

DIALOGUE IN THE DARK

Over a hundred students from the Symbiosis Institute of Technology stepped away from all the havoc and chaos of a college student's haphazard life and stepped down into the shoes of a differently abled person, to understand and to feel how it is to remain in sheer darkness all the time, what all difficulties does a person face when he/she can't speak or listen, the everyday struggles of a blind, dumb, or a deaf person.

Celebrating great response from last year, 'Dialogue in the Dark', an initiative of the Club V@rSITy-Care at Reverb'19 welcomed over 30 teams to participate. The team engaged the participants in various unique and interesting activities to make them empathize life in the dark.

The entries were taken as a pair and the objective was pretty simple. Complete the tasks and find your way out as soon as possible, the motive being the experience. The Club was allotted two rooms. In the first room, one person of the two had to act as the blind person while the second one had to pose as the dumb and deaf, decided as per the team's choice. The former was blindfolded properly with a blindfold and the dumb and deaf person was made to wear headphones with loud music so that he/she couldn't hear whatever's going on around and was instructed not to communicate with his/her partner.

The first and foremost task of a blind person is to find his/her way around. One had to feel the objects around to identify which way to go. The first activity was 'Sense It'. In this activity, the blind person was passed an object behind the back to sense and identify the object and then he/she had to enact to explain what the object was to the dumb and deaf person, who had to try and guess the object. Each team had one minute to identify as many objects as they could. The activity was fun-filled. Next, it was 'Stepping Stones'. In this activity, the blind person was provided with a rod and he/she had to tap to discover the route. One could step on the wooden boards only, and if they stepped on the floor they had to take one step back. Next came 'Crossing the Road'. Traffic noise was played and the blind had to identify when to cross the road and when to stop. After crossing the road, they had to walk on the pavement only. Next one was a really interesting one, 'Hit the Gong'. The dumb and deaf person had to hit the gong and the blind person had to identify the direction from which the sound came and hit the gong with a ball. This brings us to the end of the first room.

In the second room, both of the players were blindfolded and were allowed to communicate with each other. The first activity in this room was 'Scrabble'. The objective was to feel and identify the letters given to the team and form a 4-letter word. Each team had three minutes to form as many words as possible.

Next was 'Sandwich Making', wherein one of the two had to identify certain specific ingredients among many by either feeling or smelling them and the other person had to make the sandwich. Then there was 'Pyramid'. Both the mates had to make two individual pyramids, as high as possible, in just one minute. Next, the team gave the participants the feel of a 'Jungle' as the participants were to cross a patch of lush green, providing them with the aura of the surroundings by creating a suitable environment. Finally, each participant had to find and wear their own shoes amongst the many pairs which were put there. Also, they had to find a key that unlocked the exit door.

The whole event can be summarised as a fun activity with a deeper meaning to it, providing amusement as well as the realisation that how grateful we are to be having everything; how lucky we are and how gritty and bold are the people who choose not to wail about their situations and instead, try and adapt to a different lifestyle.

Dialogue in the Dark was not just a mere 'Event' or a 'Game'; it was an 'Experience': an initiative to change the perspective of the people that the differently abled are not weak. Instead, they are stronger than any and all of us.