

7a3

Community Buddy

Do

Recruit a volunteer from the setting that the person wants to join who will then support the person.

Story

Mike wanted to play pool at the local pub but was not confident about going on his own and just trying to join in. The people supporting Mike all agreed that they would ask around among their friends to find out if anyone they knew also played pool. It turned out that Robyn, the sister of one of the people who supports Mike in his home, played pool once a week in Mike's local pub. Mike and Robyn got to know

each other and then Robyn introduced Mike to the other local pool players.

'Stan is part of an NVQ course in woodwork. None of the other students have learning disabilities. He has made a beautiful casement clock. He communicates through smiles and grunts. The college provides a support worker who describes herself as 'part of the class – I don't just want to be known as Stan's support worker'. At break times Stan stays with the other students and is accepted in the group in his own right'. (McIntosh & Whitaker 1998, p114)

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Hints & Hazards

Think through the risk of inappropriate disclosure by the buddy to other members of the host community. This could partly be managed by training for the buddy. See 6a7 'Disclose Key Information' for some thoughts of disclosure. Make sure that the buddy knows that she / he should foster contact between the person being supported and other members of the club.

What happens if the buddy and the person don't get on? Negotiate the role of the buddy and decide how much responsibility they need to exercise in different circumstances.

This is a longer-term version of 6c1 'Welcoming Host'.