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Cabaret Table Group

Do

Establish a group that meets in an ordinary community venue at the same time as other citizens are using the same room.

Story

A voluntary organisation in Leicestershire has set up mental health groups in ordinary venues (such as the lounge bar of a pub). These groups have the potential for developing 'fuzzy edges' – they could assist group members to gradually build links with other users of the venue.

Hints & Hazards

Much of the support comes from being part of a group and knowing those individuals. It enables people to become accustomed to particular places or journeys and builds confidence in social settings, which offering an opportunity to observe and copy the behaviour of the other users of the facility. Some people may not want to move on as the group meets their needs for company. There may be little contact between group members and other users of the space. So actively help people to look at other activities available in the building and support them to consider attending independently at other times, or using them for very brief periods.

For example a member of the cabaret table group at the pub might go off to the pub to play pool for a while with other customers, but remain within sight of the group.

This approach was pioneered in Bristol where a group of disabled people worked in an ordinary factory, but sat around their own work table (*Early 1960*), see 3c7 'Group in a Community Venue' for a comparison, as the group is in its own room in a shared building, while the Cabaret Table Group meets in a shared room. Any group that is seen as different might draw out and amplify stigma, so groups might be subject to more discrimination than individuals would encounter.