HOW TO ENGAGE DISABLED PEOPLE IN SPORT AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY: A COACH’S GUIDE TO PRACTICE

1) Emphasise ‘activity’, not ‘sport’:
Many disabled people are not fond of traditional ‘sport’. Therefore, coaches should adopt a more creative and inclusive approach to their practice with a focus on the physical activity.

2) Include a variety of activities:
Many disabled people do not always know what physical activities they might enjoy or have a talent for. Therefore, coaches should offer a range of activities to maintain interest and help disabled people realise their potential.

3) It must be fun!
Many disabled people have not enjoyed their previous experiences of ‘sport’ and will look for any excuse not to do it! Therefore, coaches must absolutely ensure that fun is prioritised above all other agendas.

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Commissioned by: Buckinghamshire County Council and Leap With Us
Researched and written by: Dr Ben Ives and Dr Ben Clayton (Human Performance, Exercise & Wellbeing Centre, Buckinghamshire New University)
4) Create a supportive setting:
Many disabled people are worried about their athletic capabilities. Therefore, coaches should ensure that they create a welcoming, friendly, and supportive environment.

5) Get to know disability:
Many disabled people worry that coaches will not acknowledge their anxieties or be able to accommodate their needs. Therefore, coaches should ensure that they engage with at least basic training in how to deliver physical activity for disabled people.

6) Signpost further opportunities:
Many disabled people at the same time desire and fear the idea of engaging in more mainstream sport and physical activity. Therefore, while coaches should adopt an inclusive, multi-activity approach when working with disabled people, they should also provide signposts to established disability sport clubs or mixed able-bodied / disabled recreation clubs for any participants that show an interest.