

## 5b1

# Help Relatives Get On Board

### Do

Help relatives and carers support the goal and method of increasing social inclusion.

### Story

Julie is eight years old and attends a school for children with special needs. She has always enjoyed swimming at school and now wishes to attend lessons at the local leisure centre. Her parents are reluctant as they are unsure about how she will respond to other people, and their reaction to her. Her parents were encouraged to watch the first few sessions. This simple step helped to allay their fears.

John wanted to get a job but his mother, who he lives with, was concerned that this would stop his access to benefits, that he might get bullied at work and that he would not be able to travel independently. With his job coach, John arranged for a welfare benefits advisor to talk to him and his mother to offer real answers to her concerns about benefits. The job coach explained to John's mother about what informal supports would be available in the workplace and, together, they developed travel plans and a back-up plan.

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### Hints & Hazards

Acknowledge the genuine concerns of carers and remember that these are usually based on love, rather than a desire to be difficult. Almost everyone has a family member (whether local or far away, living or dead) who they imagine will approve or criticise the proposal, so work with this factor. Even if the relative never goes near the community setting he/she will influence the person who needs support.

The inclusive activity may symbolise a much larger issue, such as acceptance by others or feelings of shame. Involving relatives in the person's achievements can help (see 7c3 – 'Validation').

A reluctant relative may be won over by meeting up with someone whose relative has had a positive experience of the inclusion activity. The goal is not so much a home on your own but a home of your own – so involving relatives is important!