

Building Friendships: One step at a time on a journey to belonging



FAMILY SUPPORT
Institute of **BC**
families supporting families



OUR MISSION:

The purpose of the Family Support Institute is **to strengthen and support** families faced with the extraordinary circumstances that come with having a family member who has a disability. We believe that **families are the best resource** available to support one another. Directed by families, the Family Support Institute provides **information, training, and province-wide networking** to assist families and their communities to build upon and share their strengths.

OUR VISION:

All families throughout British Columbia are supported, connected and leading meaningful lives in communities that equally value their citizens.

About us

The Family Support Institute

A province-wide organization

Purpose

- To strengthen and support families faced with the extraordinary circumstances that come with having a family member who has a disability
- We believe that families are the best resource available to support one another

Directed by families, the Family Support Institute provides

- Information
- Training
- Province-wide networking to assist families and their communities to build upon and share their strengths



Building Friendships

- The Value of Friendships
- What are True Friendships?
- Impact of Social Isolation for Children with Special Needs
- Building Social Circles and Supporting Families

The Value of Friendships

Humans need social connections

Who experiences loneliness most often?

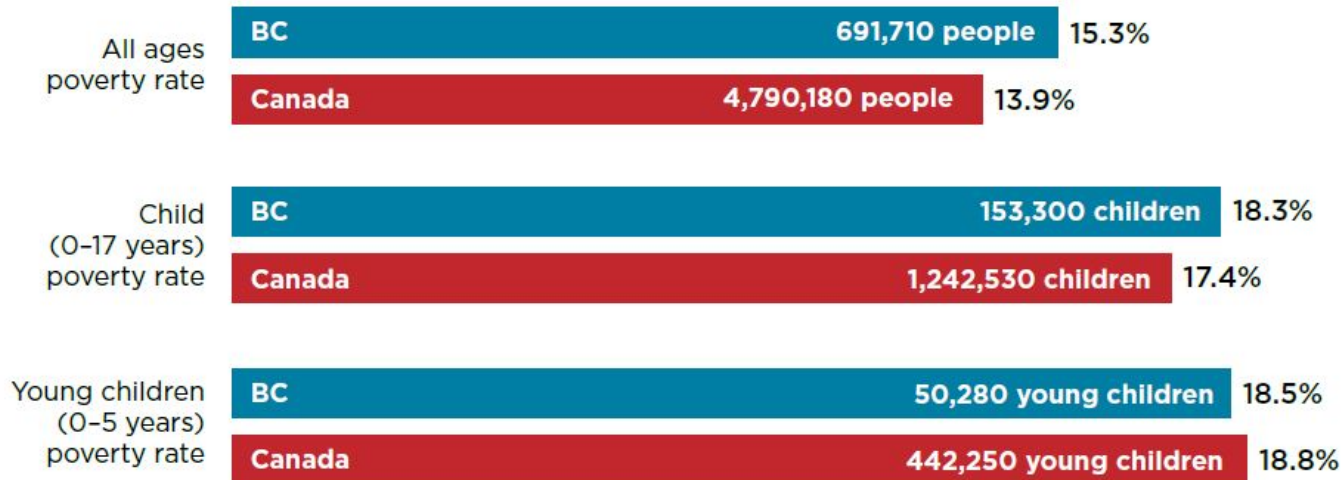
- Income less than \$20,000/yr
- Younger people
- Not employed
- Persons with disabilities
- Families who have a child with a disability



The Value of Friendships

1 in 5 children live in poverty in BC

All Ages, Child (0-17 years old) and Children Under Age 6 Poverty Rates,
BC and Canada, LIM After Tax, 2015



Source: For all ages and child poverty rates: Statistics Canada. CANSIM Table 111-0015. For early childhood poverty rates: Statistics Canada. Income Statistics Division. T1 Family Files 2015. Reference 17061. Custom data.

MASLOW'S HIERARCHY OF NEEDS

ABRAHAM MASLOW



MORALITY, CREATIVITY, SPONTANEITY, PROBLEM SOLVING, LACK OF PREJUDICE, ACCEPTANCE OF FACTS

SELF-ACTUALIZATION

SELF-ESTEEM, CONFIDENCE, ACHIEVEMENT, RESPECT OF OTHERS, RESPECT BY OTHERS

ESTEEM

FRIENDSHIP, FAMILY, SEXUAL INTIMACY

LOVE/BELONGING

SECURITY OF BODY, OF EMPLOYMENT, OF RESOURCES, OF MORALITY, OF THE FAMILY, OF HEALTH, OF PROPERTY

SAFETY

BREATHING, FOOD, WATER, SEX, SLEEP, HOMEOSTASIS, EXCRETION

PHYSIOLOGICAL

Abraham Harold Maslow (April 1, 1908 - June 8, 1970) was a psychologist who studied positive human qualities and the lives of exemplary people. In 1954, Maslow created the Hierarchy of Human Needs and expressed his theories in his book, *Motivation and Personality*.

Self-Actualization - A person's motivation to reach his or her full potential. As shown in Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, a person's basic needs must be met before self-actualization can be achieved.

The Value of Friendships

Generational Aspects of Isolation

- Common thread through generations
- Social exclusion
- Impacts families resiliency and strength
- Across the life span
- Negative effect on our health and wellness



The Value of Friendships

“ Friendships are an important aspect of all our lives. Immeasurable benefits result from having friends, depending on the meaning we attach to the concept and the depth of the relationships. ”

Benefits:

- Companionship
 - Identity development, autonomy, & self-esteem
 - Positive influences
 - Social Support
 - Preventive role in health issues
 - Foundation for development of a romantic relationship
 - Contributes to being a valued citizen.
- Huchinson, Lord, Lord, 2010

The Value of Friendships

The Early Years

- Builds positive base for future friendships
- Friendships help with development
- Communication
- Feeling of Belonging
- Social skills
- Cooperations Skills
- Being part of a group





Parents and Caregivers need skills to build Friendships

“ The greatest reward along the journey for my family has been the ability to connect with other families who work together to guide and create a better life for all our sons and daughters. ”

- Donna Diggins, Resource Parent
Salt Spring Island

What is True Friendship?

Aspects of Friendship?

- Mutual Interests
- Proximity
- Goes beyond what is seen on the surface
- Companionship
- Give and take (reciprocity)
- Trust/loyalty
- Help/Support
- intimacy/disclosure

What are True Friendships?

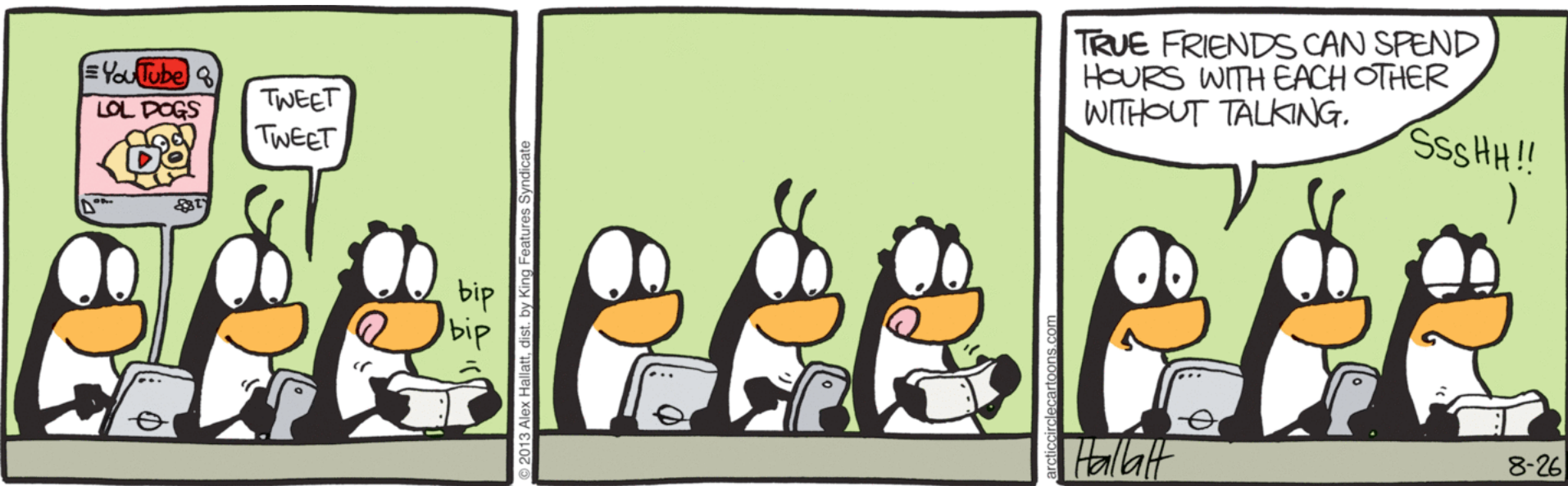
“ A relationship that's comfortable, non judgmental, enjoyable to spend time with, someone you care about their well being, common interests, a mutual "like" even if you don't know why, someone you have a history with. A friend could be any or all of the above.

- Y. Bissada ”



Friendship takes time

“The wish for friendship develops rapidly, but friendship does not”
(Aristotle)



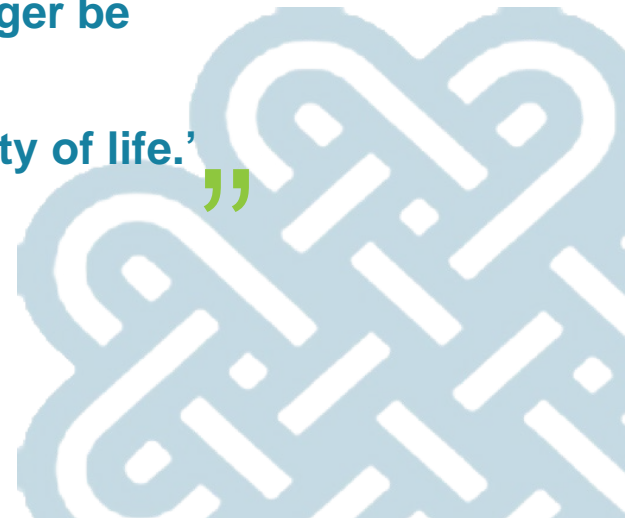
- A Friendship can only be defined by the people within it

Impact of Social Isolation for children with Special Needs

Why Friendship?

“ Interactions with others enrich our lives and give us the chance to develop friendships and critical personal relationships which we will enjoy across our lifespan. We typically regard these interactions, relationships and friendships as central to our personal well-being.

It is time for children with disabilities to share these experiences, so that these individuals will no longer be isolated from what is perhaps the most essential component of what we elusively refer to as ‘quality of life.’”



Impact of Social Isolation for children with Special Needs

- Has a life long impact for the child and family
- Loneliness
- Increase in negative behavior
- Missed opportunities for learning social skills
- Sends negative message to families



Impact of Social Isolation for children with Special Needs

Common Barriers

- Attitudes and beliefs
 - Friendships aren't important
 - Friendships aren't possible
 - Friendships are too much maintenance
 - Friendships happen by themselves
- Expectations
 - People know how to interact with a peer
 - Treat everyone the same



Impact of Social Isolation for children with Special Needs

Common Barriers

- An overly intrusive “helper”
- Equating “paid support person” with “friendship”
- Payment - making money the reward instead of the relationship
- Being rigid and inflexible
- Holding judgement and biases
- Fear of harm, of making a mistake, of failure
- Discomfort in asking and inviting



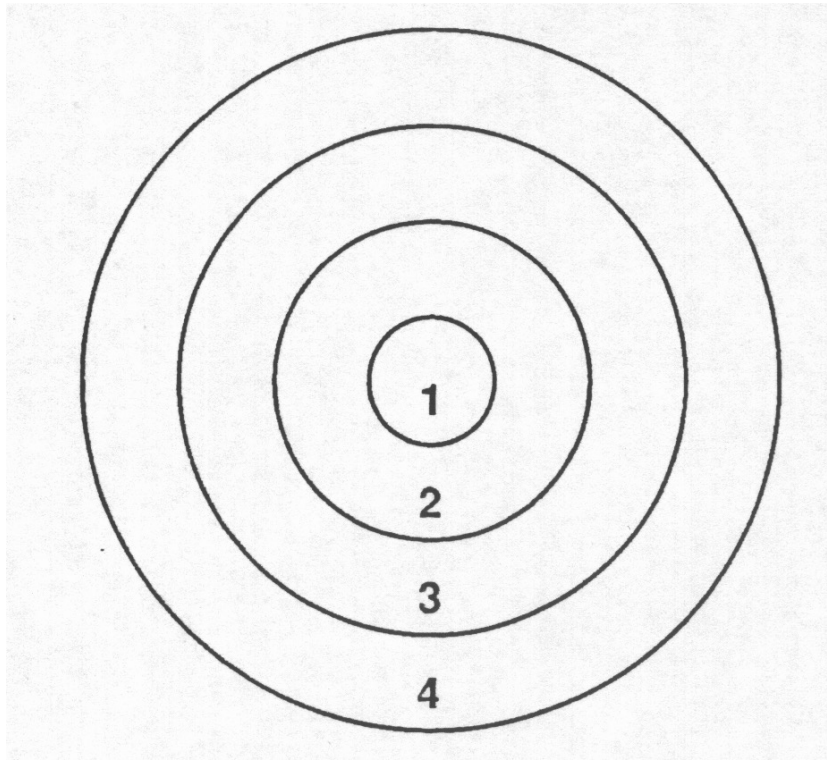
Impact of Social Isolation for children with Special Needs

**DON'T WALK BEHIND ME,
I MAY NOT LEAD.
DON'T WALK IN FRONT OF ME,
I MAY NOT FOLLOW.
JUST WALK BESIDE ME
AND BE MY FRIEND.**

Albert Camus



Circle of Friends



First Circle: Circle of **Intimacy**

Second Circle: Circle of **Friendship**

Third Circle: Circle of **Participation**

Fourth Circle: Circle of **Exchange**

Fill circles from the Outside-in!



Circle of Friends

Circle of Support (Friends)

- This exercise is a social scan. It will give a quick picture of who is in your life. The hidden key question is: “*Who loves this person?*”

Instructions

- *Draw four concentric circles.*
- *Put yourself in the middle then take a few minutes to fill in the people in each of your four circles.*



Circle of Friends

Circle of Support (Friends)

First Circle: Circle of **Intimacy**

- List the people most intimate in your life – those you cannot imagine living without.

Second Circle: Circle of **Friendship**

- List good friends – those who almost made the first circle.

Third Circle: Circle of **Participation**

- List people, organizations, networks you are involved with (work colleagues, the choir, the square dance club, your soft ball team, etc. – people/groups you participate in.



Circle of Friends

Circle of Support (Friends) con't

Fourth Circle: Circle of **Exchange**

- List people you **PAY** to provide services in your life. (medical professionals, tax accountants, mechanics, hair dressers, barbers, teachers, etc.)

Note: People can be in more than one circle. Example: your doctor or teacher could also be a very close friend; a deceased parent/friend or even a pet, might be an intimate personal supporter, etc.



Circle of Friends

HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS
Circle of Friends

FIGURE 2

CIRCLE ONE

- INTIMACY -

CIRCLE TWO

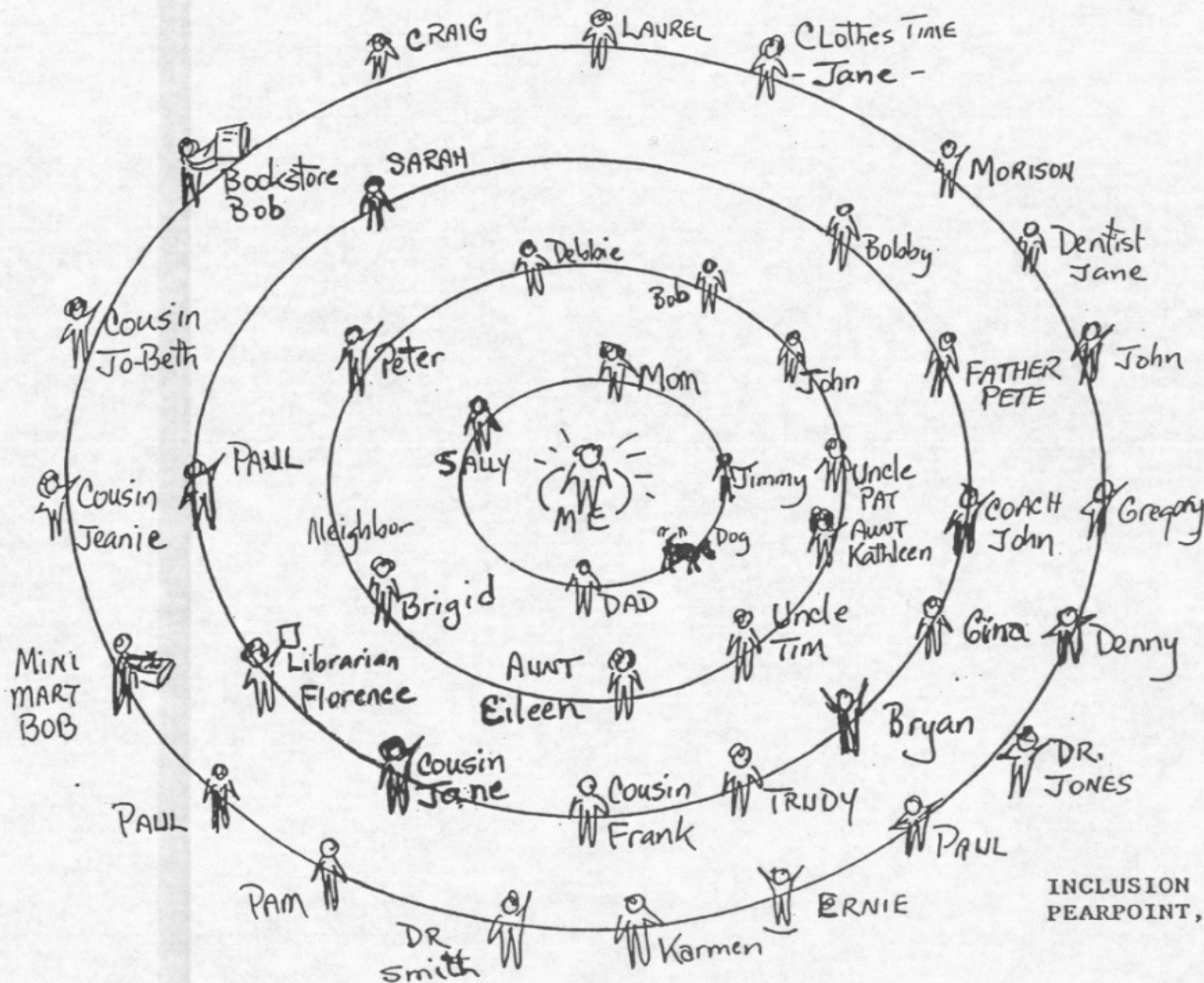
- FRIENDSHIP -

CIRCLE THREE

- PARTICIPATION -

CIRCLE FOUR

- EXCHANGE -



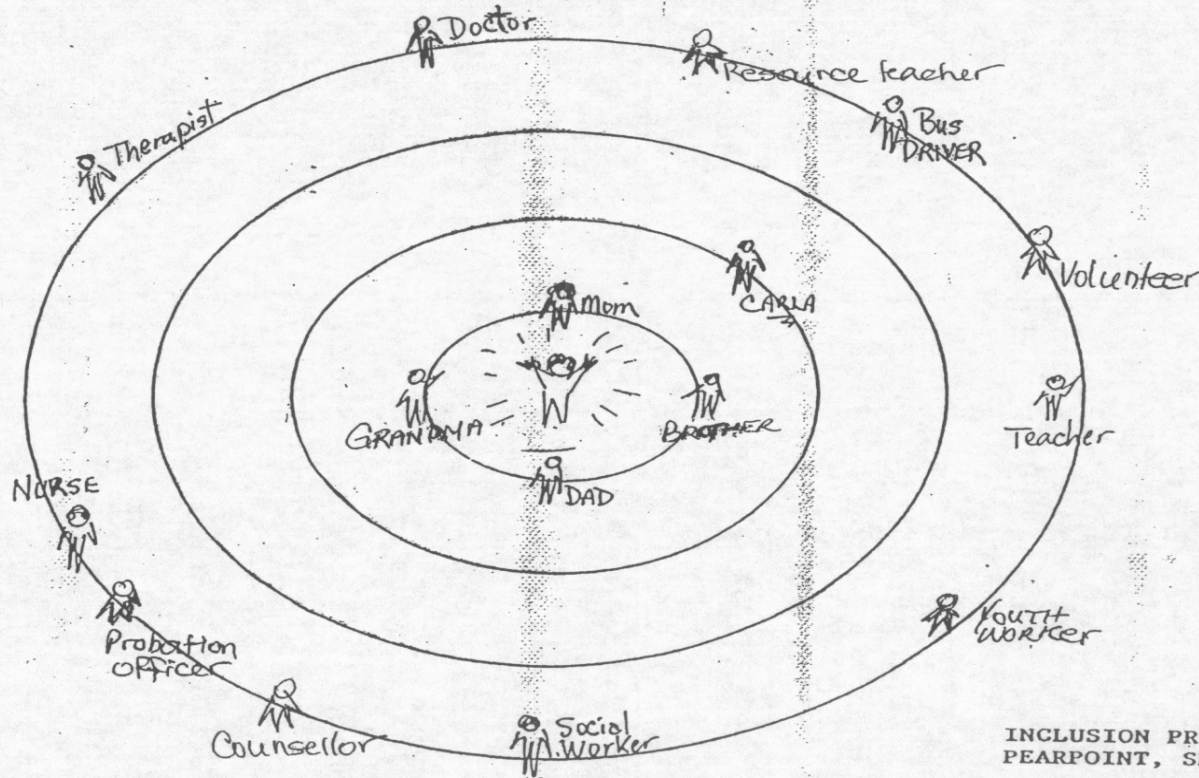
INCLUSION PRESS FOREST.
PEARPOINT, SNOW © 1994

Circle of Friends

PERSON with "at risk" label

FIGURE 3.

Circle of Friends



CIRCLE ONE

- INTIMACY -

CIRCLE TWO

- FRIENDSHIP -

CIRCLE THREE

- PARTICIPATION -

CIRCLE FOUR

- EXCHANGE -

INCLUSION PRESS FOREST.
PEARPOINT, SNOW © 1994

Supporting Natural Connections

- Teach skills
- Model - skills, technique, respect, dignity
- Share information with the family
- Encourage participation - home, school, community
- Creativity/problem solving - find solutions to barriers



Supporting Natural Connections

What people need:

Others who believe in the possibilities

We must believe that friendships are possible for everyone if we are to successfully support and facilitate friendships for others.

Others who believe in the gifts, strengths, & value of all people

We must believe in the gifts, strengths and value of all people if we are to successfully support and facilitate friendships for others.



Supporting Natural Connection

What people need:

Continuity

- Provide continuous contact over a period of time with the same individuals. School, community activities, clubs, work, etc.
- Spending time over and over with peers to get to know each other better.
- Joining groups that are ongoing in nature, taking part in the same club or group each year.



Supporting Natural Connection

What people need:

Relationships that are freely chosen and given

- Friendship cannot be mandated; we need an opportunity to
● choose who we want to be with.
- Respect the individual's choice in who they make friends with.
- Friendships need to be reciprocal – both parties see and
Believe in the benefit of their relationship



Supporting Natural Connection

What people need:

Opportunity

Provide opportunities to share time and space with peers.

- Buddies, pairing
- Travelling and working together
- Unstructured time
- Children sharing their expertise
- Parties, social events
- Being in the regular class
- Joining Boy Scouts, etc.



Supporting Natural Connection

What people need:

Reciprocity

- Friendship is supported by the act of reciprocity. We can support reciprocity
 - by helping children send thank you cards, facilitate their phone calls, teach
 - them about how to reciprocate acts of friendship to another and help others
 - to understand what would be welcomed by the individual we are supporting.
- Both need to believe in the benefit of reciprocity



Supporting Natural Connection

What people need:

Support and Facilitation

- Friendships for children with disabilities most often need support and facilitation to give them a chance to blossom. Support and facilitation can help ensure that friendship foster and continue.



Supporting Natural Connection

Supporting Natural Connection Strategies for Support:

Be Positive in Your Approach

- Focus on what our differences are in a positive and general way that includes everyone (ie. John is tall, Mary wears glasses, Susan has really curly hair and Joe rides in a chair).
- Be open to questions and curiosity – this opens the door to relationships
- This can also include the efforts or strategies that parents and caregivers can provide on an individual such as a personal journal, photo book, communication log etc.



Supporting Natural Connection

Strategies for Support:

Share Information with the Family

- It's important that the family is involved in efforts others make on behalf of their child regarding friendship
- This connection will contribute to consistency and allow for dialogue at home in a positive manner about new potential relationships too



Supporting Natural Connection

<http://conversationsthatmatter.org/videos/fostering-friendships-and-natural-supports>

Fostering Friendships and Natural Supports
With: Erin Sheldon

CONVERSATIONS THAT MATTER
ONLINE CONFERENCE CENTER from BROADREACH TRAINING

Foundation of Friendship



Spaces and Places

- * Where can friendship happen?
- * How can you support?
 - * Support should be unseen – the person needs to be seen.
- * Who else needs support?
- * Where are the welcoming and accessible spaces?

Circle of Friends

Circle of Friends can create life long friendships



- Roles of Circle of Support
- Starting a Friendship Circle
 - Good Facilitator
 - How to Support Through Transition
 - Success of a Circle
- Friends Make a Difference

Circle of Friends

Roles of Circles of Support

- Finding and receiving the gifts that each person has to offer
- Personal commitments to others
- Connectors to trusted friends in the community
- Offer and organize support in various situations and ways
- Source of continuity
- Connectedness and support to one another in the circle



Circle of Friends

Strategies for Support

- Know the person, identify gifts, strengths, and abilities
- Identify, present and explore possible interests
- Look for “connectors” - people, places, activities
- Identify similar interests
- Make introductions and invitations
- Provide information - about the child
- Develop awareness and promote understanding
- Provide support and facilitation



Circle of Friends

Starting a Friendship Circle

How to Begin:

- Know the child, involve the family
- Identify the facilitator
- Identify and invite participants
- Develop an understanding of the purpose and of the individual
- Link to experiences and opportunities



Circle of Friends

Starting a Friendship Circle

How to Maintain:

- Call a meeting
- State the purpose (make it fun)
- Identify needs of the individual
- Sign up students
- Support them knowing each other
- Support the meetings



Circle of Friends

Good facilitation

- Helps people understand why they are there
- Values everyone
- Encourages everyone to participate, where they feel they fit
- Shows confidence in everyone's capabilities
- Helps everyone share experiences and mutual interests
- Makes people feel that their ideas are interesting, expected, and needed

Facilitate.

[*fuh-sil-i-teyt*]

1. To make easier or less difficult; help forward (an action);
2. To assist the progress of a person or people.



Circle of Friends

Good facilitation

- Uses an individual's non-verbal communication to help them express their thoughts and feelings and to support their participation
- Encourages good listening skills
- Encourages group independence by assuming tasks, making choices, or showing leadership
- Encourages positive interactions among the participants in the group



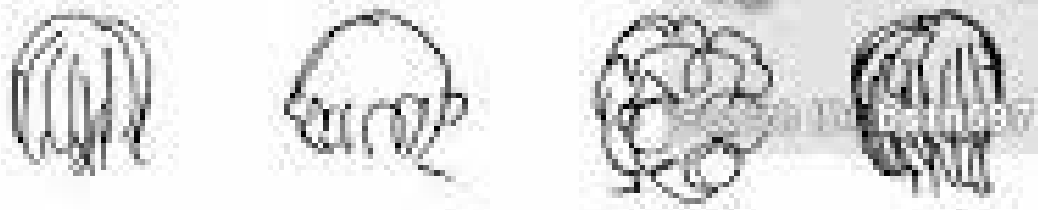
Circle of Friends

Good facilitation

- Helps the group discover and use everybody's particular skills
- Helps the group find their own means to adapt certain activities to encourage everyone's participation
- Allows the participants to be themselves
- Lets the participants know it's their choice whether to come or not
- Draws on the facilitator's patience, experience and common sense



Now, let's brainstorm ideas for where to have lunch!



The facilitator from hell

Circle of Friends

How to Support Through Transition

- Identify future commitments of the regular members
- Identify possible new members
- Assist with planning new environment
- Ensure there is a new facilitator to transfer responsibility to
- Encourage circle members to approach staff at new school about their desire to connect and to introduce others to the concept of Circle of Friends
- Assist with planning for when school is out, (i.e..) summer ,etc.
- Help identify new possibilities such as clubs, groups, other programs and activities



Circle of Friends

Success of a Circle

- It's flexible and supports students to move in and out of the group, as their needs and time availability change.
- All students level of commitment to the individual is respected.
- Students are encouraged to share time with their friends while including the student they are supporting (lunch hours, etc.)



Resources

The Family Support Institute:
Find Support BC

www.findsupportbc.com

We connect families of persons with disabilities with the resources available to them.



Resources

PLAN (Planned Lifetime Advocacy Network)

How Does Plan Create Networks

PLAN hires network Community Connectors and match them with families, based on their knowledge of the community and their compatibility with the person who is socially isolated. The Community Connector looks for others to join the network.



Resources

Vela

www.velacanada.org

Provides information and mentoring to individuals with disabilities and their trusted others by supporting them to take greater control of their lives. We do this by exploring ideas and options that can lead to customized inclusive and creative supports and services.

Spectrum Society for Community Living

<https://101friends.wordpress.com>

PATH and MAPS training events.



References

O'Brien J, O'Brien, CL. 1993, Unlikely Alliances: friendship and People with developmental disabilities. Perspectives on Community Building

Vancouver Foundation. 2017, Connect and Engage: A survey of Metro Vancouver

First Call, BC Child and Youth Advocacy Coalition. 2017, BC Child Poverty Report Card,



Contact us

Family Support Institute

227 6th Street

New Westminster, BC V3L 3A5

Phone: (604) 540-8374 ext. 523

Toll free: 1-800-441-5403

Fax: (604) 540-9374

fsi@fsibc.com

www.familysupportbc.com

