

WISE Diversity Awareness at Your School

We are eager to provide a WISE Diversity Awareness Program at your school. If you are interested, please review the following criteria, which are essential for the program's success:

- Session length: 2 to 2½ hours
- Class presentation size: up to 35 students
- Classroom teacher's participation is required.
- Other service providers are encouraged to participate.
- Student with hearing loss must be present. If the student who is deaf/hard of hearing is absent the program will be rescheduled.

Please Contact:

Coordinator

WISE

The Maine Educational Center for
the Deaf and Hard of Hearing
1 Mackworth Island
Falmouth, ME 04105

207-781-6280 V/TTY
207-781-6228 V/TTY

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THE MAINE EDUCATIONAL CENTER FOR THE DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING

STATEWIDE EDUCATIONAL SERVICES

One Mackworth Island
Falmouth, ME 04105



wise
diversity awareness program



THE MAINE EDUCATIONAL CENTER
FOR THE DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING
STATEWIDE EDUCATIONAL SERVICES



WISE

Diversity Awareness Program

Program Intent

The WISE (We Increase Sensitivity and Educate) program recognizes that student diversity enriches the educational experience for all children.

The purpose of this program is to assist hearing peers to better understand the common experiences of deaf and hard of hearing students. The WISE training provides an opportunity for other students

to become more understanding and empathetic to deaf and hard of hearing students' needs by recognizing the diversity of *all* students. The hard of hearing/deaf students will



be given the opportunity to express their feelings and share some of the challenges they experience in their everyday lives. They may also choose to answer questions their peers have about hearing loss.

This program uses a "hands-on" experiential educational model and incorporates group activities and discussions.



Peer group weekend program

Program Components

Consultation occurs with each deaf or hard of hearing student's case manager, classroom teacher, MECDHH Public School Outreach Consultant, and parent(s) to assist with the development and implementation of a specialized program.

The WISE Diversity Awareness Programs consist of a variety of activities focusing on topics such as:

- Communication
- Respecting diversity
- Assistive technology
- Life with hearing loss

Program History

The WISE Diversity Awareness Program began in 1996 as an offshoot of the Public School Outreach Program Peer Support Program. The group leaders in the Regional Program began noting that the students

who completed these programs were more willing to express their feelings regarding their hearing loss. Therefore, the WISE Program was created to promote awareness of the deaf and hard of hearing student's needs as well as to educate students about diversity. The WISE Diversity Awareness Program annually serves over 800 children statewide. Comments from teachers, di-

rectors of special education, speech and language therapists, principals, parents and students have included:

"This is the best program my daughter has ever participated in!"

"My son is no longer teased about his auditory trainer."

"Now I understand why we need to pass the microphone."

"He has been wearing his amplification equipment every day since your program."

"Can you come back and run your program for the entire school?"

"I could finally express how I feel and people listened."

Facilitators

Facilitators are MECDHH staff members who have a background in deaf education, recreation therapy, child development and/or experiential education.