

Five Steps to Making New Friends

This brief tip sheet presents five short steps to making friends, and it can be provided to Direct Support Professionals (DSPs) so that they can discuss these steps with the individuals they support.

Step 1: Think about what you like to do.

- Make a list of things you like to do. To get ideas use the "What Do I Like to Do?" tool.
- Ask people who know you well to help you. *Get lots of ideas.*
- Identify at least one or two interests or favorite activities.



Step 2: Find out where and when people are doing the things you like to do.

- If you like to garden, does the local nursery have a class? Is there a neighbor with a garden? Is there someone who can help you plan a garden?
- If you like to walk, do you know people who like to walk? Is there a walking club?
- Ask a supporter to help you look for events that match your interests. Choose activities to get involved in.



Step 3: Find out about other places to meet people. Check out local civic groups, community colleges, adult schools or libraries. Are there:

- People First meetings in your community?
- Dances and other activities at local recreation centers?
- Volunteer opportunities at parks, theaters, or museums?



Step 4: Do what makes YOU happy.

- What will you try first? A club? A new place you haven't been? A sport event?
- Do you need support - like a ride or help filling out a form? Ask!
- Do you want someone to go with you? Ask!

Step 5: What if I meet someone I'd like to have as a friend?

- Smile! Introduce yourself. Be yourself.
- The weather is always a good place to start a conversation. "It is a beautiful day!"
- Follow-up with a question. "Do you like warm weather?"
- Talk about something you enjoy. Ask questions and be a good listener.

If you both like the same thing, ask more about it. Perhaps ask the person out for lunch or coffee. That will give you a chance to talk and get to know each other a little bit better.