

## Connecting with social and community activities

Below you will find the research in detail for supports, programs or activities that may help you connect with social and community activities.

The research is organised by the following outcomes:

- **Social functioning:** Do the supports, programs or activities help you to pursue or achieve a social or community participation goal? For example finding somewhere to work, making new friends, having meaningful social relationships or participating in a social leisure activity that interests you.
- **Social skills:** Do the supports, programs or activities help you to improve your skills and capacity to communicate and interact with others, both speaking with others or using gestures, body language and personal appearance?
- **Psychosocial outcomes:** Do the supports, programs or activities help to improve your psychosocial wellbeing? For example psychological symptoms, depression or anxiety symptoms; quality of life, general functioning/wellbeing, mental health, emotional/psychological wellbeing, physical health; self-esteem, confidence, self-value or self-efficacy; self-determination, empowerment or choice; behaviours of concern or adaptive behaviours; cognitive functioning; employment; and other health-related outcomes.

You may notice that only some supports, programs or activities are listed under the different outcomes or only for different disabilities. The reasons for this are:

- the research only looked at the changes for one outcome or disability and not others
- the research looked at all outcomes and disabilities, but the support, program or activities only showed changes for some outcomes for some disabilities.

## Understanding evidence and quality of research

### Key to understanding the evidence:

- **Benefit:** the research shows a positive effect on outcomes
- **Unclear:** the research shows a mix of results, positive, negative or show no difference.
- **No difference:** the research shows no difference on outcomes
- **Harmful:** the research shows the supports, programs or activities causes harm

### Key to quality of research:

- **Quality of research** refers to the strength of the available evidence.
- **High:** all evidence is from high quality research. This means the research provides an accurate summary with no or very limited issues with the methods used.
- **Moderate:** all evidence is from moderate quality research. This means the research had some issues with the methods used. It may provide an accurate summary of the evidence, but these issues should be considered when reviewing this evidence.

- Low: all evidence is from low quality research. This means the research had many issues with the methods used. It may not provide an accurate summary of the evidence and these issues should be considered when reviewing this evidence.

The information provided in these Guides may be based on more than one piece of research. If this is the case the quality of the research may range between two or more quality ratings.

- Low to high: available evidence ranges from low, moderate and high-quality research
- Low to moderate: available evidence includes both low and moderate quality research
- Moderate to high: available evidence includes both moderate to high-quality research

## Research in detail

### Social Functioning

Some supports can help your social functioning. This may include cognitive training for people on the autism spectrum or with a psychosocial disability.

#### Interventions that show benefit

##### Autism spectrum disorder

- Peer support in the community (High quality research)
- Transition to young adulthood (Low to High quality research)

##### Intellectual disability

- Choice-making and “asset-based” approaches (Moderate quality research)
- Community group participation linkage support (Moderate quality research)
- Peer support in the community (Moderate quality research)
- Mentoring support to transition to retirement (Moderate quality research)
- Mentoring support to transition to young adulthood (Low to High quality research)
- Person Centred Planning (Low to High quality research)
- Individualised behaviour and participation support (quality of research not reported)

##### Psychosocial disability

- Community group participation linkage support (Moderate quality research)
- Social prescriber and “connecting people” interventions (Low to High quality research)

#### Interventions where the research is unclear

##### Psychosocial disability

- Befriending interventions with a non-disabled volunteer (moderate to high quality research)
- Peer support in the community (moderate to high quality research)
- Peer-based friendship programs (low to moderate quality research)
- Peer support in mental health services (low to high quality research)

## **Interventions where the research shows no difference**

### **Intellectual disability**

- Befriending interventions with a non-disabled volunteer (low quality research)

### **Psychosocial disability**

- Animal companionship at home (low to moderate quality research)

## **Social Skills**

### **Interventions that show benefit for social skills**

#### **Psychosocial disability**

- Social prescriber and “connecting people” interventions (quality of research not reported)

### **Interventions where the research is unclear**

#### **Intellectual disability**

- Choice-making and supports and strengths-based approaches (moderate quality research)
- Individualised behaviour and participation support (quality of research not reported)

### **Interventions with no evidence available related to this support area for any disability type**

- Person Centred Planning
- Community group participation linkage supports
- Befriending interventions with a volunteer
- Peer-based friendship programs
- Peer support in the community
- Peer support in mental health services
- Transition to young adulthood
- Transition to retirement

## **Other outcomes**

### **Interventions that show benefit**

#### **Intellectual disability**

- Choice-making and supports and strengths-based approaches (moderate quality research)
- Person Centred Planning (low to high quality research)

#### **Psychosocial disability**

- Social prescriber and “connecting people” interventions (quality of research not reported)

### **Interventions where the research is unclear**

#### **Intellectual disability**

- Transition to retirement (moderate quality research)

## Psychosocial disability

- Befriending interventions with a non-disabled volunteer (moderate to high quality research)
- Peer support in the community (moderate to high quality research)
- Peer support in mental health services (low to high quality research)
- Social prescriber and “connecting people” interventions (low to high quality research)
- Peer-based friendship programs (low to moderate quality research)

## Interventions with no evidence available related to this support area

- Community group participation linkage supports
- Befriending interventions with a non-disabled volunteer (Autism and intellectual disability only)
- Transition to young adulthood

## Activities that offer opportunities to participate

### Social Functioning - Participation in existing groups/activities/programs in the community

#### Interventions that show benefit

##### Autism spectrum disorder

- Music programs (quality of research not reported)

##### Intellectual disability

- Art programs (low quality research)
- Community group participation (low quality research)
- Dramatherapy and drama programs (quality of research not reported)

##### Psychosocial disability

- Farm, ecotherapy, gardening and horticulture interventions (moderate quality research)
- Outdoor nature experiences and camps (moderate to high quality research)
- Music therapy (low to moderate quality research)
- Community group participation (low quality research)
- Dramatherapy and drama programs (quality of research not reported)
- Art programs (quality of research not reported)

### Social Functioning - Sport or physical activity interventions

#### Interventions that show benefit

##### Autism spectrum disorder

- Disability-specific physical activity programs (low to high quality research)

##### Intellectual disability

- Disability-specific physical activity programs (low to high quality research)
- Unified Special Olympics participation (low quality research)
- Disability-specific Special Olympics participation (low quality research)

### **Interventions where the research is unclear**

#### **Intellectual disability**

- Mainstream sport/ physical activity in community (low to high quality research)

#### **Psychosocial disability**

- Sport or physical activity programs (moderate quality research)

### **Social skills - Participation in existing groups/activities/programs in the community**

#### **Interventions that show benefit**

##### **Autism spectrum disorder**

- Dance therapy (moderate to high quality research)

##### **Intellectual disability**

- Dramatherapy and drama programs (quality of research not reported)

##### **Psychosocial disability**

- Dramatherapy and drama programs (quality of research not reported)

#### **Interventions with no evidence available related to this support area for any disability type**

- Community group participation
- Music therapy
- Art therapy
- Farm, ecotherapy, gardening and horticulture interventions
- Outdoor nature experiences and camps

### **Other outcomes - Participation in existing groups/activities/programs in the community**

#### **Interventions that show benefit**

##### **Intellectual disability**

- Dramatherapy and drama programs (quality of research not reported)
- Art programs (low quality research)

##### **Psychosocial disability**

- Dramatherapy and drama programs (quality of research not reported)
- Art programs (quality of research not reported)
- Farm, ecotherapy, gardening and horticulture interventions (moderate quality research)
- Outdoor nature experiences and camps (moderate to high quality research)

## **Interventions where the research is unclear**

### **Autism spectrum disorder**

- Dance therapy (moderate to high quality research)

## **Interventions with no evidence available related to this support area for any disability type**

- Community group participation
- Music program

## **Other outcomes - Sport or physical activity interventions**

### **Interventions that show benefit**

#### **Autism spectrum disorder**

- Disability-specific physical activity programs (low to high quality research)

#### **Intellectual disability**

- Mainstream sport/ physical activity in community (low to high quality research)
- Unified Special Olympics participation (low to moderate quality research)
- Disability-specific physical activity programs (low to high quality research)
- Disability-specific Special Olympics participation (low quality research)

### **Interventions where the research is unclear**

#### **Psychosocial disability**

- Sport or physical activity programs (moderate quality research)