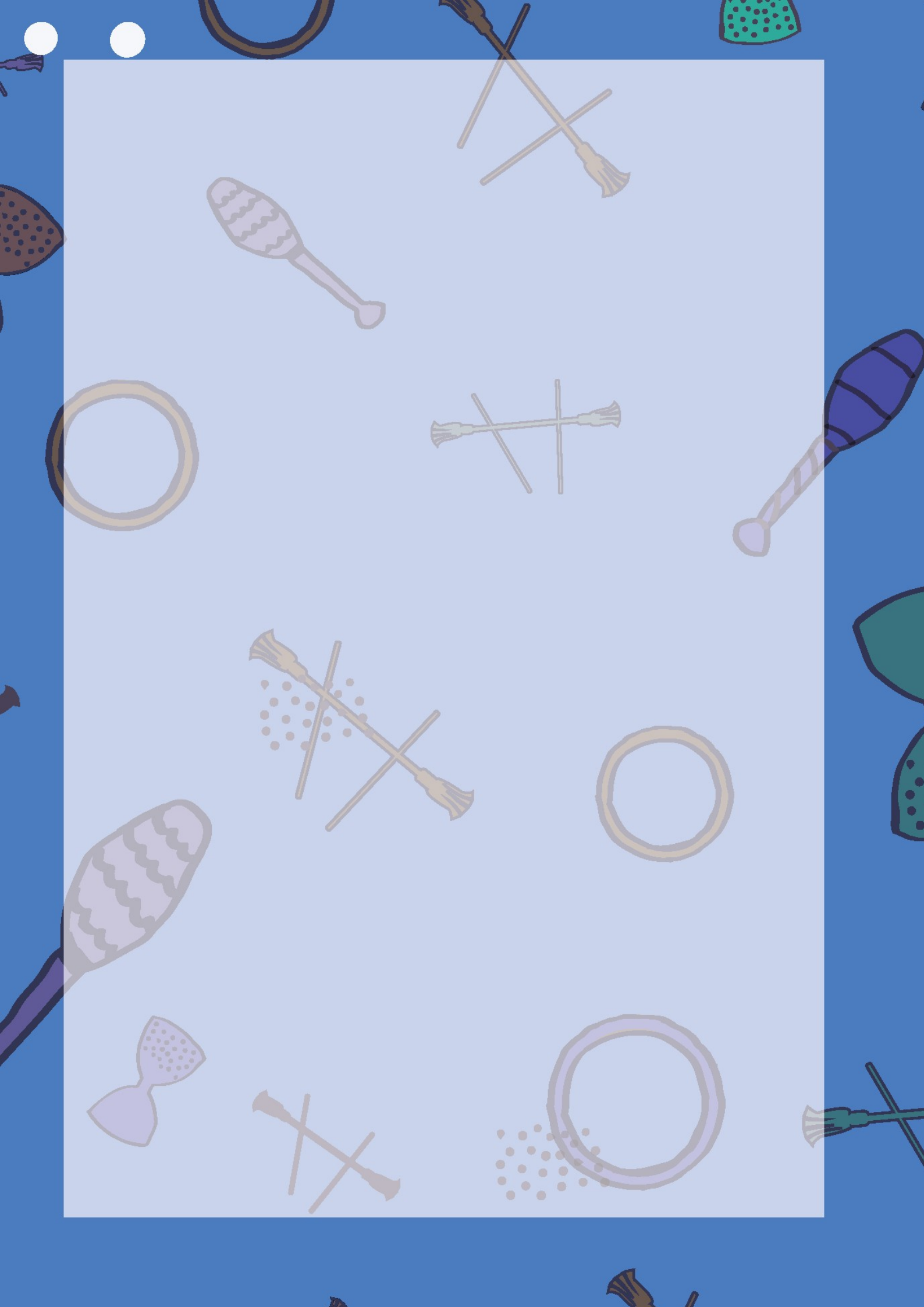


TOGETHER WE PLAY



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Quick start Guide





What is it?

The DiversAbility Circus Game is an **inclusive introduction to circus activities**. It combines movement, creativity, and teamwork, and can be adapted to different abilities, experience levels, and group goals.

Players travel from station to station, completing fun circus challenges together using the props they find along the way.

Who is it for?

This game can be used with:

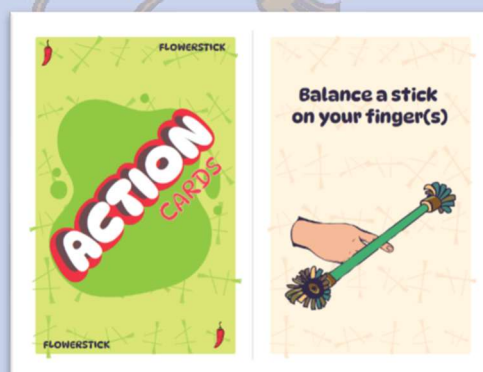
-  Complete circus beginners
-  Mixed-ability groups
-  People with and without disabilities
-  Youth workers, educators, and circus facilitators

What do you need to play?

The cards

The game is composed of two decks of cards:

-  **The action cards** which look like this:

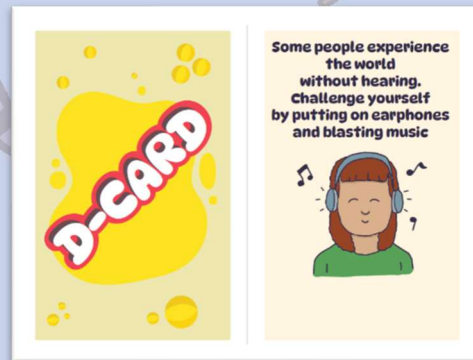


On the back of the card, you can find the card type (Action), the equipment needed for the exercise (in this case, a flower stick), and the level of difficulty, represented by a number of chilies. One chili means there are no particular safety concerns; two chilies indicate that participants may need some assistance and should be monitored.

On the front of the card, you will find a brief description of the exercise, consisting of one or two sentences, along with an illustration.

🎨 **The D-cards** which look like this:

On the back of the card, you can find the type of card (D-Card).



On the front of the card are challenges meant for participants to imagine what it feels to perform an action with a disability.

⚠️ **Important Advisory About D-Cards**

The D-Cards are designed to **encourage empathy, reflection, and understanding** by inviting participants to experience certain physical or sensory limitations while performing activities. However, it is important to remember that these cards **only simulate challenges** that many people live with every day.

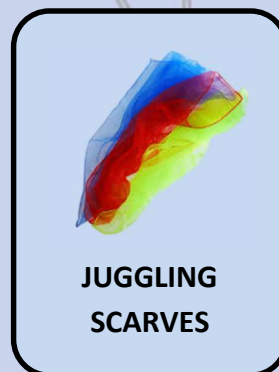
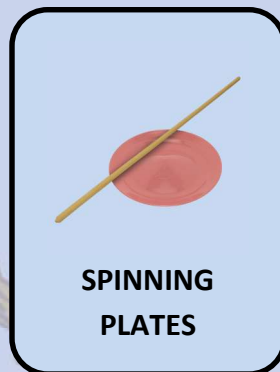
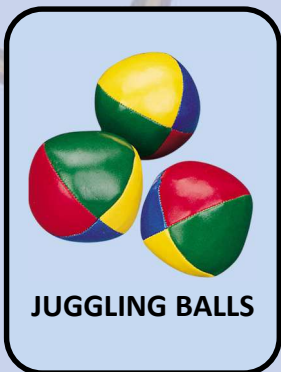
Please approach these activities with **respect and sensitivity**. Participation must always be **voluntary**, and no one should ever be forced to take part in a simulation that makes them feel uncomfortable, unsafe, or emotionally distressed.

Facilitators should create a **supportive environment**, clearly explain the purpose of the D-Cards, and remain available to support participants or adapt activities when needed.

The aim is to promote inclusion and awareness—not discomfort, mockery, or performance.

Circus Props

To play the game, facilitators should select the cards **according to the circus props available**. If all cards are used, the full list of required props includes:



NOTE: If you don't have props, improvise: scarves, sticks, balls, natural objects...

A safe Space

The game requires a **safe, open space, with an appropriate sensory atmosphere** (light, sound, and visual stimulation) and enough room for movement and circus activities.

Players

The game works best with **10 to 20 players**, organised in **teams of 2 to 4 people**, and at least one facilitator. We do not recommend using it with groups larger than 30 players.

Quick Setup

Set up the space

Prepare a safe, open space and set up **several activity stations**, each with the required circus props.







Prepare the cards

Sort the Action cards and place them in a **central pile**.
Decide if and how you will use D-Cards (optional).

Using the D-Cards

D-Cards add an extra layer of challenge and reflection by changing how actions are performed. Their use is always optional and should be clearly explained before the game begins.

Possible ways to use D-Cards:

-  **One round only:** Introduce D-Cards for a single round, then return to normal play.
-  **One D-Card per team:** Each team receives one D-Card and keeps it for a set number of actions.
-  **Same D-Card for all teams:** All teams play with the same D-Card, allowing shared reflection.
-  **Time-based:** Use a D-Card for a limited time (e.g. 5–10 minutes).
-  **Action-based:** Apply a D-Card only for one specific action, then remove it.
-  **Optional participation:** Players may choose whether or not to take a D-Card, or swap it if needed.

Important reminder

Participation is always voluntary. D-Cards should never cause discomfort, stress, or exclusion. The goal is awareness and inclusion, not performance or imitation.

Form teams

Divide players into teams of 2–4 people.

Explain the rules

Explain that the game is cooperative, that activities can be adapted, and that safety and enjoyment come first.

Set the time

A session lasts between 15 and 60 minutes. The facilitator determines the duration.

▶ How To Play

1. Each team **draws an Action** card from the central pile.
2. The team **goes to the matching station** and uses the available props to practice the exercise.
3. Players help each other to **complete the action together** and adapt the exercise if needed.
4. When the action is completed, **the card is returned** face-up to the facilitator.
5. Teams **continue drawing and completing cards** until time is up or a set number of cards is completed.

💬 Group Sharing

At the end of the game, everyone comes together.

You can:

- 📌 Show one movement you practiced,
- 📌 Say how you felt during the game,
- 📌 Say what you liked or found difficult.

If D-Cards were used, you can talk about how it felt to do the activities in a different way.

You do not have to speak or show anything if you do not want to.

This moment is to finish the game together, in a calm and respectful way.

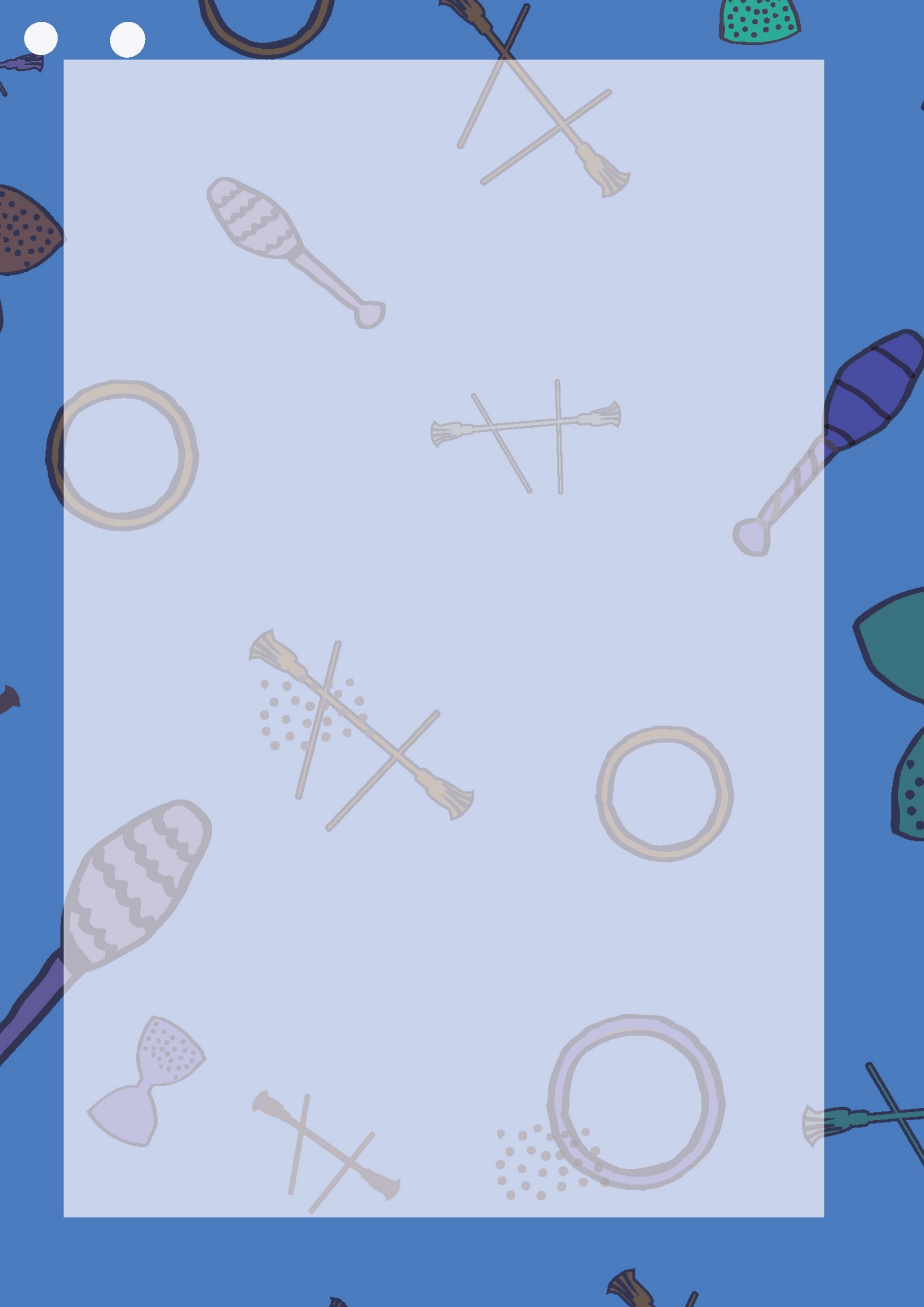
⚠️ Safety & Inclusion Basics

- 📌 **Safety comes first.** Supervise balance and acrobatic activities.
- 📌 **Adapt actions** to the abilities and needs of the participants.
- 📌 Participation is always **voluntary**.
- 📌 Encourage **cooperation**, not performance.
- 📌 **Stop or change** an activity if someone feels unsafe or uncomfortable.

❤️ Remember

There is no “right” way to play the game. The above suggestions outline the basic principles and are a starting point. They are friendly guidelines and can be adapted to the needs of each group.

Above all, the goal of the game is to have fun



Facilitator's Guide

This guide is here to support you in using the DiversAbility Circus Game in a **safe, inclusive, and meaningful way**. The game is simple and playful, but working with mixed groups always benefits from a bit of **preparation and reflection**.

The game is not about performance, competition, or technical mastery. It is an educational and experiential tool that uses circus activities to explore diversity, collaboration, and different ways of functioning. The **role of the facilitator is therefore essential**: not to direct outcomes, but to hold the space, observe group dynamics, and support participants throughout the process.

In this guide, you'll find **practical tips** on how to prepare the space, adapt activities, support inclusion, and guide short moments of reflection. The focus is not on performance or "doing things right," but on creating a space where everyone can take part in their own way.







There are no fixed rules in this guide. Think of it as a **toolbox** you can dip into, depending on your group, your context, and your experience. Trust your observations, stay curious, and adapt as you go.

Most of all, remember: circus is about play, connection, and trying things together — and inclusion grows from care, flexibility, and a bit of joy.

The Role of the Facilitator

In the DiversAbility Circus Game, the facilitator is not a referee or judge. Their role is to **create a safe, inclusive, and supportive environment** where participants can explore movement, cooperation, and difference.

The facilitator:

-  Prepares the space and materials
-  Introduces the game and its values
-  Supports adaptation and inclusion during play
-  Observes group dynamics
-  Ensures physical and emotional **safety**
-  Facilitates reflection after the game

The role of the facilitator is not to evaluate performance or skill level.

Before working with a group, take a moment for self-reflection. There are no “right” answers — this is about awareness.

- 🚩 How familiar am I with circus activities?
- 🚩 What is my experience with group facilitation or pedagogy?
- 🚩 How comfortable am I working with mixed-ability groups?
- 🚩 What are my limits, and when might I need support or assistance?

👤 Knowing Your Group

Every group is different. Preparation should always start with who is in front of you. Take time to consider the following:

- 🚩 The **size** of the group and the **age** range of participants
- 🚩 Whether **you know the participants** and if they already **know each other** or are meeting for the first time
- 🚩 **Differences** in experience, confidence, cognitive and physical ability
- 🚩 Visible and non-visible **needs** (e.g. attention, sensory sensitivity, anxiety)
- 🚩 The presence of **assistants or helpers**, and how support will be organised
- 🚩 How players will be **divided** into pairs or teams, and whether certain combinations may require additional support or adaptation to best support your goals (e.g. pairing a non-speaking person with a blind person, or placing two wheelchair users together in a mixed group).

⚠️ Avoid assumptions. Do not ask for diagnoses or personal histories. Your goal is not to “identify” differences, but to create conditions where different ways of participating are possible and respected. If complex needs are present in the class, it is recommended to design adaptations together with **teachers and support staff**.

🎯 Defining Your Goal

Before you start playing, it’s important to clarify what your **goal** with the game is, because this allows you to select the game variation that fits your purpose.

Possible goals include:

- 🚩 Having fun and moving together
- 🚩 Developing social skills
- 🚩 Developing motor skills
- 🚩 Raising awareness about inclusion and difference
- 🚩 Teaching specific circus skills
- 🚩 Creating a performance
- ... and more.

Your goal will influence:

- 🚩 Card selection,
- 🚩 Duration,
- 🚩 Use (or non-use) of D-Cards,
- 🚩 Level of structure or freedom.

● Preparing the Space – Environment

Depending on the group, you will need a space of **appropriate size** where playing is safe and undisturbed. Keep in mind that some spaces do not allow certain exercises to be performed safely—for example, in a very low-ceilinged room you cannot safely build a human pyramid.

Plan in advance how the game will unfold in the chosen space. Consider whether there is **enough room**, where equipment and any game elements will be placed, and how players will move within the area. Make sure the space is **safe** by checking for furniture, sharp corners, fragile objects, or other obstacles.

Also consider the **sensory environment** of the space: light, noise, echo, temperature, and visual stimulation can affect how comfortable and focused participants feel. When possible, adapt the environment to reduce unnecessary sensory overload and support everyone's participation.





Selecting Materials

Choose the activity cards based on the circus props you have available. Make sure there are enough props so no one has to wait, and don't forget safety equipment when needed (such as mats).

Before you start, take a quick look at the cards and materials. If something is missing, feel free to improvise — everyday or natural objects often work just as well (for example, a simple stick instead of a flower stick). As always, keep safety in mind.

Taking your group and your goal in consideration, select the cards that best support what you want to achieve. Set aside any cards that you cannot use at the moment.

You may also find it helpful to sort the cards in different ways, for example:

-  By equipment
-  By type of action
-  By level of difficulty
- 

Using the D-Cards with Care

The game includes a special deck called **D-Cards**. These cards add an extra layer to the game by introducing small, simulated constraints that invite empathy and reflection about disability. Like in real life, they can make things more challenging, but they also open up new ways of playing and adapting together. Before using them, think about whether D-Cards make sense for your group, what you want to explore with them, and for how long — especially if some participants already live with similar challenges.

You can use D-Cards in many different ways: one card for the whole game, just for one action, or from time to time during the session. Whatever you choose, take a moment at the start to explain clearly what these cards are for.

Using D-Cards is always **optional**. Players can refuse, swap, or stop using a card at any time, and no one should ever be pushed to do something that feels uncomfortable. As a facilitator, stay attentive to how people are feeling, offer alternatives when needed, and don't hesitate to pause or adapt the activity. D-Cards are not about testing, joking, or performing — they are simply an invitation to imagine, reflect, and understand each other a bit better.

! Safety & Support

The activity cards are designed for circus beginners, but even simple **circus activities need attention**. Some actions, especially balance or acrobatic ones, require closer supervision. People may also need a bit more time or explanation to understand certain cards, so be ready to support them. Safety always comes first.

Keep an eye on both **physical and emotional** safety throughout the game. Use mats or other supports when needed, avoid rushing or turning activities into a competition, and create a respectful atmosphere. Different reactions, rhythms, and abilities are normal, so help everyone feel comfortable participating in their own way — whether by doing the activity, observing, helping others, or adapting the action.

Remember: for some participants this is just a game, while for others it may connect to real-life experiences. Staying attentive and caring makes a big difference.

Reflection & Debriefing

Taking a few minutes to talk after the game is an important part of the experience. The game is about movement, play, and having fun together, but it can also bring up frustration and reflections, especially when D-Cards are used. A **short debrief** helps everyone slow down, share, and better understand what they've just lived.

Organise the debrief **right after the game**, while everything is still fresh. Find a calm and comfortable place, and, if possible, sit in a circle so everyone feels included.

Start by creating a relaxed atmosphere. Let the group know that there are **no right or wrong answers**, and that sharing is always **optional**. Listening is just as important as speaking. You can also gently remind participants that some challenges in the game are only a simulation, while for others they may reflect real-life experiences.

Begin with a simple check-in. Invite everyone to share one word, a gesture, or a short sentence about how they feel. You might also ask which card they enjoyed most, found surprising, or found difficult. Feel free to adapt this moment and offer creative options like drawing, choosing an image, or writing a few words.

If D-Cards were used, take some time to talk about that experience. Ask how it felt to play in a different way, what was easier or harder than expected, or what changed in how people moved or communicated. Never push anyone to share personal stories.

Encourage participants to speak from their own experience and respect each other's boundaries.

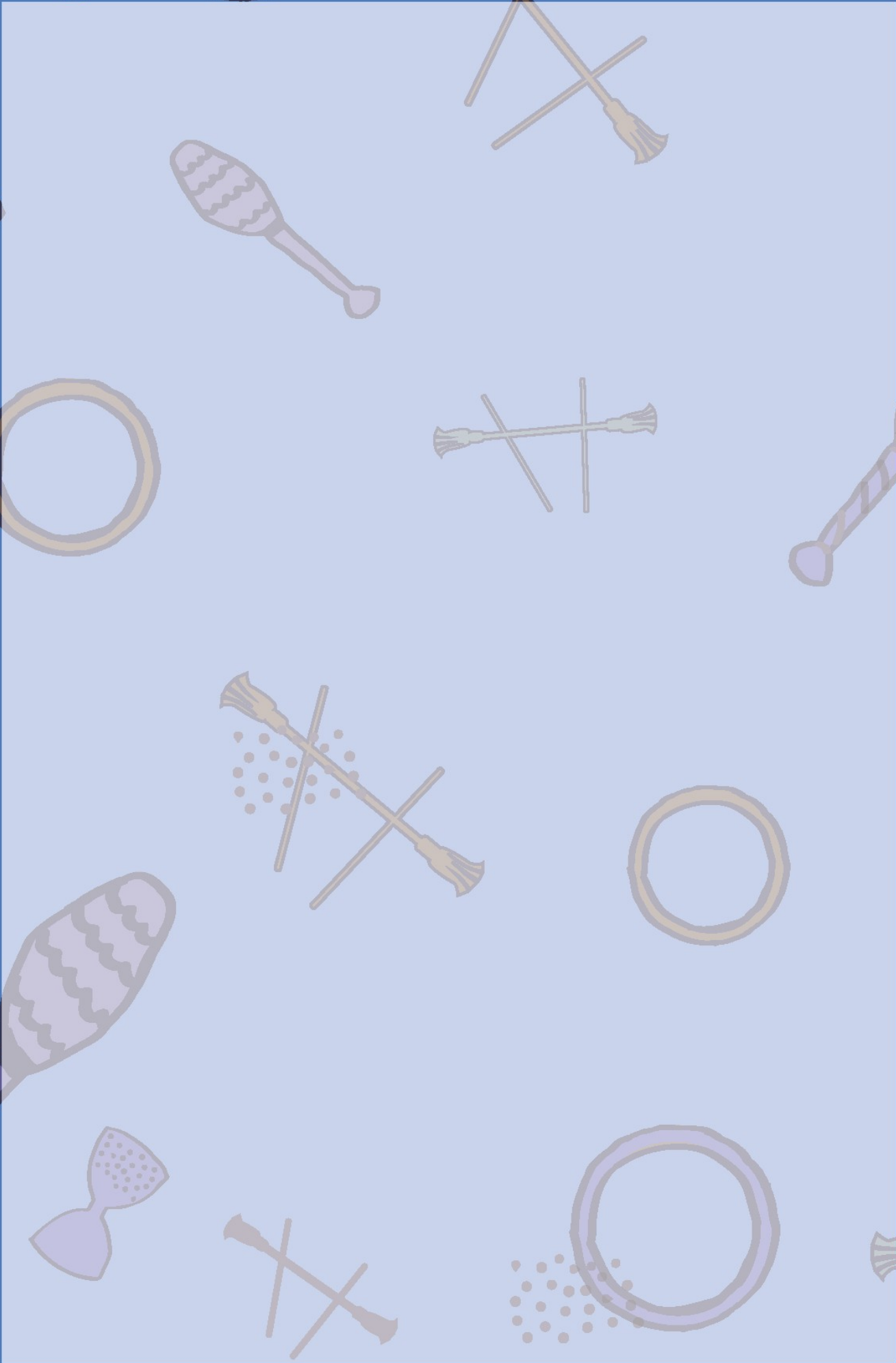
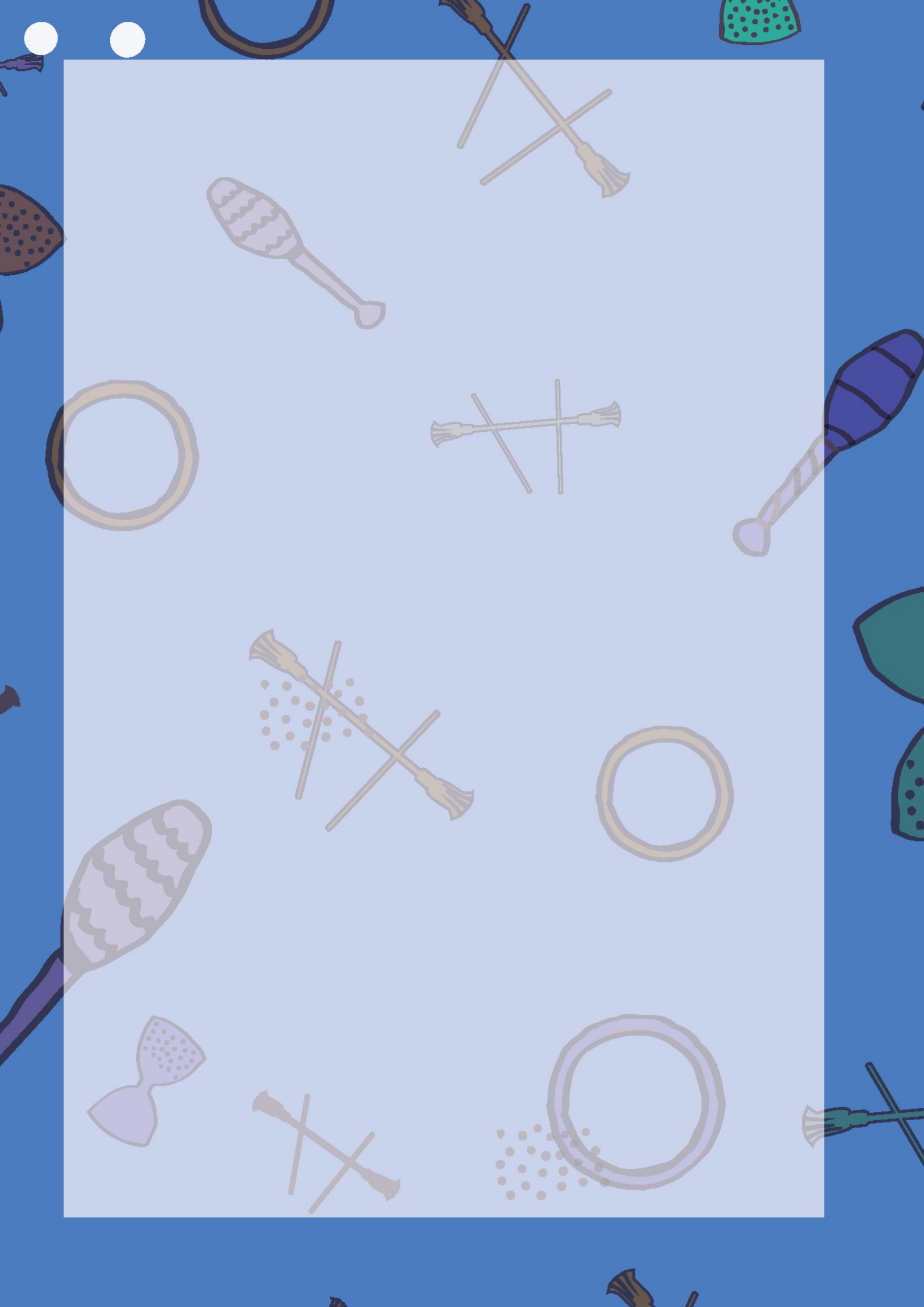
With some groups, you may also open a short discussion about inclusion. For example, you can ask how people supported each other, how they adapted activities, or what could make the game more accessible next time. Let participants suggest ideas — they often have great insights.

Finish with a simple closing round. Invite everyone to share one thing they are taking with them from the game, even if it's just a word or a feeling. Thank the group for their energy, openness, and cooperation.

As a facilitator, stay attentive during this moment. Some people will want to talk, others may prefer to stay quiet. Both are completely fine. Offer different ways to take part if needed, and remember that laughing, being thoughtful, or being silent are all natural responses.

Above all, see the debrief as a moment to connect, slow down, and reinforce the spirit of respect, curiosity, and inclusion that runs through the whole game.





Advanced Variations

This section is for facilitators who already **feel comfortable** with the basic game and want to explore **more complex**, creative, or long-term formats. The Diversability Circus These variations allow you to deepen learning, strengthen group cohesion, and adapt the game to specific educational or training contexts.

Advanced variations are **optional**. They should only be introduced when the facilitator feels safe, confident, and familiar with the basic structure.

Game Dynamics

Like many board games, the DiversAbility Circus Game can be played with **different types of goals and dynamics**. These elements influence how participants experience the game and how motivated they feel.

Let us take a short detour about game mechanics here.

In general, games often work around simple objectives, such as:

- Completing all actions
- ❏ Reaching a finish point
- ★ Collecting points during the game.

These objectives can be regulated by different tools, for example:

- 🕒 A timer or clock
- 📊 A game board
- 🎲 Point tokens or simple scoring systems.




Circus is, by nature, a collaborative art form, and the main spirit of this game is cooperation and shared enjoyment. However, when designing your session, you can decide whether the game should be **cooperative**, lightly **competitive**, or a mix of both. Depending on your group and your goals, you may choose to add playful challenges, such as:

- Teams trying to complete the most **actions**
- 🕒 The whole group working together against **time**
- ❏ All teams collecting points toward a **shared goal**.

To enrich the game experience, you may also introduce additional game mechanics, including:

- 🎲 **Dice**
- 📊 **Boards** (paper, fabric, or floor-based)
- 🍀 **Chance-based** elements (e.g. moving back a space, earning a bonus after several actions).

Storytelling can also influence game dynamics. For some groups, a narrative framework increases motivation and imagination, while for others it may feel unnecessary or distracting. If a story supports your goals, you may choose to:

-  Invent a simple scenario
-  Use symbolic props
-  Wear small costume elements

When choosing game dynamics, always keep **inclusion, safety, and accessibility** in mind. Any added element should support participation and enjoyment for everyone. If a dynamic becomes too complex, stressful, or exclusive, simplify the game and return to the basic format.







Game Variations

Cards, Board, Pawns, and Dice Version

This variation combines circus activities with classic board game elements. Teams move their pawns across a game board by rolling a die and complete Action Cards along the way. The game follows a clear path with a starting point and a finish line, making it especially suitable for groups who enjoy **structured rules and visual progress**.

While this version introduces a playful competitive element, the focus remains on cooperation, safe practice, and quality participation rather than speed.

Setup

-  Prepare a simple **game board** on the floor using rings or hoops, on paper, or on a table, with a clear start and finish. The cards themselves can also be used to form the board.
-  Place one **pawn** for each team at the starting point.
-  Put the Action Cards in a **central pile** next to the board or at each corresponding stations.
-  Prepare one or more **dice** and, if needed, point tokens or a timer.
-  Set up activity stations with the required circus **props**.
-  Form **teams** of 2 to 4 players and explain the rules and safety reminders.

How To Play

1. Teams take turns **rolling the die** and moving their pawn forward according to the number rolled.
2. After moving, the team **draws one Action Card**.
3. The team goes to the matching station and **completes the action** together using the available props.
4. When the action is finished, the team **returns to the board**.

5. If the action cannot be completed safely, it may be **adapted** with the facilitator's support.
6. The first team to **reach the finish line** wins.







Throughout the game, facilitators should encourage teams to focus on cooperation, careful practice, and enjoyment rather than rushing. If competition creates pressure, the game can easily be adapted into a cooperative "beat the clock" version in which all teams work together to reach the finish within a set time.

Cards and Dice Version





In this variation, the game is guided by dice rolls instead of a board. The die decides which type of action, station, or card the teams will play next. This format keeps the game dynamic and unpredictable, while remaining simple to organise and easy to adapt.

It works well for groups who enjoy surprise elements and for sessions where space or materials are limited.

Setup

-  Prepare the activity stations with the **required circus props**.
-  Place the Action Cards in a **central pile**, or organise them by category.
-  Decide in advance what each number on the die **represents** (for example: a station, a type of card, or a special rule).
-  Prepare **one or more dice**. The dice can be a classic small die, but you can also use or create a large die
-  Form **teams of 2 to 4 players**.
-  Explain the rules, safety guidelines, and how the die will be used.

Example mapping:

-  1–2 = Juggling actions
-  3–4 = Balance actions
-  5 = Acrobatics actions
-  6 = D-Card (optional)

This mapping can be adapted to your goals and group.

▶ How To Play

1. Teams take turns **rolling the die**. The number rolled determines which action or station they must go to.
2. The team **draws** the corresponding Action Card.
3. They go to the station and **complete the action together** using the available props.
4. When finished, they return and **roll the die once again**.
5. The game continues until the agreed time is over or a set number of actions are completed.

If a action cannot be done safely, it may be adapted or replaced with the facilitator's support.

Story-Based Adventure Version

In this version, the game is built around a **story**. The game is cooperative: players work together to complete action cards at different stations to solve a shared challenge.

The game leader distributes the action card to each team. The team then finds the correct station, uses the available props, and works together to complete the action. When they succeed, they return the card to a central table. Once all required cards are completed, the game ends with a collective performance in which participants show what they have practiced. The completed cards are then used to build a symbolic object that represents the solution to the story's main challenge.

The story can be adapted to any situation that involves collecting missing elements to create, repair, or solve something.

Examples include:

The Journey to the Stars

A spaceship cannot take off. Teams must collect fuel cells and control parts to begin their space journey.

The Broken Bridge

A bridge between two worlds has collapsed. Teams collect pieces to rebuild it and help everyone cross safely.

A broken time machine that needs missing parts

The time machine has stopped working. Teams must collect missing parts to repair it and return safely to the present.

The Lost Circus Show

The circus has lost its artists. Players must recover the missing performers before the audience arrives.

The Lost Treasure Map

The treasure map is in pieces. Players collect and assemble it to find the hidden treasure.

The Giant Soup

A community celebration is coming. Players collect ingredients to cook a giant soup for everyone.

The Forest Rescue Mission

An animal friend is trapped in the forest. Players collect ropes, maps, and tools to organise a rescue.

Invent your own story








Players invent their own stories.

The game leader becomes part of the story (e.g. astronaut, helper, chef, guide) to help maintain the narrative atmosphere and motivation.

This format is especially motivating for children and younger participants and works well when the group enjoys imagination and role-play.

Setup

Before the session, the facilitator should:



-  **Choose the story** and overall situation
-  Decide on the **number of stations**
-  Prepare the necessary **props**
-  Select simple **costume** elements or symbolic objects for storytelling
-  **Sort action cards** by type on a central table
-  Decide how collected elements will be **represented** (e.g. parts, ingredients, pieces)
-  Define **how many elements** are needed to complete the story goal

Each card is used by only one team per round.

Using D-Cards in the Story Format

D-Cards can be introduced in a second or third round. They represent specific challenges that change how actions are performed.

When used in story-based play:

-  D-Cards can be integrated into the narrative
-  Participants may invent background stories for their roles

Participation should always remain voluntary, and facilitators should remain attentive to participants' comfort and emotional safety.

▶ How To Play

1. The game leader **presents the story**, explains the goal, and forms the teams.
2. A number of action cards matching the story goal is **placed on a central table**, possibly in several piles. This table is also used to collect completed cards.
3. Teams **move freely** between stations. They draw a card, go to the matching station, and practice the exercise.
4. After completing the action, the card is **returned face-up to the central table**. Other teams may repeat the action, but only the first completion counts toward the story goal.
5. **When all required cards are completed**, the group has collected all necessary elements.
6. Together with the leader, participants visit each station in a circle. The leader shows each card, and the players who practiced it **demonstrate the movement**.
7. Using the completed cards, the group **builds the symbolic object** (e.g. machine, rope, pot) in the centre of the space and celebrates with a group photo.

Multi-Session Version

The DiversAbility Circus game can be used over several sessions with, for example, school classes or youth groups that include participants **without visible or certified disabilities** as well as students with neurodiversity or non-visible needs (such as attention difficulties, sensory sensitivity, performance anxiety, ADHD, or learning differences). This format works best with groups of 10 to 20 participants and is not recommended for larger groups.

The suggested programme comprises **three sessions**, allowing participants to gradually build trust, awareness, and confidence.

Each session follows the same structure:

1. Icebreaker
2. Circus activities with Action Cards and D-Cards
3. Reflection and sharing

Session 1: Experiencing the New and Normalising Differences

Setup

Setup the game for the Cards and Dice Version, with **4** stations

Icebreaker: “The 4 Ball Challenge”

Participants stand in a circle and pass balls while naming the receiver. Balls are gradually added. If a ball falls, the group restarts together without judgement.

Main Activity

Play the Cards and Dice Version: the pairs roll the die, go to the corresponding station, draw a card, and complete the action. Everyone follows their own rhythm. **When a 6 is rolled, a D-Card is used by one partner, only for the next action.**

Reflection & Debriefing During

Participants reflect on:
“How do I feel when I try something new?”

Session 2: Being Close to Others with Care

Setup

Setup the game for the Cards and Dice Version, with **5** stations

Icebreaker: “6 Objects in the Game”

Participants stand in a circle and various shaped objects are passed in silence, encouraging adaptation.

Main Activity

Again, play the Cards and Dice Version: the pairs roll the die, go to the corresponding station, draw a card, and complete the action. Everyone follows their own rhythm. **This time, for each action, each team also draws a D-Card.**

Reflection & Debriefing During

Participants reflect on:
“How do I feel when I need help, and when I help others?”

Session 3: Making Invisible Needs Visible with Respect

Setup

Setup the game for the Cards and Dice Version, with 6 stations

Icebreaker: “Keeping Diversity in Play”

Participants stand in a circle and pass a simple movement (such as raising a hand, rolling shoulders, or waving a scarf) from one person to the next, creating a “wave” around the group. Each person repeats the movement and passes it on, and new movements can be added in later rounds.

Main Activity

Play the Cards and Dice Version. D-Cards are used every round but in “mystery mode”, meaning the person receiving it does not show it to their partners.

Reflection & Debriefing During

Participants reflect on:
“What need of mine would I like to share, and what helps me understand others better?”

Credits

This game was created by the members of **Association La Villa, Trapiti, the Hungarian Juggling Association, Društvo CIK and Lunenuove**, with the collaboration of **CirKusKus**.

It was developed in the framework of the Erasmus+ project, “DiversAbility Circus” with the aim of promoting inclusion and creativity through circus and play.

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TOGETHER WE PLAY

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