

The next simulation activity I will do with the teachers is one that will help them understand what it's like to have cerebral palsy. I will give each member of the group two pairs of thick socks and a large flannel shirt. I will ask the teachers to group themselves in pairs and ask one member of each pair to put two thick socks on each hand. I will explain that they will experience what it is like to have cerebral palsy. I will ask one member of each pair of teachers to try to button a shirt. They will do this without any talking or laughing. I will give a signal and allow the teachers to put a shirt on, button it, unbutton it, then sit down facing their partner. I will have each pair exchange materials and repeat the experiment. The group will then discuss the following questions: How did it feel to button the shirt with socks on your hands? What was easy about the task and what was hard? How did it feel to have your partner watching you? Did you ever feel like giving up? When and why? Did you ever feel like laughing? Why or why not? I will talk with the group about their feelings and observations during the activity. I will explain that the rigidity that they felt in their arms and fingers is very much like the rigid muscles that most people with cerebral palsy have. It is very hard for them to relax their muscles and many people with cerebral palsy need help to get their muscles to relax. A physical therapist helps the person with CP to be less stiff and uses games and activities to help them flex their muscles. I will talk with the teachers about their attitude toward this disability. How did they feel being observed while performing in this manner? Discuss with the group how it feels to be observed and/or even laughed at when you are trying as hard as you can.