

# Your Choice...Your Action...Your Life We All Have Different Strengths

**Grade Level(s):** K-12

**Focus:** Disabilities - It is normal for students to have questions about people who seem different than they are. Those who have physical disabilities are people too and we need to treat them that way.

**Goal:** Students will build compassion for others with special needs or physical disabilities by experiencing a simulated activity.

**Materials:** “We All Have Different Strengths” PSA, wheelchair, blindfolds, cotton balls

**Discussion:**

Set discussion rules for your classroom. Use the following questions appropriate for your students:

- Does anyone know someone who is in a wheelchair?  
We all have strengths. What strengths might a person in a wheelchair have?
- Does anyone know someone who is blind or deaf? They are not able to see or hear, but what strengths do they need to be able to function in this world?
- How should you treat someone who has a disability?
- We all have challenges: sometimes they are not easily noticed.
- What might be a physical challenge that isn’t as noticeable as someone in a wheelchair?
- Think about what you can do well and what are your challenges?.
- Those with disabilities are people too and need your acceptance. No one wants to feel left out. What can you do if another student in your class has a disability?



**Activities:**

**Choose the activity that is best suited to the level of your class.**

LACC.K.W.2.5	With guidance and support from adults, respond to questions and suggestions from peers and add details to strengthen writing as needed.
LACC.K.SL.2.6	Speak audibly and express thoughts, feelings, and ideas clearly.
LACC.1.W.2.5	With guidance and support from adults, focus on a topic, respond to questions and suggestions from peers, and add details to strengthen writing as needed.
LACC.1.SL.2.6	Produce complete sentences when appropriate to task and situation.

LACC.2.W.2.5	With guidance and support from adults and peers, focus on a topic and strengthen writing as needed by revising and editing.
LACC.2.SL.2.4	Tell a story or recount an experience with appropriate facts and relevant, descriptive details, speaking audibly in coherent sentences.
LACC.3.W.2.4	With guidance and support from adults, produce writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task and purpose.
LACC.3.SL.2.4	Report on a topic or text, tell a story, or recount an experience with appropriate facts and relevant, descriptive details, speaking clearly at an understandable pace.
LACC.4.W.2.4	Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
LACC.4.SL.2.4	Report on a topic or text, tell a story, or recount an experience in an organized manner, using appropriate facts and relevant, descriptive details to support main ideas or themes; speak clearly at an understandable pace.
LACC.5.W.2.4 LACC.6.W.2.4 LACC.7.W.2.4 LACC.8.W.2.4 LACC.910.W.2.4 LACC.1112.W.2.4	<i>Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.</i>
LACC.5.SL.2.4	Report on a topic or text or present an opinion, sequencing ideas logically and using appropriate facts and relevant, descriptive details to support main ideas or themes; speak clearly at an understandable pace.
LACC.6.SL.2.6 LACC.7.SL.2.6 LACC.8.SL.2.6 LACC.910.SL.2.6 LACC.1112.SL.2.6	Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate.

**Activity 1:**

If you have access to a computer you can generate a poster using positive words that students will generate about acceptance toward people with disabilities. [www.wordle.com](http://www.wordle.com)

### **Activity 2:**

Have students role play a variety of disabilities (i.e. blind, deaf, mute; physical impairment, etc.).

- . Divide students into groups. One group can be blindfolded; another group can have cotton balls in their ears; another group can be sitting still in chairs or wheelchairs; some with their hands behind their backs; some who are not allowed to speak, etc. One group may be designated to assist those role playing individuals with disabilities.
- The teacher will then engage the students in a variety of everyday and/or academic tasks for a period of 15 minutes.

Debrief:

- How did it feel to have a disability?
- What surprised them about doing everyday tasks and/or activities?
- What ways did they have to change their behaviors to accomplish simple tasks?
- How did others in the class respond to you?
- If you assisted someone, what did you discover about that person and/or yourself?

### **Activity 3:**

Refer to More Diversity Activities for Youth and Adults (Penn State Publication) p.7 **People with Disabilities** activity

### **General Follow-Up Questions:**

- Describe the simulation activity that you participated in.
- How did you feel when you were pretending to be the person with a disability? How did this experience change your thinking about people with disabilities in any way?
- How will you view people with disabilities in the future?
- How will you help others to have empathy for people with disabilities?
- If you know someone with a physical disability? Did your feelings change in any way toward this person?