

ROLE PLAYS ON SYNCOPE

Read these scenarios and follow the instructions. You will have to use the information that you have learnt from the other activities to help you to put yourselves into each situation. You will learn about how it feels to have syncope and how you can help someone with the medical condition.

Living with syncope in school is sometimes difficult. Not many people know about it apart from my close friends and I can't be with them all the time. Some people at school treat my medical condition as a joke and think it is funny that I have loss of consciousness caused by a syncope attack. This makes me feel unhappy and different from everybody else. Explain to someone why you feel this way.

You have a friend who has syncope. She is going to be moving schools soon and will be coming into your class. How can you get your classmates to understand her medical condition so that they are not scared when she suffers a loss of consciousness? How can you help your friend to feel comfortable in her new school? Explain to your friends and tell them how you can help and support your new classmate.

You have syncope and can lose consciousness without warning. You have been invited to a friend's birthday party and sleepover. You want to go and do not want to feel left out, but are worried that you might lose consciousness and there would not be anyone around to help you if you did. What should you do? Should you avoid the party and stay at home? Tell someone your concerns.

Points for teacher to highlight in de-brief following role plays:

The role play is to make pupils think about difference and prejudice. It will ensure- by putting themselves in someone else's position- that they understand that people with syncope are no different from themselves.

- Everyone is different in some way, but this really is the only similarity between us all. Difference should therefore be embraced, not discriminated against.
- Making jokes about people can be seen as a form of bullying which is not tolerated. An understanding environment that welcomes differences is a much better place to learn in! Making jokes can mean that the individual feels left out and alone. This is not a nice feeling, will upset people and make them not want to come to school. If the pupils put themselves into this position, they may better understand how it might feel.
- The best school would be one that creates an atmosphere of understanding, where everyone knows how to help the individual if they lose consciousness. If everyone understands, they needn't laugh at it. Bullies usually bully when they are ignorant and are trying to pretend that they understand.

This role play is designed for pupils to a) use the information that they have gathered from the previous resources and b) put themselves in the position of someone who understands all about syncope and wants to tell others. This is really asking the pupils to put themselves in their own real life position.

They could suggest:

- Have a class session using these resources
- Briefly explain to them what syncope is so they understand
- Run through the care procedure so they know how to help and show them what the recovery position is
- Explain why it is so important to understand syncope so that everyone can support their new classmate- they will feel more comfortable if everyone understands and is able to help them if they lose consciousness. It will also prepare the classmates for syncopal attacks and will make it clear that they need not be shocked, panicked or afraid.

This role-play invites the pupils to a) use the information they have learnt and b) put themselves in the position of a young person with syncope.

They should:

- Go to the party but make sure that the adults in charge are aware of your medical condition and know the care procedure.
- If your friends don't know, tell them about it so that they will not be shocked and scared by a syncopal attack.
- Being left out is no fun whatever medical condition you may have. Create an atmosphere where people are not afraid, panicked and on-edge about being responsible for an individual with syncope. Be open and honest and again, understanding can ensure this friendly environment is created.