

# National Core Indicators® Data Highlight



## What do NCI® Data Tell Us About the Friendships of People With IDD?

**In the 2017-2018 data collection cycle, 78% of participants reported having friends who were not staff or family. States ranged from 92% to 62% participants reporting they had friends who were not staff or family**

**Why does it matter?** People with IDD, like all of us, want and need friendships. In addition to companionship, friendships relieve loneliness and diminish isolation (Amado, 2013). Isolation is linked to potential vulnerability to abuse and neglect and is also associated with negative health outcomes (MA DDS, 2013). Friends can help people reduce the stress of being surrounded by paid staff -- who may turnover frequently -- by providing stable relationships. A circle of friends can help people to become involved in social and cultural activities in their communities, to find jobs, and to provide support at critical decision points. Finally, the presence of friends in a person's life can reduce reliance on staff and reduce staff burnout.

**Questions to ask:** Is training and support available to help direct support professionals support people with IDD to develop relationships? Do person centered guidelines and training for case managers include the importance of exploring relationship goals? Are supports available to help people with IDD to learn how to make social connections, such as role playing? Are people encouraged to become engaged in self-advocacy organizations where they can make social contacts? Are tool kits available to families, providers, and other stakeholders that lay out step by step suggestions for connecting people with IDD with community members who may share similar interests? Are Charting the Life Course framework and principles used to support friendships? Have people with IDD been helped to use social media to make connections and find communities of interest?

### Want to know more?

- Social Capital: *The Real Route to Inclusion*. (2014). Frontline Initiative: A Publication of the National Alliance of Direct Support Professionals. Vol. 12, No. 1. [https://ici.umn.edu/products/Frontline\\_Initiative/FI\\_12\\_1](https://ici.umn.edu/products/Frontline_Initiative/FI_12_1).
- Angela Amado. (2013). *Friends: Connecting People to Community Members*. Research and Training Center on Community Living, University of Minnesota. [https://rtc.umn.edu/docs/Friends\\_Connecting\\_people\\_with\\_disabilities\\_and\\_community\\_members.pdf](https://rtc.umn.edu/docs/Friends_Connecting_people_with_disabilities_and_community_members.pdf)
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- *Charting the Life Course*. <http://www.lifecoursetools.com/planning>
- Massachusetts Department of Developmental Services. (2013). *Quality is No Accident: Friendships In People with IDD*. University of MA Medical School E.K. Shriver Center. [https://shriver.umassmed.edu/sites/shriver.umassmed.edu/files/QINA%20Friendship\\_final\\_web2.pdf](https://shriver.umassmed.edu/sites/shriver.umassmed.edu/files/QINA%20Friendship_final_web2.pdf)
- <https://shriver.umassmed.edu/programs/cdder/webinars/widening-circle-expanding-opportunities-friendship>

