

Community Inclusive Sports: Starter Kit

A practical guide designed to
support disabled youth

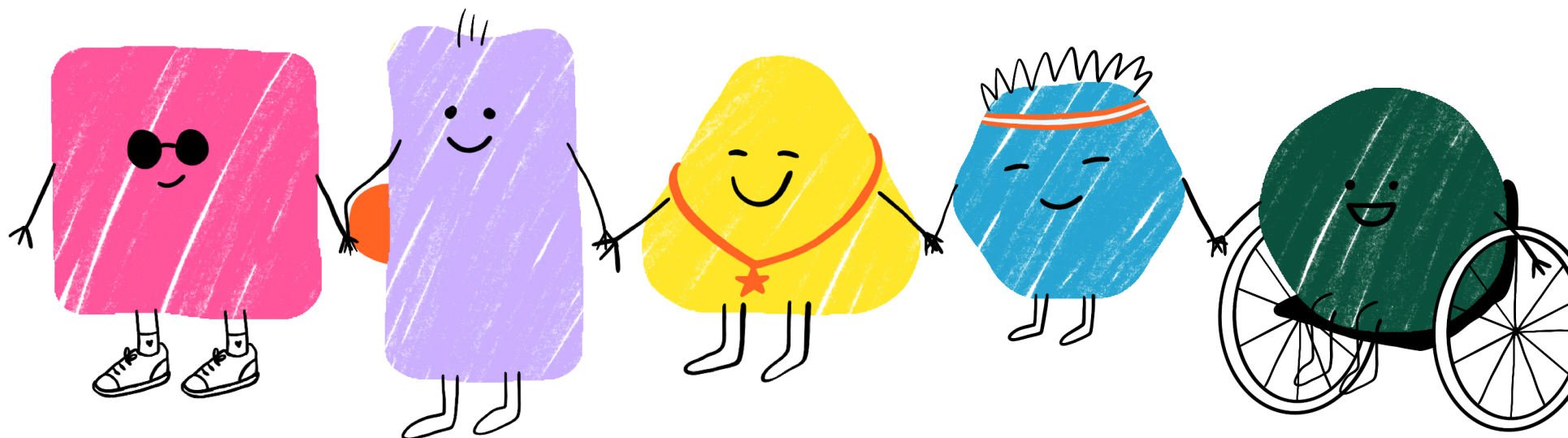


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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	4
What does Inclusive Sports mean?	6
Disability and Equal participation in Sports	9
Choosing the sport that works for you	18
What does accessible mean	31
Ideas for inclusive sport activities	38

INTRODUCTION

The Community Starter Kit: what it is and why it was created

The Community Inclusive Sports Starter Kit was designed as a practical tool to support disabled young people to participate equally and confidently in community sport. Despite ongoing progress in inclusion, many disabled young people continue to face barriers such as inaccessible infrastructure, a lack of adapted activities, and persistent social stereotypes surrounding disability and sport.

The Starter Kit aims to address this gap by offering guidance, tools and activities that empower disabled people not only to find their place in sport, but also to take on leadership and organisational roles within their communities. In doing so, it supports disabled people to actively contribute to the development of more inclusive community sport practices.

**“Sport is a tool for
participation and
empowerment.”**

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INCLUSIVE SPORTS

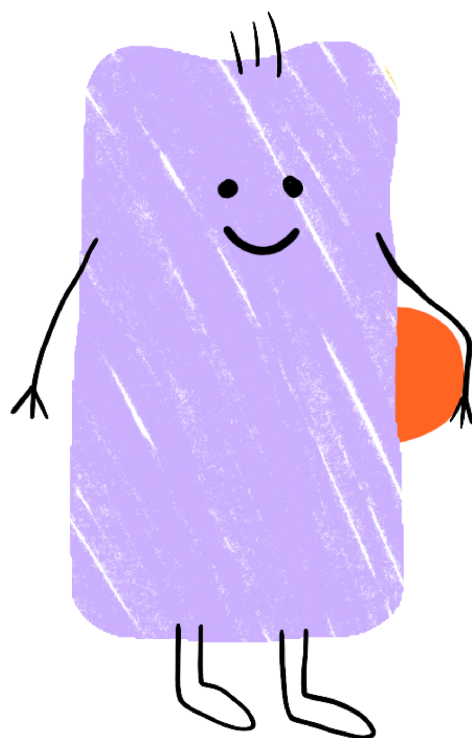
The term inclusive sports refers to forms of sport that promote participation on an equal basis, focusing on removing barriers and ensuring that everyone can take part on equal terms, regardless of abilities, gender, age or social background.

Inclusive sport places emphasis on adapting activities, equipment and training methods. The aim is to ensure meaningful participation for everyone and to encourage cooperation and mutual understanding between disabled and non-disabled participants.



Disabled people participate in the Community Kit in order to be empowered and motivated to take on leadership roles in the design, planning and organisation of community sport activities and events.

In this way, they become active advocates and agents for the promotion of inclusive sport!



Useful Material

- Brittain, I., Hayday, E., & Milne, E. (2020). Disability, sport and inclusion: Exploring the evidence. *Sport in Society*, 23(11), 1771–1785.
- Coaching Association of Canada. (2020). Coaching inclusive sport: Guidelines and resources. Coaching Association of Canada.
- Darcy, S., Lock, D., & Taylor, T. (2017). Disability and sport tourism: Inclusion, participation and accessibility. Channel View Publications.
- DePauw, K. P., & Gavron, S. J. (2005). Disability sport (2nd ed.). Human Kinetics.
- United Nations. (2020). Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. United Nations.
- World Health Organization (WHO). (2022). Global action plan on physical activity 2025–2030: More active people for a healthier world. WHO.

DISABILITY AND EQUAL PARTICIPATION IN SPORTS



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DISABILITY AND EQUAL PARTICIPATION IN SPORT

What does disability mean?

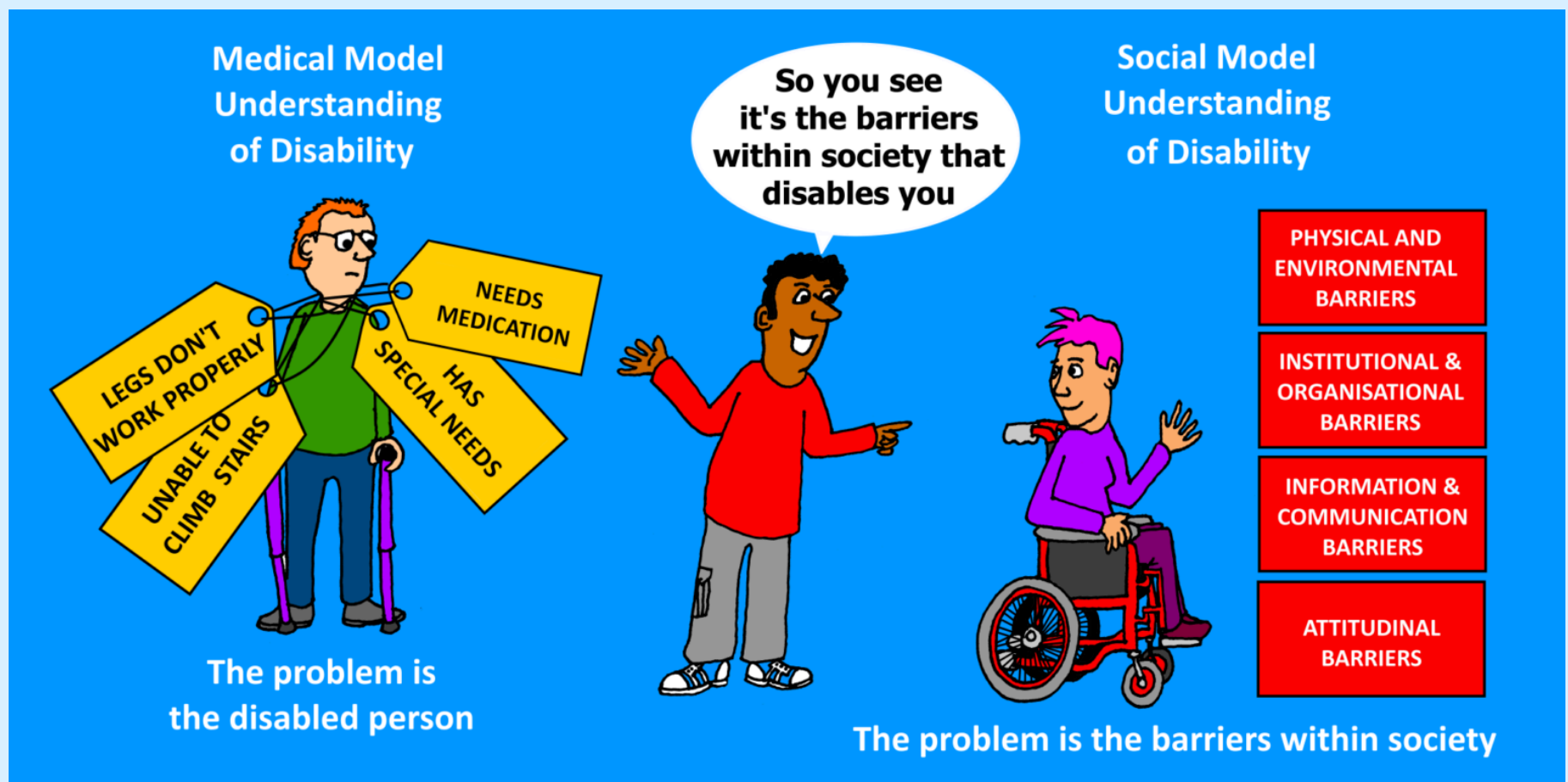
The concept of disability is shaped by society, culture, religion and the economy (Oliver, 1990/2009).

Globally, 1 in 7 people, meaning more than 1 billion people, are disabled (WHO, n.d.).

For many years, disability was understood as an individual problem, leading to charitable and passive approaches. The social model of disability argues that disability is imposed by social and physical environments, rather than being caused by a person's body or impairment. Its aim is to highlight the social structures that create exclusion, rather than focusing on bodily impairment itself (Oliver, 1990/2009).

The social model of disability shifts responsibility from the individual to society and calls for changes in environments, policies and attitudes (Oliver, 1990/2009).

According to this model:



Source Crippen Cartoons (Disability Arts Online)

Impairment refers to the loss or limitation of a part of the body or of a bodily function.

Disability refers to the disadvantage or restriction caused by social organisation, which fails to take into account the needs of people with impairments (Oliver, 1990/2009).

Making this distinction leads to a deeper understanding of both the real barriers people face and the core principles of the social model of disability. Rather than trying to “fix the individual”, the focus is on changing society so that it includes everyone (Anastasiou & Kauffman, 2013).

“Ableism positions the non-impaired body as the ‘ideal’ and is reproduced through architectural, social and institutional barriers.”

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The real barriers in sports (1/2)



Architectural barriers

the absence of ramps, appropriate changing rooms, tactile guidance paths, and specialised equipment (Darcy & Dowse, 2013).

Organisational barriers

lack of appropriate training for coaches, leading to discomfort and exclusion.

Communication barriers

insufficient information in accessible formats, and the absence of sign language or easy-to-understand language.



The real barriers in sports (2/2)

Procedural barriers

registration, participation, and club operation systems that fail to take into account the impairments individuals may have.



Prejudices

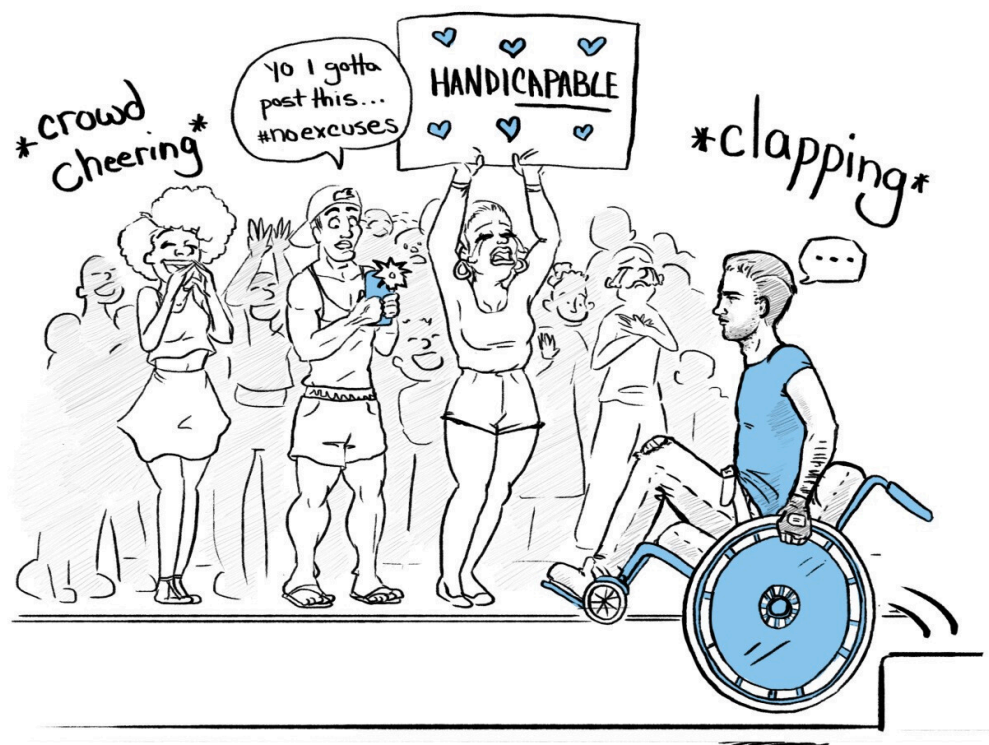
stereotypes about what disabled people are “able” to do, particularly in high-intensity or team sports.

In addition, social stereotypes, the media, and popular culture often reinforce exclusion rather than reduce it:

- **Invisible in everyday life:** Disabled people are often excluded from sports events because “the system is not ready to include them.”
- On the other hand, when they are invited, their presence is frequently tokenistic, lacking meaningful inclusion.
- **Inspiration porn:** The media often portray disabled people as “sources of inspiration” for non-disabled audiences, focusing on extreme stories of “courage” or “overcoming” rather than on their everyday lives, needs, and rights. Instead of promoting equality, this narrative reinforces the idea that the value of a disabled person lies only in their ability to “overcome” their impairment (Young, 2014).

Source: The Disabled Life [CLICK HERE](#)

SPECTATORS



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Communities with an inclusive culture view diversity as a source of strength and growth, rather than as a problem (Booth & Ainscow, 2002). Inclusion is created with participants and is not imposed from the top down.

This requires:

- ✿ Open communication and continuous learning,
- ✿ Multiple ways of participating and expressing oneself,
- ✿ A commitment to equality rather than uniformity,
- ✿ Recognising impairment as part of human diversity, not as a problem.
- ✿ Overall, inclusion can be understood as a dynamic process of change in institutions, relationships and attitudes (Thomas, 2007).



Useful Resources

The Politics of Disablement (Mike Oliver, 1990)

Find the book [here](#)

Let's raise the roof - A social model of disability (Welsh Government, 2021)

Watch the video [here](#)

I'm not your inspiration, thank you very much (Stella Young, 2012)

Watch the video [here](#)



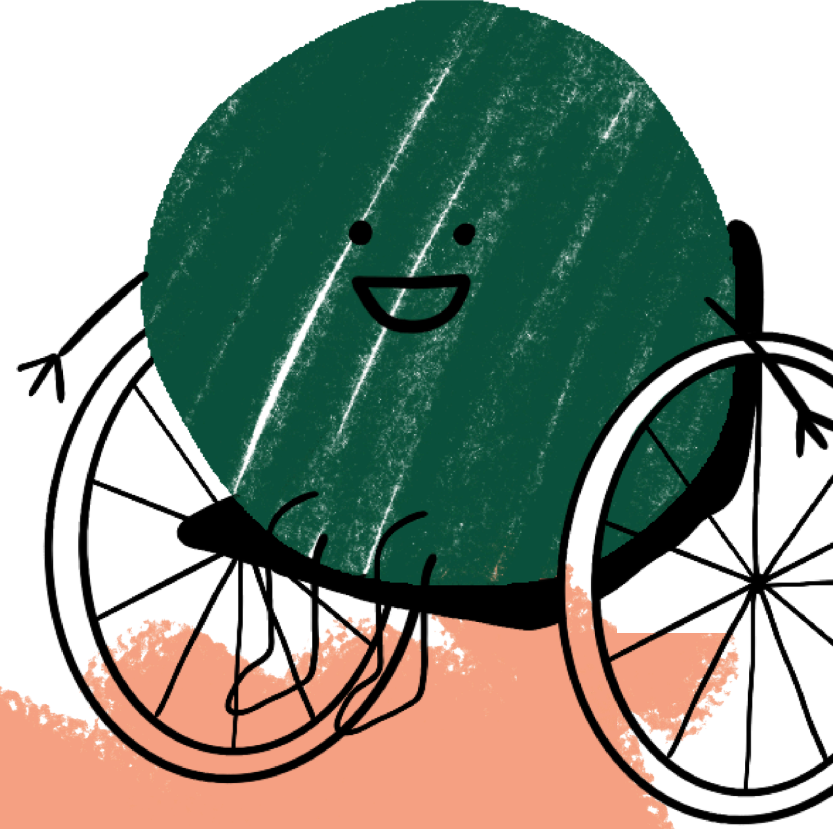
Choosing the sport that works for you

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Sport is for everyone. What matters most is finding something that brings you joy, motivates you and inspires you.

Choosing a sport is similar to choosing a hobby: think about what excites you, what gives you a sense of fulfilment, and what works for your interests and needs.

What to consider

Interest & enjoyment: Do you want to move for the challenge, for social connection, or for personal development?

Personal needs & comfort: Think about your own needs. This may include time for adaptation, equipment, or simple adjustments to activities.

Intensity & pace: Do you prefer calm and steady movement, or fast-paced, dynamic and high-intensity sports?

Environment & accessibility: Would you rather be active indoors or outdoors?

Social or individual activity: Do you enjoy being active as part of a group, or do you prefer exercising on your own?



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Quiz

Which sport works for you?

Instructions: Answer each question with the option that best reflects you. At the end, add up your scores to see which sport suits you best.

If there is a tie, you will be asked to choose the option that feels most suitable for you at this moment.

Quiz: Which sport works for you?

Questions

Answers

1. **What kind of activity gives you energy on the weekend?**

- 1. Meeting friends and having fun together
- 2. Running or hiking in nature
- 3. Trying fast-paced, high-energy sports
- 4. Learning new skills or techniques

2. **How do you like to approach challenges?**

- 1. By working together with others and sharing the experience
- 2. By facing challenges on a personal level and pushing your limits
- 3. By making fast and bold decisions in intense situations
- 4. By thinking strategically before acting and focusing on precision

3. **Which environment inspires you most to be active?**

- 1. A lively court with friends and teammates
- 2. Calm natural settings, such as trails, lakes or mountains
- 3. Open spaces where action and speed take the lead
- 4. A calm, organised space that supports focus and technique

4. **How would you describe the way you move?**

- 1. Energetic, social and cheerful
- 2. Steady, patient and persistent
- 3. Spontaneous, bold and fast-paced
- 4. Careful, analytical and strategic

5. **What motivates you to take part in a sport?**

- 1. Working together as a team
- 2. Personal growth and challenge
- 3. Energy, intensity and adrenaline
- 4. Developing a skill and focusing on precision

6. **How do you prefer to train?**

- 1. With friends or as part of a team, enjoying collaboration
- 2. On your own, following your own pace
- 3. Through fast, dynamic sessions that boost adrenaline
- 4. Through careful, focused sessions aimed at improving technique

Quiz: Which sport works for you?

Questions

Answers

7. **What pace feels right for you when practising a sport?**

- 1. Fast-paced but organised team play
- 2. A steady, endurance-focused pace
- 3. Fast, intense and unpredictable
- 4. Slow, controlled and detail-oriented

8. **What makes you feel successful in a sport?**

- 1. Working together as a team and celebrating shared success
- 2. Personal growth and steady progress
- 3. High-energy action and adventure
- 4. Strategic thinking and precise movement

9. **How do you usually respond to mistakes or setbacks?**

- 1. I rely on the team and we keep going together
- 2. I reflect, learn, and try again
- 3. I act immediately and keep going without fear
- 4. I analyse carefully and adapt strategically

10. **What kind of environment do you prefer for being active?**

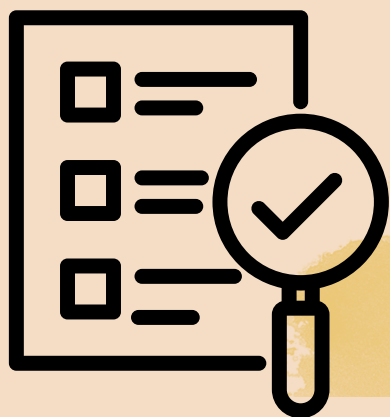
- 1. An energetic court or stadium with friends
- 2. Peaceful natural settings, like trails or lakes
- 3. Spaces full of action, speed and adventure
- 4. A quiet training space for focus and technical improvement

11. **What kind of energy do you bring to the game?**

- 1. Outgoing, encouraging and collaborative
- 2. Patient and persistent
- 3. Explosive, spontaneous and bold
- 4. Focused, precise and methodical

12. **What do you enjoy most after a game?**

- 1. Celebrate and socialise with the team
- 2. Relax alone or with a close friend
- 3. Do something fun, exciting or adventurous
- 4. Review my performance and work on my technique



Results

Mostly (1) – Team Sports:

Football, Basketball, Volleyball, Sitting Volleyball, Walking Football, Floorball

– You thrive on social interaction, teamwork and shared experiences.

Mostly (2) – Individual / Endurance Sports:

Running, Swimming, Cycling, Athletics (track, throws, jumps), Triathlon, Seated Powerlifting, Adaptive CrossFit, Para-Kayaking

– You enjoy personal challenges and pushing your own limits.

Mostly (3) – Extreme / Dynamic Sports:

Snowboarding, Skateboarding, Surfing, Sit-Ski, Para-Canoe, Para-Kayak, Adaptive Sailing

– You thrive on adrenaline, intensity and excitement.

Mostly (4) – Precision / Strategy Sports:

Archery, Golf, Fencing, Para Fencing, Para Archery, Adaptive Badminton, Para Table Tennis

– You succeed through strategy, focus and technical skill.

Tie-Breaker in case of a tie



Do you have a tie between two or more sport categories?

Lucky you! This means that both styles suit you.

Sport is for everyone, regardless of experience, abilities or physical condition.

The way sports are grouped here is not based on impairments, but on elements such as pace, intensity, environment and modes of participation.

**Every sport
can be adapted
to ensure
meaningful
participation
and
accessibility
for everyone.**

Team Sports



You thrive on social interaction and teamwork.



Key characteristics

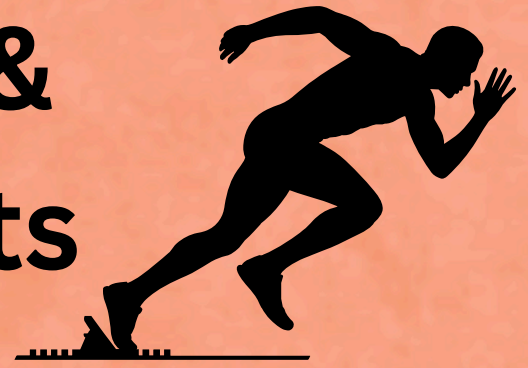
They foster team spirit, communication, collaboration and social skills. They are well suited to people who enjoy intensity and strategy within a team environment.



Examples

Football, Basketball, Volleyball, Sitting Volleyball, Walking Football, Para-badminton, Floorball

Individual & Endurance Sports

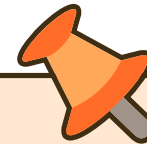


You love personal challenges and pushing your own limits.



Key characteristics

They promote physical endurance, discipline, focus and self-improvement. They are ideal for people who enjoy personal progress.



Examples

Running, Swimming, Cycling, Athletics (track events, throws, jumps), Triathlon, Seated Powerlifting, Adaptive CrossFit, Para-Kayak

Extreme / Dynamic Sports



You thrive on adrenaline and intensity!



Key characteristics

They combine speed, dynamism and adaptability. They are well suited to people who seek adventure and intense experiences.



Examples

Snowboarding, Skateboarding, Surfing, Sit-Ski, Para-Canoe, Para-Kayak, Adaptive Sailing

Strategy / Precision Sports



You excel through strategy, concentration and technical skill.



Key characteristics

They promote precision, analytical thinking, technical skills and composure. They are ideal for people who enjoy methodical approaches and a strong sense of control.



Examples

Archery, Golf, Fencing, Para Archery, Adaptive Badminton, Para Table Tennis

Accessibility



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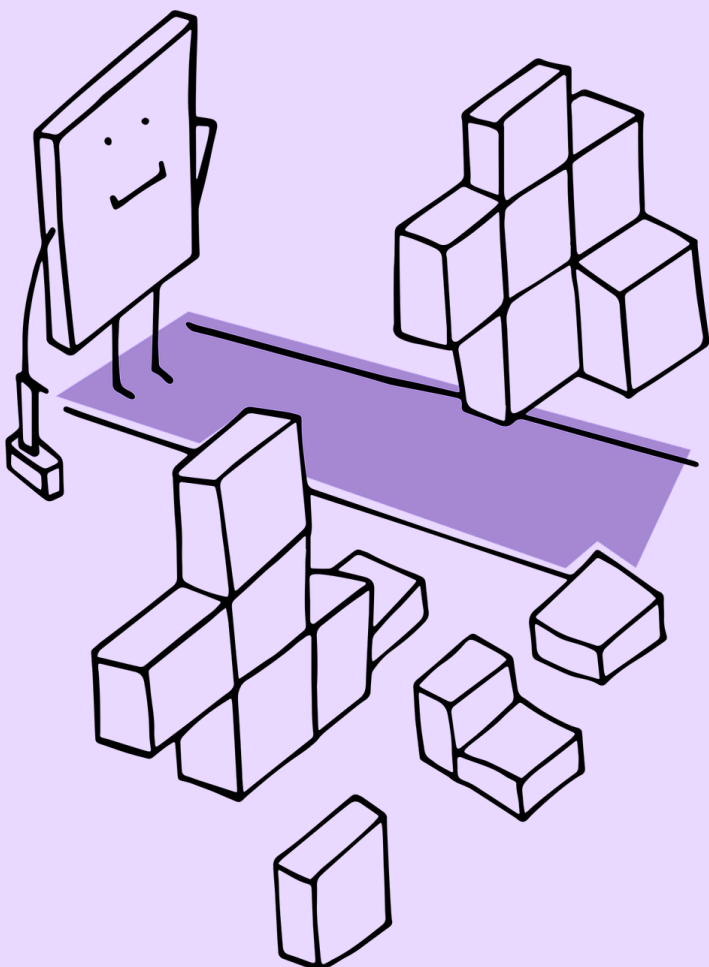
What does it mean

Accessibility is not only about entering a space.

It is the combination of infrastructure, equipment and communication that enables everyone to participate on an equal basis.

Accessibility must be integrated from the very beginning, at all stages of planning, and developed in collaboration with the people it concerns.

It is important to remember that accessibility benefits far more people than we might initially think. People who face barriers also include pregnant people, older adults, parents with strollers, young children, and people with higher body weight, among others.



Accessibility includes:

- ✿ **Infrastructure:** Ramps, lifts, step-free changing rooms and accessible toilets.
- ✿ **Equipment:** Adapted equipment, sufficient space for wheelchairs and mobility aids.
- ✿ **Orientation and way-finding:** Tactile guiding paths, Braille signage, visual and audio cues.
- ✿ **Communication:** Clear and accessible language, use of sign language interpretation or personal assistance when needed.
- ✿ **Digital accessibility:** Websites, registration forms and materials provided in compatible, readable formats.
- ✿ **Simple procedures:** User-friendly participation guidelines, clear information and support during registration.
- ✿ **Participation:** The possibility of individual adjustments based on participants' needs.

Accessibility is not a “service” or a “provision”; it is a prerequisite for meaningful participation.

Get to know your rights to accessibility and participation, as defined by the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and national legislation.

Remember that inclusion is a two-way process: it also involves communicating your needs to coaches or staff.

Keep in mind that everyone has different needs, even when people share the same impairment.

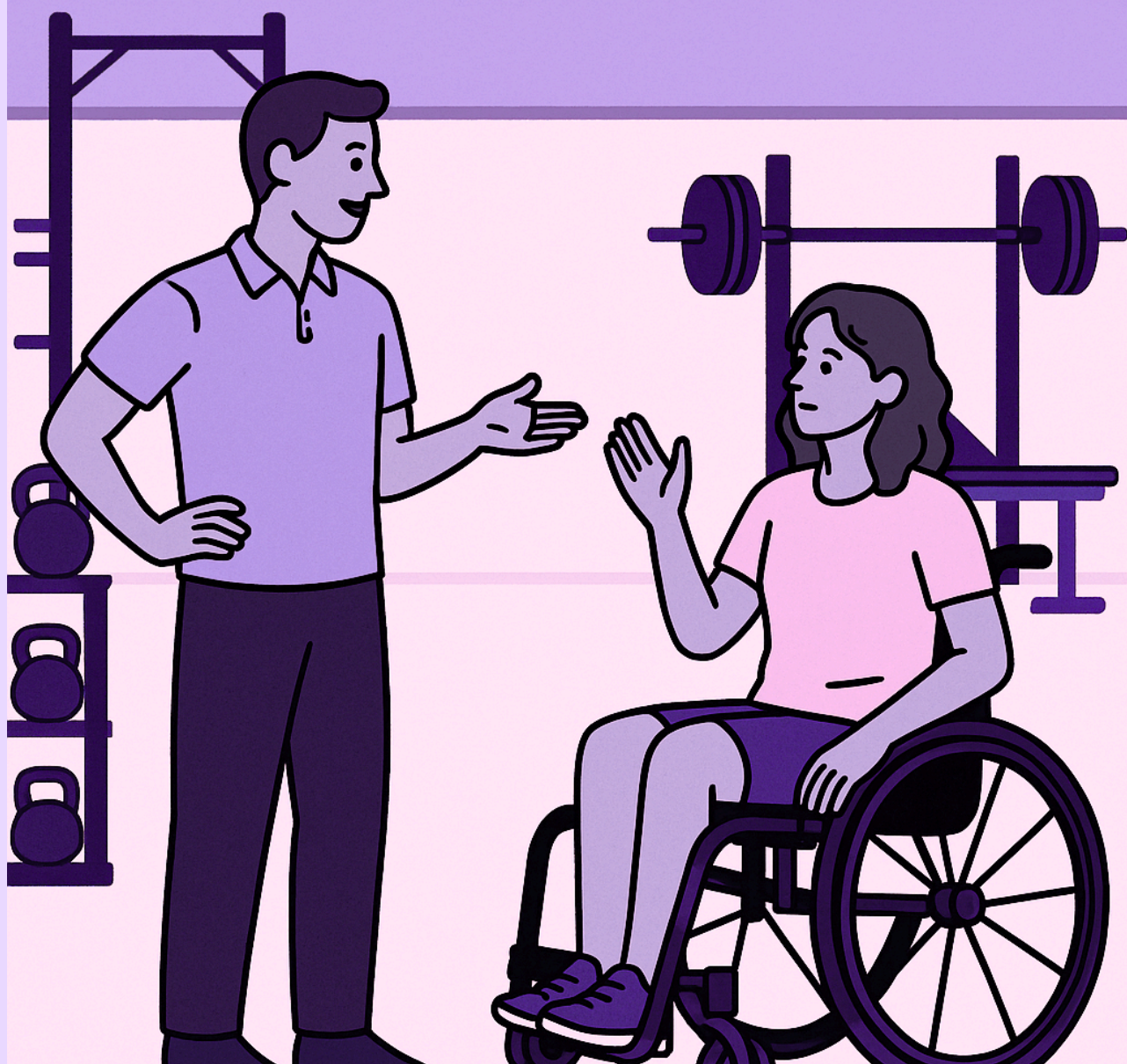


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How can I assert my needs?

Ask for specific adjustments that meet your needs, even if it may not be possible for all of them to be fully met (for example, adapted equipment or changes to the layout of the space).

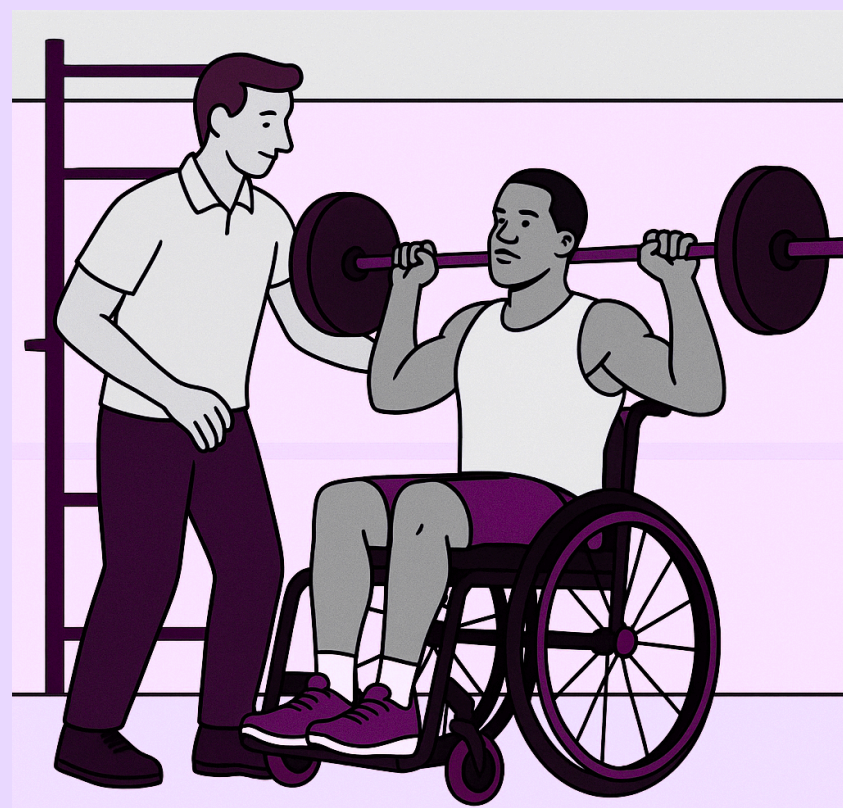
If needed, suggest the involvement of a support person, interpreter or support staff.

You can also share good practices from other gyms or organisations. Remember: it is your right to participate on an equal and active basis.

Support staff

Equal inclusion in sport may require the presence of support staff. Their role should be clearly defined, promote independence, and be adapted to the needs of each individual.

A personal assistant provides individualised support in the daily life of a disabled person, following their instructions, promoting autonomy and helping to prevent social isolation.



A training assistant supports the athlete during exercise, without being involved in personal care. This role may be carried out by the same person as the personal assistant, provided there is prior agreement and the arrangement supports the athlete's participation and safety.

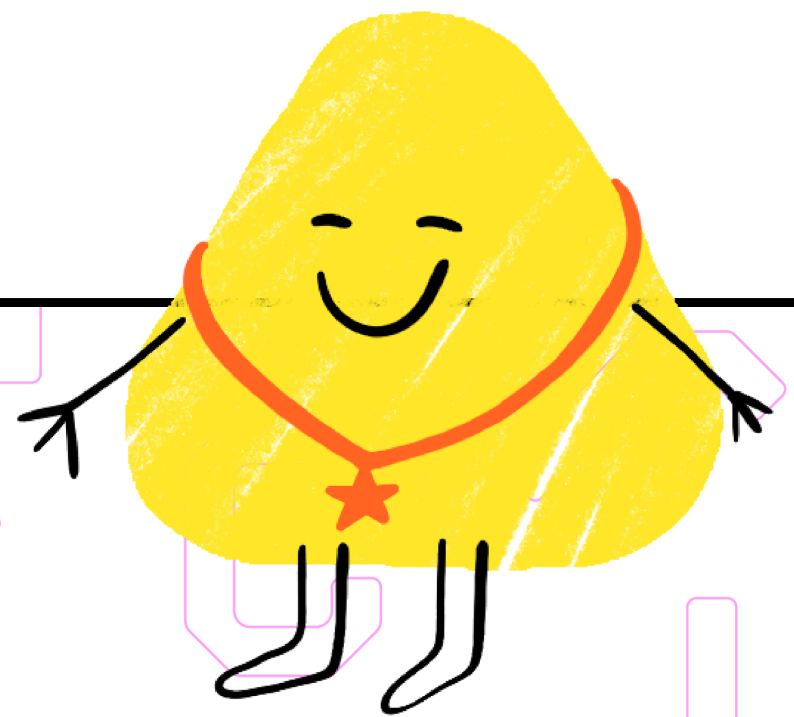
Useful Resources

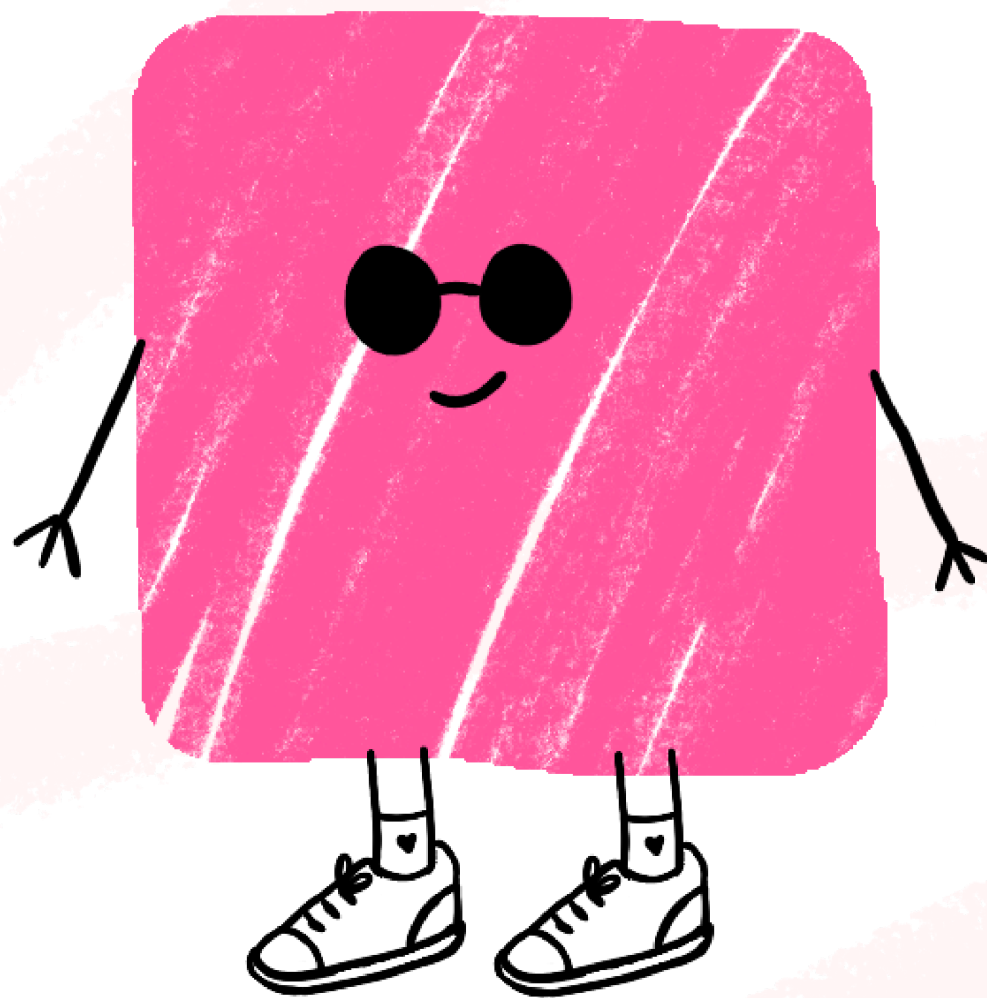
Accessibility for People with Disabilities and Persons with Mobility Impairments (Ministry of Environment and Energy)

Find the legal framework [here](#)

European Accessibility Standards (European Union)

Find the standards [here](#)





Ideas for inclusive sport activities

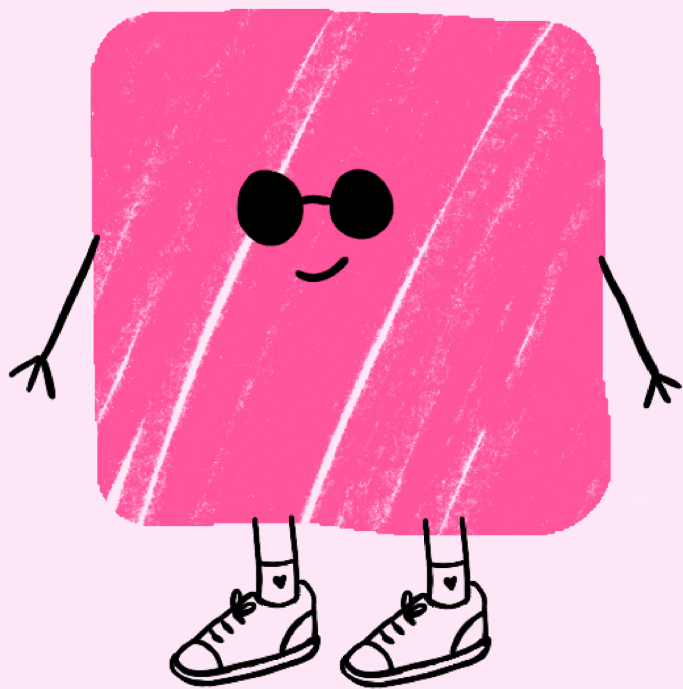
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Did you know that every sport can become inclusive, as long as you adapt the rules or the equipment? Let's take a look at some examples.



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Key elements for inclusive sport

Rule adaptations

Equipment adaptations

Mixed teams

Diverse roles

**Flexibility &
encouragement**



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Examples of adapted sport activities

Basketball

Although basketball is often associated with teams of non-disabled players, it can be a fully inclusive sport. By using lighter balls, reducing the shot clock, or allowing mixed participation between seated and standing players, everyone can take part. Adaptation does not reduce the challenge or the enjoyment of the game; instead, it strengthens equal participation by giving people with different skill levels the opportunity to collaborate and share the experience of playing together.

Football

Football is one of the most widely played sports and, yes, it can be made inclusive for more people. Adaptations such as a smaller pitch, lighter balls, and the use of guides or supportive frameworks allow people with different abilities to play together. The game promotes teamwork and strategic collaboration, while also reducing social and physical barriers that often exclude certain groups. Playing in mixed teams also helps challenge stereotypes and break down prejudice.

Examples of adapted sport activities

Cycling

Bicycles do not come in only one standard form. They can have different types of pedals, additional wheels, hand-powered systems, or be ridden from different positions. What matters is that when each person has access to a bicycle that works for their body, they can take part in the sport. Cycling encourages teamwork, mutual support and companionship, while participants build skills and confidence regardless of individual abilities.

Goalball

Although traditionally designed for people with visual impairments, goalball can also be played by mixed teams.

Everyone wears eye shades, creating an equal playing experience and strengthening cooperation through sound and touch. This encourages players to rely on their teammates' skills and to enhance communication in order to succeed.

Paralympic sports do not have to be played only by disabled people. They can be played by anyone – in a sports club, at school or in the local community.

Tips for inclusive activities

Including every participant: Start with dialogue. Ask what people enjoy, what they are good at, and what they need in order to participate comfortably. This is not only about adaptations, but also about personal preferences and different levels of experience.

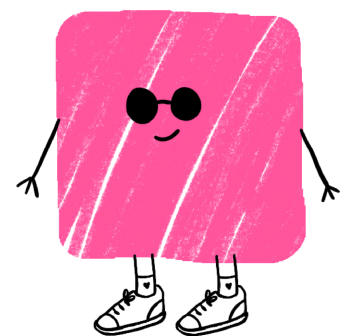
Flexibility and adaptability: Small changes to rules or equipment can make an activity more accessible and enjoyable for everyone.

Accessibility and appropriate equipment: Creating accessible spaces with ramps, clear and safe surfaces, visual and audio cues, or instructions in plain language makes the environment more welcoming for all participants.

Mixed groups and collaboration: Form groups with different skill levels. The idea of a “mixed group” means that everyone works together, learns from one another and supports each other, without separation or exclusion.

Useful Resources

- *Sense (n.d.). Inclusive games to play with people with complex needs. Available at: sense.org.uk*
- *WomenWin / Playground (n.d.). Everyone's Game: A Toolkit for Advancing Disability Inclusion in Sport-based Life Skills Programming. Available at: playground.womenwin.org*
- *Sport for Development (n.d.). Sport Builds Inclusive Generations Manual. Available at: sport-for-development.com*
- *Disabled Sports USA: Adapted Sport Programs. Available at: adaptedsports.org*
- *Disability Support Guide. (n.d.). What are my adaptive sport options? Available at: disabilitysupportguide.com.au*
- *Move United. (n.d.). Adaptive sports. Available at: <https://moveunitedsport.org/sports/>*



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