

Meet a Tree

Instructions to start playing the game: (Suggested wording below)

- We are going to play a game now called “Meet-A-Tree.” What do you think we are going to do in this game?
- Have participants pair off and give each pair a blindfold.
- Explain these directions:
 - One person in each pair will get blindfolded.
 - The sighted participant leads their “blind” partner to a tree that interests them – s/he should lead his/her partner to the tree in an indirect way to make it more interesting.
 - **Make sure the sighted participant takes care of their sight-impaired partner. THIS IS VERY IMPORTANT.**
 - Have fun with this:
 - You can walk your participants over imaginary logs or under imaginary branches.
 - You can spin them around once or twice (but no more than that!) before they remove the blindfold.
 - The blindfolded participant should use their other senses to “see/experience” the tree. Later, when the blindfold is off, they will have the chance to locate their tree by sight.
 - Encourage the participant’s exploration by suggesting that s/he:
 - Feel for plants growing on or around it.
 - Feel for signs that animals use the tree.
 - Feel the bark. How thick is it? Is it rough or smooth?
 - Feel for interesting branches or knots in the tree.
 - Put your arms around the tree to measure it. How wide is it?
 - Smell the tree.
 - Did you walk up hill or down hill to the tree?
 - To add humor, you can suggest participants can lick the tree, kiss the tree, hug the tree, speak with the tree, tell the tree a secret... etc.
 - Once the blindfolded participant feels they know the tree well (after 2-3 minutes), their sighted partner will lead her/him back to the starting place.
 - Take a different route away from the tree, stepping over imaginary rocks, ducking under pretend branches, etc. – make it a fun challenge (but not too hard) for the blindfolded participant to find his/her tree.
 - Once back at the starting point, remove the blindfold. The newly sighted participant tries to find the tree with his/her eyes open by walking around the trees and trying to find their tree.
 - Encourage them to do everything they did before with the blindfold on (feel, lick, talk to, hug the tree) in order to locate their tree.
 - When they find their tree, or after a few minutes, the partners switch roles and play the game again.
 - When everyone has had their chance to ‘Meet-A-Tree,’ gather everyone together to debrief the activity using open-ended questions to allow participants to process the information.