



Activity Worksheets

Friends: Connecting People with Disabilities and Community Members:
A Manual for Families

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Using these activity worksheets



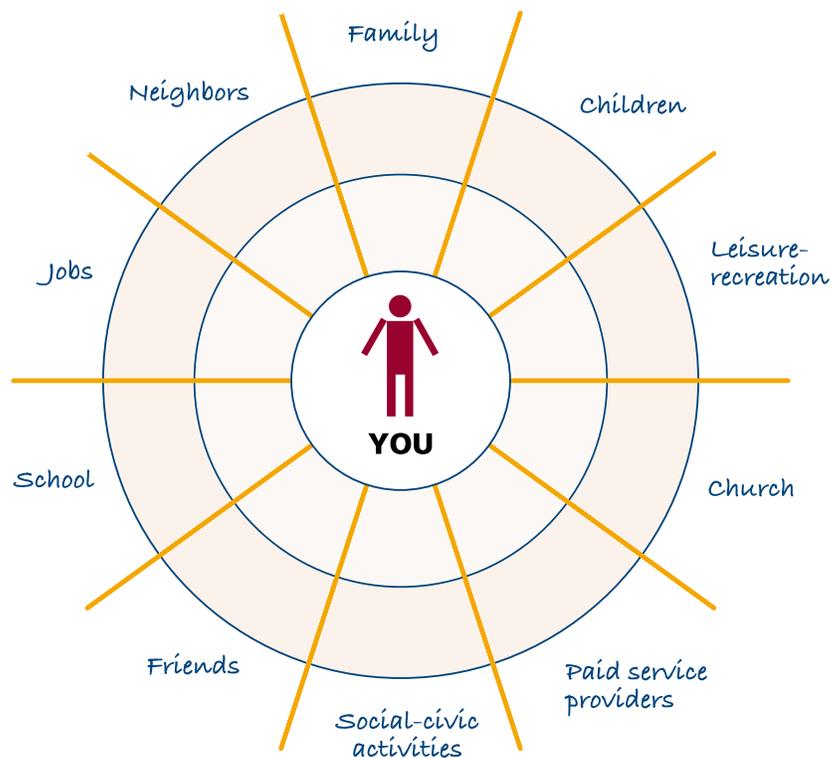
- These activity worksheets are for people using *Friends: Connecting people with disabilities and community members: A manual for families* to deliver training, or for anyone to use as stand-alone sheets for their own purposes.
- Most sheets are single stand-alone pages, with the “back” of many of the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

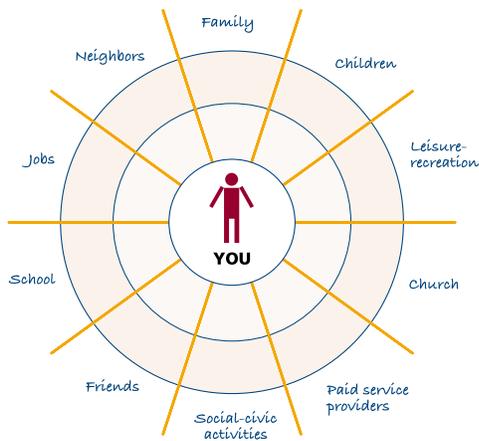
Activity 1

Relationship map

Here is another diagram that can show us a second context for why it is important to work on community connections. A Relationship Map is a way to diagram any person's social network. Here's how to fill it in —

- If you were doing a map for yourself, YOU are in the middle
- In the first, inner-most circle put the people you see the most frequently, love the most, are closest to
- In the next outer circle put people you associate with but know less well than the inner-most circle
- 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 might know people. So “recreation-leisure” does not mean that you have recreation activities, but rather: who do you know through that recreation? For example, if you’re on a softball team, who are the other team members, coaches, others you know?

The “Family” section represents not just your own family members, but others you know through your family – like friends of your sisters, etc.

Think about what YOUR map looks like, versus a map for your family member with disabilities.

Are there differences between YOUR map and the map of your family member with disabilities? What would be the differences in the Relationship Maps of average community members and the people with disabilities who live in your community?

You can write some of these differences here —

Here are some differences others have noted between their own Relationship Map and the map of a family member with disabilities —

- 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 of the map than people with a disability label.
 - » 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.
- 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. While someone with a disability may have many “acquaintances” on the outer-most circle, often the number of people in the inner-most circle is limited.
- What other differences do you see?

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 —

- **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?**

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



Many of us, if we had no friends, would do **SOME-THING**. For example, when we move to a new community we usually do something to meet new people there.

But, people with disabilities often have a history of few friends — so perhaps it's easy to understand why some people are reluctant to try new things or meet new people!

What others have said —

- 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
- Learning patience

“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 exercise with another person or in a group of people, you can compare what is similar in the many ways most people get to have friends.

Activity 5

Track your progress with the relationship map

Let's look again at the "relationship" map diagram we looked at on page 3. There is also one on the next page. Again, here is how to fill it in —

- Doing a map for yourself, YOU are in the middle
- In the first, inner-most circle put the people you see the most frequently, love the most, are closest to
- In the next outer circle put people you associate with but know less well than the inner-most circle
- In the outer-most circle put people that are acquaintances, people you see frequently or 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 "recreation-leisure" does not mean that you have recreation activities, but rather: who do you know through that recreation? For example, if you're on a soft-ball 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 also put extended family members.

You can use this map in two ways —

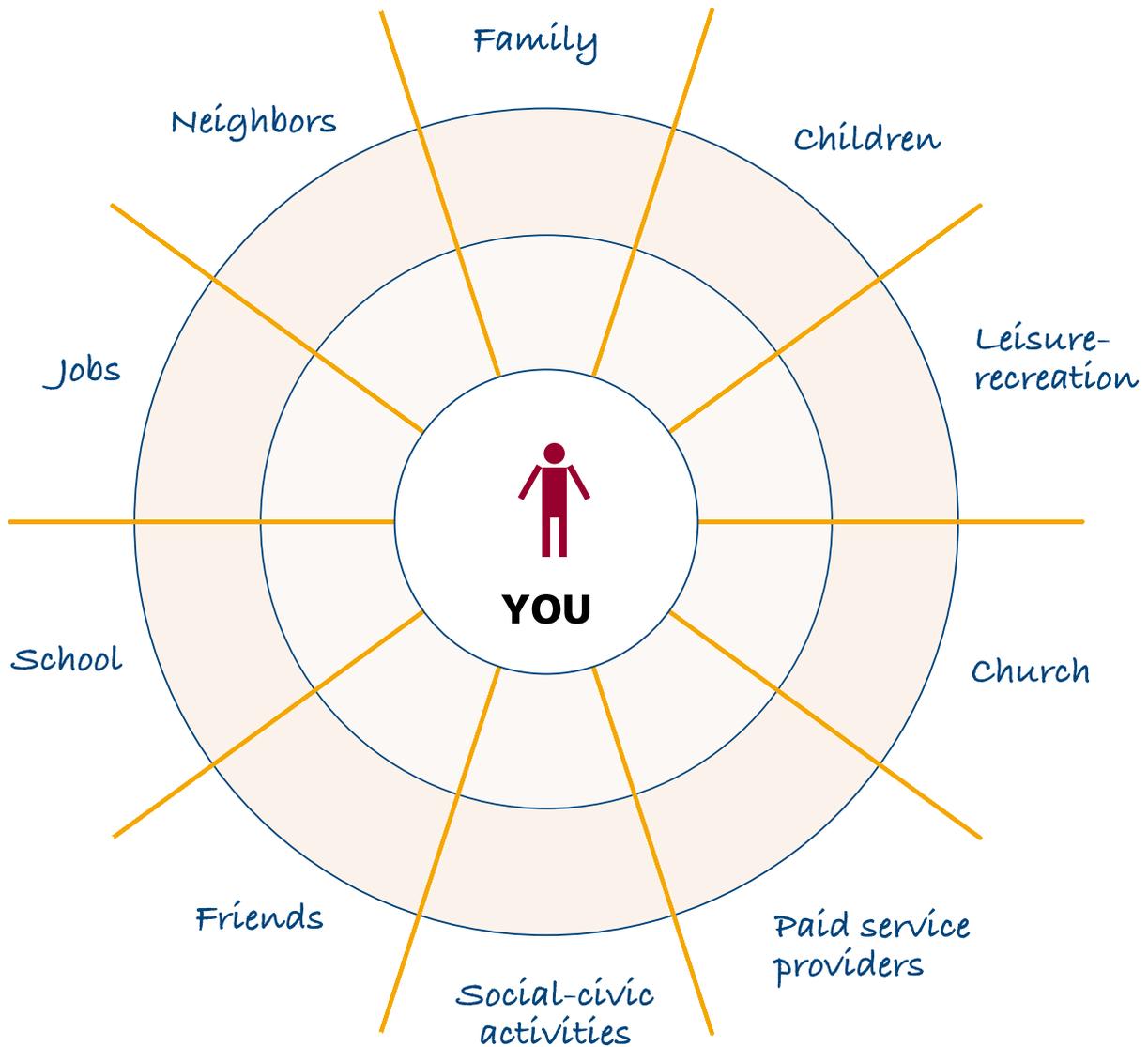
- **Have your family members and/or any others who may be supporting this effort each make a map for themselves** — By doing their own maps, they can identify their own acquaintances and friends who share interests with your family member with disabilities. Who do they know who likes cars, music, etc.?

In some small communities, you, your family members and friends may know virtually everyone in town – so if your family member with disabilities is going to have a closer relationship with another community member, it will be someone you or they probably already know. Even in larger communities, the people in your extended network can be rich resources for potential relationships and information about link-ages to others.

- **Make a map with or for your family member with disabilities** — Notice the areas of relationships. For many people with disabilities, their social network is primarily family, paid staff, and other people with disabilities.

In some communities, there are some individuals with disabilities who “everyone knows.” For example, the person says hi to everyone, lots of people in the community know their name and say hi to them. But if we examine these types of social networks more closely, we see that these others are usually 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 or with your family member can help you see how you’re doing on supporting them in expanding the size and depth of their social network.



Activity 6

Identify interests and gifts

Pick one person for whom you would like to increase community connections. Work through these exercises about that one person.

Person _____

Date _____

Group members participating _____

Interests	Gifts, skills, and talents: What does the person do well?	Gifts: What do you get from knowing this person? What do they give you?
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

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



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

Activity 7

Who will Mary get to know there?

Mary's interest is in music. When people think about community connections, a frequent thought 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 —



"Time doesn't take away from friendship, nor does separation."



~ Tennessee Williams (1911–1983), American playwright, *Memoirs*

What others have said —

- Church choir
- Church choir practices
- High school bands/orchestras
- College orchestras/bands
- Radio station, where Mary can have a regular role such as volunteering
- Supporting a local rock band — being a member of their fan club
- Concert series, where Mary can volunteer and get to know other volunteers



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

~ Anaïs Nin (1903–1977), French-Cuban-American essayist

Activity 8

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?

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?

“

The better part of one's life consists of his friendships.”

.....

~ Abraham Lincoln (1809–1865), 16th
President of the United States

Activity 9

What are your family member's gifts?

You can reference what you wrote on Activity 6, p. 28

Gifts: What does your family member do well?
Talents, abilities, skills?

Gifts: What do you and others receive from knowing
your family member

Who would appreciate receiving these gifts?



“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 (1942–2016), American professional boxer

Activity 10

Places where people engage in the person's interests

Pick one interest from the list from Activity 6 on p. 28: _____

Places this interest is expressed

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Who does anyone know at any of these places?

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Here are some examples in which parents helped their young adult child volunteer —

- Science Museum
- Children’s Museum
- Community Theater: performing, ushering
- Community Chamber Orchestra member
- Sunday school teaching assistant
- Helping with communion cups at church
- Weather-watcher
- Pet Adoption group



“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 13

Where can your family member belong?

Associations, clubs, and groups (formal and informal)



“A friend may be waiting behind a stranger’s face.”



~ Maya Angelou (1928–2014), American author and poet, *Letter to My Daughter*

Activity 14

Places that would be welcoming

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 15

What kind of job?

An agency in Maryland was committed to finding everyone a job, no matter what kind of behavior they had. One young man had a very high screechy voice quality, and was echolalic — so he repeated everything you said right after you, in a very high screechy voice. Most people could not stand to be around him for too long. The normal “human services” response would be to get him speech therapy, or to think he couldn’t get a job until he managed to reduce the echolalia. But no, this agency was committed they could find everyone a job.

What’s your guess about what they found for him?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

“The antidote for fifty enemies is one friend.”

~ Aristotle (384 BC–322 BC), Greek philosopher

What others have guessed —

- Working around deaf people
- Carnival barker
- Working with birds

Great guesses! What did they actually find? A job in a Chinese Laundromat!

Most of the people who worked there spoke mainly Chinese. They didn't think his voice quality was irritating — they thought he only talked like that because he was from New York!



“Since there is nothing so well worth having as friends, never lose a chance to make them.”

~ Francesco Guicciardini (1483–1540),
Italian historian

Activity 17

The three best ideas to pursue

Review all the ideas you generated in Strategies 1 through 7 (pp. 33-52). Pick your three best ideas.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

After you have selected your three best ideas, go on to Section 4!

Activity 18

What would a community member get from getting to know your family member?

First, think about: What would a community member get from getting to know your family member?

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

Activity 19

What kind of person are you looking for?

For your family member 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? _____

Activity 20

When you want to get to know someone better, what would you ask or invite 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 or invite them to do?



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



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

Activity 21

What increases the chances of getting a “yes”?

If someone asks you to do something you have never done before, what increases the likelihood of your saying “yes” to them? (For example, think about trying a new food, or bungee-jumping, or some other new endeavor)

<hr/>	<hr/>

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 you give a positive response?

<hr/>	<hr/>



Ask other people about this and share your ideas with others! Learn what others see about what increases the chances of getting a “yes!”

What others have said —

- If I know what's in it for me
- If you come along
- If I know what's really involved
- If it's not a long-term commitment — if I just have the chance to try it first

“

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 22

Look for yourself

When connecting individuals with disabilities and community members, what are the fears of —

- The person with a disability?

- Their family?

- Community members?

- Staff or other supporters?

- You personally!?

What would help each party get past their fears?

What would help someone be more willing or more likely to say “yes”?

What would help someone go outside their current comfort zone?

Activity 23

What will you say about your family member to the community member?

Here are some situations to think about what you will say about your family member —

- If the community member has not met your family member yet, what would you say about them?

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

- If your family member can speak for themselves, what would they say or what would you suggest or recommend they say?

- If it is someone who already knows your family member, what would you or your family member say?

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

Real-life examples of things that are good for a community friend to know —

Kay

After spending time with you (playing tennis, having lunch, etc.) when it is getting to be time to leave, Kay will start swearing. That is Kay’s way of expressing wanting to keep spending time with you. It will help if you talk about the next time you are going to get together.

Mabel

Mabel will always ask you or even beg you to buy her things — you don’t have to. Just tell her no.

John

When John is in a place that is too loud, he gets very stressed. It will be a good time to leave and go to a quieter place.



What if a community member thinks they are a volunteer?

If the community member asks about “volunteering” — about being a volunteer for the person, what would you say? How would you explain that you are not looking for a formal volunteer relationship, but more for companionship and friendship?

Here are some interesting examples (not that these necessarily apply to your family member, but great to work through, if they do apply, or if you want to help others connect).

- What would you tell a community member about getting to know an individual who —
 - » Will seem like they are not interested in you: _____

 - » Does not use words to communicate: _____

 - » Hits: _____

 - » Takes off their clothes: _____

 - » Screams: _____

With some individuals with disabilities, a community member might need to be a very special or particularly understanding or empathetic person if they are going to befriend your family member. How would you let the community member 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 _____

Activity 24

Your three best ideas for making requests

Go back to your three best ideas on page 53 and think about what would you ask the community member for in each of these three situations?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Activity 25

Practice asking/inviting

Go to the three ideas you had on p. 53, Activity 17, and p. 68, Activity 24, what will be your invitation in each of these cases? For example, how would you invite a community member to go out for lunch?

You can practice with someone, or have your family member practice their own invitation. Have another person pretend to be the community member that you want to invite to something. (For example, your family member could practice talking with you as if you are the community member they are inviting to something.) Practice asking them to lunch, or for something else. Talk (or have your family member talk) as if you are talking to that community member. Get feedback on how it sounds! The more you practice, the more effective you or your family member will get!

Tim

Tim was a young man who lived with his parents and went to church with them. His mother asked who it was at church that he would like to get to know better. He could immediately say, it was the “guy with the vest and the long hair.” He said “I want to get to know that guy!” The parents knew this man’s name was Bert. The young man and his parents together figured out what would make sense to ask Bert to do. The parents suggested that their son ask Bert if he would like to have lunch with them after church one Sunday. They practiced what Tim would say to Bert. In addition, the parents figured that all of them having lunch together would also give the parents a chance to get to know Bert better.



“My friends are my estate.”



~ Emily Dickinson (1830–1886),
American poet

Activity 26

Action plan

After you review all the ideas you generated in Strategies 1 through 7 (pp. 33-52), and picked your three best ideas on p. 53, Activity 17, and p. 68, Activity 24, make an action plan.

What will be done?

Who will do it?

By when?

<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>

How will you follow-up to stay in action?

By when and with whom?

Activity 27

What do community members think?

Imagine your family member lives in a group home with 4 residents. One of the residents, Amy, is interested in the library, and there is only one staff working on a given day. The staff decides to take everyone to the library.

When this group of four residents and the staff walk into the library, what does the librarian think? What do the other patrons think? How do they respond?

Suppose Amy would like 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 other three residents especially if they are not interested in the library? What do they think? How do they respond?

“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

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 any of the individuals with disabilities!

Note: This same phenomenon can happen with only three residents, too — or even just two!

If your family member gets support in any type of group situation (living, working, recreating, etc.), you can address this issue with the staff. It takes something to figure out how to just have one-to-one time — which will work better for your family member AND for the community members to get to know them as their own person!



Tip

Look for relationships on a one-to-one basis. It just works better for your family member and for the community members.