

7b7

Taper Down

Do

Gradually reduce the amount of time spent with the person at the community location in order to eventually leave them attending independently.

Story

Andrea wanted to attend an arts activity. At first the worker attended with her, worked alongside her and showed her how to carry out the arts activities. After a few weeks the worker began to attend on alternative weeks, and then stopped attending entirely. As Andrea enjoyed the experience and environment, she sustained her participation in the group on an independent basis.

Hints & Hazards

Support is tapered off as confidence and competence increases, and natural supports (See 7c1) develop. Agree roles, timing and the changing level of support at the start. Paid people may worry that they're not 'working'. Don't be too rigid about the programme, as the person may have a setback or do better than expected.

Tapering is not a discharge from support. This can create a role model (go for a while and then stop attending). The supporter may inhibit the development of connections with other participants.

In the vital first few sessions. Tapering may mark the person out as different, and (as Steve Beyer says) if you start different you risk staying different. People in the setting may get the idea from this that they should not be involved with the service user. An alternative is to attend the beginning or end of every session but gradually shorten the time spent with the person. Sometimes people can be reluctant for the supporter to withdraw as their support is valued above the activity undertaken. Withdrawal should only take place after the person has identified some natural support (see 7c1) – perhaps a long standing member of the group who will continue to assist the newcomer.