

What is community inclusion?

Community inclusion means being connected to others in a way which is meaningful and provides a sense of belonging. Community inclusion is created through social and everyday interactions across a range of environments, including:

- friends and family, as appropriate
- paid, or volunteer work
- everyday exchanges with others in the community
- pursuing interests with others, such as gardening, or playing sport
- attending places of worship, or joining meditation or yoga groups
- participating in civic events such as voting, attending community consultation or advocacy groups
- attending events or workshops, such as the football, cricket, concerts, or art classes.

Community is not just about the geographic area in which people live. It is also a:

- community of interest
- community of friends or peers
- community which connects through an online discussion forum
- Participation in, and a sense of belonging to, any type of community helps to ensure inclusion.

How to support community inclusion

Community inclusion must be based on what participants find meaningful and enjoy doing. Ways to increase community inclusion include:

- supporting participants to access the community more doing the things they enjoy
- supporting participants to generate social activities
- investigating participants interests and exploring options for community connections.

Supporting people in the community

Supporting participants to become part of their community involves:

- finding tasks, or activities they like and want to do
- investigating ways they can become involved in communities of interest
- supporting them to make connections with others who share like interests and lifestyle choices.

Generating social activities

Assisting participants to initiate social activities involves:

- identifying with whom they like to spend time
- identifying activities they can do together. Such as watch a favourite television program on a regular basis with a friend, invite family members to a barbeque, host a party, go walking with friends, invite a friend on a date, etc.

Staff support may be required to support participants to plan and carry out social activities.

Supporting key interests

Participants can build connections through shared interests. Staff can support residents to develop, or expand their interests by:

- providing opportunities to sample new activities, particularly if they have not had exposure to a wide range of interests
- exploring ways they can pursue interests such as attending community recreational classes
- supporting attendance at come and try days at local sporting clubs.

