Contents

1B Research, identify and network with relevant services to explore community inclusion opportunities

Once you have worked with people to identify their interests and abilities, you need may need to research some of the social networking opportunities available to them in their local community.

Encourage the people you support to think broadly about their interests and the roles they might play in their community. There are often many more possibilities to realise these goals than either of you are first aware of. As a facilitator in the process, you should encourage them to think about the valuable contribution they could make to the community. Participation in community groups may include acting in the role of:

- interpreter
- mentor
- teacher
- club secretary
- treasurer
- chairperson
- advocate
- club member.

Explore community inclusion opportunities

You can facilitate a person's inclusion in social networks by encouraging them to research, identify and explore the opportunities that exist within their community.

The guiding principles in this process should be self-determination and person choice. Your role is to encourage people you support to play as active a role as possible in the process and to ensure that both the process and the outcome empowers them to take part in community networking.

Exploring community inclusion opportunities:

- Identify the need.
- Research your neighbourhood.
- Identify relevant services.
- Network.
- Plan the first contact.

Identify the need

A person-centred approach allows you to target your research to services that are likely to meet the person's interests and individual needs. As we have seen, the starting point of a person-centred approach is a wide-ranging discussion about interests, strengths, goals and ambitions. This approach is preferable to simply preparing a broad list of what is available in your local community and then trying to fit people you support into one of those services. To ensure the services you identify are relevant for the individual person, ask yourself the following questions.

Early adulthood

The need for affiliation is filled by friends and/or a partner

Friendships very important to people who are single

Personality traits most likely to change up to the age of thirty

Middle age

Mid-life crisis occurs in a small minority of cases.

Personality traits tend to stay stable.

Experience of facing age discrimination is more likely.

Older age

Improvement in ability to cope with stress, reduce negative emotions and manage personal relationships.

Satisfaction with life largely dependent on family environment.

Identify relevant services

Make a point to learn about a person's individual and cultural differences, take into account their age and stage of development and research services which may meet their needs. Then you can work with the person you are supporting to decide if the inclusion opportunity is a good match for them.

This matching process should be person-led as much as possible. Your role is not to decide which service best matches the person's needs. Your role is to assist the person to evaluate the options that are available and make an informed choice about the opportunities they will decide to pursue.

Match needs to opportunities

To facilitate this matching process, you can make a list of the opportunities you have researched and consider any additional information you have found. You will then need to assist the person to evaluate these against the criteria that are important to them.

The following criteria should be used in this matching process:

▶ Does it match their interests?

▶ Is the location suitable?

▶ Is access suitable?

▶ What are the attitudes and awareness about disability and diversity?

▶ Is there an opportunity for learning?

▶ Is there an opportunity for contribution?

▶ Are there opportunities for social engagement?

▶ Is it an ongoing opportunity?

Support needs

Once you have established the appropriateness of the social network, you need to encourage people you support to assess their support needs in relation to taking an active role in the support network.

It may be necessary to break down activities into the tasks involved. You may need to consider the activities the network offers, the procedures for joining the club, the money required to pay for the membership or activity, and the transport issues to get to and from the social networking opportunity.

In conjunction with the task analysis, you need to encourage the person to look at their support needs in terms of resources. It may also be necessary to undertake an initial visit to the social networking group in order to ascertain its appropriateness and facilities. There are a number of questions you need to consider as part of this task analysis.

In breaking the activities into tasks:

▶ Can people you support perform this task independently?

▶ Will they be able to perform the task with prompting and faded prompting?

▶ Will they require ongoing support to perform aspects of this task?

Example

Actively engage the person in a social network and identify supports they may need

Fifteen-year-old Toby has been involved in his local cricket club for only one season, but as the new season approaches he is very excited to begin training again. Over the off-season he has watched a number of training videos and he has been bowling to his brother in the practice nets at the local park for months.

Toby is usually first to training and always brings his cricket bag and a collection of balls along with him. Although Toby is younger than many of his teammates, his coach is impressed with his enthusiasm and dedication. As Toby has chosen to focus on his bowling, the coach asks Toby whether he would be comfortable helping to organise the bowlers at practice.

The coach is annoyed that everyone seems to sit around waiting for him to arrive at practice and that they are wasting some valuable time for a bit of extra practice. Toby is unsure that the rest of the players will listen to him, but the coach tells him not to worry; 'I'll word them up. If anyone has a problem with you giving a few pointers they can speak to me and explain why.'

Accessibility

▶ Inaccessible buildings, toilets, change rooms

▶ Information in inappropriate forms for people with sensory impairments

▶ Signs, footpaths, fences, stairs and other obstacles

Finance

▶ Approximately 80% of people with disabilities live below the poverty line

▶ Specialised services are more expensive

▶ Less able to shop around due to mobility issues

Work with the person to develop strategies to manage barriers

As a support worker with direct involvement in the person's program or as a supervisor responsible for the development of community integration plans, you are in an ideal position to assist people you support to develop strategies to manage potential barriers to their community involvement. These strategies are best divided into short-term strategies to remove immediate barriers and long-term systemic strategies.

In working with the person to develop strategies to reduce potential barriers to social inclusion, you need to be familiar with your organisation's policies and procedures. You must also work within the role boundaries set out in your job description. Where strategies are outside of your job role, people you support may need the assistance of a professional advocate.

Examples of short- and long-term strategies to overcome potential barriers are shown below.

Stigma

Short-term strategies:

▶ Provide accurate information to the potential social network about the specific disability of the person and the issues relevant to the particular social network.

▶ People you support may explain their disability to the network.

▶ Have a physical presence out and about in the community.

▶ Encourage self-advocacy

Long-term strategies:

▶ Community education programs on the rights of people with disabilities

▶ Disability awareness sessions

▶ School education programs on disability

▶ Person-centred plans

▶ Community integration planning

▶ Systemic advocacy

▶ Affirmative action campaigns

▶ Creating positive images of disability in the media

Learning checkpoint 1
Support person to identify and engage in social networks within the broad community

This learning checkpoint allows you to review your skills and knowledge in supporting a person to identify and engage in social networks within the broad community.

Part A

The following table shows the principles that underline the move towards encouraging social integration for people with a disability.

1. Complete the table by stating briefly in the second column, your role in supporting the principles. In the third column, give an example of something you would do that demonstrates that principle. The first line has been completed for you as an example.

Principle	Your role	Example
Understanding and reducing stigma	Know that many people still see disability as a 'handicap'.	Ask people to always address the person you are supporting first and not ask you what they would like.
Legislative process and rights of people with disabilities		
Principle of active support		
Relevant policies and protocols		
Strengths-based and person-centred practice		
Support community integration		

▶ support workers

▶ mentors or coaches

▶ family members or carers

▶ guardians

▶ case managers

▶ other health professionals

▶ a buddy or sponsor.

Community inclusion goals

The person is encouraged to develop goals in regard to community inclusion. These may be broad goals such as becoming fully active in the local community as a disability advocate, joining a youth group or meeting people their own age and/or becoming a volunteer at their child's school.

Goals need to be appropriate for the person's age and level of development. If you are working with a person with delayed development, their goals may be more specific as shown here.

Examples of specific goals for persons with delayed development
▶ Going to the day centre and making friends
▶ Joining the scouting group
▶ Playing with other children at the playground

Strategies to achieve goals

Strategies to achieve goals include the actions needed to achieve the goals. Without affirmative strategies for community integration, people with disability can become isolated from what is often a largely inaccessible community around them.

The person's plan should include a description of the level of support the person requires to perform an action or follow a strategy. Support may be differentiated using a three (or more) point scale. For example, levels of support may be independent, minimal support and significant support.

Strategies to achieve goals may include:

▶ joining specific existing networks

▶ training in skills and behaviours that are expected in the network

▶ working out how to get to and from the networking opportunity

▶ educating people in the network about the rights of persons with a disability

▶ applying for funding for additional equipment or resources.

2B Assist the person to establish their requirements to maximise community participation

Once you have assisted the person to develop an individualised plan to participate in the community, you can then work with them to establish their requirements in order to maximise their participation in the community. This may include identifying the resources required or the strategies you need to put in place to maximise participation in community life.

In order to commence the process of identifying person requirements, you should encourage the person to look at their community inclusion goals and the strategies they have developed in order to meet these goals. You need to establish a relationship of trust so that you can work through a series of questions. Good communication skills are essential. Use active listening and summarise what you have heard. You also need to be patient as this process may take some time.

Here are some useful questions to ask.

Useful questions to ask about a person's community support plan
▶ What strengths and interests does the person have?
▶ Who could add to the knowledge and experience the person has?
▶ Is there someone who would be able to support the person?
▶ What assistance is required?
▶ What equipment or resources are required?

Techniques to assist persons to clarify their requirements

There are several techniques you may choose to use to help the person establish their requirements to maximise involvement in their community. These include visioning, researching and prioritising. As you undertake visioning, researching and prioritising you need to be patient and ask open questions. Use whatever communication method the person finds easiest and, if possible, do this in a one-to-one session with the person.

An explanation of each technique is provided here.

Visioning
Ask the person what it would look like, or be like, if they had maximum involvement in the community. What would they see themselves doing? The person may come up with a wish list of activities but you can then work backwards by asking 'In your ideal vision, what supports are in place to assist you to reach that maximum level of participation? This process helps to identify realistic and practical actions and goals.

Hobbies

Ask what hobbies they have and what hobbies they would like to develop further. Try to establish their values and concerns. Ask what is important to them. Use your prior knowledge of their home and its contents to prompt them if you can.

Interests

Use the local paper to identify the articles that are of interest or concern to them. Look at the community noticeboard section and see what interests them.

Engaging with people

Ask what sort of people they would enjoy spending time with. What age group and gender would they prefer the people to be? What sort of interests or values might they share? Can they name anyone in particular that they would like to network with?

Community contributions

Ask what they would like to contribute to their community and where they think they could make a difference. Emphasise the skills they have and prompt them to explore how they could use these skills within the community.

Potential contacts

Ask who could add to the knowledge and experience they already have. This may be a group of people or individuals within the community.

Community roles

Ask what role the person would like to take in the community. Focus on both the immediate and the long term. Do they have special skills or experiences they can use in certain roles in the community, such as minute taking, organising meetings or coaching people?

Coaching and mentoring

Ask if they have someone who would be able to accompany them to activities. Do they have a partner or family member who shares these interests? Do they know of someone in their peer group who they look on as a mentor? Do they know someone who could coach or buddy them in certain areas?

Community access

Ask what resources and equipment would make access to the community easier. Focus on the particular options that they have identified rather than asking general questions.

People who are re-engaging after an acquired disability or period of absence

As a facilitator of the process for someone who is re-engaging with the community after an acquired disability or a period of absence, you may use the same basic framework of questions. A person who is re-engaging is likely to have lived a full life out in the

Strategies to establish contact

There are many different strategies the person can use to establish contact. Following are the major strategies and ways you may be able to assist as a support worker or supervisor.

Face-to-face meeting

- ▶ Make sure the meeting has been organised and that the community organisation knows the person is coming.
- ▶ Ensure the meeting time is accommodated in the daily personal care regime for the person.
- ▶ Organise transport to and from the meeting.
- ▶ Check access at the agreed venue.
- ▶ Assist the person to work out what questions to ask.
- ▶ Role-play meeting to prepare.
- ▶ Accompany the person to the meeting if required.
- ▶ Assist with any communication or mobility issues.

Contact members via email or website

- ▶ Assist the person to use the internet.
- ▶ Assist the person to compose an email.
- ▶ Check the location and suitability of the community group for person's needs before you send an email to them.

Make a phone call

- ▶ Assist the person to work out what they want to say.
- ▶ Role-model a positive attitude.
- ▶ Role-play conversations to build confidence.
- ▶ Make initial contact via phone if the person has communication difficulties.
- ▶ Use a speaker phone and assist the person to record the information they are given.

Write a letter

- ▶ Assist the person to compose a letter.
- ▶ Provide an example of a letter for them to copy.
- ▶ Assist the person to plan the letter.
- ▶ Edit the letter for the person.
- ▶ Post the letter.

2E Assist the person to select activities

As a support worker or supervisor in the disability sector, your role is to empower the person to gain the level of social recognition they desire for themselves. Each of us is unique with regard to our community participation needs. The person's individual plan must reflect their values and priorities and what is important to them.

Your role is to facilitate this process, but not to impose your views or expectations on the person. It is, and must remain, their plan. The person will not learn and grow if you make decisions for them, or impose your views of what is best for them onto their planning process.

Assuming that you have already worked with the person to establish their interests and hobbies, and undertaken research to find out more about their options, the person then has to decide which activities they should select. You can assist your person with this process but not make decisions for them.

Benefits of inclusion

To help the person select activities that enhance inclusion, it is worth discussing the benefits to the person of social inclusion before you start the selection process. This discussion will provide a context for the person's selection of activities.

The benefits of inclusion include:

▶ greater opportunities available

▶ greater choice

▶ more highly regarded role in community

▶ reduced isolation

▶ new social groups and new interests

▶ opportunities to form friendships and meaningful relationships

▶ sense of connectedness to community

▶ opportunity to practise and learn relationship skills.

Assist the person to select activities

You can also help the person to think through their needs for social inclusion. Encourage them to develop some criteria to assess whether the activities they have selected will enhance their inclusion. By enabling the person to develop criteria to use in selecting activities, you can use the following principles as a starting point, and see if they are relevant to the person's needs.

Electronic communication devices

Electronic communication devices have software that enables someone to choose images or words that are then produced as speech. There is a variety of different electronic communication devices available, including dynamic display or voice output devices. Remember, these devices allow people without natural speech to be heard and they should not be touched without permission.

Telephone typewriter

People with a hearing impairment may use a telephone typewriter (TTY), which allows users to type instead of talk on the phone. If your organisation does not have a TTY, you can use the National Relay Service (NRS). The NRS relays your spoken telephone conversation to text for a person who uses a TTY.

Sign language

Some people with disabilities use signing to communicate. Signing can take several different forms. It is important to understand how the person communicates. You may need another worker or family member to teach you, as some people make up their own signs and meanings. Some of the different methods of signing include:

▶ Signed English: Word-for-word translation from spoken English to signs.

▶ Key word signing: Key words only are signed

▶ Auslan: Auslan stands for the Australian Sign Language. It is a whole language of signs, facial expressions and body language. It is generally used by people who were born deaf; they will think of it as their first language.

▶ Individual sign language: Some families will make up their own system of signing to communicate. This is often true if they have a child with an intellectual disability who is also nonverbal.

Hearing aids and devices

There is a range of hearing aids and devices that can be used by people with an acquired hearing impairment. The cause of the hearing impairment needs to be assessed and a device that is specific to the individual needs recommended. If the person has a hearing impairment due to illness, injury or the ageing process it may be possible to assist them with a hearing aid or device.

Interpreter

Some people may need an interpreter to help them communicate. This may be a foreign language interpreter or an Auslan interpreter who assists with signed communication. Many people from a non-English speaking background may have acquired their English in the workplace and it may not extend to the vocabulary needed in the community setting.

3D Recognise personal limitations and seek assistance

You may be asked to do something outside of your job role or the person's individual plan by the person you are supporting or by someone close to him or her. You must be clear about your own limitations and when you need to ask others for assistance or advice.

You may also require help with a task within your area of responsibility due to it being too physically demanding for one person or due to the circumstances at the time. For example, you may need help with lifting or help assisting a person of the opposite sex to access the toilet.

You may also be unfamiliar with the person and their needs and be unable to discuss these with the person due to communication barriers.

In cases when you are unfamiliar with the person, you should:

▶ know your job description

▶ recognise your limitations

▶ explain the situation to the person

▶ ensure the person is in a safe environment

▶ contact your supervisor for assistance

▶ document the incident as soon as practical.

Areas of limitation

When a person's needs or demands are outside of your role, you still need to handle the issue professionally.

By being familiar with your organisation's policies and procedures, you should be prepared to respond appropriately to both time critical and non-urgent demands. You need to be familiar with your organisation's protocols or procedures for dealing with these situations.

There are some circumstances where demands may be beyond your limitations.

You may find that an issue or task is outside of your limitations because:

▶ you lack the necessary skills and knowledge

▶ you lack information

▶ it is not in your job role

▶ it is not in the person's plan

▶ you lack the physical ability

▶ you lack the resources

▶ it may cause danger of injury to you or the person.

Below are the steps in the behavioural modification process:

Steps for modifying behaviours of concern

1 Collect information about the possible purpose of the behaviour

2 Highlight the common challenging situations, environments or activities

3 Make a plan to avoid or change those 'high risk' activities or situations whenever possible

4 Consider options for more appropriate replacement behaviour. Ensure the replacement behaviour meets the same needs as the challenging behaviour as well or more effectively

5 Use prompting and positive reinforcement to consistently encourage the placement behaviour

Communication

While some behaviour may be difficult to manage at times, there are some simple communication tips that help. These are shown below.

Ten communication tips to help manage behaviours

1 Address the person by name.

2 Make eye contact if appropriate.

3 Use simple sentences and simple words.

4 Ask one question at a time.

5 Give one instruction at a time.

6 Ask closed questions to clarify information.

7 Talk about emotions, fears and feelings.

Some common modifications are shown here.

Steering wheel handle

To assist people who only have use of one arm to steer.

Hand pedals for accelerator and brake

For people without use of one or both legs.

Accessible driver's seat

For people who use a wheelchair to get around when not driving.

Air travel

Air travel is a source of anxiety for many people for a range of reasons. If the person you are supporting is planning to take a flight, discuss some of the challenges that can occur at each stage of the journey such as navigating the airport and accessing the toilets onboard the plane.

Requirements and conditions for people with disabilities who are travelling unaccompanied vary from one airline to another. Airline regulations require people with disabilities to occupy an aisle seat, which means fellow passengers may have trouble getting past them to get to the window seat.

Often however air travel is the only viable option.

Tips for undertaking air travel:

▶ Book in advance and notify airlines of any special needs.
▶ Consider travelling with a companion.
▶ Request mobility assistance at the airport.
▶ Request information in a suitable form.
▶ Arrive with plenty of time.
▶ Do a risk assessment and plan a contingency regime.
▶ Take advantage of early boarding for people with special needs.

Formal review

The formal review process is usually undertaken by supervisors. As a key player in the success of the implementation of the person's plan, it makes good sense for support workers to also be included in the process.

Support workers can contribute direct insights into the effectiveness of the strategies in place. The worker is also the person most likely to have the person's trust and respect so having them at the review will usually help the person engage in the review process and speak up.

Where persons are not capable of making decisions for themselves, a guardian or advocate may be involved on their behalf.

The formal review process consists of:

▶ revisiting the person's plan

▶ providing evidence that it is not working

▶ considering whether a formal assessment is required

▶ inviting the person to discuss their current strategies

▶ considering additional equipment, resources or training

▶ reading through all documents that relate to the individual plan

▶ clarifying anything that is unclear

▶ revisiting their learning goals and reconfirming or changing them

▶ redesigning strategies to meet the revised goals

▶ drafting up a new plan and signing it off by both parties.

Example

Evaluate the success of strategies

Ahmad finished studying at his local special school a few years ago and has been sitting at home mostly playing video games ever since. As part of a community engagement plan, he has decided to start a course to help him get a job at a nursery. The horticultural course he wants to study is at an institute several kilometres away and he is unfamiliar with the public transport system.

Pauline, his support worker, does some research with him on the internet to find out about the easiest public transport option. She prints off timetables and maps and discusses the journey with him. Pauline accompanies him on the trip from his house to the horticultural institute to get him enrolled.

Once Ahmad is enrolled and gets his study timetable, he sits down again with Pauline and works out exactly which service he is going to catch.

Ahmad is not confident that he can do the trip himself because his short-term memory is not very good. Ahmad and Pauline agree that, to make sure he does not get lost, Pauline will 'shadow him' for the first week on his journey to and from the course.

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Topic 4

In this topic you will learn how to:

4A Conduct location or activity risk assessment

4B Discuss elements of risk

4C Work with people to identify strategies to remove or reduce risks

Determine risks associated with supporting participation and inclusion

The principle of supporting community participation and inclusion is a key component of current government initiatives to overcome social inequality experienced by people with disabilities. However, these activities do not come without some risk being involved. Particularly for people with a history of institutionalisation, intellectual disabilities and cognitive impairment such as dementia, there are risks involved when the support worker accompanies the person they are supporting into the community. You have a role in minimising these risks.

You need a clear understanding of your organisational policies and procedures for risk management and the strategies that can be adopted to reduce risk. These are based on legislation and standards which are applicable to your area of work.

Common risk issues

As well as the broad categories of risks already mentioned relating to the activity and the group, there are a number of environmental, behavioural and cognitive factors unique to the individual that may increase their risk in community settings.

A number of factors that you should consider are identified here.

Environment

Consider environmental factors such as:

▶ location and activity

▶ accessibility

▶ ease of parking

▶ crowds

▶ excessive noise

▶ lots of distractions.

Behaviour

Any known behaviour issues such as outbursts, aggression or verbal abuse.

Traffic awareness

The person may not be aware of cars and other vehicles when crossing roads.

Level of awareness

The person may have:

▶ memory support needs

▶ confusion

▶ money handling issues

▶ reduced level of insight

▶ cognitive impairment

▶ sensory impairment.

Triggers

There may be behaviour triggers such as:

▶ noise

▶ traffic

▶ crowds

▶ shops.

Known absconder

The person may have a history of wandering or may not be able to find their way home.

Case manager

Information they may provide:

- If the person is a known absconder
- Previous behaviours
- Triggers
- Level of road sense
- The person's goals
- Strategies that have worked in the past
- Activities that have been successful in the past

Advocate or guardian

Information they may provide:

- The person's wants and aspirations
- Their rights
- Level of cognitive awareness

Family members

Information they may provide:

- Impact on family members
- History of absconding
- Known trigger for behaviours
- Strategies that work

Behavioural specialist

Information they may provide:

- behavioural strategies that are in place already
- triggers and risks specific to person with an acquired brain injury.

Other support workers

Information they may provide:

- everyday level of awareness of traffic and, environments that trigger behaviours
- the person's goals.

Rights

As a facilitator of community inclusion, you must remember that your aim is to assist the person to achieve participation in the broader community. It is important that you model an understanding of the person's rights at all times, including during the risk assessment process.

In order to uphold these rights, you need to be familiar with your organisation's policies. When in doubt, contact your supervisor for advice.

2. Think innovatively and create at least one strategy that does not interfere with the benefits of going to the show but helps minimise the risk to Tasmin posed by:

   ▶ the activity

   ▶ the environment

   ▶ her behaviour.

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Click to complete Practice task 23

Summary

1. Before a person who you are supporting commences their community inclusion activities, it is important that a risk assessment is conducted of both the location and the activities involved.

2. Risk assessments are based on the likelihood and consequences of a given risk event occurring and provide a basis for deciding what is an acceptable level of risk.

3. Once you have identified possible risks, you should discuss these risks with the person and appropriate others.

4. You may be required to work with the person and other appropriate people, to identify strategies to remove or reduce the risks you have identified.

5. You will need to ensure that you are familiar with your organisation's guidelines to ensure strategies to avoid risks are consistent with these policies and therefore with relevant legislation and standards.

6. Two key principles that inform legislation and standards are duty of care and dignity of risk. Risk management involves taking reasonable steps to prevent injury and harm but cannot and should not seek to eliminate risk entirely.

7. You will need to document risk minimisation strategies in accordance with organisational guidelines.