

FOSTERING INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS

COMPETENCIES: COMMUNITY LIVING SKILLS AND SUPPORTS; RELATIONSHIPS/SOCIAL SKILLS

INTRODUCTION

The associations we have with others are a critical part of our lives. Our interpersonal relationships provide love, support, and a connectedness that all of us need. Through interpersonal relationships we learn about ourselves, how we affect others, and we get feedback about who we are as human beings. It is no different for those on the Autism spectrum. While differences in social interaction are a defining characteristic of Autism, autistic individuals desire interpersonal relationships just as much as anyone else. In your work you are in a position to support another person in meeting their needs for connection. Using some of the techniques below, you can help the person you support to explore and establish new relationships and deepen existing ones.



USE MODELING, ROLE-PLAY, AND SOCIAL NARRATIVES TO TEACH AND REHEARSE SKILLS

- Initiation / Greeting
- Commenting / Complimenting
- Question asking
- Turn taking / Conversation

CREATE OPPORTUNITIES FOR FRIENDSHIPS TO DEVELOP AND DEEPEN

- Look to strengths and interests to identify reinforcing avenues for interaction
- Explore community resources (library, classes, meet-ups)
- Talk to the individual about organizing time with others at home or in community settings

REINFORCE INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS

- Praise the use of social-communication skills
- Provide support as needed to scaffold social interaction and friendship-related behaviors

WHAT YOU CAN DO NOW!

- 1** Identify one social skill from the list above that you can teach to someone you support to foster his or her interpersonal relationships.
- 2** Support him or her in creating opportunities to meet others in the community and to strengthen relationships at home.
- 3** Recognize and reinforce the friendship and friendship-related behaviors you see in those you support.