



New Jersey Center for Tourette Syndrome

AND ASSOCIATED DISORDERS, INC.

*Collaborative Partnerships for the
Tourette Syndrome Community*

September 27, 2017

Today your child's class was educated about Tourette Syndrome (TS) by Youth Advocates, Lianne Sturrock and Mike Hayden, from the NJ Center for Tourette Syndrome and Associated Disorders (NJCTS). Things that your child learned:

- Each of us has differences and some people need special arrangements to help them deal with their differences. We gave examples: people who don't see well, wear glasses but just because they wear glasses doesn't mean everyone in the class should wear glasses. Some people need more movement to help them learn so they may need to leave the class or move around the room during the day.
- TS is a neurological disorder and individuals with TS can't stop their movements or sounds.
- It is best to understand that people with TS need to move and only sometimes can "hold it in" or control their movements. Other times, they just can't stop. It is best to try to ignore the different movements or sounds rather than to tell someone with TS to stop. We gave examples: We would never tell someone wearing a hearing aid to just try harder, and then they could hear. Similarly, we shouldn't tell a person with TS to stop moving or vocalizing because most often they can't stop, and trying to hold it in may only make it worse.
- People with Tourette may sometimes also get "stuck" on a certain thought, worry, or issue. They may feel an intense need for cleanliness, order, or justice/fairness as they see it.
- People with Tourette are not sick and we can't "catch" TS from them.

We concluded that we should treat people with TS just like any other friend. You would never tease or bully a friend. It is always best to treat others like we would like to be treated. For more information regarding TS, please contact the NJ Center for Tourette Syndrome or visit the website at www.njcts.org.

Thank you,

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What is Tourette Syndrome?

- Tourette Syndrome is a medical condition.
- Kids and adults with Tourette Syndrome have tics.
- Tics are sudden, rapid movements or sounds that your body makes.
- Your body cannot stop or control the tics.
- Kids with Tourette have both motor and vocal tics.
- Common motor tics are: blinking your eyes, twitching your nose, nodding your head, shrugging your shoulders, movements of your hands, arms or legs.
- Common vocal tics are: clearing your throat, sniffing, humming, making noises, saying a word over and over again.
- It's complicated and no one knows for sure, but scientists think that TS is caused by differences in one or more parts of the brain.
- Tourette Syndrome is hereditary.... it is passed down in your genes.
- You are born with Tourette Syndrome and you have it for your entire life.
- Most kids usually don't start to have tics until between the ages of 5 and 8.
- If you have Tourette Syndrome, you will have symptoms by the age of 18.
- Tourette Syndrome is not contagious.
- Kids with Tourette Syndrome do not choose to have it and they did not do anything bad or wrong to cause them to get it.
- Kids with Tourette Syndrome are just like everyone else ...except they have tics.
- Kids with Tourette Syndrome are just as smart as other kids.

What can you do to help kids with Tourette Syndrome?

- Just be aware.
- Never make fun of someone for something that they cannot control.
- Be understanding and patient towards others.
- Encourage kids not to make fun of other kids and stick up for the victim if you see it happening.

Acknowledgements: Thank you to our NJCTS Youth Advocate for an outstanding presentation! If you would like additional information about our services, please contact Pat Phillips, Education Outreach Coordinator at 908-575-7350 or pPhillips@njcts.org.

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