



Building Community

Actions That Build Community

connect with others • build trust • get involved

Communities grow stronger when citizens regularly and persistently do a variety of simple things together that give them chances to connect with others, build trust and get involved in doing things together. Trusting relationships that grow from people sharing food, helping others with everyday tasks, and joining together to recognize, help, involve and entertain one another make bigger joint ventures possible and strengthens resilience (go to www.hks.harvard.edu/saguaro/ to learn more).

This exploration identifies 75 different actions from a longer list prepared by a group of academic researchers and civic leaders who want to support the creation of what they call social capital (their label for networks of connection that build trust by involving people in one another's lives and projects). This list is just **a way to encourage thinking**; it is not an instrument for research and many other actions will serve the purposes of connecting people, building trust, and involving people with one another. **Use these pages to explore the current pattern of community building action from three different angles:**

- 1) the actions you and your family regularly engage in;**
- 2) the actions your organization actively supports people with developmental disabilities to take; and**
- 3) any policies or practices that could make it harder for people with developmental disabilities to act as community builders.**

People have different interests and gifts so actions that come easily to some might seem alien to others. What matters to the quality of community life is the number of people who regularly connect, build trust, and get involved with one another. *There is more to overcoming social inclusion than taking actions like these, but these are good practices to build a stronger, more diverse foundation for our common life.*

John O'Brien
INCLUSION.COM
version 2.0



Building Community

75 Actions that Build Community¹

connect with others • build trust • get involved

Community grows stronger through hundreds of little and big actions citizens take every day.

As you scan the list:

- 1) put a mark next to any of these actions that you or a family member has done either in the past month or so, or for more occasional actions, in the past year or so. What can we learn about community building from your own pattern of action?
- 2) put a mark next to any of these actions you or your organization have supported a person with a developmental disability to do in the past month or so, or for more occasional actions, in the past year or so. How can you build on the experience of the people you support who are building community?
- 3) put a mark next to any of these actions that a person supported by your organization would find it harder to do because of a policy or current practice or routine. What changes would make it easier for the people you support to take community building action?

This is a good activity for a staff meeting with direct support professionals. Identify barriers and opportunities. TAKE ACTION!

____ Invite neighbors over for a meal or barbecue

____ Attend a political meeting

____ Support local merchants

____ Volunteer your special skills to a community organization

____ Donate blood (with a friend)

____ Work in a community garden

____ Mentor a person of a different ethnic group

____ Surprise a new or favorite neighbor by taking them food

____ Avoid destructive gossip or help someone else avoid it

____ Help another person outside your home fix something

____ Get to know the clerks and salespeople at your local stores

____ Audition for community theatre or support a production backstage or volunteer to usher

____ Attend a lecture or concert

____ Give to your local food or clothing bank

____ Play cards or games with friends or neighbors

____ Walk or bike to support a cause and meet others

____ Participate in a political campaign

____ Attend a local festival or parade

____ Find a way to show personal appreciation to someone who builds your local community

____ Coach or help out with local (youth) sport

¹ Adapted from www.bettertogether.org which identifies 150 social capital building actions.



Building Community

- ___ Offer to help a neighbor with garden work or shopping or a ride
- ___ Start or participate in a discussion group or book or film club
- ___ Start or join a carpool
- ___ Plan a “Walking Tour” of a local historic area
- ___ Tutor or read to children or have children read to you
- ___ Run for public office
- ___ Host a party
- ___ Offer to serve on a committee outside of work
- ___ Form a walking group (or swimming group) with another person, encourage each other
- ___ Play a sport
- ___ Go to church and connect with people and activities
- ___ Ask an elder or a young person to teach you something
- ___ Take dance lessons with a friend
- ___ Become a trustee
- ___ Join a campaign & take action that brings you into contact with others (not just a donation)
- ___ Gather a group to clean up a local park, cemetery or waterway
- ___ Bake something for neighbors or work colleagues
- ___ Plant trees
- ___ Volunteer at the library or primary school
- ___ Call an old friend
- ___ Sign up for a class & meet your classmates
- ___ Accept or extend an invitation
- ___ Log off and go to the park
- ___ Say hello to strangers
- ___ Find out more by talking with a neighbor you don’t know very well yet
- ___ Host a potluck supper





Facilitates Choice

HCBS Settings Requirement

The setting facilitates individual choice regarding services and supports and who provides them.

Intent

Individuals are free to choose who provides the services they receive and where they receive those services. Individuals are not coerced or forced to obtain services in a particular setting. They may instead choose to go out into the community for the same services.

It is important for individuals and/or their guardians to know that the person-centered plan is in place to address the needs of individuals. If individuals are not happy with their current services for any reason, you should direct them to their support coordinator who can help them make changes to the plan.

Best Practice Suggestions

- ✓ Support coordinator shares information on available providers and gathers input from the individual and/or their guardian on preferred providers.
- ✓ Provider gathers input from the individual on goals, lifestyle choices and the services and supports available.
- ✓ Provider creates opportunities for individuals to choose desired activities.
- ✓ Provider seeks input from the individual on preferences in staff.
- ✓ Provider has a policy and procedures for ensuring individual choice in services and supports.

Additional Guidance to Providers

If an individual is unhappy with my service, what should I do?

First, as the provider you should try to understand why the individual is unhappy. If it is something that can be corrected or easily addressed, you should attempt to do so. If not, acknowledge that sometimes a service or service provider is not the best fit, encourage and support the individual with contacting their support coordinator to discuss possible changes.

What role does the person-centered service plan have in meeting this requirement?

The individual supports plan is the central place where the individual's choices for services, supports and who provides them is documented. If an individual is unhappy with their services and supports, encourage the individual to contact their support coordinator to discuss possible changes.

Red Flags 🚩 -- Practices to Avoid

A policy or procedure requiring that a particular service be provided by the provider and the individual cannot choose a different provider in the community. For example, the provider offers hair styling services in-house and requires individuals to use these services rather than access services in the community.

Provider determines services and service providers without input from the individual.

Acknowledgements:

Idaho- Welcome to HCBS Rules Guidance Section of the Provider Toolkit
Minnesota- A Provider's Guide To Putting the HCBS Rule Into Practice
Virginia- www.dmas.virginia.gov

HCBS Toolkit: All Settings/Facilitates Choice/Services and Supports and Who Provides Them
9/18/2019





Independent Choices

HCBS Settings Requirement

Independence in making life choices, including but not limited to, daily activities, physical environment, and with whom to interact.

People retain the ability to make choices about how they spend their time in any given setting and have opportunities to participate in age-appropriate activities. As a provider, you should engage with the person and the team using person-centered thinking to ensure you:

- support people in life-informed “real” choices and autonomy;
- offer people actual experiences on which they can base future choices;
- create plans for the appropriate balance between autonomy and safety;
- give a person’s personal preferences priority. When there is a difference of opinion with a guardian or provider preference (unless for a documented health and safety reason) there needs to be open dialog where agreement is met;
- support and inspire individuals to work toward their goals, dreams and priorities.

Best practice suggestions

- The provider supports people to participate in activities of their choice that are consistent with the goals and objectives identified in their plan for supports. This includes activities within the setting, as well as provider-organized activities in the community.
- The provider is encouraged to use the natural environment as frequently as possible to help people learn new skills. Learning a skill in the natural environment is more effective than “classroom” training.
- The provider creates a decision-making process that supports people in making activity choices freely and fairly.
- People can access things like a radio, television or computer and choose leisure activities.
- The physical setting can adequately support a variety of individual needs and activities, such as having space for people to move about and allow individual and group activities.
- People can choose with whom they would like to do activities.
- People can provide suggestions about activities through a comment box, small group sessions or by meeting with a preferred staff.
- The provider supports individuals with developing individual calendars of activities versus “group” calendars for everyone in a particular setting.

Examples

- Sharon has a desired outcome of learning how to use money to shop. Sharon’s group day services provider brings her to a store to shop instead of using pretend money or a toy cash register in the center setting.
- Marcus played guitar in a band while he was in high school prior to his car accident that caused his brain injury when he was 20. Marcus recently moved into a sponsored residential home. His bandmates still meet regularly a few Fridays a month at the local pub for live music. Marcus, his provider, and his support coordinator were able to work out a plan that supports Marcus to see his friends at the pub on Friday nights. Marcus’s plan includes text messaging the provider at scheduled intervals to say he is fine or request support, Marcus communicating with his friends who agree to provide natural supports,



Independent Choices

returning to the residence by an agreed upon time, and planning transportation options to and from the pub.

Red Flags 🚩 -- Practices to Avoid

- 🚩 Provider makes the decision that Marcus (above) cannot go to the local pub because alcohol is being served.
- 🚩 The provider forces or coerces a person to participate when he/she does not wish to participate in an activity because it is “on the schedule” or “what everyone else is doing.”
- 🚩 The provider punishes a person for not participating in an activity.
- 🚩 The provider develops activity schedules without input from the people in the setting.
- 🚩 The provider develops activity schedules based on staff preference and availability.

Acknowledgements:

Idaho- Welcome to HCBS Rules Guidance Section of the Provider Toolkit

Minnesota- A Provider’s Guide To Putting the HCBS Rule Into Practice

Wyoming-HCB Setting Improvement Strategies Guidance for Case Managers, Providers, Participants & Guardians

South Dakota-Guide to Expectations and Compliance

Virginia- www.dmas.virginia.gov





Individual Initiative and Autonomy

HCBS Settings Requirement

A setting optimizes but does not regiment individual initiative, autonomy, and independence in making life choices, including but not limited to, daily activities, physical environment, and with whom to interact.

Intent

Individuals make choices about how they spend their time in any given setting and are given opportunities to participate in age appropriate activities.

Best Practice Suggestions

- ✓ Individuals are supported to participate in activities of their choice.
- ✓ Provider seeks input from individuals on their daily schedules and preferred activities.
- ✓ Provider uses natural environments to assist individuals in learning new skills. For example, if a goal is to learn how to use money to shop, the individual shops at the local mall.
- ✓ Individuals have daily routines based on their interests and preferences.
- ✓ Individuals choose with whom to interact and engage in activities.
- ✓ Provider is flexible and accommodates changes and choices in activities.
- ✓ Individuals help develop the grocery list for the week and shop for food.
- ✓ Provider seeks to foster relationship and the involvement of others in the community in activities.
- ✓ Provider has a community participation policy that represents HCBS expectations and values.
- ✓ Individuals have opportunities to participate in a variety of activities but are not required or forced to participate if they decline.
- ✓ Evidence of staff training on HCBS principles, practices and expectations.
- ✓ Provider encourages individuals to host friends and families in their home.
- ✓ Space is provided for individuals to have private interactions with visitors.
- ✓ Individuals are able to decorate their bedroom and home environment.

Additional Guidance

What makes an activity “age appropriate?”

“Age appropriate” means something that corresponds with a person’s chronological age. For example, people of all ages may enjoy working on puzzle. If this is an activity offered in an HCBS setting, then the image on the puzzle should be reflective of the interest of that age group. Children may prefer images of cartoon characters, while adults may prefer landscapes. Similarly, if a community outing is planned, the provider should consider the interests of the individual(s) when selecting the movie. A young adult may prefer to see the latest superhero action movie rather than an animated children’s film. Generally, the content and context of an activity are what make it age-appropriate or not.

Red Flags 🚩 -- Practices to Avoid

- 🚩 Provider requires that all individuals participate in activities, even when the individual declines.
- 🚩 Individuals do not provide input in daily routines and activities.
- 🚩 Provider has one posted activity schedule for the week or month for every individual to follow.



Individual Initiative and Autonomy

- ✘ Provider is not flexible in accommodating individuals when there are changes in schedules.
- ✘ No policy, procedure or process for staff to document attempts to gather input from individuals.
- ✘ Punishing an individual for not participating in an activity.
- ✘ Restricting an individual's right to access the community.
- ✘ Restricting an individual's right to meet with a visitor.
- ✘ Provider decides how an individual's bedroom should be decorated with no input.
- ✘ The culture of the organization does not support individual initiative, autonomy, and choice.

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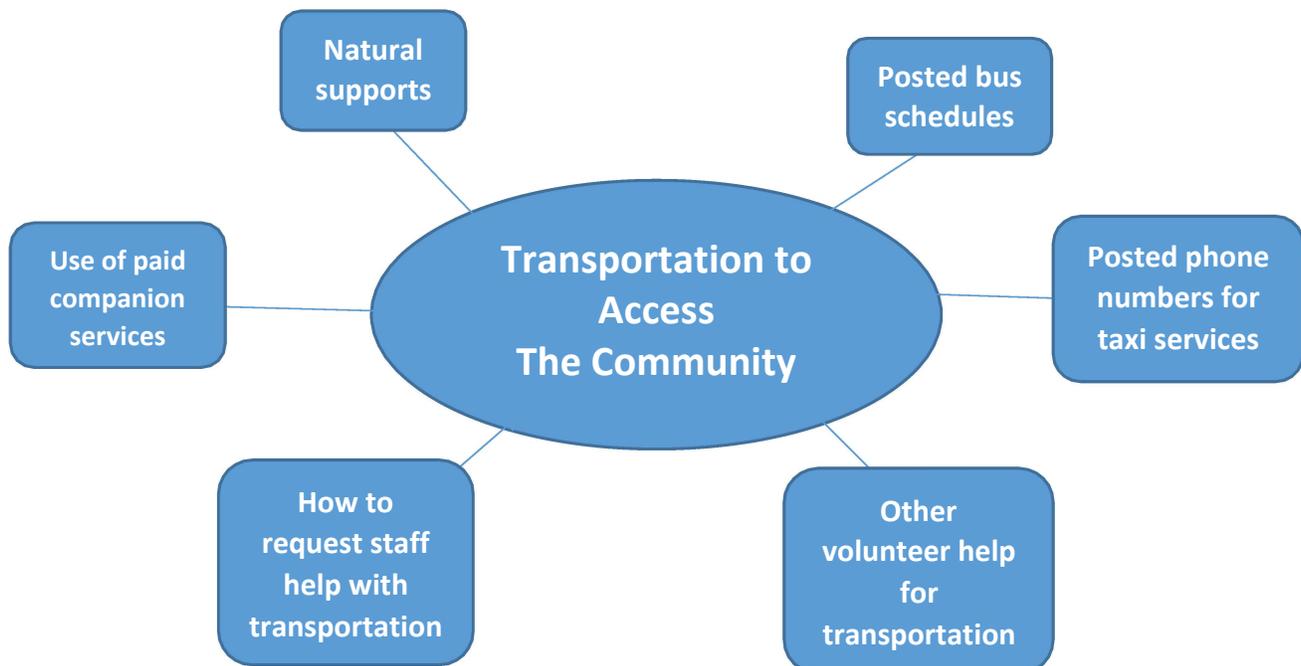
HCBS Settings Requirement

The setting is integrated and supports full access to the greater community. This includes opportunities to seek employment and work in competitive integrated settings, engage in community life, control personal resources and receive services in the community, to the same degree of access as individuals who do not receive HCBS.

Intent (Community Life)

Individuals who receive HCBS have equal access to the same community resources and activities available to the greater community. Rules and practices that facilitate community access should be established. When providing Medicaid waiver services and supports individuals should not be isolated from individuals who do not have disabilities. As a provider, you must ensure that your practices do not create an environment that is institutional in nature. You support individuals in their desires to participate in the community providing opportunities for new experiences using the philosophy and practice of person-centered thinking to:

- Ensure individuals have opportunities and supports needed to be fully included in the community
- Identify information on transportation options
- Assist with developing meaningful relationships
- Ensure that individuals have services, resources, and supports to explore and engage in meaningful activities.





Community Life

Examples

- Staff help a group of individuals plan a trip to Six Flags over Georgia. Each individual is encouraged to consider a list of friends to invite on the trip. The provider transports the individuals to the park and a pick up time and location is determined. Each individual goes through the park with their friend/natural support(s) to explore the park, rides and activities.
- Two individuals want to participate in a Zumba class. Staff help the individuals search the internet for available classes, review registration requirements, and explore options for transportation. Both individuals select a nearby community center and are able to ride a local bus or access Uber to Zumba class where they exercise and interact with other class members.

Best Practice Suggestions

- ✓ The mission statement and admission agreement contains information on the organization's support of integration and community access.
- ✓ Provider creates clear expectations for staff to adhere to the services and activities in the individual's plans while respecting the need for flexibility should an individual's preferences change.
- ✓ Planning meetings are held with individuals to discuss opportunities for the coming weeks to ensure community integration.
- ✓ Provider supports individuals in trying new things and shares information about activities in the community.
- ✓ Provider supports individuals in exploring options for transportation to access the community (e.g., use of public transit, family, friends, companion services, volunteers).
- ✓ Provider has written policies and procedures explaining individual's access to and utilization of transportation to access the community.
- ✓ Provider posts information about how to access transportation.
- ✓ Progress notes, activity logs, and calendars document community activities and response.
- ✓ Consistent and individualized documentation of the # & type of community connections an individual makes
- ✓ Access to information about community events is available in a variety of ways such as the internet, newspaper, newsletter, etc.
- ✓ Provider helps the individual search for a job and prepare for employment

Additional Guidance

What is an integrated setting?

Integrated settings provide people the opportunity to live, work, and receive services in the greater community. They offer access to community activities when and with whom the person chooses. They offer people choices in daily life activities and encourages interaction with people without disabilities or who are not receiving HCBS.

Is integration different for everyone?

Yes, each individual may have different needs and different desires. Direct support professionals (DSPs) should be educated and trained to address individual needs and desires. DSP's seek and discover ways to support each individual to the extent possible. One individual's needs should not limit another person's freedoms and opportunities. To fully support community integration, settings must facilitate individuals taking part in age



Community Life

appropriate activities with other individuals who do not receive HCBS. In residential settings, if access to the community is limited, the provider should facilitate access to transportation however possible (i.e., natural supports, taxi services, bus).

Red Flags 🚩 -- **Practices to Avoid**

- 🚩 No written policies and procedures on access to and utilization of transportation.
- 🚩 No expectation for staff to adhere to the services and activities documented in service plans.
- 🚩 A lack of documentation by staff that reflects community engagement activities and an individual's response.
- 🚩 Due to a lack of staff, individuals consistently miss desired opportunities to access the community.
- 🚩 Due to a lack of transportation, individuals consistently miss desired opportunities to access the community.
- 🚩 Provider discourages individuals from trying new activities because of concerns about possible risks and perceived limitations of the individual.
- 🚩 Provider plans activities without input from individuals.
- 🚩 Failure to budget with the individual or plan for provider sponsored cost.
- 🚩 Documentation of community activities is the same for all individuals' supports

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Employment

HCBS Settings Requirement

The setting is integrated and supports full access to the greater community for individuals who receive HCBS services. This includes opportunities to seek employment and work in competitive integrated settings, engage in community life, control personal resources and receive services in the community, to the same degree of access as individuals who do not received HCBS.

Intent (Day/Employment)

Individuals receiving HCBS have opportunities to explore, seek and experience employment, including work in a competitive integrated setting, if desired. As a provider, you should ensure that an individual's needs, desires and choices are assessed and the individual is able to make decisions through an informed choice process, which includes having community experiences.

Best Practice Suggestions

- ✓ The mission statement and admission agreement contains information on the organization's support of integration and community access.
- ✓ Provider establishes expectations for staff to adhere to the services and activities in the individual's plan.
- ✓ Planning meetings are held with individuals to discuss strategies to ensure community integration.
- ✓ Provider supports individuals in trying new things and shares information about activities in the community.
- ✓ Provider supports individuals in exploring options for transportation to access the community (e.g., use of public transit, family, friends, companion services, volunteers).
- ✓ Provider has written policies and procedures regarding individual's access to and utilization of transportation to access the community.
- ✓ Provider posts information about how to access transportation.
- ✓ Progress notes, activity logs, and calendars document community engagement activities.
- ✓ Access to information about community events is available in a variety of ways such as the internet, newspaper, newsletter, etc.
- ✓ Provider supports an individual's desire to search for a job and prepare for employment

Practices to Avoid (Red Flags)

- ✗ No written policies and procedures regarding access to and utilization of transportation.
- ✗ No expectation for staff to adhere to the services and activities documented in service plans.
- ✗ A lack of documentation by staff to demonstrate community activities.
- ✗ Due to the lack of program staff, individuals consistently miss desired opportunities to access the community.
- ✗ Due to a lack of transportation, individuals consistently miss desired opportunities to access the community.
- ✗ Provider discourages individuals from trying new activities due to concerns about possible risks and perceived limitations of the individual.
- ✗ Provider plans activities without input from individuals.

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HCBS Toolkit: All Settings/Setting is Integrated and Supports Full access to the Community

(Employment)

9/18/2019

