

Activity worksheets

Friends: Connecting people with disabilities and community members

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rtc on community living

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Driven to DiscoverSM

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This manual and additional activity worksheets are available at rtc.umn.edu/friends

Using these activity worksheets



- These activity worksheets are for people using the manual “Friends: Connecting people with disabilities and community members” to deliver training, or for anyone to use as stand-alone sheets for their own purposes.
- Most sheets are single stand-alone pages, with the “back” of many of the sheets having “answers” that others have provided. The “answer” sheet does not have to be used.

Activity 1

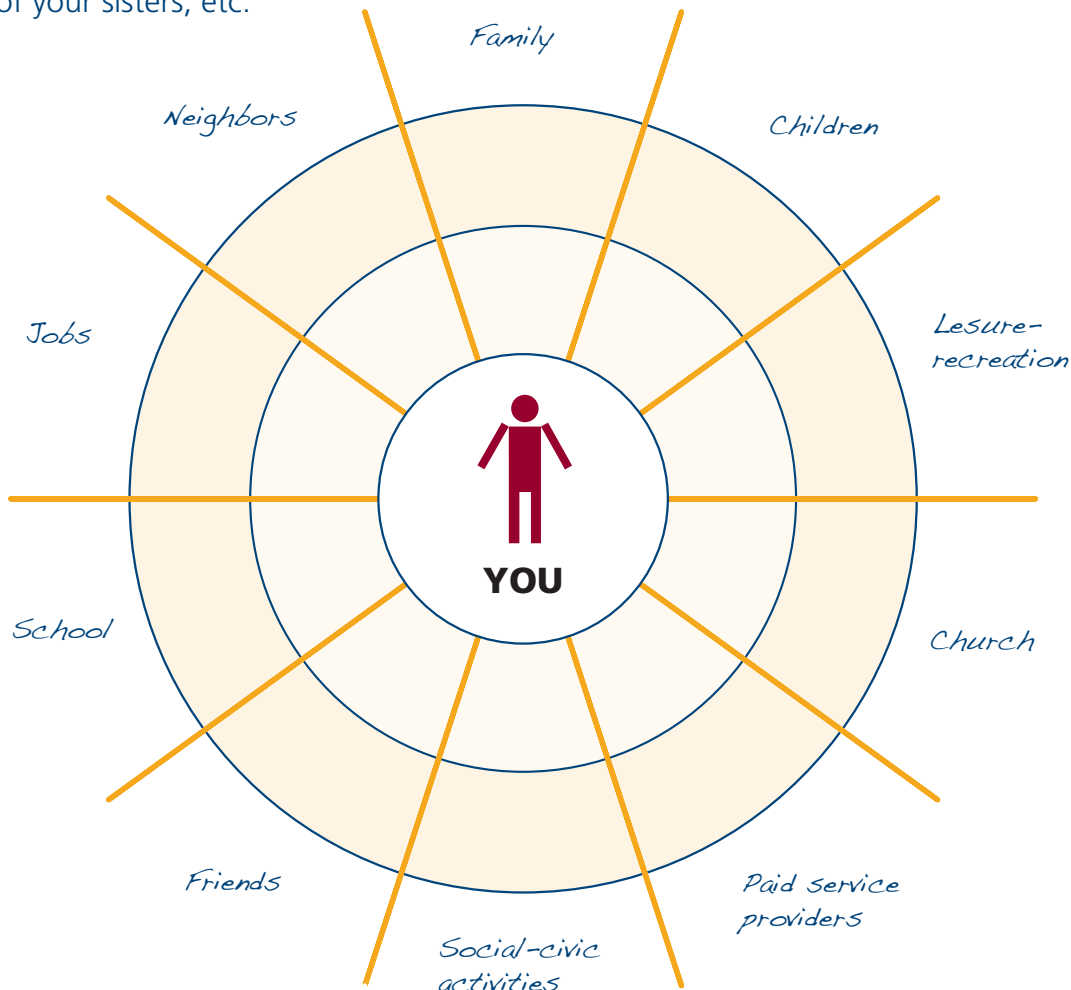
Activity 1

Relationship map

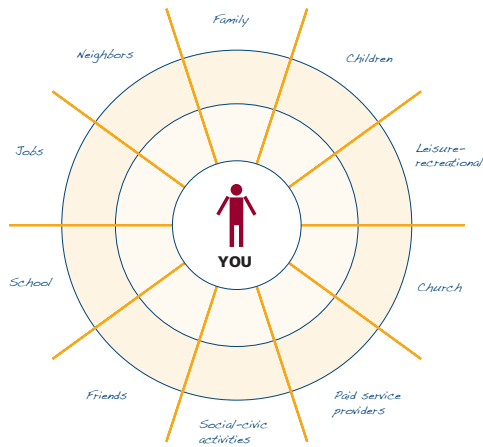
A Relationship Map is a way to diagram a social network and can show us why it is important to work on community connections. Here are four steps to filling it in —

1. If you were doing a map for yourself, YOU are in the middle
2. In the first, inner-most circle put the people you see the most frequently, love the most, are closest to
3. In the next outer circle put people you associate with but know less well than the inner-most circle
4. In the outer-most circle put people that are acquaintances, people you might know by name but not that well

The different titles of each section represent different life arenas through which you know people. So “Leisure-recreation” does not mean that you have recreation activities, but rather: who do you know through that recreation? If you’re on a softball team, who are the other team members, coaches, others you know? “Family” — not just your own family members, but others you know through your family — like friends of your sisters, etc.



Activity 1



Think about what YOUR map looks like, versus a map for a person with disabilities you support.

What are the differences between YOUR map and the map of people with disabilities you support? What would be the differences in the Relationship Maps of average community members and the people with disabilities who live in your community?

Write some of these differences:



Using a Relationship Map to appreciate the nature of the social networks of individuals with disabilities gives us more reasons to work on relationships with community members. Can you be committed to expanding the number and quality of relationships in the social network of someone you support? Can you be committed to bring people “closer in”? Can you be committed to add more people who are there for the person just because they like that person?

What others have said —

- The “paid service providers” section is usually larger for people with disabilities.
- We all have people we pay to do service for us (like our car mechanic, hairdresser, barber, etc.) but for many people who receive services, this is a large proportion of their relationships.
- Average community members typically have relationships in many more “sections” or areas than people who receive services.
- A typical pattern for individuals with disabilities is people in only three sections: paid staff, other people with disabilities they live with or work with, and their family (and some have no or few family relationships).
- The number of people on the map —
 - » The average community member typically has many more people on their map.
- The number of more intimate relationships —
 - » The average community member usually has more people in the “inner-most” circle.
- What other differences do you see?

Activity 1

“

Friendship improves happiness and abates misery by the doubling of our joy and the dividing of our grief.”



~ Marcus Tullius Cicero (106-43), Roman orator

Activity 2

What would it be like if you had no friends?

Write in your responses to these two questions. Look for yourself before going onto the next page. Really get present to what would it be like if you had NO friends —

- **How would you feel?**

- **What would you DO if you had NO friends?**

Activity 2

What others have said —

- How would I feel if I had no friends?
 - » Lonely
 - » Depressed
 - » Sad
 - » Alone
- What would I do if I had no friends?
 - » Turn anybody who was there into a friend
 - » Drink
 - » Sleep a lot
 - » Eat a lot
 - » Withdraw
 - » See what I can do to make friends — get more active

Most of us, if we had no friends, would do SOMETHING. For example, when we move to a new community we usually do something to meet new people there.

But, people who receive services often have a history of few friends or having lost relationships — so perhaps it's easy to understand why some people are reluctant to try new things or meet new people!



Activity 3

What do you get from knowing people?

Most people don't work in human services for the money. Most people work in the field, and continue to do so, because there is something they get from the people they support. People we support make great contributions to us.

Think of your favorite person you have supported. What do you get from knowing them? What did they give you?



"I love him. I see my job as:
how many more people can I
find to love him?"



~ Direct Support Staff

Activity 3

What others have said —

- Learning patience
- Being reminded of what's really important in life
- Love
- Being loved unconditionally — no matter what I do, they still love me
- Making a difference in someone's life
- Seeing their accomplishments — brings me a sense of accomplishment
- They make me laugh

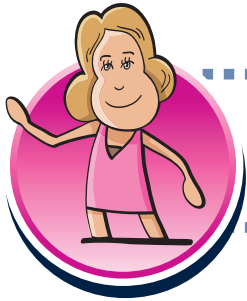
“There is nothing better than a friend,
unless it is a friend with chocolate.”

~ Linda Grayson, American children's book
author

Activity 4

How did you meet *YOUR* friends?

Think of your friends. Where did you meet them?



If you are doing this activity in a group with others, you can compare what is similar in the many ways we get to have friends.

“

Wherever we are, it is our friends that make our world.”

~ Henry Drummond (1851-1897), Scottish scientist and writer

Activity 4

How do most people make friends?

- Most people say they met their friends through —
 - » Work
 - » School
 - » Church
 - » Through other friends
 - » Through a club or interest
- What do all these avenues have in common?
 - » Almost all are places where you see the same people over and over again. But just seeing the same people in the same place is often not enough. For example, as a consumer, we often might see the same waitress, or post office worker, or grocery store check-out person — but have you made friends with any of them? Even if you see the same people over and over again, that's often not enough in itself.
 - » In those places where most people make friends there is meaningful interaction, over and over again. There are real chances to get to know each other.
- You don't become friends with everyone at school or work.
- When you want to become better friends with people, what do you do?
 - » Usually you ASK them to do something more.
 - » The people who are YOUR friends — what did you ask them to do when you first wanted to get to know them better? Or, if there was someone now you wanted to get to know better, what would you ask them to do?
 - Have coffee?
 - Have lunch?
 - Go fishing?
 - Come over?
 - Talk on the phone?
 - » We ASK people to do more.
 - » Becoming an “asker” is one of the most important skills to develop to become a community builder.

Activity 5

Who will Mary get to know there?

Mary's interest is in music. When staff identify that as her interest, a frequent response is "oh, let's take her to a concert." BUT — who will she get to know there?

What might be better places to pursue her interest in music?

What are places where she will see the same people, in the same place, over time?

Where are the places where she can really get involved with others there?

Write your ideas —

“It’s the friends you can call up at 4 a.m. that matter.”



~ Marlene Dietrich (1901–1992), German-American actress and singer

Activity 5

What others have said —

- Church choir
- Church choir practices
- High school bands/orchestras
- College orchestras/bands
- Music store where they can have a regular role
- Radio station, where they can have a regular role
- Supporting a local rock band
- Concert series, where they could volunteer



Big tip for success

A big focus in many service agencies is for individuals to participate in community activities. Yet, participating in activities is different than getting to know people.

Some of the most common community activities for people who receive services (and for many of us!) are going to restaurants, shopping and movies. Yet, when was the last time you made a new friend at any of those places?

A big tip for success is to start shifting our focus, shifting our thinking, from “activities” to “people.” The most important question we can start asking is: “Who are they going to get to know there?”

Remember, where will they see the same people, in the same place, over time? How will they get involved with others there, in meaningful ways?

Activity 6

Track your progress with the relationship map

Let's look again at the "relationship" map diagram we looked at in Activity 1. There is also one on the next page. Again, here is how to fill it in —

1. Doing a map for yourself, YOU are in the middle
2. In the first, inner-most circle put the people you see the most frequently, love the most, are closest to
3. In the next outer circle put people you associate with but know less well than the inner-most circle
4. In the outer-most circle put people that are acquaintances, people you know by name but not that well

The different titles of each section represent different life arenas through which you know people. So "Leisure-recreation" does not mean that you have recreation activities, but rather: who do you know through that recreation? If you're on a softball team, who are the other team members, coaches, others you know?

In the "Family" section, put not just your own family members, but others you know through your family — like friends of your sisters, etc.

You can use this map in two ways —

1. **Have each staff member make a map for themselves** — By doing your own maps, you can identify your own acquaintances and friends who share interests with those you support. Who do you know who likes cars, music, etc.?

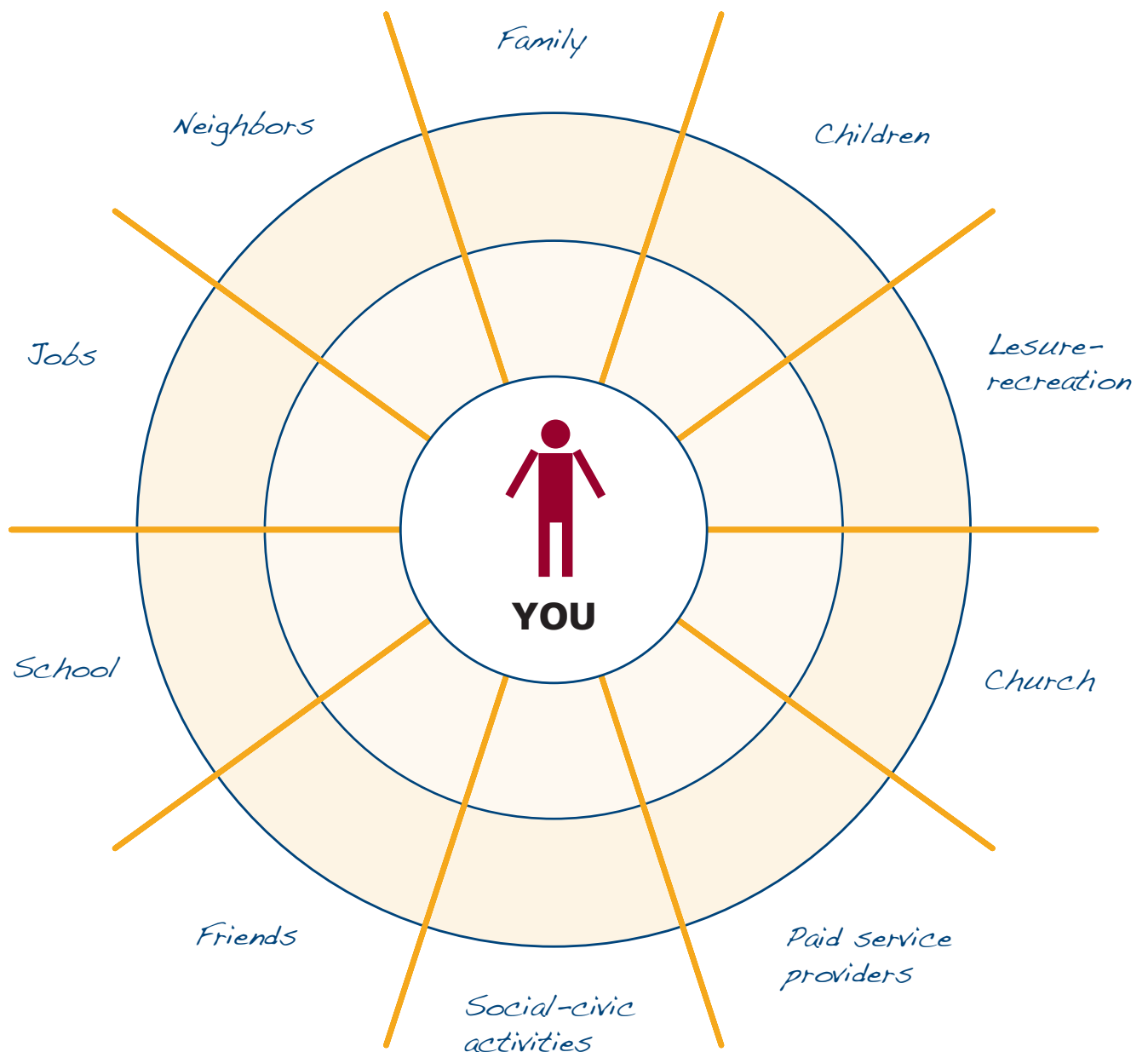
In some small communities, the staff know virtually everyone in town — so if a person with disabilities is going to be connected to a community member, it will be someone the staff knows. Even in large communities, the people in the staff's networks can be rich resources for potential relationships and information about linkages to others.

2. **Make a map for each person you support** — Notice the areas of relationships — for most people who receive services, their social network is paid providers, family, and other people with disabilities.

Activity 6

There are some individuals who “everyone knows.” They say hi to everyone, lots of people in the community say hi to them. But if we examine these types of social networks more closely, we see that usually these other people are on the outermost circle of this individual’s relationship map, they are at best acquaintances. A goal in this type of case would be to see: how can these people be moved into more inner circles, how can we deepen these relationships?

Regularly updating the map for anyone you support can help you see how you’re doing on supporting the individual in expanding the size and depth of their social network.



Activity 7

First step: Identify interests and gifts

Pick one person you support for whom you would like to increase community connections. Work through these exercises about that one person from Activity 7 through Activity 24.

Person _____

Date _____

Group members participating _____

Interests	Gifts, skills, and talents What does the person do well?	Gifts — What you and others receive from knowing this person
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

“Life is partly what we make it, and partly what it is made by the friends we choose.”



~ Tennessee Williams (1911-1983), American playwright

Activity 7

“We don’t see things as they are, we see things as we are.”

~ Anais Nin, (1903–1977),
French-Cuban author



If you work through these exercises, you can brainstorm many different ideas.

You don’t have to select an idea right away. Have fun brainstorming first! A later section addresses how to select where to start.

Activity 8

Who is already there?

For the person you selected in Activity 7.

What are the community places the person goes now?

Who are the community members that are there?

What could you ask them to do to become better acquainted? (coffee? lunch? etc.)

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“Friendship is born at that moment when one person says to another: “What! You too? I thought I was the only one.”



~ C.S. Lewis (1898–1963), British author

Activity 8



“Friendship is the hardest thing in the world to explain. It’s not something you learn in school. But if you haven’t learned the meaning of friendship, you really haven’t learned anything.”



~ Muhammad Ali (1942–), American professional boxer

Activity 9

Who would appreciate these gifts?

For the person you selected in Activity 7.

Gifts, skills, and talents

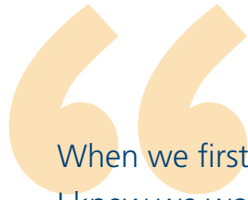
What does the person do well?

Gifts — What you

and others receive from knowing
this person

Who would appreciate receiving this person's gifts?

Activity 9



When we first talked to each other
I knew we would always be friends.
Our friendship has kept on growing
And I'll be here for you to the end.

You listen when I have a problem
And help dry the tears from my face.
You take away my sorrow
And put happiness in its place.

We can't forget the fun we've had
Laughing 'til our faces turn blue.
Talking of things only we find funny
People think we're insane-If they only knew!

I guess this is my way of saying thanks
For catching me when I fall.
Thanks once again for being such a good friend
And being here with me through it all.



~ Rachel Ellis, American poet and fiction writer

Activity 10

What are Ken's gifts?

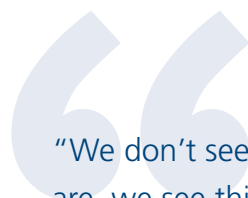
Ken was a student with quadriplegia who could not move. He was graduating from high school, and a facilitator got together his school friends to help look at what type of career would Ken have. What would he do with his life after he graduated?

The facilitator asked the students, "What does Ken do well?"

This was a hard question because Ken doesn't DO anything! He doesn't move!

Finally, one student said, "You know what Ken does well? He sits still really well!"

What kind of people would appreciate a gift for sitting still? What kind of job did they help Ken get? What are your guesses?



"We don't see things as they are, we see things as we are."



~ Anais Nin (1903–1977),
French-Cuban author

Activity 10

You know who appreciates a gift for sitting still? Artists!

They helped Ken develop a career as an artist's model. Not only does he have a gift for sitting still, you can move his body into any position and it will stay there — that is a great gift for an artist!

He also became a “hand” model, since he has beautiful hands. One product which featured a photo of his hands was a calendar, with a mountain lake scene behind his hands — it was a calendar for a soap company.

Ken makes so much money as an artist's model and with residuals from various products like the calendars, he is not dependent on social welfare funding.

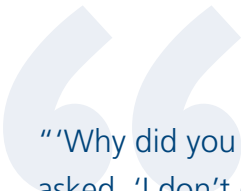
This, a guy who can't “DO” anything! What glasses did the people have on who supported him?

Activity 11

Where can we find an interested person?

For the person you chose in Activity 7.

Who would be interested in getting to know this person, deepening their relationships, or reconnecting



“‘Why did you do all this for me?’ he asked. ‘I don’t deserve it. I’ve never done anything for you.’
‘You have been my friend,’ replied Charlotte. ‘That in itself is a tremendous thing.’”

~ E.B. White (1899–1985), American writer,
Charlotte’s Web

Activity 11



A tip about volunteer work

One way to contribute to others is by volunteering. Some volunteering opportunities are great to get to know community members and some are not.

For example –

Volunteering at recycling centers has gotten quite common for people with disabilities. At some major recycling plants, several different agencies for people with disabilities are all congregating together. While people are contributing, it is not a great opportunity to get to know community members!

Another place where some individuals volunteer is at humane societies. While this is great for those like dogs, to get to be with dogs, it is often not a great opportunity to get to know community members. At some shelters, there are hours and hours where there is only one staff person working.

Think about other places for volunteering for getting to know people –

- Where do the people in your community with the most valued social roles volunteer? The opera? Different charity balls?
- Remember the question: Who is the person going to get to know there?
- For example, for someone who likes dogs, maybe walking dogs for people in the neighborhood would be a better opportunity to get to know people than at a shelter.

Activity 13

Places where people engage in one of the person's interests

Pick one interest from the list in Activity 7: _____

Places this interest is expressed

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Who does anyone know at any of these places?

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____



"I would rather walk with a friend in the dark, than alone in the light."



~ Helen Keller (1880 –1968), American author and political activist

Activity 13

“

I would rather walk with a friend in
the dark, than alone in the light.”



~ Helen Keller (1880 –1968), American author
and political activist

Activity 14

Places that would be welcoming

For the person you selected in Activity 7.

Places that would be welcoming (for instance,
in the person's neighborhood, etc.)



"A friend is one that knows you as you are,
understands where you have been, accepts what you
have become, and still, gently allows you to grow."



~ William Shakespeare (1564–1616), English playwright

Activity 14

Activity 15

Places this person would fit in just the way they are

For the person you selected in Activity 7.



Tip

Look for relationships on a one-to-one basis. If you work in a group home, don't look for someone to come over to visit **EVERYONE**. Just ask them to get to know one person.

Activity 15

Activity 16

The three best ideas to pursue

Review all the ideas you generated in Activities 8 through 15.

Pick your three best ideas. Then continue to Section 4.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____



“Don’t walk behind me; I may not lead. Don’t walk in front of me; I may not follow. Just walk beside me and be my friend.”



~ Albert Camus (1913–1960), French Nobel Prize winning author

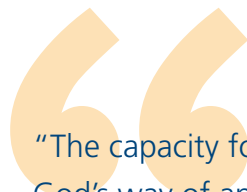
Activity 16

Activity 17

What would you ask them to do?

Think back to the people who are your friends now. When you first started to get to know each other, what did you ask them, or what did they ask you, to do?

If you met someone now that you wanted to get to know better, what would you ask them to do?



“The capacity for friendship is God’s way of apologizing for our families.”



~ Jay McInerney (1955–), American writer, *The Last of the Savages*

Activity 17

Activity 18

What increases your chances of saying yes?

If someone asks you to do something new, something you haven't done before, what increases the likelihood of your saying "yes" to them?

If someone asked you to meet someone new, what would increase the likelihood you would say "yes"? What would maximize getting to "yes"? What is more likely to have a positive response?



Share your ideas with others! Learn what others see about what increases the chances of getting a yes!

Activity 18

Activity 19

What would a community member get from getting to know this person?

First, think about: What would a community member get from getting to know the person you selected in Activity 7?

What does the individual have to contribute? Why would a community member want to get to know them better?

Activity 19

Activity 20

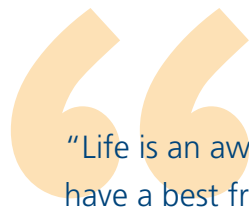
Your three best ideas for making requests

Go back to your three best ideas you listed in Activity 16 and think about what would you ask the community member for in each of these three situations?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____



“Life is an awful, ugly place to not have a best friend.”



~ Sarah Dessen (1970–), American writer,
Someone Like You

Activity 20

Activity 21

Action plan

After you review all the ideas you generated in Activities 8 through 15, and pick your three best ideas from Activities 16 and 20, make an action plan.

What will be done?

Who will do it?

By when?

How will you follow-up to stay in action?

By when and with whom?



“My friends are my estate.”

~ Emily Dickinson (1830–1886),
American poet

Activity 21

Activity 22

Practice asking

How would you invite a community member to go out for lunch?

You can practice with a partner or a small group. One of you can pretend to be the community member. Practice asking them to lunch, or for something else.

Talk as if you are talking to the community member. Get feedback on how it sounds! The more you practice, the more effective you will get!

What worked? If something didn't work, what would have been better?



Big tip – become an asker!

Practice – How would you invite a community member to go out for lunch?

Activity 22

Activity 23

What kind of person are you looking for?

For a particular individual with disabilities that you are interested in connecting with more community members —

- What kind of community member are you looking for? What types of qualities are you looking for?

- If it helps, you can also identify, who would NOT be the right person to ask? What types of qualities would be best to avoid?

- If a community member were going to befriend this person, what would they have to know? What would be good for them to know?



“There are good ships and wood ships,
ships that sail the sea,
but the best ships are friendships,
may they always be!”



~ Irish proverb

Activity 23

Activity 24

What will you say about the person to the community member?

Here are some situations to think about what you will say about the person —

- If the community member has not met the person yet, what would you say about the individual?

- If you have not had a conversation with the community member before-hand about the person, what would you say about the individual upon their first meeting?

- If the person can speak for themselves, what would you have them say about themselves?

- Here are some interesting examples — what would you tell a community member about getting to know an individual who —

» Spits: _____

» Hits: _____

» Takes off their clothes: _____

» Screams: _____

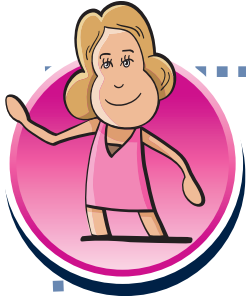
With some individuals, if a community member was going to befriend them, that community member might need to be a very special or particularly understanding or empathetic person. How would you let someone know that? What would you say? Here's a sample —

_____ needs a very special person to be their friend.

That person will need to be _____

That person will need to understand _____

and that _____



Examples of things that are good for a community friend to know

- 1.** After spending time with a friend playing tennis or having lunch, when it was getting to be time to leave, Kay would start swearing. Then it was good for the friend to talk about the next time they were going to get together.
- 2.** Mabel will always ask you or even beg you to buy her things – you don't have to. Just tell her no.
- 3.** When John is in a place that is too loud, he gets very stressed.

What would be good for a community member to know about the individual you selected?

Activity 25

What do community members think?

Imagine you work in a group home with four residents. One of the residents, Amy, is interested in the library, and because you are the only staff working that day, you think it will be a good activity for everyone. You walk into the library with all four residents.

What does the librarian think? What do the other patrons think? How do they respond?

Suppose you would like Amy to get to know the librarian better. How does the librarian respond to this group of four?

At the same time, what's happening with the group of four residents? What do they think? How do they respond?



“Some people go to priests, others to poetry — I to my friends.”



~ Virginia Woolf (1882-1941), American author

Activity 25

What others have said —

- For the community members, they are afraid, or back off.
- It's too much!
- The librarian might think you want her to befriend the whole group.
- She can't "see" Amy — only the whole group.
- For the group of four residents, there's safety in numbers.
- The person not interested in the library will start acting up.
- "Why does Amy get all the attention from the librarian, I want attention too. "

It doesn't work — for either the community members OR the individual with disabilities!

Note: This same phenomenon happens with only three residents, also — or even just two!

If you work in a service that supports more than one individual at a time, it takes something to figure out how to just have one-to-one time — which will work better for the individual AND for the community member!



"Community is the sense that one is part of a readily available, mutually supportive, network of relationships."

~ John O'Brien, one of the founders of Person-Centered Planning