

## 6a4

# Getting Ready to Participate

### Do

Assist the person to learn the skills they need to participate in the inclusive activity.

### Story

'Bethan worked at Leigh Library on a voluntary basis for nine months. She had intensive training from the Supported Employment Service and from the library staff. Library staff were advised on the best way to support her. She learnt how to do stock and counter work. She became confident at dealing with fines

and issuing new books, in an environment that is always busy but where there is always a member of staff on hand to give any help. She became a valued member of staff and was offered a part-time post.' (*Hemmings & Morris 2004, p11*)

**Hints & Hazards**

Providing training in so-called 'obvious skills' might help too. Southampton library worked with the Adult Learning Service to run a regular 7-week accredited course for people who speak English as a second language on how to use the library and then follow it up with a regular drop-in session.

Training can be either off-site or on-site. Consider everyone there (see 2b3) before deciding who could offer the training. The training syllabus might be practical (e.g. how to clean cars), interpersonal (how to behave in committee meetings), or personal (assertiveness).

Where the trainer accompanies the person in a community contact, this training might be as subtle as 'shaping' – offering tiny bits of feedback to encourage appropriate behaviour. Coaching is a very special skill. For example, Wimbledon champions play better tennis than their coaches, but the coach can help them play even better.

Specific and precise guidance about appropriate behaviour can help. It might be compared to the way in which it is courteous to explain to visitors from another culture how to behave in new social settings. If the group of learners and the group of trainers is made up of a mixture of people who need support and other citizens (staff, volunteers and others), then the result can be very creative. See 6a6 'Systematic Instruction' for a particular example of training.

Sometimes people don't want to have their difference trained out.' A group of young people with autism were asked what they would do if there was a pill that cured it. They said 'no thanks'. The training you offer may be welcomed by a broad range of the general public. In Glasgow in 2008, an evening class on managing anxiety and depression attracted up to 100 people a night.