

# TRAINING LEADERS *of* CADETS

## INTERMEDIATE COURSE

### LESSON PLAN

#### 1.2 Cadets With Special Needs

VERSION:	December 2016 <i>please verify this is the latest version by visiting <a href="http://capmembers.com/TLC">capmembers.com/TLC</a></i>
DURATION:	40 minutes approximately, and subtopic times shown in margins below are also approximate
INSTRUCTOR:	A master-rated cadet programs officer or highly experienced CC or DCC is suggested
KEY QUESTION:	What is CAP's policy regarding special needs cadets, and what specific accommodations might local leaders use in serving them?
OBJECTIVES:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Explain CAP's non-discrimination policy in your own words.</li><li>2. Discuss the goal of maximum inclusion.</li><li>3. Discuss the goal of a least restrictive environment.</li><li>4. Discuss the concept of a reasonable accommodation.</li><li>5. Describe four key starting points to consider when trying to identify possible accommodations.</li></ol>
SIMPLE OUTLINE:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Starter: "Cadet Ironman"</li><li>2. Policy<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. Preamble to CAP nondiscrimination policy</li><li>b. Maximum inclusion</li><li>c. Least restrictive environment</li><li>d. Reasonable accommodation</li></ol></li><li>3. Starting points for accommodations</li><li>4. Exercise</li><li>5. Conclusion</li></ol>
READING:	Jennifer Gerhardt, "CAP's Ironman," in <i>Civil Air Patrol Volunteer</i> , April – June 2016, pp. 42-43.
CLASS ACTIVITIES:	Group discussion, followed by an activity where given realistic scenarios affecting cadets with special needs, participants will describe potential accommodations that further maximum inclusiveness with the least restrictions. They'll also describe the anti-inclusive perspective a naysayer might voice in that situation.
EQUIPMENT:	Butcher paper (or whiteboard) and markers; 1 copy of exercise handout per student



## Welcome & Starter

3 min

**Q1:** Who is welcome to become a CAP cadet?

**A1:** *Full listing is not necessary, but responses should include some of the following:*

- Anyone who meets the age requirements
- Anyone who promises to try to abide by our Core Values
- Anyone who meets the usual membership requirements, regardless of disability
- . . . Regardless of race
- . . . Regardless of religion
- . . . Regardless of sexual orientation
- . . . Regardless of gender identity or gender expression . . . etc.



## "Cadet Ironman"

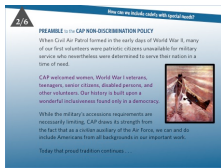
2 min

*Read aloud the highlighted portions of the "CAP's Ironman" article.*

## Overview

1 min

For the next half-hour, we'll discuss how to serve cadets with special needs through reasonable accommodations, and we'll end with an exercise where you do some problem-solving involving hypothetical special needs cadets.



## Policy

6 min

Let's begin our discussion on how we can serve special needs youth by looking into CAP's nondiscrimination policies.

*Read aloud the preamble to the nondiscrimination policy, as shown on the slide.*

**Q1:** What are some take-aways we can deduce from this preamble?

**A1:** We're different from the military and so it's appropriate for us to have different entrance requirements

Our ability to accept a wider population makes us more diverse than the military

**Emphasis:** Our goal is to bring the cadet experience to as many youth as we can. Therefore, we'll modify our cadet training environment whenever reasonably possible to accommodate youth possessing special needs, so long as they are otherwise eligible for membership. Further, because we're largely a youth character and leadership program, our business is in preparing young people to lead in a diverse world, so maximum inclusion of individuals with special needs is a natural goal for us and it benefits everybody.



**Q2:** Allowing people with special needs to participate would be meaningless if we didn't make an extra effort to recognize those needs and support "maximum inclusion." What does "maximum inclusion" mean to you?

**A2:** Maximum inclusion means we take steps to accommodate a need so that that special need doesn't sideline a cadet, when we're reasonably able to do that.

Maximum inclusion can also mean bringing the services to the cadet, versus removing the cadet from the "normal" environment to obtain services elsewhere.

**Emphasis:** If a cadet has a serious disability and encampment is coming up, the first reaction might be to ask for a waiver so the cadet can earn the Mitchell Award without attending encampment. But that's the opposite of maximum inclusion. So, CAP's desire is first to think creatively and try to find a way for the cadet to attend encampment, even if that means adjusting the encampment experience a bit. (We'll discuss accommodations in a moment.)

**Q3:** Another term associated with special needs individuals is the "least restrictive environment?" What do you suppose that term means?

**A3:** If a cadet's special need requires us to modify the cadet training environment, we'll provide as many aids and supports as are reasonably available to us, and restrict the cadet's participation as little as we can, subject to our limited resources.

### Photos on the slide (left to right)

"Team Hoyt" an Air Force dad and his son who have completed over 70 marathons

The "Munchkin Coroner," Meinhardt Raabe, did not qualify for military service but flew CAP missions during WWII

Wing Commander who uses a wheelchair

Female CAP volunteers during WWII

Service dog supporting her owner at a CAP activity

A double-amputee who uses prosthetic limbs to live an active life

**Emphasis:** Consider a cadet who has asthma. Local leaders who don't understand our special needs policies might tell the cadet she can come to the bivouac, but she'll have to stay at base camp and is prohibited from the hiking activities. Such an approach is wrongheaded because it's contrary to the principle of the "least restrictive environment." The cadet could carry an inhaler with her, be allowed to rest if she gets winded, and the adult staff can keep an extra eye on her. That's maximum inclusion in the least restrictive environment.

**Success Stories** Who can share the story of a reasonable accommodation that made it possible for a cadet to be included in an activity? *If the class doesn't have many examples, mention some of the hypotheticals listed below.*

A blind cadet is likely unable to drill with precision as a flight member, but could be taught how to march in place and command a flight from a stationary position.

The cadet who values her femininity can be permitted to wear the blues skirt, even if local leaders prefer the standardized look of slacks. Her inclusion is more important than an arbitrary want for standardized appearance.

A cadet whose medication makes him drowsy can still attend encampment, though he may need a nap back at the dorm, with the downtime scheduled such that he misses as little "cool stuff" as possible.

Some of the facilities we use on military installations were not built to modern standards of accessibility. But sometimes we can lodge an element of cadets on the ground floor so that a cadet with mobility challenges can live as part of the team.

The small, single-engine aircraft we fly are not always accessible to persons with limited mobility. But maybe that cadet can be granted priority for flights on a KC-135 that have easier boarding and egress, when those flights become available.

### **Policy Summary**

As a Cadet Programs Officer who holds a leadership role at the squadron, wing, or at overnight activities, CAP asks that you approach questions related to inclusivity with a positive "Let's make it work" attitude, and not a "You don't fit" mindset.

Set aside the question of whether a requested accommodation is technically or legalistically "reasonable" or not. Begin in dialogue with the parents and cadet. Try to find a solution. If you can't find one acceptable to you both, call your wing or NHQ for help.



## Reasonable Accommodations

2 min

**Q1:** We've mentioned the word "accommodations" a few times. What is an accommodation? And who can give an example of an accommodation?

**A1:** An accommodation is when you modify or adjust the environment to enable someone to participate more fully at work, school, in CAP, or elsewhere. *Underlined phrases are critical to the definition.*

### Examples:

Providing a stool so a little boy can reach the counter (slide image)

Parking spaces reserved for disabled persons

Breaking a long exam into portions for an ADHD student

**Q2:** How will you know that a cadet is facing a special need and would benefit from an accommodation?

**A2:** Listen, be aware of struggles and special needs, whether explicitly stated or not; talk with cadets and parents, ask how you can help.

**Emphasis:** No one is going to say, "I hereby request a reasonable accommodation..." So, some phrases they'll say that should trigger in your mind the idea of altering the normal environment to help a cadet thrive might include:

"My dyslexia makes it hard for me to read test questions, especially if there's a time limit . . ."

"I'll be wearing this cast on my arm for 8 weeks . . ."

"My son has surgical scars that make him feel uncomfortable undressing in front of others . . ."

## Starting Points in Imagining Reasonable Accommodations

5 min

Here are three suggestions on how to get started upon learning that a cadet has a special need requiring an accommodation.

### Ask about IEPs, doctor / counselor instructions

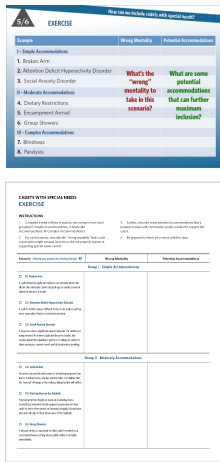
If a cadet regularly lives with a special need, chances are that cadet has an IEP, and Individual Education Plan or a "504" on file at school. Those documents are confidential, but the family may share them with us if they choose. They're a great starting point when the commander and family discuss how the cadet is to find a path in CAP. If you see an accommodation listed in an IEP, try to carry that strategy over to CAP. Likewise, a physician or counselor may have instructions that will help you learn what accommodations can work.

### **Ask the parent or guardian to become a CSM**

For cadets with acute special needs, it may be important for a parent or caregiver to attend CAP events, so the Cadet Sponsor Member program should be encouraged. If CAP leaders sincerely welcome parent / caregiver involvement, that attitude will go a long way to show that we support inclusivity in a least restrictive environment. Further, you'll feel more confident in that a cadet whose needs seem beyond your capability will have someone right beside him to help find that path to success.

### **Call the Wing DCP or NHQ.**

The wing or NHQ may know of best practices appropriate for your cadet's situation. At NHQ especially, they may know of other cadets who have "been there, done that," and therefore might connect you and/or the family with peers who can share the lessons they learned navigating cadet life.



## Activity

18 min

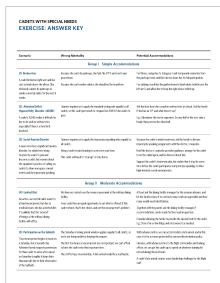
Divide the class into three groups. One group will do scenario 1, 4, and 7; another will do 2, 5, and 8; and another will do 3, 6, and 8. The students in each group do one scenario from the Simple Accommodations section, the Moderate Accommodations section, and the Complex Accommodations section.

You can have the students work individually or with their peers.

The students' task is to read their assigned scenarios, describe how an ill-informed leader might respond negatively to the hypothetical cadet's need, and describe some potential accommodations. Restated, we're trying to contrast the "cadet must fit into CAP" mindset with one better informed by what they've learned in this class.

Allow about 8 minutes for students to complete their three assigned scenarios, and then allow about 10 minutes to review the answers to all eight scenarios.

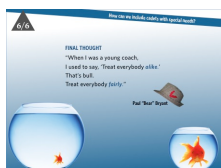
See the Answer Key for the ideal responses.



**Emphasis:** As we compare what we've written in the left column (Wrong Mentality) and the right column (Potential Accommodations), we can draw a few over-arching conclusions:

The wrong mentality tends to value programs and standards over people. The sort of posture we see is, "We have our program, you're welcome but you have to conform to it, not vice versa." Such an attitude would make our nondiscrimination policy meaningless in reality.

Some of the principles and attitudes behind the solutions listed in the Potential Accommodations column are, "Let's try to find a way to say 'yes.'" There's imagination and creativity at work. Local leaders are showing that their first priority is to take care of their people.



## Final Thought

1 min

"When I was a young coach, I used to say, 'Treat everybody alike.' That's bull. Treat everybody fairly."

- Paul "Bear" Bryant

Treating everyone alike sounds right, but upon reflection, we realize that everyone is a bit different, and some of us have special needs requiring accommodations so that we can participate and flourish. Therefore, our goal should be not to treat everyone alike, but to treat everyone fairly.