

7a4

Participate Together

Do

Support the person in the community activity by joining the group alongside them and taking seriously all the responsibilities of membership.

Story

Ronni and her supporter, Wendy, visited the local line dancing group on Thursday evening. Ronni sat at the side with her drink, but would not get up to dance until Wendy did so too. They spent a few weeks getting used to the dances and becoming familiar with the

other people who attended the dance. Ronni gradually got friendly with Alice, an outgoing and long-standing member of the line dancing club. Wendy had a quiet word with Alice and encouraged her to invite Ronni up to dance. After two months, Ronni would get up and dance if she saw Alice already amongst the dancers.

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Hints & Hazards

The supporter who is a full co-participant might be side-tracked by the responsibilities of membership and forget the needs of the person they agreed to support. Alternatively, they may feel duty-bound to keep attending after their own interest has waned, leading to a half-hearted involvement in the activity. The host group will only have a limited capacity to welcome newcomers and the escort might use up this resource. The pair of co-participants might form a small Cabaret Table Group (7a1) that has no social interaction with the host organisation.

The support person might stay with the activity to the end (co-completing the activity with the

person) or may taper down (7b7). Sometimes the supporter offers some kinds of help but not others – for example, a college supporter may offer personal but not teaching assistance. If the supporter misses sessions or drops out of the activity entirely then this could be a problem. The supporter needs to stay in the background and quietly support the person to make friends with other participants at the inclusive setting, so that no-one (either the person, other participants or the person in charge) gets the impression that the person needs a ‘minder’. Sometimes the supporter is not identified to the person in charge of the setting.