



# **make someone welcome**

## **Toolkit**

**growing kind communities**





# quick find

	Page
Congratulations	5
Exercise 1: Take a moment	6
Growing kind communities	7
Top Tips for inclusion	9
Why kind communities matter	11
Exercise 2: Perceptions	12
What is dignity?	13
Exercise 3: See the REAL person	14
Services	15
What is strong, not what is wrong & proof that it works	16
5 Principles underpinning wellbeing	18
Top Tips from other successful community groups	20
Definitions	21
References	22



# congratulations!

You are now signed up to Make Someone Welcome. You join over 150 other groups in Bath & North East Somerset, Wiltshire and Swindon, all showing a passion and a willingness to make our communities work for everyone!

This toolkit has been designed to help you do this, providing top tips from others and some exercises designed to make you think about what being inclusive really means to you.

We are on hand to work with you on the toolkit. We can come and talk to your group and help you think about ways in which you can reach people in your community who might not know about you.



*Keep an eye out for this Easy Tip symbol for some quick tips*

# take a moment

## exercise 1

Spend a minute or two to think of a time when you were out of your comfort zone. This could be an experience that scared you, or made you feel uncomfortable.

For someone who has a disability or is experiencing mental health issues, this feeling could be much more exaggerated and often stands in the way of people being able to live the life they want to.

The way you felt is a feeling you get when you aren't in your comfort zone. For those with a disability or mental health issues, this may be how they feel all the time.



*When meeting with someone for the first time it is worth remembering how you felt when you were taken out of your comfort zone.*

# what makes a kind community?

In 2018 Wiltshire CIL undertook a piece of work in the South of Wiltshire. We talked to lots of people and community groups to find out what works in their community and what is needed to make the ultimate **kind community**. We have created a cartoon graphic to illustrate what we have found, which you can see on the next page. You can use this graphic yourself and in your conversations with other community members.

## What we know:

- A recipe for a good life is simple. People need:
  - Freedom and independence
  - A sense of purpose and meaning
  - Everyday connections with people in their community
- Sometimes things ‘break’ for people. This can be for 1000’s of reasons. Here are a few: they become ill; they have moved to a new area; they lose their job; they care for someone else, or need care themselves; a loved one dies. When things ‘break’, people can lose their sense of purpose and that makes life really tough. This is when people need reaching out to.
- Your community is already really great and full of people supporting each other who prove every day that they can support people to get back on track.
- It’s easy to be kind, to support people so they once again feel part of their community and have a purpose. (And what’s really great is that this gives you a real ‘buzz’ in return!)



*Examples we have found: from MASSIVE—starting a new community group; to SMALL—saying hello at the bus stop; checking in on a friend, or taking someone’s bin out.*



# top tips for inclusion

Stories from the community groups we have worked with show how the natural supports offered by family, friends and the wider community can be enhanced through group attendance, with some community groups having a powerful and positive impact on a person's life.

Community group success factors include:

- **Reaching out to people:** When things break for people they sometimes don't know how to move on. This is when they can become lonely and isolated. Community groups work best when they are proactive and reach out to people, supporting them to find new social connections and new ways in which to grow their confidence.
- **A community within a community:** Community groups can create their own little communities of support—becoming a home from home for people. Group members care about each other and look out for one another. It helps when they are all working towards a shared goal—anything from creating a community garden to putting on a dance show.
- **Skills and interests—giving people something to do:** Community groups work best when they can positively contribute to someone's identity. This can happen really well when group members share a common interest and skill. Examples include dance, art & crafts, sports and DIY skills. They don't work as well when the only point of connection is a shared characteristic such as age or disability.
- **Everyone Welcome! :** Community groups work best when they bring all people together. For example, people we have spoken to enjoy mixing with all age groups—it gave them energy and a different perspective. We also spoke to a local dance group who positively include everyone regardless of whether they could dance. They just needed to show masses of enthusiasm which the encouraging dance leader was happy to build on.

- **Community Spirit:** The groups we spoke to had a strong sense of social purpose and community spirit, wishing to be inclusive and help build a positive community. They showed that every club and group has the ability to be inclusive. As a sports group member said, “A team isn’t just made up of the players on the pitch, but needs the support of friends and family to be great!”

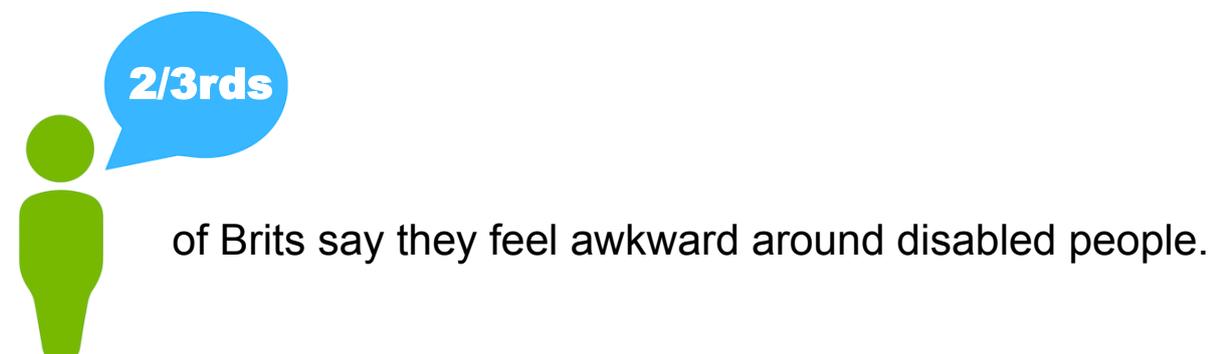
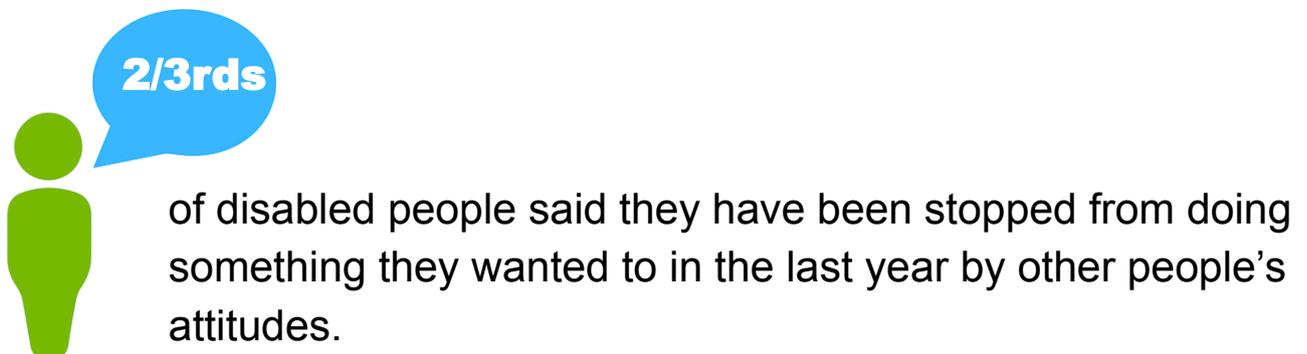
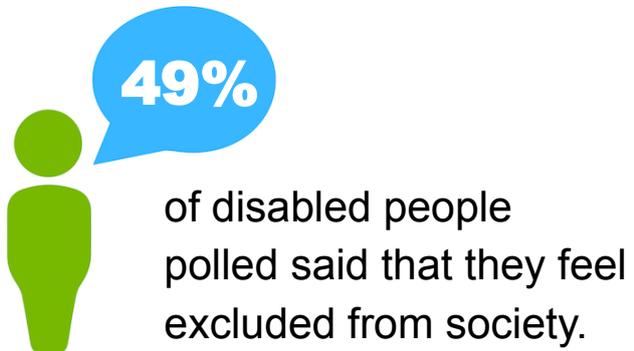


*Three simple steps to a 'Good Life'*

- 1. Freedom and independence*
- 2. A sense of purpose and meaning*
- 3. Everyday connection with people in your community*

# why kind communities matter

Unfortunately disabled people are still feeling that they don't always feel part of their community. The facts below are from Scope's ([www.scope.org.uk](http://www.scope.org.uk)) publications online:



These figures show that there are still a lot of barriers faced by disabled people. From recent research we have found that perceptions of disabled people still play a big part in this. The next two pages look at different perceptions. There is no wrong or right answer, but it shows the different ways in which disabled people are seen.

# perceptions

## exercise 2

Disabled people are often seen as either ...

### superheroes



'We're the Superhumans' campaign by Channel 4

### scroungers

Disability benefits should only go to “really disabled people”, a senior advisor to Theresa May has said, “and not those taking pills at home, who suffer from anxiety”.

## MailOnline

**'There wasn't a dry eye on the school field': Schoolboy with Down's Syndrome wins his first sports day race**



© Helen Chambers / SWNS



*Just take a moment to think about this picture and newspaper headline. You could say it is great that this young boy's classmates decided amongst themselves to deliberately not compete in the race, letting him win. However, would this have been such a great story if the young boy wasn't disabled, but just a really slow runner? The headline focuses on the condition (Down Syndrome) rather than the person. Lots of people want to be seen as a person first and not defined by their disability or condition, but sometimes the most well intentioned actions leads to people still being seen as different.*

*This is something to reflect on when thinking about what inclusion means and what it might look like in your community.*

# what is dignity?

Disabled people just want to be treated the same as everyone else, and deserve their dignity. Some top tips are:

- **Don't patronise or talk down to me:** Talk to me on the same level as you would anyone, and talk to me as an equal. Even if I have a carer/PA/family member or friend with me, talk directly to me and not them.
- **Treat me as an individual:** Not every disabled person is the same. Just because two people may be wheelchair users, it doesn't mean we want to be friends.
- **Recognise personal space:** Be aware of how you interact with someone, e.g. not bending down to talk to someone in a wheelchair, or unnecessary touching such as patting on the head, or talking in a raised, slower voice.
- **Listen to what I have to say/don't force your views on me and vice versa:** Value what that person says, everyone is entitled to an opinion even if it's not always right. No-one should force their views onto another person.
- **Respect my private time:** This one applies more to those who are supporting an individual on a more personal level. Choose your time if you want to discuss something. There are times when certain conversations are inappropriate.
- **Don't presume/always check with me first:** Not everything in a disabled person's life is structured. Don't presume I want everything the same all the time. Check with me first before presuming how I like things to be done.



*Just treat everyone as equals. Disabled people want to be the same as any other person, and very rarely want to be treated differently.*

# see the REAL person

## exercise 3

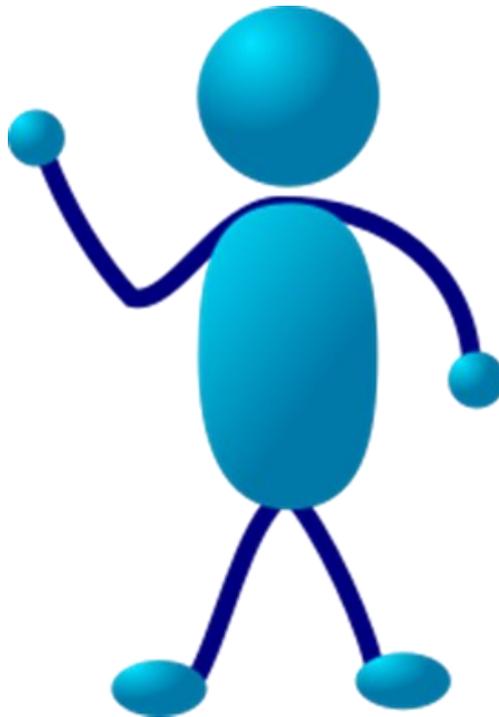
Take a moment to think of someone in your life (you can use yourself). Make two lists, one of the services you use and the other of the important things in your life. Look at the lists and think about which one is most important to you.

**Services I use:**  
**(For example)**

**GP**  
**School**  
**Shops**

**Other stuff:**  
**(For example)**

**Love**  
**Work**  
**Play**  
**Skills**  
**Strengths**

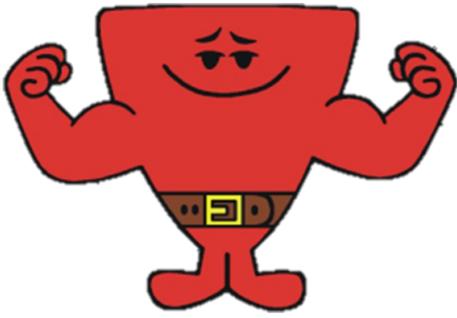


# services

- We all use services in our everyday lives whether it's the doctors or the dentist. This can be seen on the previous exercise.
- Disabled people need services in their life, and they may play a big part in everyday life, such as getting up each day; making meals and other everyday tasks that are taken for granted by non-disabled people. But, if you ask a disabled person what is important to them, the answer is more than likely the same as everyone else's.
- If you look at the two boxes that you have created from the previous exercise, it shows that everyone uses some form of services. If you now look at what box is most important to you, the chances are it's the 'other stuff' box. This would more than likely be the same for a disabled person.



*Everyone uses 'services' but it isn't what's important in your life. This is the same for disabled people. They have a life outside of services.*



# What is **STRONG**, not what is **WRONG**

**The Strengths based Approach** is based around what is right in someone's life. Those with a disability go through life having to explain what is wrong with them, whether it's social care assessments, benefits claims, medical support etc. The Strength Based Approach is all about having that positive conversation; What is good in your life? What is important? What are your hobbies and skills, hopes and dreams?

**Don't put a time limit** on the time you work with a person. These conversations may not happen the first time you meet or speak to the person, it's about building that rapport and relationship. You can't put a time limit on how long you should be working with the person. It may take one meeting, or it could take 6 months, depending on the individual.

**Encouraging** the person to be proactive. The person needs to be ready to take charge of their life. You aren't there to do it for them. If they don't want to be proactive, they may not be ready to take those steps. If they are ready, support and encourage them to do it for themselves.

Cormac Russell, Nurture Development

# proof that it works

A young man whose aim was to find paid work. He was supported to find some work opportunities in the sport industry as sport is his passion. An organisation was identified that was enthusiastic to have the young man volunteer for them. The organisation is keen to have him as a paid employee and are supporting him with applying for funding for transport to and from work.

A young woman who had left college and moved back home had lost a lot of confidence and independence. She wanted to attend a fitness class which was local. She was supported to find one within walking distance and which she felt comfortable to walk to independently. She was introduced to the class and supported to attend for the first couple of times. Gradually the support decreased until she felt happy enough and comfortable enough to attend independently. She is now happy and healthy and living well in her community .

A young woman wanted to lose weight and get a paid job. Over a period of time she was supported to find a Personal Trainer and to find a volunteer job. Her confidence has grown enough to be able to secure a volunteer role and work is ongoing to build up her confidence to find paid work as well as lead an independent and healthy lifestyle.

# 5 principles underpinning wellbeing

Feelings of wellbeing are fundamental to the overall health of people, enabling them to successfully overcome difficulties and achieve what they want out of life. These principles set out 5 actions to improve wellbeing. This is something we think about when working with people to support them to live their best life.

## 1 **Connect with others**

Social relationships play a crucial part in wellbeing. Feeling 'valued by' and 'close to' contributes to living well. Communities play an important part in 'connecting with others' as they already have the resources to help these connections happen. For a disabled person to be able to be part of their community can have a positive effect on their wellbeing.

## 2 **Be active**

It's a known fact that regular exercise contributes to a lower rate of depression and anxiety. When we say exercise, it doesn't need to be strenuous, even just a walk around the block can make a lot of difference to a person's wellbeing. If you choose to exercise with someone else, you are also connecting with others.

## 3 **Take notice of the world around you, and of others**

Be aware of what is going on around you. It's important that you take notice of how other people are feeling, and your surroundings. Take time to just sit back and enjoy moments. Taking notice can make such a difference to your wellbeing.

# 4

## **Keep learning/taking risks**

We talk about 'positive risks' and how important it is to take these risks. Disabled people always come across red tape, whether it's accessibility issues, or being risk assessed for everything—such as going out. It's all about disabled people having the same opportunities and have the same life experience as everyone else. We are all capable of deciding for ourselves whether a risk is worth taking.

To keep learning in life is known to improve self-esteem and in many circumstances get you interacting with others. Having something to aim for in life and setting goals can keep your mind occupied. This could be in education, or at work. To have something to focus on can impact on your wellbeing.

# 5

## **Give**

Giving back is great for your wellbeing and makes you feel good. This could be giving back to your community or being part of your community; feeling useful to others and having those relationships with others. If you feel you are needed, this gives you confidence and a sense of belonging which has a positive effect on your wellbeing.

# top tips from other successful community groups

A lot of time and research has been spent talking to local community groups and organisations to find out what makes them so successful and why they are an integral part of the community.

- Be supportive. Don't see things as a problem, see them as a challenge.
- See everyone as an individual.
- Encourage people. Reassure them if needed.
- Get involved with your local funders, including the council. Make yourselves known as there are pots of money to be spent on community activities/groups.
- Think up ways to make your group as accessible as possible and cater for all abilities.
- Promoting at different clubs and events is important, and meeting people face to face is a valuable connection to have.
- Give back to the community. Think of ways to reach out to individuals within the community, whether it's knocking on a neighbour's door, or fixing someone's fence.
- Use social media. Get yourselves out there and known. Word of mouth goes a long way.
- Get other members of your group/organisation involved in welcoming members. A 'buddy/welcomer' can often be a good way of introducing new members. Meet the new person before the group starts to familiarise them with the building/location, e.g. the location of the toilets or kitchen.



*These tips were given by community groups driven by their enthusiasm to make kind communities. They are thriving and already part of their community.*

# definitions

**Disability** A physical or mental condition that limits a person's movements, senses or activities.

**Mental Health** The term 'mental ill-health' is generally used to refer to a group of conditions that affect a person's ability to think, interact with others and cope with the demands of everyday life. This can lead to significant changes in the person's feelings or behaviour.

**Wellbeing** The state of being comfortable, healthy or happy.

**Inclusion** To embrace all people irrespective of race, gender, disability, medical or other need. It is about giving equal access and opportunities and getting rid of discrimination and intolerance (removal of barriers).

**Community** A community is more than just a group of people living in a particular area. A community is a group of people we lean on when times are tough; our friends, family and neighbours who are there for us when we need love, support and encouragement.

**Dignity** Respecting other's views, choices and decisions. Not making assumptions about how people want to be treated and working with care and compassion.

**Kindness** The quality of being friendly, generous and considerate.

**Equality** Equality is about ensuring that every individual has an equal opportunity to make the most of their lives and talents.

# references

<https://blogs.webmd.com/from-our-archives/20121220/what-does-community-mean-to-you>

[https://www.time-to-change.org.uk/about-mental-health/support-someone?field\\_relation\\_type\\_value=2](https://www.time-to-change.org.uk/about-mental-health/support-someone?field_relation_type_value=2)

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/benefits-george-freeman-really-disabled-people-anxiety-pills-depression-mental-health-a7600931.html>

<https://blogs.webmd.com/from-our-archives/20121220/what-does-community-mean-to-you>

Certificate in Understanding Children and Young People's Mental Health

<https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition>

J Aked and S Thompson July 2011 NEF (New Economics Foundation)

[https://www.inclusion.me.uk/news/what\\_does\\_inclusion\\_mean](https://www.inclusion.me.uk/news/what_does_inclusion_mean)

<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/secondary-education-resources/useful-information/understanding-equality>

<https://www.scope.org.uk/campaigns/independent-confident-connected>

<https://www.scope.org.uk/campaigns/end-the-awkward>



**#MakeSome**  **neWelcome**

**supporting everyone to be  
part of their community**

**Wiltshire Centre for Independent Living  
11 Couch Lane Devizes Wiltshire SN10 1EB  
0300 1233 442**

**[www.wiltshirecil.org.uk](http://www.wiltshirecil.org.uk) [info@wiltshirecil.org.uk](mailto:info@wiltshirecil.org.uk)**

**Charity no. 1120611 Company no. 5480761**

