Training section summary: Supporting our swimmers

Our volunteers aren't professional swim teachers, and we hear so often from our swimmers that they love the different perspectives that each volunteer brings. Every swimmer that attends a WeSwim session is different, and it’s important to always be person centred in your approach: listen to your swimmer, adapt to them and be empathetic.

Floating...

- Remind swimmers that floating looks different for everyone - whether that means needing some light sculling, legs at angle or even more of a seated position
- Help your swimmer to relax by reassuring them that you’re right there with them. Use a noodle if needed.
- To initiate a float, squat down as far as possible, look to the ceiling, relax your legs. Keep your head back and relax your shoulders.
- Support their shoulder blades to begin with to help them feel safe

Training section summary: Supporting our swimmers

....and standing up again

This is key for ensuring swimmers are safe in the water. It can be difficult to explain, so break it down into these steps.

- Tuck knees into chest
- Roll forward / look at your toes / do a sit up. Help them rotate here if needed
- Straighten your legs and stand up.
- Do this by a wall to start with so they can steady themselves once stoood up

Starting to swim on front

- It's often helpful to start just by walking in the water, possibly holding hands if they're very nervous
- Next, practice kicking by holding on to the wall - add a noodle around their hips if needed. To get into this position, stand to the side of them while holding both ends of the noodle around them, then ask them to lean forward over the noodle. Wiggle it down their body a bit if needed.
- Progress this by coming away from the wall, haaving them hold your hands, then just one hand or a float, and keep practicing until they can do this independently.

Training section summary: Supporting our swimmers

Non verbal swimmers

- Remember all ways of spending time in the water are great
- Make your communication as simple, short and direct as possible. Usual visual cues where possible.
- Pay attention to non verbal forms of communication such as body language and behaviour
- Ask for help from a committee member if you need it!
- Relax - you're doing a great job. If your swimmer didn't want to be there wiith you, they'd get out.

Swimmers with learning disabilities

Everyone's experiences with learning disabilities are different, so remember to be adaptive!

- Give your swimmer lots of encouragement and positive reinforcement.
- Listen to your swimmer and ask them what they need from you. Make gentle suggestions if they're unsure.
- Check if they've understood you, and if they haven't, try explaining in a different way, or demonstrating visually.
- Don't be afraid to experiment, have fun and play games.