

community imagination tool



Facilitator's guide

This imagination tool is to help people with a disability and their families to start thinking about 'access to community'.

We all live in the community. When government and providers talk about 'access to the community', it is often interpreted as being a place we visit rather than a place we belong to.

Community is not a magical tourist destination. This tool was written around the concept that community is built by the people who are in it. There are many types of communities.

How to use this tool

The activity should take twenty minutes to complete with three to five people.

Facilitator instructions:

1. Explain the activity.

You could use words like this:

'This is an activity to help you start thinking about which communities you are in now and which ones you could belong to. It will take ten minutes and you will need to work as a group.'

2. Ask each person to give you a brief example of a type of community they might belong to.

3. Explain the difference between the types of communities, giving concrete examples.

You can use the information overleaf to help people understand.

Keep it short.

A **community of interest** is a group of people who are interested in the same topic or who share the same identity. How many people are there online or at Whovian conventions, dressed as Daleks or wearing Tardis teeshirts?

A **community of practice** is a group of people who do the same job or activity. That might mean people who are artists or people who fix watches. The group comes together to share experiences & expertise and get better at what they do.

A **community of action** is a group of people focused on bringing about change in the world. People don't always think about meaning and passion when they think of disabled people - if you love animals, it doesn't mean going to riding classes endlessly, it might mean animal rescue or fundraising communities.

A **community of place** is usually made up of people who are in the same geographic location. It might mean the local P&C or residents association but it might also mean people who walk their dog at the local park on Sundays.

A **community of circumstance** is a group of people who come together to share experiences related to being in a particular life situation or other circumstance, rather than a shared interest, for example carers' support groups.

4. Ask a member to read one of the example cards or read it yourself. Explain to them which communities Stephen belongs to - a community of interest because he's interested in football, a community of place because it is a local footy club, a community of action with other adults who are raising money to make the footy club grow and be sustainable and a community of circumstance because of the group he runs for injured and retired footballers.

Explain to the group that for disabled people, it is limiting to say 'we cannot play football' - there are lots of communities in and around football clubs that people can belong to and contribute.

5. Ask a member to read Zoe's story. Ask the group members to briefly outline which communities Zoe might belong to.

6. Put down the 'community door' card and the 'my community card'.

7. Ask the group members to go through the cards (there are about 90) as a group.

If any of the group members identify as a person who belongs to that community (for example, if the person owns a motorcycle (they do not need to belong to a formal club) or belongs to a formal group like a dance group) put the card on that pile.

If there is nobody who belongs to that community but someone knows a person in that community, put the card on the other pile.

8. With the remaining time, ask the group members to fill out the 'My Community' worksheet.

Worksheet

Write down the communities you belong to and explore the opportunities within them. Write down any other ideas you have - there's an example below to get you started.

Communities I already belong to _____

Are any other communities linked with ONE of these groups? _____

What opportunities might my membership with this community give me?

What would I need to overcome any barriers and be part of this community?

What other communities could I belong to?

John's Communities - an example

Communities I already belong to

John lives in the country and owns a MotoGuzzi road bike that he used to ride before his accident, when he acquired a disability.

Are any other communities linked with it?

There is a large network of online MotoGuzzi groups for enthusiasts which have face to face events and regular rides, plus the motorcycle racing, vintage bike and motorcycle photography communities.

What opportunities might this community membership give me?

John could meet other people online or offline, think about starting a group for bike enthusiasts who have an acquired injury, lobby for modifications to motorcycles, share information about how to return to riding or racing, volunteer at a bike rally or expo, hire his motorcycle out for riding lessons or develop a product to sell to the community.

What would I need to overcome any barriers?

John isn't able to ride any more but he is self managing his funding and could employ a club member to pick him up and ride pillion or in a side car to an event, ride or meeting. He could also think about modifications to his bike or organising country rides to his regional area, including asking for local sponsorship from coffee shops.

From your list, choose another community you already belong to. _____

Are any other communities linked with it? _____

What opportunities might my membership with this community give me?

What would I need to overcome any barriers and be part of this community?

What other communities could I belong to?

Some Tips and Things to Remember -

- If there isn't something, **start it up**. Perhaps your neighbourhood desperately needs a safety campaign or a weekend regular barbeque or street party. Write invitations or letters, get it started.
- Think about **doorways into communities**. Ask non disabled people if they belong to any communities and ask them how they ended up there. Usually it is through a friend who belongs to something, or they've spotted some advertising. Community newspapers are also great to source info.
- Think about **service related activities**, or volunteering. They are surefire ways to 'get into' a community. If you are the person with your hand up for a committee and the person who always brings food to the event, you are going to be the most popular person in the club.
- Remember that **cultural communities** include many identity groups, which includes disability groups. Autistic culture and the neurodiversity movement is unexplored by many young autistic people and there are many disability rights groups that are cross disability in nature - groups for disabled women, for example, or Aboriginal disability groups.
- If you're in the **NDIS**, don't forget to work out what support you need to make this happen! Think about adaptive equipment as well as support workers.

And remember...

...the community is not a tourist destination!