



# Tips on Getting Involved

## Remember the 4 Steps to Building Social Capital

1. Identify key areas of interest - Identify the interests of the individual you are supporting. Get to know what they would like to do, what new opportunities they would like to explore.
2. Find the matching group or community - Research new opportunities for community engagement – involve the other staff on your team who are good at researching new information, have an in depth knowledge of the community, always have the inside scoop on what's happening in the community or like to find the deals that will save money.
3. Understand how that community behaves – research that particular group or activity. Learn the ins and outs of the group, how people dress, when do they arrive, do they bring a snack or go out for a drink afterwards etc.
4. Find and engage the gatekeeper - look for someone already in that community or business who has some influence or authority over the other members. They can have formal or informal influence and can affect how people react to new things in positive or negative ways.

## Keep the Guidelines for Building Social Capital in mind

- Inclusion – do the same things as everyone else in the community.
- Regular contact – go to places where the individual will see people on a regular basis.
- Connect around common interests- most friendships develop around shared interests.
- Frequency – the more time people spend together, the better the chance of making a connection.
- Proximity - to make connections, people need to be in the same physical space as others.
- Reciprocity – volunteering on a regular basis will enable the individual to support a cause he/she cares about and spend time with people who have a similar interest.
- Positive experiences change perceptions – the more we support people to have positive experiences in the community, the greater the chance that we change people's negative perceptions.
- Consistent support staff – have the same staff support the individual in the activity. Using a consistent support staff makes relationship building easier as the staff will know all the details necessary to connect with other people in the group.
- Staff attitude – always have a positive attitude and be attentive.
- Know when to step back – know when to back off and let the relationship develop.
- Respect – always conduct yourself in a respectful manner. Others will follow your lead!

## Things to Remember

- Be aware of which of your teammates has strengths in the roles of Researcher, Connector and Maintainer and work together as a team.
- Check in with the individual often to make sure you are on the right track!
- Make contact! Involve the staff on your team who knows a lot of people, likes to be with other people, remembers other people's names or has a knack for making friends.
- Make a call or make an appearance, depending on the potential partnership or opportunity.