

What is

ADAPTIVE CIRCUS

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Adaptive Circus focuses on cultivating the student's holistic self rather than just their circus skills. It is a method of teaching for students who have physical, mental, or emotional needs which might make participating in a traditional circus class more difficult. SANCA's coaches use circus skills as the joyous, fun, creative medium to help students heal and grow.



Student First

In Adaptive Circus, the coaches are student-focused. Coaches follow the lead of the student, adapting the curriculum, goals, and approach, to meet the needs of the student in each session, shifting as they grow.

Foundational Theories

We always come back to three main truths about our students when trying to make decisions about how to work with them.

- Each student has intrinsic value and is worthy of social connection.
- Each student knows what they need.
- Each student is highly capable of ANYTHING.



HAVE FUN
BE SAFE
WORK HARD

1 THIS STUDENT HAS INTRINSIC VALUE AND IS WORTHY OF SOCIAL CONNECTION

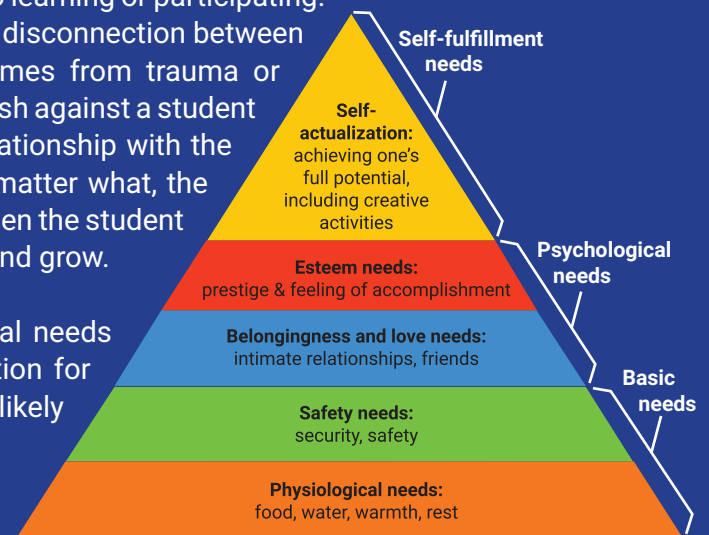
Students in Adaptive Circus may exhibit resistance to learning or participating.

Typically, resistance to learning can be traced back to a disconnection between the student and coach. This disconnection most likely comes from trauma or disconnected relationships in the student's life. Rather than push against a student who is resisting, an Adaptive Circus coach prioritizes the relationship with the student. It is important for the coach to remember that, no matter what, the student has value as a human and is worthy of connection. When the student feels connected to the coach they will be more open to heal and grow.

In Adaptive Circus, we first consider their basic physiological needs and then use the coach-student relationship as the foundation for building trust. A student who trusts their instructor is far more likely to learn.

This is based on Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Self-actualization and creative activities cannot happen without positive relationships and other basic needs.



From: <https://www.simplypsychology.org/maslow.html>

2 THIS STUDENT KNOWS WHAT THEY NEED

Everyone has an expert knowledge of their own needs, this includes and is particularly true of young people. Deep inside each of us is our true self-voice which speaks only to ourselves about our needs. "I'm hungry." "That scares me." "I feel safe." "I feel so full of energy that I can't sit still." But these words aren't always clear to other people and people are often taught that this inner voice needs to wait, needs to come second, needs to be quiet. Trauma and detrimental relationships can make that inner

voice silent or can make that inner voice the only voice a person can hear. When a person can hear that inner voice clearly and understand how to tell the messages to others around them, then that person can be an expert in knowing their own needs. Our Adaptive Circus coaches help students to listen to their inner voices, to listen to and communicate their needs. **Because of trauma, it may take time for the student to be able to check in with their needs, but that becomes part of your job-helping them listen.** For example,

if a student has Hemi-paresis, or one-sided paralysis due to a stroke, they know what they are capable of. They have lived in their body. If they feel scared or tell you they are in pain, it is important to listen even if you think they can eventually get passed that. Trust their process. They may have been told over and over they are not capable so it may take some careful relationship and safety building but soon they will be able to communicate to you and be able to check in with themselves more honestly.

3 THIS STUDENT IS HIGHLY CAPABLE OF ANYTHING

As an Adaptive Circus coach continues to focus on meeting the basic needs of your student, creating safety through trusting they know themselves and reinforcing that the student has intrinsic value, you will begin to notice they are capable of anything.

The student wants to learn a back tuck on the trampoline? **YES.**

They want to learn to stand on someone's head? **YES.**

**Everything.
Yes.**

Circus becomes this magical, fun experience where students may reach for amazing goals and grow IMMENSELY in the process, learning that they are capable and successful. The Adaptive Circus coach is the conduit to their path to healing.