

Getting ready for social and community participation

Below you will find the research in detail for supports, programs or activities that may help when getting ready for social and community participation.

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 - Social skills and communication supports, programs or activities

Social skills training has been shown to build social and communication skills. Some research has also shown that learning these skills then leads to improvements in your social functioning, such as making new friends and opening up other opportunities to participate in the community. For some participants group training works well. For others (particularly people on the autism spectrum) this training may work better if it is done individually. While theory of mind training may be useful for people with a psychosocial disability, it has not been shown to support social and communication skills for people on the autism spectrum.

Supports, programs or activities that show benefit

Autism spectrum disorder

- Intensive interaction support for specific communication skills (high quality research)
- One-on-one social skills training (low quality research)

Intellectual disability

- Group social skills training (moderate quality research)
- Intensive interaction support for specific communication skills (low to high quality research)

Psychosocial disability

- Social Cognition training focused on loneliness & self-control (moderate quality research)
- Social Cognition and Interaction Training (SCIT) in groups or one-on-one (low to moderate quality research)
- Other approaches to learning: theory of mind, emotion or social cognition training (moderate quality research)
- Social Skills Training that does not include a focus on cognition, or ways of thinking (low quality research)

Supports, programs or activities where the research is unclear

Autism spectrum disorder

- Program for the Education and Enrichment of Relational Skills for Young Adults (PEERS-YA) social skills training program (low quality research)

Supports, programs or activities where the research shows no difference

Autism spectrum disorder

- Other approaches to learning: theory of mind, emotion, or social cognition training (low quality research)
 - Group social skills training (quality of research not reported)

Social Functioning - Psychosocial wellbeing and capacity building support

Some supports may assist you to improve your psychosocial wellbeing so that you can participate in the community. This may include mindfulness activities which have been shown to benefit people on the autism spectrum. Other supports that have shown benefit include some types of therapy including Cognitive Behavioural Therapy with a focus on social functioning (for people on the autism spectrum), and Cognitive reframing and recovery-oriented therapies (for people with psychosocial disability).

Supports, programs or activities that show benefit

Autism spectrum disorder

- Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) based interventions targeting social functioning (moderate quality research)
- Mindfulness for social anxiety (low to moderate quality research)

Psychosocial disability

- Cognitive reframing (low to moderate quality research)
- Recovery-oriented therapy (low quality research)

Supports, programs or activities where the research is unclear

Autism spectrum disorder

- Psychoeducation (Low to high quality research)

Psychosocial disability

- Psychoeducation (Low to high quality research)
- Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) based interventions targeting social functioning (low to moderate quality research)
- Telehealth-based support or SMS prompting (quality of research not reported)

Supports, programs or activities where the research shows no difference

Psychosocial disability

- Behaviour activation (moderate quality research)

Supports, programs or activities with no evidence available related to this support area for any disability type

- Meta-cognitive training, Cognitive Enhancement Therapy

Social Functioning – Work-related social skills supports, programs or activities

Some supports can help to build your work-related social skills, which can then impact on your social functioning. There is evidence that coaching programs (for people with intellectual disability) and internships and volunteering (for people with psychosocial disability) may help to build these skills. We don't know enough about how well job interview and conversation skills training works.

Supports, programs or activities that show benefit

Intellectual Disability

- Vocational social skills or coaching programs (high quality research)

Psychosocial disability

- Vocational internships and training and volunteering (moderate quality research)

Supports, programs or activities where the research is unclear

Autism spectrum disorder

- Aspirations Program – vocational skills (low quality research)

Supports, programs or activities with no evidence available related to this support area for any disability type

- Job interview and conversation skills training
- Broad vocational social skills programs

Social Functioning - Relationship-focused supports, programs or activities

Some supports may assist you to improve your relationships. This may include friendships as well as romantic relationships, and relationship and family planning (group or individual programs). These have been shown to help people on the autism spectrum and people with intellectual disability to learn about and make new relationships. Supports may also focus on how to go on a date, and romantic relationship programs which have shown to benefit people on the autism spectrum.

Supports, programs or activities that show benefit

Autism spectrum disorder

- Relationships (including romantic relationships) & family planning (group or individual programs) (low quality research)
- Dating, and relationship programs, mostly in group settings (low quality research)

Psychosocial disability

- Relationship programs (group programs) (moderate quality research)

Intellectual disability

- Relationship & family planning (group or individual programs) (low quality research)

Supports, programs or activities with no evidence available related to this support area for any disability type

- Abuse prevention programs (group and individual programs)
- SexG program on sexual health and responsibility
- Relationship and AIDS/HIV-prevention interventions

Social Functioning - Life skill focused supports, programs or activities

Some supports may assist you with improving your life skills. This may include parenting skills, knowledge and safety training and life story work which have been shown to benefit people with intellectual disability. These supports have not been tested with people with autism or psychosocial disability.

We don't know enough about the benefits of navigation and travel training interventions for people on the autism spectrum.

We also don't know enough about digital literacy skills training (e.g., using email or SMSs) or navigation and travel training for people with intellectual disability.

Supports, programs or activities that show benefit

Intellectual disability

- Parenting skills, knowledge, and safety training (Moderate to high quality research)
- Life Story work (moderate quality research)

Supports, programs or activities where the research is unclear

Autism spectrum disorder

- Navigation and travel training interventions (quality of research not reported)

Intellectual disability

- Digital literacy skills training (e.g., using email or SMSs) (low to moderate quality research)
- Navigation and travel training interventions (quality of research not reported)

Supports, programs or activities with no evidence available related to this support area for any disability type

- Life Skills Training

Social skills – social skills and communication supports, programs or activities

Some supports may assist you with improving your social and communication skills. This may include social skills training (for people on the autism spectrum), or Intensive Interaction Support for specific communication skills for people on the autism spectrum or with intellectual disability. Group social skills

training has shown benefit for people with intellectual disability and social skills training that doesn't include a focus on cognition, or ways of thinking and theory of mind training has shown benefit for people with psychosocial disability. We don't know enough about Group social skills training or Program for the Education and Enrichment of Relational Skills for Young Adults (PEERS-YA) social skills training program for people on the autism spectrum. The research is also unclear about the benefits of Social Cognition training focused on loneliness & self-control or Individual or group Social Cognition and Interaction Training for people with psychosocial disability.

Supports, programs or activities that show benefit

Autism spectrum disorder

- Individual social skills training (low to high quality research)
- Intensive Interaction Support for specific communication skills (low quality research)

Intellectual disability

- Group social skills training (moderate quality research)
- Theory of mind/ emotion/ social cognition training (moderate to high quality research)
- Intensive Interaction Support for specific communication skills (low to high quality research)

Psychosocial disability

- Social Skills Training that did not include a focus on cognition, or ways of thinking (low quality research)

Supports, programs or activities where the research is unclear

Autism spectrum disorder

- Group social skills training (low quality research)
- Program for the Education and Enrichment of Relational Skills for Young Adults (PEERS-YA) social skills training program (low quality research)

Psychosocial disability

- Social Cognition training focused on loneliness & self-control (moderate quality research)
- Individual or group Social Cognition and Interaction Training (SCIT) (moderate quality research)

Social skills – Psychosocial wellbeing and capacity building support

Some supports can help you build your psychosocial wellbeing and focus more broadly on general capacity building. This may include cognitive training for people on the autism spectrum or with a psychosocial disability.

Supports, programs or activities that show benefit

Autism spectrum disorder

- Meta-cognitive training, Cognitive Enhancement Therapy (low to moderate quality research)

Psychosocial disability

- Cognitive reframing (moderate quality research)
- Meta-cognitive training, Cognitive Enhancement Therapy (low to moderate quality research)

Supports, programs or activities with no evidence available related to this support area for any disability type

- Telehealth-based supports or SMS prompting
- Psychoeducation
- Mindfulness for social anxiety
- Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) based interventions targeting social functioning
- Behaviour activation
- Recovery-oriented therapy

Social skills – Work-related social skills supports, programs or activities

Some supports may be helpful for improving your work-related social skills. Work-related social skill programs have shown benefit for people on the autism spectrum and with intellectual disability. The research is unclear for the benefits of job interview and conversation skill training for people on the autism spectrum.

Supports, programs or activities that show benefit

Autism spectrum disorder

- Broad vocational social skills programs (low to moderate research)
- Aspirations Program – vocational skills (low quality research)

Intellectual disability

- Vocational social skills or coaching programs (high quality research)

Supports, programs or activities where the research is unclear

Autism spectrum disorder

- Job interview and conversation skills training (low to moderate quality research)

Supports, programs or activities with no evidence available related to this support area for any disability type

- Vocational internships and training and volunteering

Social skills – Relationship-focused supports, programs or activities

Supports are available to help you build successful relationships. Relationship programs showed benefits in both group and individual settings for people on the autism spectrum or with intellectual or psychosocial disability. Abuse prevention programs also showed a benefit for people with intellectual or psychosocial disability. The research on the benefits of the SexG program on sexual health and responsibility for people with psychosocial disability is unclear.

Supports, programs or activities that show benefit

Autism spectrum disorder

- Dating and relationship programs, mostly in group settings (low to moderate quality research)
- Relationship & family planning (group or individual programs) (low quality research)
- Abuse prevention programs (low quality research)

Intellectual disability

- Relationship & family planning (group or individual programs) (low quality research)
- Abuse prevention programs (low quality research)

Psychosocial disability

- Relationship and AIDS/HIV-prevention interventions (low to moderate quality research)

Supports, programs or activities where the research is unclear

Psychosocial disability

- SexG program on sexual health and responsibility (moderate to high quality research)

Social skills – Life skill focused supports, programs or activities

Digital literacy (e.g., using email or SMSs) (for people with intellectual disability) and life skills training (for people with psychosocial disability) showed benefits for improving peoples social and life skills.

Supports, programs or activities that show benefit

Intellectual disability

- Digital literacy skills training (e.g., using email or SMSs) (high quality research)

Psychosocial disability

- Life Skills Training (low quality research)

Supports, programs or activities with no evidence available related to this support area for any disability type

- Parenting skills, knowledge, and safety training
- Navigation and travel training interventions
- Life story work

Psychosocial outcomes – social skills and communication

Social skill training showed benefit for people on the autism spectrum and people with psychosocial disability.

Supports, programs or activities where the research is unclear

Autism spectrum disorder

- Individual social skills training (low quality research)

Psychosocial disability

- Social Skills Training that did not include a focus on cognition, or ways of thinking (low quality research)

Supports, programs or activities with no evidence available related to this support area for any disability type

- Social Cognition training focused on loneliness & self-control
- Individual or group Social Cognition and Interaction Training (SCIT)
- Group social skills training
- Program for the Education and Enrichment of Relational Skills for Young Adults (PEERS-YA) social skills training program
- Intensive Interaction Support for specific communication skills

Psychosocial outcomes - Psychosocial wellbeing and capacity building support

Interventions called Meta cognitive training and Cognitive enhancement therapy have shown benefit for people on the autism spectrum and for people with psychosocial disability for improving psychosocial outcomes. Mindfulness for people on the autism spectrum shows benefits for social anxiety. It is unclear if behaviour activation or telehealth-based supports or SMS prompting are beneficial for people with psychosocial disability. Psychoeducation for people with psychosocial disability was found to show no difference for psychosocial outcomes.

Supports, programs or activities that show benefit

Autism spectrum disorder

- Meta-cognitive training, Cognitive Enhancement Therapy (moderate quality research)
- Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) based interventions targeting social functioning (moderate quality research)
- Mindfulness for social anxiety (low to moderate quality research)

Psychosocial disability

- Meta-cognitive training, Cognitive Enhancement Therapy (moderate quality research)
- Cognitive reframing (low to moderate quality research)

Supports, programs or activities where the research is unclear

Psychosocial disability

- Behaviour activation (moderate quality research)
- Telehealth-based supports or SMS prompting (quality of research not reported)

Supports, programs or activities where the research shows no difference

Psychosocial disability

- Psychoeducation (low to high quality research)

Supports, programs or activities with no evidence available related to this support area for any disability type

- Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) based interventions targeting social functioning
- Recovery-oriented therapy

Psychosocial outcomes – Work-related social skills supports, programs or activities

Work related social skill programs show benefit for psychosocial outcomes for people on the autism spectrum, or with intellectual or psychosocial disability. Job interview and conversation skills training shows no difference for people on the autism spectrum.

Supports, programs or activities that show benefit

Autism spectrum disorder

- Broad vocational social skills programs (low quality research)
- Aspirations Program – vocational skills (low quality research)

Intellectual disability

- Vocational social skills or coaching programs (high quality research)

Psychosocial disability

- Vocational internships and training and volunteering (moderate quality research)

Supports, programs or activities where the research shows no difference

Autism spectrum disorder

- Job interview and conversation skills training (low quality research)

Psychosocial outcomes - Relationship-focused supports, programs or activities

Group and individual romantic relationship and family planning programs showed benefits for psychosocial outcomes for people on the autism spectrum and with intellectual disability.

Supports, programs or activities where the research shows no difference

Autism spectrum disorder

- Relationship & family planning (group or individual programs) (low quality research)

Intellectual disability

- Relationship & family planning (group or individual programs) (low quality research)

Supports, programs or activities with no evidence available related to this support area for any disability type

- Dating, relationship programs, mostly in group settings
- Abuse prevention programs
- SexG program on sexual health and responsibility

- Relationship and AIDS/HIV-prevention interventions

Psychosocial outcomes – life skills focused supports, programs or activities

Life skills training for people with psychosocial disability show benefit for psychosocial outcomes. It is unclear if life story work for people with intellectual disability provides benefits for people with intellectual disability.

Supports, programs or activities that show benefit

Psychosocial disability

- Life Skills Training (low to moderate quality research)

Supports, programs or activities where the research is unclear

Intellectual disability

- Life Story work (moderate quality research)

Supports, programs or activities with no evidence available related to this support area for any disability type

- Parenting skills, knowledge, and safety training
- Digital literacy skills training (e.g., using email or SMSs)
- Navigation and travel training interventions