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STAY CONNECTED

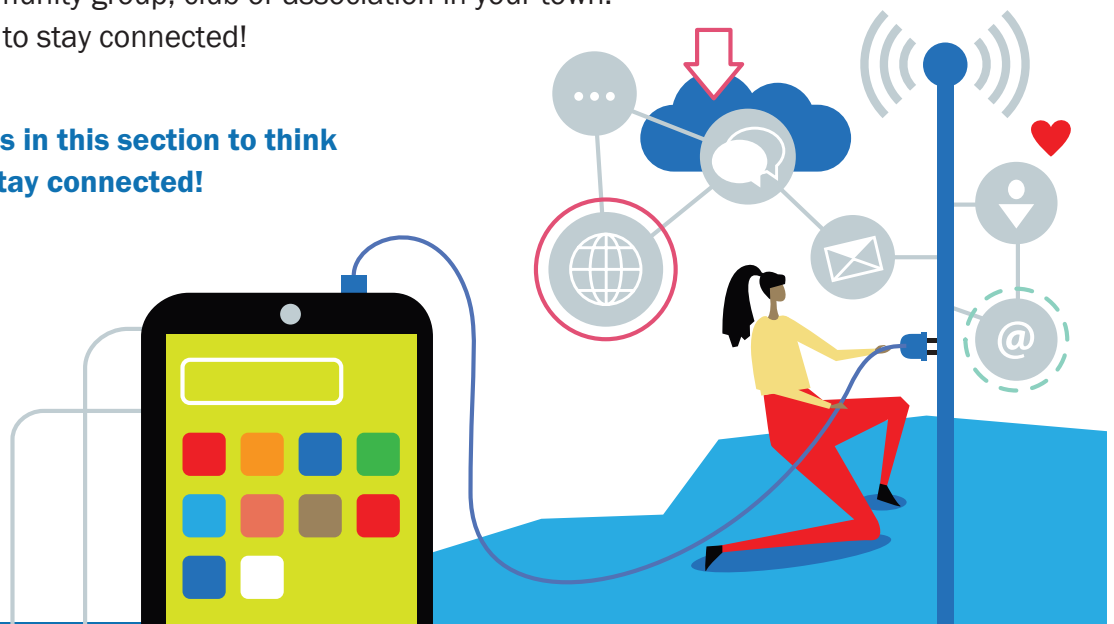


How Can I Stay Connected?

Connections with other people is an important part of life. Good friends can make you happier and healthier. This section of the toolkit will give you ways to grow your community connections. Here are some examples of ways you can connect with people both in person and with technology:

- Schedule a meal or activity together with a friend. You can take a walk in the park, go to a movie, or get coffee together.
- Schedule regular phone chats, facetime calls, Zoom or Skype dates to connect with people in your life.
- If you and a friend have the same streaming subscription you can watch a movie together.
- Join a church or community group, club or association in your town.
- There are more ways to stay connected!

Use the tools in this section to think of ways to stay connected!



Map Your Relationships

A good place to start is to make a map of the connections you have. A relationship map can help you see:

- The people and places in your life now.
- Where you have strong connections.
- If you lack connections in a specific area.
- People who can help you make more connections.
- Places where you can make more connections.

Do not worry about coming up with the "right" people and places. At this point you are coming up with ideas. Just write down all connections you have.

Here are some things to think about while you are doing your map:

Skills and Interests: Write down your skills and interest areas. Add names of people you know who share those same things. Also write down places where people with those same skills and interests go.

Community Affiliations: List people and places you are connected to. These are things like churches, clubs, and groups you, or the people you know, belong to.

Places, Work, Learning: List the places you go to and the people you know there. Also list places you have worked and places you have learned (like schools or training).



(Invitation and Networking Map Cindy Kernan with Dave and Faye Wetherow)

Use the next page to create your own relationship map!



Additional Resource

Check out "Friends: Connecting People with Disabilities and Community Members" manual and worksheets by Angela Amado:
<https://ici.umn.edu/products/579>

My Relationship Map

HELPFUL TIP

Use this page to write down the people and places you are connected. Then answer the questions based on your map.



- What people and activities do I want to stay connected to?
- What people or activities do I want to get reconnected with?
- What places or people on this list can help me make more connections?

Find New Opportunities

All communities, big and small, have a lot of activities and group. Here are some ideas of ways to find new things to do:

1. Talk to everyone you know. Tell them that you are looking for new things to do and people to meet. Ask if they have ideas for you.
2. Call your library. People at the library have a lot of information about events, groups and resources.
3. Look at Facebook. You can find events in your area or join online groups who share the same interests as you.
4. Find bulletin boards. You will find events and groups on bulletin boards in coffee shops, grocery stores, city hall, and colleges.
5. Contact your city or town government. Call someone at the town hall, the recreation office, or look at your town's website for events.
6. Look in the newspaper. Your town might have free newspapers that list upcoming events, classes, and groups.
7. Contact your neighborhood association. Some places have neighborhood associations. These people know a lot about activities and groups in your area.
8. Connect with a service provider. Agencies support people with disabilities to volunteer and get connected to other people.
9. Check out this Building Full Lives video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C027NQhMJNO>
10. Contact the Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC). ADRC's have a lot of information about resources in the county.
11. Contact United Way. United Way can tell you about volunteer opportunities. They have a website called Volunteer Wisconsin (www.volunteerwisconsin.org)

How to Get There

Do you need a ride to do the things you want to do? Think about these transportation options:



- Find things you can walk or ride your bike to.
- Ride the bus – mobility trainers can help you learn to ride the bus.
- Share a ride – Find out if anyone you know is traveling in the same direction or willing to give you a ride.
- Take a low-fare taxi – some taxis charge people with disabilities less for rides
- Get a driver's license – People with disabilities can get extra support and accommodations for driver's classes and testing.
- Specialized transportation – this is paid for through Family Care or IRIS

Activities to Try

People find things to do and people to meet in many ways. Some ways to meet people are:

- At work
- Volunteering and helping others
- Going to church
- Taking classes
- Through hobbies
- Fitness centers and classes

Use the chart below to come up with things you want to do. Put a check mark by the ones you want to do and write in other things you would like to do. You can ask people in your life to help you come up with ideas.

Activities to Try

Interest Area	Activities to Try (These are examples)
Career	<input type="checkbox"/> Explore different types of jobs <input type="checkbox"/> Find a job developer who can help me find a job <input type="checkbox"/> Ask for more hours or get another job <input type="checkbox"/> My ideas:
Learning & Classes	<input type="checkbox"/> Learn to dance <input type="checkbox"/> Visit museums <input type="checkbox"/> Take a budgeting class <input type="checkbox"/> Learn how to ride the bus <input type="checkbox"/> My ideas:
Fun & Recreation	<input type="checkbox"/> Go to a festival <input type="checkbox"/> Go camping <input type="checkbox"/> Have a party with friends <input type="checkbox"/> Play bingo at the community center <input type="checkbox"/> My ideas:



Health & Exercise	<input type="checkbox"/> Walk in my neighborhood every day <input type="checkbox"/> Join the YMCA <input type="checkbox"/> Train for a 5k running race <input type="checkbox"/> My ideas:
Hobbies	<input type="checkbox"/> Scrapbooking <input type="checkbox"/> Collecting comic books <input type="checkbox"/> Play board games with friends <input type="checkbox"/> My ideas:
Religion & Spirituality	<input type="checkbox"/> Learn to meditate <input type="checkbox"/> Find a new church <input type="checkbox"/> Join a prayer group <input type="checkbox"/> My ideas:
Helping Others	<input type="checkbox"/> Volunteer <input type="checkbox"/> Mow a yard <input type="checkbox"/> Walk the neighbor's dog <input type="checkbox"/> My ideas:
Food & Nutrition	<input type="checkbox"/> Take a cooking class <input type="checkbox"/> Invite a friend over for dinner once a week <input type="checkbox"/> Go to the Farmer's Market <input type="checkbox"/> Plant at garden at the Community Gardens <input type="checkbox"/> My ideas:

Connect with Technology

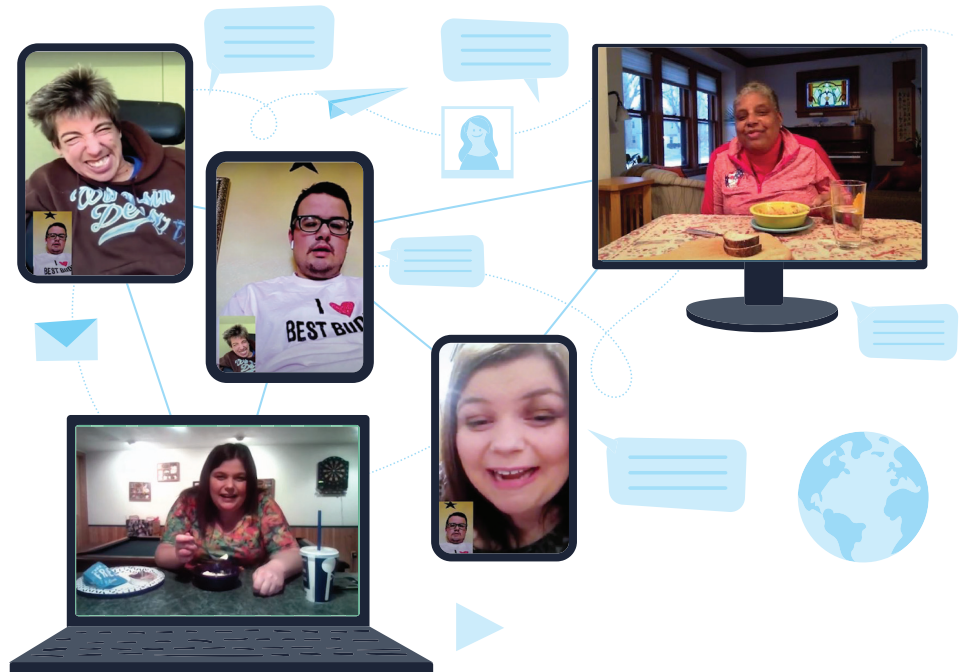
The COVID-19 pandemic taught us how to use technology better to stay connected. Zoom, Google Meet Ups, and Facebook are still great ways to connect, visit with people, go classes, go to church, and work. Many agencies offer virtual services to people with disabilities. Ask your service provider, Care Manager or IRIS Consultant what your options are.

When you use the Internet, you should follow these top five tips to keep your information safe:

1. Keep your information private – when you are on a website do not type in your bank information, full birthday, or social security number.
2. Do not share your passwords or answers to password hints.
3. Use strong passwords by using letters, numbers and characters (! ? # \$ and more)
4. Lock your phone, tablet or computer with a PIN, fingerprint lock or password.
5. Be careful about Wi-Fi. Do not use public Wi-Fi networks that do not have a passwords to log in. Cybercriminals (people who steal information over Wi-Fi) can hack into devices that are connected to open Wi-Fi.

If you are connecting with people over social media like Facebook or Instagram, be sure to follow these top five safety tips:

- Do not give out your phone number, address or personal information to people who you do not know really well.
- Think before you post. Everything you post can be shared by others. Even if you try to delete a post it can show up again.
- Block people who bother you. All social media sites let you do this.
- Do not share private pictures or videos. There is no guarantee it won't be shared with someone else.
- Learn to spot fake profiles. There are people who use fake profiles to pretend to be someone they are not. They do this to trick people into giving personal information or meeting up. These people are not safe. Ask someone you trust for help if you spot a fake profile.



My Stay Connected Plan

Interest Area	What things I would like to do:	Where I can learn more about this:	People who can help me:	How will I get there:
Career				
Learning & Classes				
Fun & Recreation				
Health & Exercise				
Hobbies				
Religion & Spirituality				
Helping Others				
Food & Nutrition				

Ways to Share Ideas With Others

People are learning new ways to stay busy, productive, and connected every day! We want to hear about the things you are finding or the creative ways you are connecting with others. We want to share more of what you are finding on our social media!

You can share your ideas with us on:



Wisconsin Board for People with Developmental Disabilities

Share what you are doing in the comments on our page or tag us in the photos or stories on your pages!



Tag us in cool and accessible things you see on Twitter!

@WIBPDD



Share what you are doing in the comments on our posts or tag us in the photos or stories on your pages. Answer the questions you see in our Instagram Stories!



Self- Determination Channel

Share what you are doing in the comments on our videos!



Join us every week for Living Well Wednesdays on Facebook, or sign up for emails to get the zoom link” and include a link to: <https://wi-bpdd.org/index.php/join/>.

