



BEE TOGETHER

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#ChangeIdeas



**IDEAS ON HOW TO INCLUDE
PEOPLE WITH LEARNING
DISABILITIES**

BEE TOGETHER

Bee Together is a **Time to Shine** project aimed at combating loneliness and social isolation for older people with learning disabilities.

People with learning disabilities are living longer. They need to be able to access services for older people.

Many people with mild learning disabilities live alone within society. Learning disability services do not cater to their needs and society is not yet fully equipped to meet their needs.

Bee Together believes that by integrating into their local communities they will be less socially isolated and lonely.

Many people have never met or spoken to a person with learning disabilities. Dealing with something you know nothing about can cause anxiety and misunderstandings.

Bee Together wants to help answer some of the questions you may have about how to include older people with learning disabilities.

This booklet will give some basic ideas.

Every person is unique and to support them you need to get to know them.

SOCIAL ETIQUETTE



When you visit a new group or centre it takes time to understand how things work.

Where do people meet before the session?

Who is in charge?

Do I have to sign in anywhere?

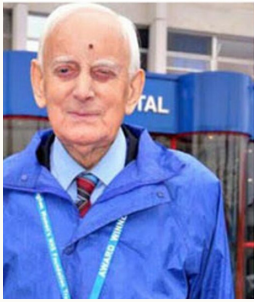


It can be daunting just to turn up. Having to ask where to go or what to do could make you turn around and walk back out again.



Some people with learning disabilities find social etiquette difficult. Reading social situations almost impossible. The things we take for granted can cause great anxiety .



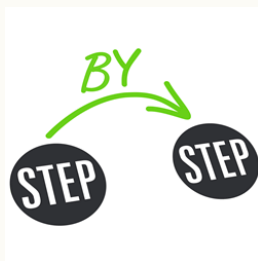


Having someone to meet and greet people who knows how things work will help.



Easy read information about the group or session will help people understand more.

See the booklet: "Ideas on how to include accessible information".



Think about all the things someone does when they arrive and participate in a group or session.

A simple timetable, photos of who is in charge.



A list of organisations offering help can be found at the end of this booklet.





People with learning disabilities do not mean to be rude or disrespectful. Some just don't understand social etiquette, they don't get it.

Interrupting



All you need to do is **explain**. If they interrupt whilst you are speaking to someone just say, "I'm speaking to.... When we've finished I will come and chat to you".



They may well do the same thing again. **Explaining once does not mean they have understood.** Understanding is difficult for some people with learning disabilities. They may never understand.



Patience is the key.





The best way to support someone is to get to know them.



People with a learning disabilities could have certain habits or ways of doing things that may seem strange.

But we all have habits and like to do things certain ways.

Milk first or tea?



These habits can be a way of dealing with situations they find stressful.

It's a way to help them cope.

It could be something you have never even thought about.



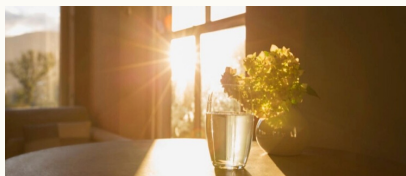
Getting to know the person is the best way of finding out what **triggers** their anxieties. If you are aware you can do your best to help them be avoided.

**It's
OK!**

You will never be able to mitigate all triggers but being aware and knowing how to help people deal with their anxiety will provide all the support they need.



You can only do what you can do. Just be aware and make others aware.



One really useful idea is to have a quiet space for people to go to if they get overwhelmed.

Distraction is a good way to help calm people or situations.

"Could you take this to the office for me"

"Could you help get the coffees ready"



BUT REMEMBER



When you've met one person with learning disabilities, you've met **one** person with learning disabilities.
We are all individuals.



You don't need to know everything about learning disabilities to be able to include people.



Bee Together is passionate about including people with learning disabilities.

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It is only through interaction that we get to know someone.

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USEFUL INFORMATION

Below is a list of organisations offering information and support to include people with learning disabilities.



CHANGE are a human rights organisation. They are led by disabled people. They work to help make a more inclusive society where people with learning disabilities are treated equally. They also make easy read resources.

www.changepeople.org



Mencap is the leading voice of learning disability. Everything we do is about valuing and supporting people with a learning disability, and their families and carers. Our vision is a world where people with a learning disability are valued equally, listened to and included.

www.mencap.org.uk



Advonet are an advocacy charity. Advocacy means help to speak up about your rights. If you want advocacy, you can call them on **0113 244 0606**. You can also email them at **office@advonet.org.uk**.



If you would like to know more about learning disability organisations in Leeds, whether to ask for training or for guidance on easy read please contact:

Jez Coram at Forum Central.

jez.coram@forumcentral.org



Connect in The North run a sign posting service for people with learning disabilities which includes the website, Through the Maze **www.through-the-maze.org.uk**



You can show your organisation's commitment to making services accessible for older people and people living with dementia by signing up as **Age and Dementia Friendly**. You will receive stickers to display your status, support and information in achieving your actions, and free publicity for the work you are doing. If you have any questions contact:

sarah@opforum.org.uk



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Bee Friends
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