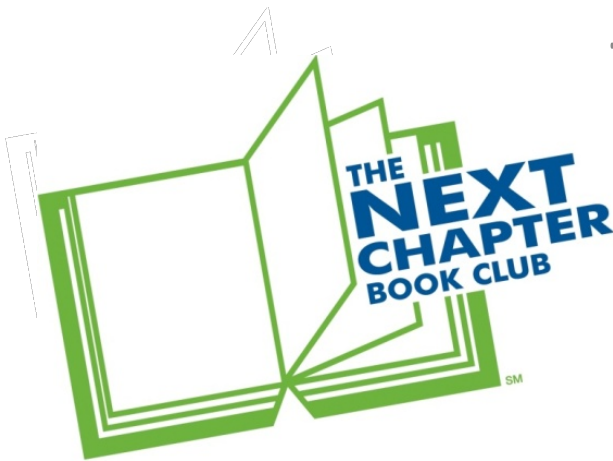


Next Chapter Book Club

Promoting Literacy, Social Connections, and
Inclusion for Adolescents and Adults with
Developmental Disabilities

Tom Fish, PhD





Dedication



This presentation is
dedicated to our beloved
friend and colleague

Steven R. Cooley

1959 – 2005

Our thanks to Steve for
“keeping us real”



Why start a book club for people with developmental disabilities (DD)?

Common Barriers for People with DD

Community inclusion barriers

- Limited opportunities for social interaction
- Segregated social activities

Lifelong learning barriers created by prevailing social attitudes that people with DD are not

- Interested in, or capable of, learning after high school
- Interested in reading or books



A Book Club What A Novel Idea



Next Chapter Book Club was started in 2002 to integrate learning and social activity in community settings



Next Chapter Book Club Model





Next Chapter Book Club

Goal

The goal of the program is for members to interact *more frequently*, and *in new ways*, with

- Books and a variety of written/oral communication
- each other, and
- the community around them.



Next Chapter Book Club Program Growth



Since 2002, The Next Chapter Book Club has grown from 2 book clubs in Columbus, Ohio to **over 250** clubs across North America and Europe





Next Chapter Book Club

Early Assumptions

- *We thought:* Members would want or need to listen to books on tape
We learned: Most members want to carry, read, and look at books
- *We thought:* Clubs would meet once or twice a month
We learned: Weekly meetings encourage member attendance and retention
- *We thought:* Professionals would facilitate clubs
We learned: Volunteers greatly enrich the program



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Book Club Meetings

- Clubs meet for 1 hour each week, at the same time and location
- 5 to 8 members, 1 to 3 facilitators per club





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Book Club Meetings

NCBCs meet in public spaces where the general community gathers

- Bookstores
- Libraries
- Cafés and coffee shops

We do not meet in isolated settings

- Workshops or agencies
- *Private* meeting rooms in *public* spaces



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Why meet in the community?

Benefits to members

- Meaningful and regular engagement in the community
- Authentic opportunities to practice emerging literacy and social skills

Benefits to communities

- Increased exposure to and awareness of people with disabilities (opportunities for attitude change)
- Enhanced diversity within community



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Why libraries?

Benefits to Libraries

- Broadens population served
- Systematic way to serve population already frequenting libraries
- Makes a statement about diversity & inclusion
- Increases the number of people utilizing a wide array of library services
- Opens up the door for high/low fiction for all



Next Chapter Book Club

Cost to become an NCBC Affiliate

The \$350.00 one time fee includes

- On-line Affiliate Training (2 ½ hrs.)
- On-line facilitator Training 1 hr.)
- Access to portal for resources
- Technical Assistance after the training
- Affiliate cost can be shared with other agencies in the community serving people with disabilities
- Service organization often are receptive to supporting costs.



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Book Club Meetings



- Members take turns reading aloud, receiving as much support as needed
- Members also spend time socializing with one another



Next Chapter Book Club

Who Can Be a Member?

- Every effort is made to accommodate anyone who would like to join, regardless of physical and/or intellectual disabilities
- Only overly disruptive or aggressive behavior may disqualify someone from membership
- Prospective members are encouraged to visit existing book clubs if possible



Next Chapter Book Club

Sample Reading Material

Adapted Classics

- *Black Beauty*
- *Little Women*
- *The Call of the Wild*
- *The Secret Garden*
- *The Wind in the Willows*
- *Treasure Island*

Short Stories

- *Lucky Dogs, Lost Hats, and Dating Don'ts*
<http://www.woodbinehouse.com>

Popular Fiction

- *Because of Winn-Dixie*
- *Charlotte's Web*
- *Little House on the Prairie*
- *Where the Red Fern Grows*

Other

- Newspaper/sports page
- Non-fiction, biographies

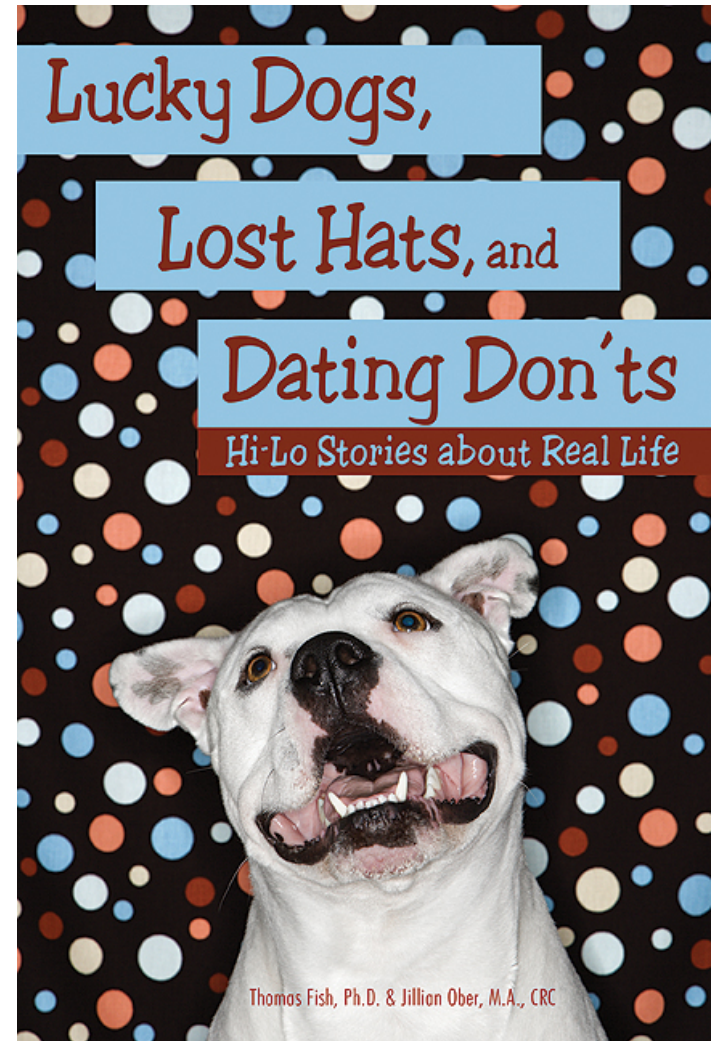


Next Chapter Book Club

Short stories for NCBC members

Why write short stories for NCBC members?

- Difficulty identifying Hi-Lo (high interest, low reading level) reading material for book clubs
- Majority of books written in “simple language” are written for children
- Classic stories, though adapted, can seem irrelevant to members’ lives





Next Chapter Book Club Facilitator Comment

“Our time together is a strong reminder of the incredible diversity and talent within people, just waiting for an opportunity to be heard. We have all become real friends and to a great extent, have positively changed each other's lives.”

– NCBC facilitators Suzanne,
Mike, and Mikey





Next Chapter Book Club

Effective Practices



Although many members do improve literacy skills, we focus on *reading to learn*, as opposed to learning to read



Next Chapter Book Club

Effective Practices

- Support Emergent Readers using **Echo Reading**

When helping a member who does not read independently, position yourself next to that member. Point to the words you are reading and encourage the member to follow along.

After a *brief pause*, say the word(s) and wait for him or her to “echo” the word(s) back. It may take you a few meetings to become familiar with how much support each member needs while reading.



Next Chapter Book Club

Effective Practices

- Support Emergent Readers using **Echo Reading**
(continued)

Encourage the member to try some smaller words on their own. Once you get to know your members, you will have a feel for how much support each one needs.

Do not spend much time sounding out words. It is advisable to limit the amount of echoed text to a paragraph or two.

Project your voice and read with inflection. Avoid whispering the words in the member's ear.



Next Chapter Book Club Activities

- Five Senses:

Ask members to imagine a particular scene in the story. For example, if a character is in a kitchen, ask, “What kinds of things do you see in a kitchen? What do you smell in a kitchen? What noises might you hear?”

- Point to It:

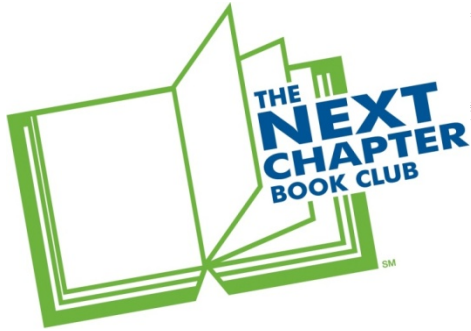
Illustrations are an excellent way to engage all members. Call the groups’ attention to the picture and ask questions such as, “What is happening in this picture?”



Next Chapter Book Club Monitoring and Evaluation

- Facilitators monitor weekly participation and attendance; NCBC staff visit periodically
- Quarterly facilitator surveys (5 questions about member skills/behavior & member/facilitator satisfaction)
- Pre/post interviews with facilitators
- Literacy/social development data collection (ECO-NCBC); end of book surveys (optional)

No matter the methods you use, monitoring and evaluating your program is essential in order to ensure that you are providing quality services



Program Sustainability

- Get started! It is easier to recruit for a group that is already running
- Success depends on intentionality of program staff; like most programs, NCBCs thrive when there is someone to champion the cause
- Regular meetings with collaborative partners encourage each party to follow through
- Consider taking breaks (e.g. during the summer) then “ramp back up” to pique interest



Affiliate Responsibilities

Day-to-day management decisions are up to you

Sign and abide by *NCBC Standards of Practice*

1. What Next Chapter Book Clubs are — and are not
- 2. NCBC affiliate training and ongoing responsibilities**
3. Recruiting NCBC members
4. Recruiting NCBC volunteer facilitators
5. Training and retaining volunteer facilitators



Affiliate Responsibilities

NCBC Standards of Practice (cont'd)

6. Finding appropriate NCBC host sites
7. Scheduling book clubs
8. Selection of activities and books
9. Monitoring and evaluation
10. Membership in NCBC email distribution list and website directory



Social Media Information

- Like us on Facebook:
www.facebook.com/nextchapterbookclub
- Follow us on Twitter: @NCBCColumbusOH
- <https://www.youtube.com/NCBCColumbusOH>

www.nextchapterbookclub.org



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