inclusiondesignlab

seven approaches
to connect with
your community

inclusion melbourne

Inclusion Melbourne is a community support organisation that has worked with people with an intellectual disability for more than 65 years.

Unlike other disability day services, Inclusion Melbourne is not centre-based and doesn't ask you to select activities from a list, follow a group schedule or stay in a centre. Instead, Inclusion Melbourne supports you to live a fulfilled life, to participate in activities based on your own needs, wants and interests, and to develop meaningful friendships within your local community. In other words, Inclusion Melbourne offers fully personalised support in the community.

Inclusion Melbourne's vision is to provide people with the opportunity to live in an inclusive community and to take their place in society as respected citizens.

inclusiondesignlab

supporting partner

Gawith Foundation

Inclusion Designlab is Inclusion Melbourne's engine room for research, innovation, communications and policy.

Our vision is to bring together people with a disability, community organisations, and the world's leading disability researchers to develop cutting-edge models of practice, choice and citizenship that shatter glass ceilings and promote a more inclusive Australia.

We do this by developing, trialling, and implementing new systems of support and communicating our insights through a range of publications and media. We are also significant contributors to public policy and government inquiries.

The products and services created by Inclusion Designlab contribute to the continuous development of the disability sector through evidence based practice, accessible materials, and vital training for families and collegiate organisations.

introduction

People are most likely to meet new friends in those places where they see and engage with the same people on a regular basis.

People with an intellectual disability are surrounded by opportunities to connect with their community based on their strengths, interests, skills and current community involvement. Connecting people with the local community and encouraging reciprocal relationships that build trust are valuable ways to support inclusion.

Seven Approaches will help you identify the opportunities for community connection that exist in a particular person's life, then assist you to develop an action plan for support and inclusion.

how to use this resource

This guide is intended to be used as a workbook, focusing on a single person. The best results are achieved when a group of people who know the person well each fill out a copy of the workbook.

It can also be distributed to each member of a Circle of Support to help record knowledge and assist with planning.

tips for success

1. See the person in light of their interests, contributions and gifts
2. Prioritise opportunities that involve relationships
3. Introduce people through one-to-one meetings
4. Focus on one person in each environment you explore
5. Become an 'asker' – it never hurts to ask!

You never know when the next good idea will strike!

follow these steps

In planning for a more inclusive life and community opportunities for a person, utilise the following steps in order to explore options and consider new ideas.

1   step one: getting started

- Have a conversation about this book with me.
- Use the information to guide the discussion.
- Discuss what the book is for and how we could use it.

2   step two: getting to know me

- Complete the lists of interests, skills and other personal details.
- Seek involvement from a wide circle of people who know me.

3   step three: seven approaches to identify activities and opportunities

- Work through the seven different approaches to supporting community inclusion and participation.
- Use the *Seven Approaches* to consider me and the role I can play in the community.
- Complete the *Seven Approaches* in any order and identify repeating patterns and connections in my life.

4   step four: assessing ideas and making plans

- Review all of the results from the *Seven Approaches*.
- Identify the possible concerns that I may encounter if you were to support me to action the best ideas. Use the questions in this step to help you develop strategies to allay any fears and identified concerns.
- Develop action plans to support me to enter the community. This plan will incorporate model responses to community questions.

5   step five: what next?

- Ensure appropriate support to engage in my preferred activities.
- Monitor and support the building of relationships.
- Support the initiation of contact and communication with people you attend activities with me so that I can make new networks and friends.

step one: getting started

Before you start to complete this guide, spend some time with me and discuss what this book is about. Explain to me what the book is for and what it might help me to do.

The easy English information below might be useful when having this conversation. **It is addressed to me directly.**

about this book

This book is to help you meet people and be a part of your community.

step one: giving this book to people

1

Talk with someone about this book and what it is for.

You should give this book to people that you trust and know well.

More than one person should get a copy of this book.

step two: learning about you!

2

Talk about all the things you like, are good at doing and things you want to do.

Talking about what you like will help find activities in the community that you will enjoy.

step three: seven approaches

3

The *Seven Approaches* are different ways to be a part of your community.

The book will help you find different places in the community that you might want to be a part of.

It will help you find ways to meet new people and get to know people better.

step four: ideas and plans

4

Choose 3 ideas that you really want to do.

This step helps you plan to make sure you are supported in the community.

step five: what next?

5

You can change your mind about things in this book.

The person using this book can keep writing ideas if you want them to.

step two: getting to know me

My name: _____

Date: _____

Other people participating/ contributing: _____
_____
_____

Draw or glue a picture of me.

⭐ this is a list of my interests

1 _____
2 _____
3 _____
4 _____
5 _____
6 _____
7 _____
8 _____
9 _____
10 _____

Draw or glue pictures of those things that come to mind when you think of me.

example: Aaron gave a copy of this book to his dad, his sister Monique and his friend, Raj.

Monique and Raj are also in Aaron's Circle of Support.

Monique and Raj carry this book around and add notes when they think of things or find new opportunities for Aaron to be involved in.

Aaron's Interests'

Dancing on a stage

Movies and DVD

Having people over for dinner

💬 goals, dreams and wishes

Have a conversation with me and list all of my goals, wishes and dreams.

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

4 _____

5 _____

6 _____

7 _____

8 _____

9 _____

10 _____

Draw or glue pictures that represent my goals, dreams and wishes.

example: Aaron's dreams and wishes

Actor

Move out of my parents house

Have a girlfriend.

🏆 my skills, talents and abilities

Have a conversation with me and list all of my skills and talents, as well as my abilities and the activities I do well.

What activities do I do? What tasks do I perform in my activities that I do well?
What are the things that I do well everyday?

1 _____
2 _____
3 _____
4 _____
5 _____
6 _____
7 _____
8 _____
9 _____
10 _____

I like singing

example: Aaron's skills and talents

Dancing

Categorising his DVD & book collection.

Cooking

🎁 my gifts and contributions

Please describe what others receive from knowing me.
What are my gifts and contributions?

*What are the positive things people say about me? When I am with other people,
how do I contribute? How do I make people feel when they are around me?*

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

4 _____

5 _____

6 _____

7 _____

8 _____

9 _____

10 _____

example:

1. Funny – Aaron likes chatting and making people laugh.

2. Good memory – Aaron will remember you and the people that you know.

3. Helpful – Aaron always likes to give people a hand and help out where he can.

Use this diagram when thinking about people, interests and community involvement. This process can take some time.

Think of all the activities and places that I go. Who do I meet there? Where do they fit in my life?
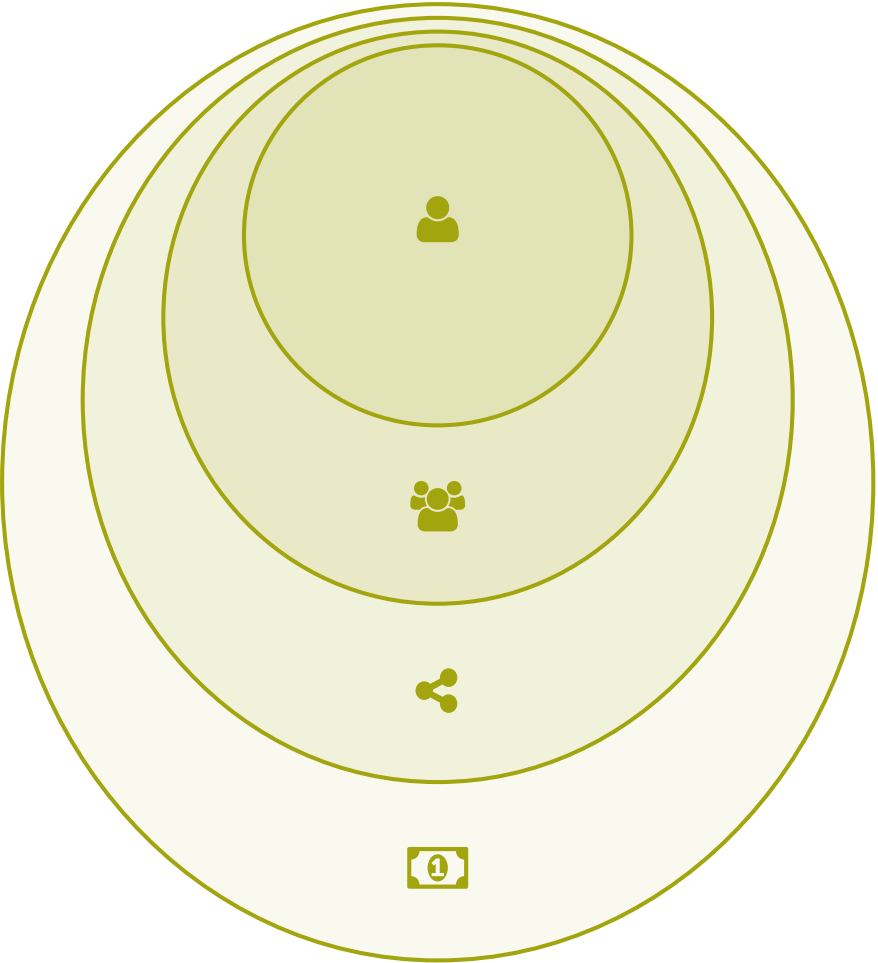
circle of intimacy

People closest to me and would have a significant impact on my life if they were not there. Eg: Parents, siblings, primary carer.

circle of friendship

People I see on a regular basis and maintain a relationship where we do fun activities together. Eg: Friends and relatives.

circle of participation

People or a person within a group that I see as part of activities that I participate in on a regular basis. It is in this Circle that relationships can be strengthened.

circle of exchange

A person or people that are paid to be in my life. They may see me on a regular basis and know me in various capacities, however, money is exchanged for a service in the process.

step three: seven approaches to connect with your community

(these approaches can be completed in any order)

approach one: community involvement

The purpose of this approach is to understand who I know and distinguish them from the activities and things that I do everyday in the community. *Who are the people that are already acquaintances?*

1.   List the community venues the person currently visits.

2.   List the community members who are there.

1. Community Venue 1	1. Community Venue 2	1. Community Venue 3	1. Community Venue 4
2. Community Members	2. Community Members	2. Community Members	2. Community Members

example: People Aaron knows....

At dancing
Bonnie (teacher)
Lauren (dancing friend)
Pieter (hip-hopper)

At the library
Lorraine (librarian)
Henry (Cleaner)
Steve (a library regular)

At the shops
Mohammed (barber)
Cameron (butcher)
Andrew (fruit & veggie shop)
Omid (the man that walks his dog when I go to the shops).

approach two: finding interested people

The purpose of this approach is to find the people I know in the community who would be interested in being my friend.

Who wants to be my friend? Who do I want to get to know better?   What are some of the things we can do together outside of the community activity that will help us build a friendship?

1. Go through the names listed in **approach one**.
2. List the people that I want to be friends with.
3. Think about why I might want to get to know them better.
4. Think of places where we can meet and activities we can do together.

List the people who would be interested in getting to know me, deepening an existing relationship, or reconnecting with me.

1. Name	2. Why do you want to know them better	3. Places and things to do

List other people that I know that may not have been identified in **approach one**.

example: People Aaron wants to get to know better...

Pieter from hip hop crew

Aaron wants to get to know Pieter better because they have a common interest. He is a funny guy and Aaron wants to go to other dance events with Pieter.

Steve from the library.

Steve goes to the library at the same time as Aaron. They have started sitting next to each other and sharing books & DVDs. Aaron would like to hang out with Steve and maybe go for coffee or to the movies.

approach three: community activities

The purpose of this approach is to think about places I can go to express my interests and how I might meet some like-minded people.

1. Pick five interests
2. List the places where this interest can be expressed
3. List the people who might share this interest

1. List the interest	2. Where are all the places this interest can be expressed?	3. Who are the people who share this interest?
_____ _____ _____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____ _____ _____
1. List the interest	2. Where are all the places this interest can be expressed?	3. Who are the people who share this interest?
_____ _____ _____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____ _____ _____
1. List the interest	2. Where are all the places this interest can be expressed?	3. Who are the people who share this interest?
_____ _____ _____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____ _____ _____

1. List the interest

2. Where are all the places this interest can be expressed?

3. Who are the people who share this interest?

_____

_____

_____

_____

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1. List the interest

2. Where are all the places this interest can be expressed?

3. Who are the people who share this interest?

_____

_____

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Repeat this exercise for each interest I have, if necessary.

example: People that will appreciate Aaron's gifts

Aaron loves movies and DVD's.

Places to go:
- Local film societies
- Free movies at local neighbourhood houses
- Universities/ film schools
- Professional videographers
- Cinemas
- TV networks

People Aaron might meet:
- People of all ages that go to movie discussion clubs
- Film makers
- Movie camera sales and service shops
- Movie camera hire companies

approach four: map the community assets

The purpose of this approach is to think about what's happening in the community and how to get involved.

List all of the local associations, clubs and groups, both formal and informal, that I am involved in now.

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

4 _____

5 _____

6 _____

7 _____

8 _____

9 _____

10 _____

Draw or glue picture of where I go in the community

example: Community assets in Aaron's life.

Aaron walks the dog with his brother. They have been attending the local dog group that meets on the weekend at the park. Aaron is meeting more people that live near him.

Aaron attends the local neighbourhood house and meets up with a movie club on Mondays and a dance class on Fridays.

Aaron's friend goes to church on the weekend. Aaron has started to attend because he likes to join in with the singing.

Community connections

Local communities are vibrant and thriving. You just need to know where to look. Here are some ideas to help you get started.

This list is based on work by John McKnight, Northwestern University Institute for Policy Research.

Personal interest groups

- Dog clubs, car clubs, book clubs
- Movie clubs, chess groups, photography club
- Arts & crafts hobby groups
- Collectors groups – stamp collectors, flower dryers, antique collectors, model planes
- Sci-fi & cosplay groups

Business organisations

- Small businesses
- Chamber of commerce
- High street trading organisation

Artistic / media organisations

- Choral Societies/ Choir
- Theatrical groups
- Writing groups
- Animation and cartooning
- Media – radio, newspaper and TV

Health, fitness and sports

- Bicycling, jogging, walking groups
- Garden & conservation clubs
- Team sports – bowling, swimming, cricket, fishing, volleyball
- AFL fan clubs and cheer squads

Mutual support groups

- Nursing, home and hospital
- Self-help groups – mental health support groups

Charitable groups & fundraising

- Red Cross, Cancer Council, Rotary, Lions
- Fundraising events eg: Mothers Day fun run

Demographic specific groups

- Women's groups
- Men's groups – men's shed
- Youth/ young adult groups – YMCA, Scouts, Future Farmers
- Older persons' groups
- Culturally diverse associations – Koorie, Greek welfare society, etc

Faith/ Religion/ Spirituality

- Faith based social justice groups
- Prayer groups
- Religious services
- Bible study
- Religious festivals

Civic groups & events

- School groups – parents & friends, early childhood centres
- Local Government – State emergency service (SES), Country Fire Association (CFA)
- Australia Day Committees

Education

- Neighbourhood house classes & skill development
- TAFE
- Universities
- U3A

Political/ social causes

- Political – Greens, Labor, Liberal, Local movements
- Social cause groups – peace, rights, advocacy

approach five: community membership

The purpose of this approach is to think about the places that would welcome me. These are places that are hospitable, friendly and local. Welcoming places may include some of the following:

- Local
- Small family owned businesses
- Neighbourhood clubs and groups

- Comprised of people who are accepting of others
- Places where you can 'hang out'
- Open to everyone making a contribution

tip for success

Consider the talents, skills, abilities, contributions and gifts that you have listed about me.

Think: Where will my skills and contributions be appreciated?

It is important to note that you should always seek out at least one person per environment that will be able to facilitate and support access.

Gift / Skill / Attribute	Places in the community

example:

1. Dancing – Aaron goes to a community dance class each week for fun and exercise
2. Organised – Aaron volunteers at an op shop and sorts the books and dvds.
3. Cooking – Aaron does a weekly cooking class at a local neighbourhood house

approach six: people that will appreciate me

The purpose of this approach is to think about the gifts, contributions and talents that I have, and consider the kinds of people that would appreciate what I have to offer.

1. Refer to step one (your list of my contributions, gifts and talents).
2. Think about who could benefit from what I have to offer.

1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	
7	
8	
9	
10	

example:

Aaron walks to the shops to collect the groceries. Cameron, the butcher knows that Aaron likes to help out and asks Aaron to take a delivery to his neighbour who is sick and a friend of his.

approach seven: individuality

The purpose of this last approach is to think about all the places where I fit in – just the way I am.

Think about all the environments where other people do the same things as me, or display similar characteristics.

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

4 _____

5 _____

6 _____

7 _____

8 _____

9 _____

10 _____

example:

Suzy wears a helmet because she has severe epilepsy and it protects her form hurting herself if she has a seizure. Suzy joined a bike club, a horse riding club and a canoeing club so she can wear her helmet and be like everyone else.

She now has 3 different helmets that make her feel more included. Suzy loves talking about her helmet now, and people ask her questions about the clubs she goes to.

step four: assessing ideas and making plans

selecting the top three ideas to pursue

It is unlikely that you will be able to implement all the ideas that have been generated in **step two**, so this is an opportunity to rank the ideas and start working on those that offer me the greatest chance of success.

Think about the following questions and have a conversation with me about each idea.

- Do I like the idea?
- Am I willing to give it a go?
- How many opportunities are there for me to meet or get to know people in the community on a personal level?
- How many opportunities are there for community members to get to know me?

- Can the idea happen easily?
- Are there appropriate resources and support for you and me to make it happen?
- What is the likely outcome for me?

Idea one:
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Idea two:
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Idea three:
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

deciding what to ask

For each of the three ideas, think about what you or I will need to ask the community members.

Idea one:
_____
_____
_____
_____

Idea two:
_____
_____
_____
_____

Idea three:
_____
_____
_____
_____

example:

Aaron wants to start a local choir.

Aaron has to arrive early because he catches the bus from his grandma's and there is not enough time to go home. Aaron needs to know when the hall is open? Who opens the hall? What he needs to bring along and the details for the afternoon tea roster so he contribute?

⚠ managing risk

Consider the barriers and fears that may be raised by community, family or support staff in response to our 3 ideas.

Think about: What can be done to maximise the success? What type of approach is most likely to have a positive response? What could you do or say to address concerns, barriers and fears?

Idea one:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Idea two:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Idea three:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

💬 what do people need to know about me?

1. What might community members need to know about me if they want to become my friend? Have a discussion with me about your answers.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

2. What will they get out of my friendship?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

3. What might community members find challenging about me? Have this discussion with me, and let us decide together what we think people should know about me. For example: understanding speech.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

🔲 develop the action plan

When developing an action plan consider the ideas that we have discussed, and record all details to support the establishment and maintenance of the activity.

Idea 1	What will be done?	Who will do it?	When will it be done?
	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____

Now consider: What is the process for follow up? Who will do this? When? Is this something that I can get help from my Circle of Support to oversee?

Idea 2	What will be done?	Who will do it?	When will it be done?
	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____

Now consider: What is the process for follow up? Who will do this? When? Is this something that I can get help from my Circle of Support to oversee?

Idea 3	What will be done?	Who will do it?	When will it be done?
	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____

Now consider: What is the process for follow up? Who will do this? When? Is this something that I can get help from my Circle of Support to oversee?

step five: what next?

The *Seven Approaches* never ends, it is continuous and always needs to be added to. Use my Circle of Support, invite new members and record new interests, skills, people and opportunities

• Build relationships

• Gather contact details or other people who are using the *Seven Approaches* to help me build relationships

• Gather details of people you meet while in the community to encourage friendships to blossom outside of the activity/ location.

contact list

Name	Phone number	Email	Relationship

other recent guides produced by inclusion designlab

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