Networking with the Community to Build Relationships and Natural Supports

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Objective

To support individuals in increasing friendships, community membership and belonging.
Identifying Individual’s Interests and Gifts

How do we identify an individual’s interests and gifts?

We always start with the person!

1. Identify the individual’s interests and preferences.
2. Get to know any common interests the person may have with others.
3. Review the person’s one page profile for information.
4. Review “What’s” important to the person with that person.
5. “What’s” listed in the Relationship Map.
6. Brainstorm with the person on what talents he/she has.
Seven Strategies for Building Relationships
Strategy 1

Identify who the person already knows and how the relationship(s) could be strengthened and deepened

- Think about people who are friendly towards the person.
- Think of methods the person could use to get to know these people better.
Strategy 2

Identify who would appreciate this person’s gifts

- Think about identifying the places and the people who would appreciate these gifts.
Strategy 3

Identify a person who is interested in developing a relationship with the person

- Get together with the individual and significant others and brainstorm.
- Consider staff matching.
Strategy 4

Identify associations and clubs the individual may have an interest in joining

- Consider cultural groups, political associations, social, men’s groups, women’s groups, and religious groups.

- Formal groups – Kiwanis, Rotary, Wednesday Night Prayer groups etc.

- Informal groups – quilting groups, scrap-booking groups, walking groups.

- To find these groups, ask around. Look in your local community centers, churches etc.
Strategy 5

Identify locations in the community where people engage in the individual’s interests

- Local Park and Recreation Departments
- Animal Shelters
- Local YMCA or Gyms
- Community Centers
- Local High School or College Football/Basketball games
- Local Sport Leagues
Helpful Tips for Strategy 5

Brainstorming about community activities takes discipline

Consider these tips:
Don’t just think about the person think about an interest.

- Think about one interest at a time.
- Identify all the possible places where this interest(s) are being conducted.
- Ask who do we know there?
- Ask does anyone in the group have a connection to anyone at those places?
- The more information the better the results.
Strategy 6

Identify community places that are hospitable and welcoming

- What kind of community centers, businesses or activities are around the person’s neighborhood?
- Explore these options and advocate for those that are friendly, welcoming and hospitable.
- Where do locals congregate?
- Does the individual feel comfortable there?
- What role would the individual play in the activity?
Strategy 7

Identify places that are accepting of the person just the way they are

- This is a particularly useful approach for people who have behavioral challenges while in the community.
- Focus on what community activity or location will build upon the person’s skills and talents.
- Emphasize the importance of ensuring the person is a valued member of his/her community.
Selecting ideas to explore or pursue

Four criteria to help select these:

1. Does the individual like the idea and is he/she willing to try?
2. How good of an opportunity does the idea provide to get to know community members?
3. Do the times/dates work for the individual?
4. Do you or someone you know have a good connection there already?
Questions and Feedback

The Georgia Collaborative ASO
Thank you

For Georgia Collaborative ASO general inquiry or questions please email:

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