

7a5

Hold Back

Do

Hold back from using your own knowledge or skills and instead encourage other participants in the group to offer support to the person.

Story

Susan and her supporter attend the rug-making class for the first time. Some of the people at the class are old hands, and are busy with their rugs. The support worker has a pretty good idea of how to set about doing the rug with Susan, but instead chooses NOT to cope.

‘We’re a bit stuck with this,’ she says to the friendly-looking people on either side. ‘Could you possibly help us out please?’ a helpful group forms. The supporter gently withdraws, so that the help – and the interaction – is centred on Susan.

Hints & Hazards

Care is needed to ensure that this does not split the group into those who help and a separate sub-group of those who do not wish to do so. The willingness of helpful people to help again should not be taken for granted. There may be ways in which Susan can repay the help she receives.

This casts Susan in an incompetent role. Choosing a supporter who is knowledgeable about the activity may stimulate Susan's own interest through shared enthusiasm, but might make the use of this strategy rather dishonest. So it is sometimes better for the supporter to be interested but less experienced than the person.

If a person has a number of interests, thinking about what activities are most likely to bring these people into contact may help you to prioritise interests. For example, allotments are well known for being supportive places where people enjoy sharing knowledge, tips and produce – an allotment may offer someone a good opportunity to begin to build relationships with other citizens.