

Building Friendships

Beyond presence

21 March 2025 | 9.30 am to 12.30 pm



What is this workshop about?

Are you wondering how to assist your loved one or the person you support build deeper, more meaningful friendships in the community?

According to researchers, one of the single most important factors influencing our health, well-being, and happiness is friendship and connection. "However, friendships between individuals with and without intellectual and developmental disabilities continue to be scarce with limited opportunities for interaction". (Athamanah et., al, 2019, p1).

This workshop is designed to empower loved ones and supporters of individuals with intellectual disability and autism with practical tools and strategies to foster genuine community connections.

Together, let's create a path from presence to true belonging.

What you will learn:

- How to create the right contexts for friendships to grow using valued roles and shared interests and activities.
- Practical ways to help initiate, nurture, and deepen reciprocal friendships.
- How your role as a supporter can sustain, encourage, and safeguard these connections.

Key Highlights

- Move beyond acquaintances and inclusion to meaningful participation and belonging.
- Discover actionable strategies to strengthen friendships through shared interests, invitations, and reciprocity.
- Learn how to balance support with independence for natural, lasting relationships.

This session is interactive, engaging, and tailored to focus on practical solutions that make a real difference.

Who is this event for?

This workshop would suit family members, friends, and paid supporters of people with intellectual disability and autism looking to actively support deeper and genuine friendships.

Join us to explore how you can be a catalyst for the kinds of connections that truly enrich lives.

About the Presenter

Ricky Esterquest, Founder and Principal Community Development Worker of Towards Better, has over 17 years of experience in disability and community services.

Based in Townsville with his wife and two young boys, Ricky is passionate about fostering inclusion through meaningful roles, authentic relationships, and inclusive workplaces.

Ricky's work focuses on empowering people with disabilities to step into valued roles, with a focus on nurturing authentic relationships and friendships, which are essential for moving from mere presence to active participation, contribution, and belonging.

Ricky brings his expertise in relationship-building, community development, and tailored support to inspire lasting, positive change. His work exemplifies Towards Better's core values of connection, learning, individuality, simplicity, and inclusion, ensuring everyone has the opportunity to contribute, belong, and thrive.



Event Booking Information



Friday, 21 March 2025



9.30 am until 12.30 pm
12.30 - 1.00 pm (lunch at venue)

There are 2 ways to attend this workshop

In Person



Box Hill Golf Club
202 Station Street
Box Hill South, Victoria

Online



This event is also hosted on
the video platform Zoom

[REGISTER NOW](#)

Registrations are through Humanitix

Ticket Pricing

Ticket pricing starts at AUD\$35. Please see the [Humanitix Event Listing](#) for full details.

The ticket price includes access to the content and handout material.

If attending in person, the price includes **lunch** between 12.30 pm - 1 pm where you can connect with others.

The ticket price for in person and livestream attendance is the same due to the cost of catering and live streaming.

Accessibility

We aim to ensure that people have equal access to our events. If you need alternative formats or other reasonable adjustments at this event, please provide details when you register your booking online.

Text to Otter is available for online participants.

For further information please contact Belonging Matters.

