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Experiencing Blindness

The blow to Phillip’s head has severe after effects. Along with the pain, he soon suffers blindness. After he realizes he is blind, he thinks, “I’ll never forget that first hour of knowing I was blind. I was so frightened that it was hard for me to breathe. It was as if I’d been put inside something that was all dark and I couldn’t get out.”

Working in pairs, take turns wearing a blindfold to experience blindness. Choose one of the experiences listed below or make up one of your own. Report to the class after your experience.

Experience 1

Take your partner outside and stop at a variety of places that he or she would recognize well if not blind. See if your partner can identify where he/she is and what is going on. Can he/she recognize voices?

Experience 4

Take your partner to lunch with you. Is eating or drinking juice or water any problem? How about peeling an orange?

Experience 2

Walk aimlessly with your blind friend and at least once “abandon” this friend. Be careful to watch how he/she reacts and make sure there is no safety problem. Return to assist and continue your excursion.

Experience 5

Have your partner participate in one of the class lessons as a blind person. Can he/she keep up with the class? If it requires reading, read for your partner.

Experience 3

Find some type of hazard (stairs, ramp, bike rack, etc.) and carefully guide your partner through this potentially hazardous situation.

Experience 6

Blindfold students while one student stands in the back of the room doing the following activities: crumple a soft drink can, tear a sheet of paper, turn the pages of a book, sharpen a pencil, open a bottle of soda, eat a potato chip. After each action, have students identify the sounds. Have students think of other sounds to perform.

