



Relationship Development Ideas for People, Direct Support Professionals and Families

Revised 3/06

**Having relationships and a life with meaning are essential
to our health and happiness.**

Step 1. What is happening now? Take a new look with new eyes.

a. Do a relationship map and look at all the people on a person's map. **Is there a relationship the person could develop further?** What are ways to do that? Call them, send them a card, and invite them for coffee.....

b. Look at where the person goes already. Are there people at these places who acknowledge him/her already? Is the place receptive and welcoming to people with disabilities? If the staff approaches the outing as an opportunity to meet people, does a current favorite place have potential for connections? What type of place does a person like and feels the most comfortable (few people/many people, quiet/noisy, outside/inside, etc.)?

c. Consider the people in his/her neighborhood? Is there a possible connection for someone? A friendly person, a person walking their dog, a person who takes a walk, an elderly person who might enjoy fresh baked cookies.....?

d. Clearly knowing a person's preferences increases the odds for success.

Step 2. What are a person's interests? Are there places in their community where others go who have similar interests? Again, is the place welcoming? Say hi.... the next time you see them say hi and make introductions. Remember their name, so the next time, greetings can include names. Take it slow..... people enjoy people who are kind and not pushy. If a person likes to plant flowers, sell them at a farmers market, or encourage (s)he to give one to a neighbor or person in a nursing home. Community is about places, but community is more about people. If (s)he likes to build things, take a class at Home Depot or Michaels...meet others who like to do the same types of things. Prior to a person going, maybe a family member or DSP can go and ask if there is someone who would be receptive & welcoming.

Step 3. What are the person's gifts? Everyone has gifts!!! A talent? A skill? Or is there something about the person everyone loves? A sweet smile. A joy for classical music. **Ask, what are you most proud of?** I make great chocolate chip cookies. **Think about who would enjoy their gifts?** Or their talents or their skills? **Do something for a neighbor, your town or someone in your community.** Spread kindness. Plant a small flower garden for someone. Read a book to an elderly person or to children in a daycare center. Walk in your neighborhood or around where you spend your days. Say hello, open a door for someone. If there is an older person in the neighborhood, maybe you could bring them a flower (just a daisy) or 2 cookies or a painting or help shovel their snow or walk their dog. There are so many ways a person can be valued in their community. **Being valued by our community & others, not only opens doors to new people, it helps us feel we belong.**



IT IS IMPORTANT!

IT TAKES TIME.....PATIENCE IS A VIRTUE.

FEELING VALUED AND CONNECTED IS ESSENTIAL TO LIFE!

If you would like more detailed information, tools +/- or assistance in relationship development, please call PAL
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