

7b3

Partial Participation

Do

Attend the activity and undertake some, but not all of the activities involved in participation.

Story

A local college offers students the opportunity to attend classes without the requirements to submit assignments. Students can take up these demands when they feel ready to do so.

Another man wanted to go to the pub, but alcohol would be a serious risk to his health. The supporter went with him and they developed an alcohol-free pattern of activity at the bar. Ten months later he was still going to the pub and remained alcohol free.

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Hints & Hazards

People who do less than everyone else might find it harder to make friends. Anyone who misses part of the session returns unsure about what they have missed. Others in the group might feel that it is unfair if one person is 'allowed' to do less. However, partial participation may be better than no participation. Can the person progress over time into more and more participation or are they subtly kept in role as a passenger rather than full member? Partial participation may not 'push' the person as much as they feel they need.

Pringle (2004) highlighted the value of joining (see 7b1) when he explored the perceived mental health gains for football fans. Belonging to a club was considered to be important for one's own mental health as it offers a sense of identity, belonging, security and warmth. The research results also show that fans consider stadium terraces to be an environment when a cathartic release of tension is socially acceptable. This highlights some of the things that might be lost if the person themselves or others consider that the person is not a full member of the group.