

Connecting Individuals with Disabilities and Community Members

Question and Answer



Q: Do you find that providers' anti fraternization policies get in the way of them helping foster friendships by introducing them to people they know?

A: This is a complex issue and agencies will have a large range of ways that they approach this issue. There can be concern that it may be related to more of the staff's interest than those of the person. However, receiving an agreement from the person and the team before connecting is the best approach.

Q: Have you ever worked with Certified Recreational Therapists as part of the effort toward friendship and inclusion?

A: Yes, there is very good information available on the difference between leisure and recreation. Thinking about our own recreation, it involves activities that are fun and we work with Recreational Therapists to assist persons in developing connections through recreation.

Q: Any advice for ways our individuals can get to know their neighbors? It doesn't seem like our individuals ever get to know the individuals without disabilities living next door.

A: This often depends on the neighborhood. Suggestions include hosting an open house, picnic, or other "get to know you" opportunities. It may be helpful for support staff or team members to go to the neighbors and assist in facilitating introductions.

Q: Can you speak further on the difference between a friend and a volunteer please?

A: A volunteer is often connected to an agency rather to a person and is often a formal agreement and time limited. However, volunteers can become friends and develop a relationship. A friendship is based on liking the person and based on a personal connection and longer lasting.

Q: Do you have any advice on helping staff / encouraging the staff to become askers? Especially resistant staff?

A: Start with something that is an interest of the staff such as the church the staff attends. Practice staff to staff in asking community members to get to know the person. Look at ways that would be more likely to receive a "yes" answer.