

DSP Essentials

Promoting Integration

Toolkit

**For Direct Support
Professionals**

helen sanderson
associates
USA 

Table of Contents

Welcome.....	3
How to use this guide	3
Why are we here?	4
What is integration?.....	5
Benefits of integration.....	6
How this course can help.....	7
Five Valued Experiences.....	8
Group discussion	10
Stages of Interaction.....	11
Presence to Contribution.....	13
Commitment card	15

Acknowledgments

This DSP training program was developed by Helen Sanderson Associates USA in collaboration with and funding from the Department of Developmental disabilities and Eastern Los Angeles Regional Center.

Explore more resources at helensandersonassociates.com or contact us at hello@helensandersonassociates.com.

Person-centered thinking skills were developed by and used with permission from The Learning Community for Person-Centered Practices. www.tlcpcp.com

Welcome,

We're thrilled that you've taken the time to join us as we explore how to easily promote integration into our everyday support. The role you play in people's lives is important. The goal of this guide is to provide you with practical, easy-to-use resources that will enhance your daily work.

This module will offer straight forward methods for creating ways to successfully integrate the people you support in their neighborhoods and community. This guide is designed to complement the lessons in . If you find yourself needing a little extra help, or a reminder on how to implement something don't hesitate to revisit the relevant sections of the online course for further guidance.

Thank you for partnering with us to support people in living the lives they choose!

How to use this guide



On your computer:

1. Download and save this guide before filling in your answers.
2. This guide is provided as an editable PDF. Click inside the boxes or above the solid lines to type your responses.
3. Don't forget to save your work onto your computer.



Offline:

- 📎 Download the guide onto your desktop. Once downloaded, you can print it at any time.
- 📎 Hand-write your answers directly onto the printed pages.

Questions, comments, or feedback contact hello@helensandersonassociates.com.

Why are we here?

Did you know that nearly one in four people in the United States live with some form of disability? Unfortunately, many people with disabilities encounter barriers or are excluded from social relationships, community involvement, employment, and everyday activities. These challenges often lead to loneliness and isolation, significantly impacting their quality of life.

The **HCBS Final Rule** was designed to help people overcome these barriers by promoting inclusion and choice. Its goals include:

- ☉ Supporting community integration by ensuring people have full access to their communities.
- ☉ Maximizing opportunities and choices for people.
- ☉ Creating opportunities for people with disabilities to work and spend time alongside those without disabilities.
- ☉ Upholding individual preferences and protecting their rights.
- ☉ Establishing person-centered service planning, where people drive and direct the process to identify the services and supports they need.

These intentions are transformative, but they can only become a reality with your help!

Here's the good news!

As a direct support professional, you are instrumental in making these goals a reality. You have the unique opportunity to bridge the gap, helping people move from isolation to becoming active, valued, and vibrant members of their community. By fostering inclusion, honoring individual preferences, and creating a sense of belonging, you can make a profound and lasting difference in their lives.

“ There is no greater disability in society,
than the inability to see a person as more. ”

– ROBERT M. HENSEL

What is integration?

Community integration means actively including and welcoming people with disabilities as full members of the larger community. Community integration is often misunderstood, and it's important to distinguish what it *is not*. True integration goes beyond physical proximity or surface-level inclusion.

It empowers people with disabilities to participate in all aspects of life—neighborhoods, schools, workplaces, faith communities, recreational spaces, and beyond—on an equal footing with those without disabilities.

What it is

- ⦿ **Valued contributors:** People with disabilities are recognized for their unique skills and contributions in society.
- ⦿ **Equality and respect:** They are treated as equals, with their preferences acknowledged and prioritized.
- ⦿ **Active participation:** They engage fully in community life, sharing the same opportunities as others.
- ⦿ **Belonging:** They feel welcomed, known by name, and connected within their communities.

What it is not

- ⦿ **Physical presence without participation:** People with disabilities are placed in spaces but lack meaningful interaction or contribution.
- ⦿ **Tokenism:** They are included for appearance's sake, without real opportunities for involvement or influence.
- ⦿ **Segregation masked as inclusion:** Separate programs for people with disabilities are created, keeping them apart from the wider community.
- ⦿ **Ignoring preferences:** Decisions are made for people with disabilities without considering their desires or personal goals.
- ⦿ **Tolerating instead of welcoming:** People with disabilities are seen as passive recipients of services, rather than active, valued community members.

Let's practice

Which are examples of community integration? Circle the answers

A bowling club just for people with disabilities

Joining the local book club

Going with a DSP while they grocery shop (not participating)

A paid internship that you picked out

Volunteering at the local theater


Benefits of integration



Community integration transforms lives by creating environments where everyone has the opportunity to thrive, regardless of their abilities. Some of the many benefits of Community Integration includes:

- ☉ **Sense of belonging:** Being part of a community helps people feel valued and included.
- ☉ **Improved mental health:** Reduces feelings of loneliness, isolation, and depression by fostering social connections.
- ☉ **Enhanced self-esteem:** Participation in community activities boosts confidence and a sense of achievement.
- ☉ **Shared experiences:** Being part of diverse cultural, artistic, or religious activities enhances quality of life.
- ☉ **Promotes inclusion:** Demonstrates the value of diversity, encouraging communities to be more accommodating and inclusive.
- ☉ **Reduced risk of health and safety:** Reduces the risk of stroke, dementia, heart disease, and depression.

What can you do?

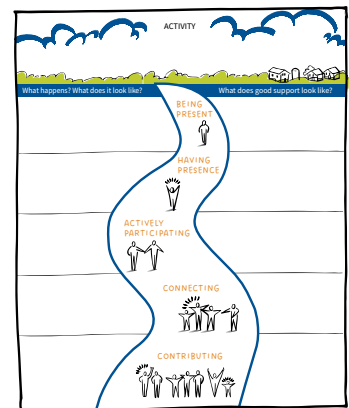
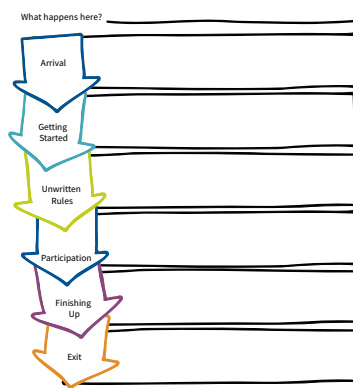
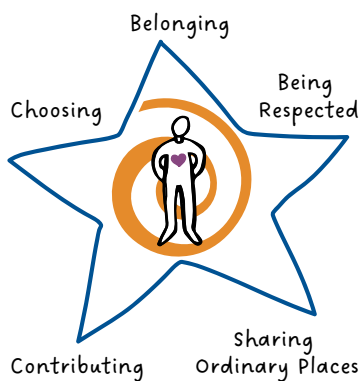
1. **Get to know the person's gifts**
Take time to understand the person you support. What are their desires, hidden talents, or skills they want to share? Everyone has unique abilities—it's all about uncovering them!
 2. **Utilize your network**
Reflect on the relationships you've built and the resources you can access. Think about connections or partnerships that might benefit the person you're supporting.
 3. **Capture and share your learning**
Keep track of what works, what doesn't, and what to adjust. Share your findings with the person's support network to help build on progress together.
 4. **Ask for help**
Change happens through collaboration. Don't go it alone—reach out to others with expertise or those who care about the person. Working together fosters real progress.
- 

How this course can help

In this course, you'll be introduced to various philosophies, practices, and tools designed to enhance community connection. Our goal is to equip you with practical, easy-to-use skills that can be seamlessly applied in your daily work.

These skills will help you identify a person's preferences, explore meaningful community spaces, and support their journey from simply being present to becoming an active, contributing member of their community.

The framework and skills we will use:



1. Five Valued Experiences

The **Five Valued Experiences** serve as a foundational framework for your role as a Direct Support Professional. By supporting individuals in exploring their communities and building genuine connections, you play a vital role in ensuring they experience these essential human experiences consistently and meaningfully.

2. Stages of Interaction

Once you've identified a place the person wants to go, use the **Stages of Interaction** to explore and prepare for the experience. This tool helps guide conversations and ensure the person you support has the best possible experience by sharing key details consistently.

3. Presence to Contribution

Simply "placing" someone in the community isn't true integration. **Presence to Contribution** helps identify ways to support the person in moving beyond presence (a great first step) to becoming a valued, contributing member—a key step in genuine integration.

Five Valued Experiences

The Five Valued Experiences by John and Connie O'Brien, support others in developing a sense of belonging, emphasizing each person's unique talents and capabilities.



Belonging

Belonging in a diverse variety of relationships and memberships.



Being respected

Being respected as whole persons whose history, capacities and futures are worthy of attention and whose gifts engage them in valued social roles.



Sharing ordinary places

Sharing ordinary places and activities with other citizens, neighbors, classmates, and co-workers. Living, working, learning, and playing confidently in ordinary community settings.



Contributing

Contributing by discovering, developing, and giving their gifts and investing their capacities and energy in pursuits that make a positive difference to other people. There are gifts of being and gifts of doing: contributions can include interested presence as well as capable performance. Contributions may be freely exchanged or earn pay.

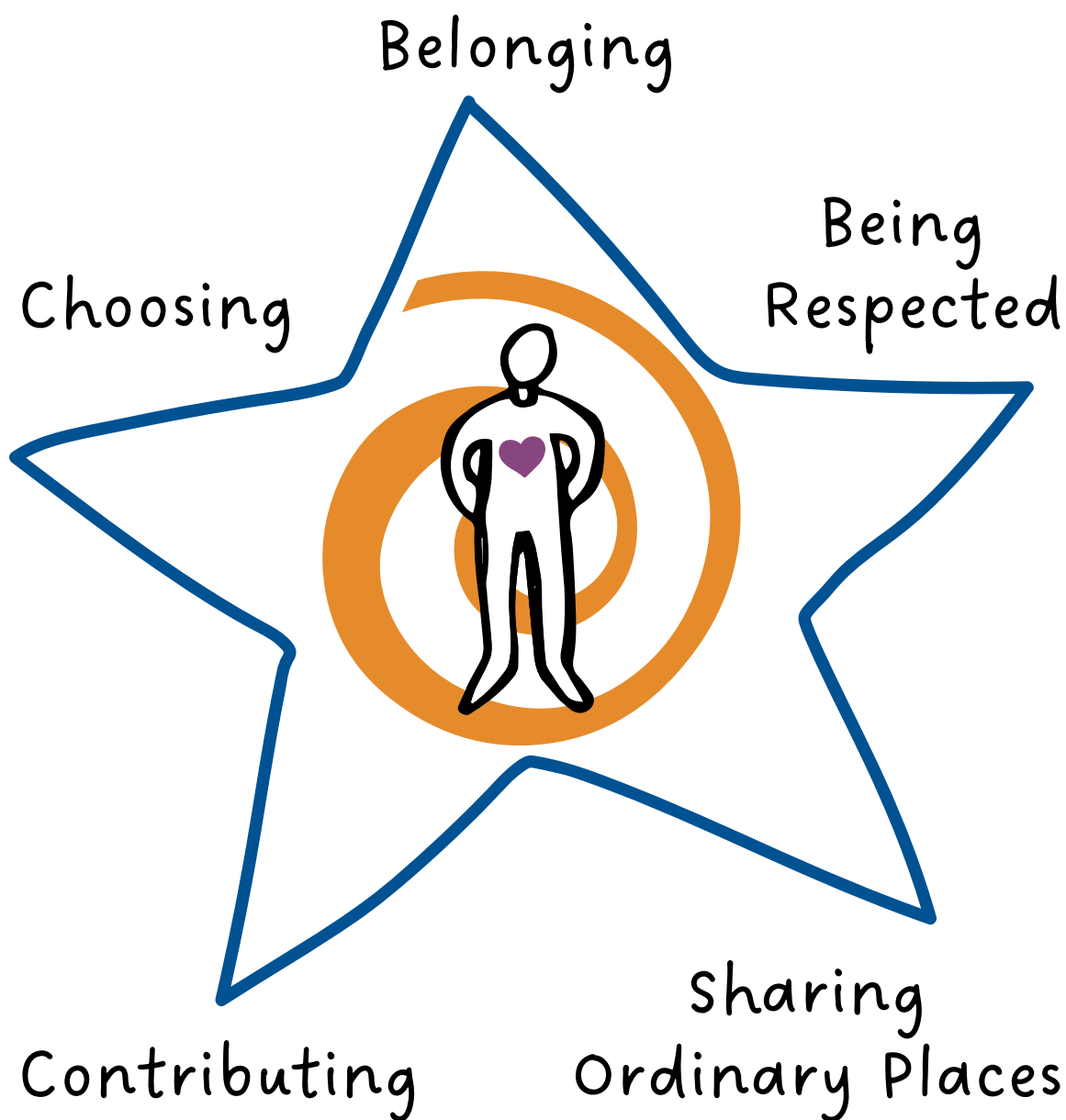


Choosing

Choosing what they want in everyday situations in ways that reflect their highest purpose. Having the freedom, supports, information, and assistance to make the same choices as others of a similar age and learning to make wiser choices over time. Being encouraged to use and strengthen voice regardless of mode of communication, clarify what really matters, make thoughtful decisions, and learn from experiences.

John O'Brien & Beth Mount. Make a difference: A guidebook for person-centered direct support. inclusion.com.

Five Valued Experiences



Adapted from John O'Brien & Beth Mount. Make a difference: A guidebook for person-centered direct support. inclusion.com.



Group Discussion

Valued Experience	Share a time when this valued experience was present in your life. How did you feel?	How do you feel when this experience is not present in your life?
<p>Belonging</p>		
<p>Being Respected</p>		
<p>Contributing</p>		
<p>Choosing</p>		
<p>Sharing Ordinary Places</p>		

Stages of Interaction

What it does

Helps us to learn about the characteristics, social rules and roles of a group.

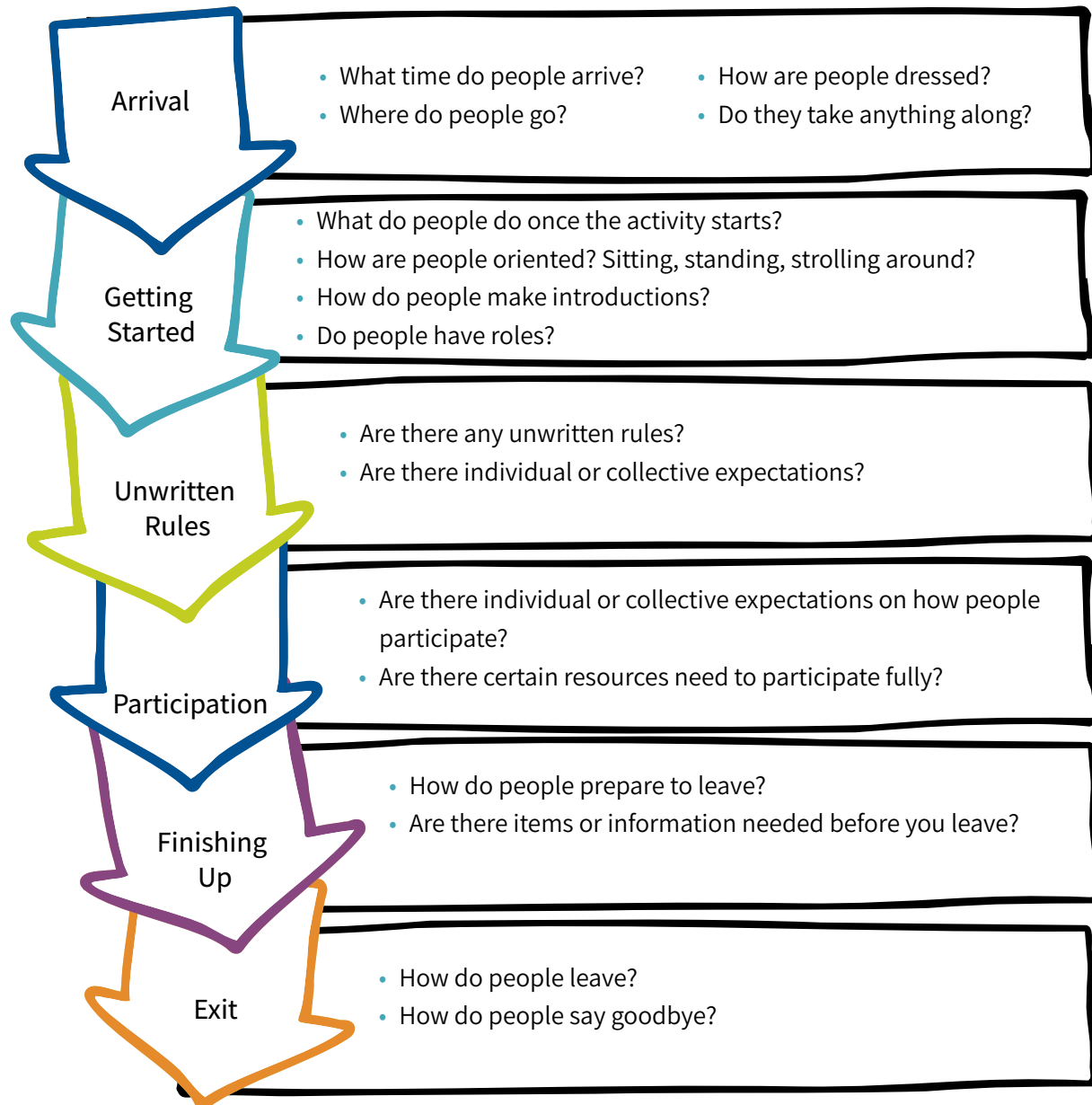
How it helps

Identifies things to do to help the person fit in.

How to use it

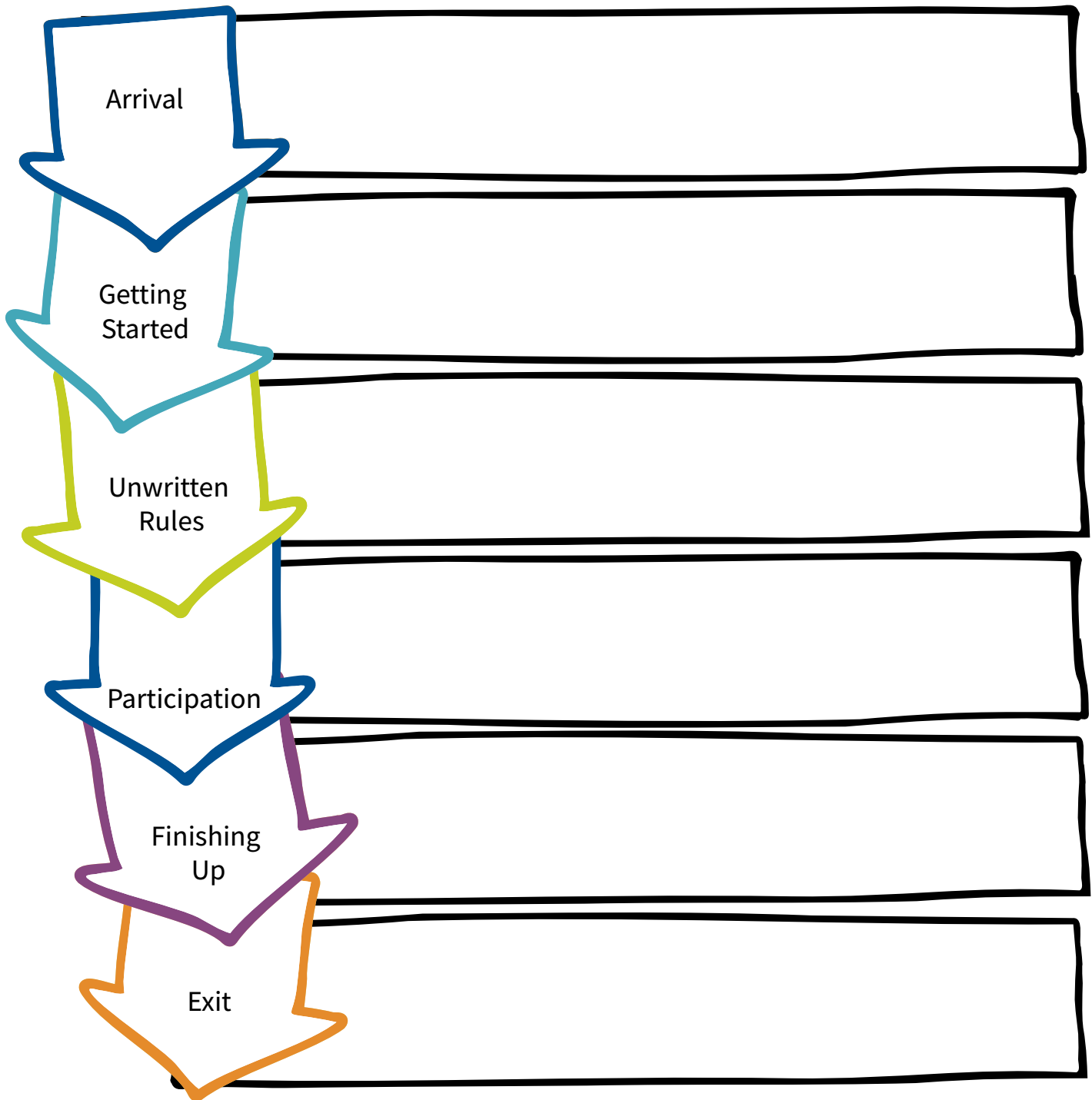
Consider an activity that a person wishes to try out. Make a list of 'need to know' information before going to the activity.

What happens here? _____



Stages of Interaction

What happens here? _____



Presence to Contribution

What it does

This is a way of having a conversation with someone your team supports, to find ways to enable the person to be part of their community.

It enables you to record what the person is interested in (or copy from their one-page profile), what it means to be present for an activity and what they could do to contribute to it more fully.

How it helps

It provides a structure to think about what a person does on a day-to-day basis, so that we can see opportunities for them to make new connections, meet new people and contribute to the community.

How to use it

Identify activities that the person is already involved in, or wishes to be. Decide where on the graphic 'from Presence to Contribution' this is currently located. Then work together to move the activity from present to presence, active participation to connecting, connecting to contribution.

Ask:

- ☉ Which activities can be regarded as vehicles for developing relationships?
- ☉ What might we see happening if the person is truly connecting?
- ☉ What might we see happening if the person is making a contribution of investing in community?



DEFINITIONS

BEING PRESENT - You are there but not noticed

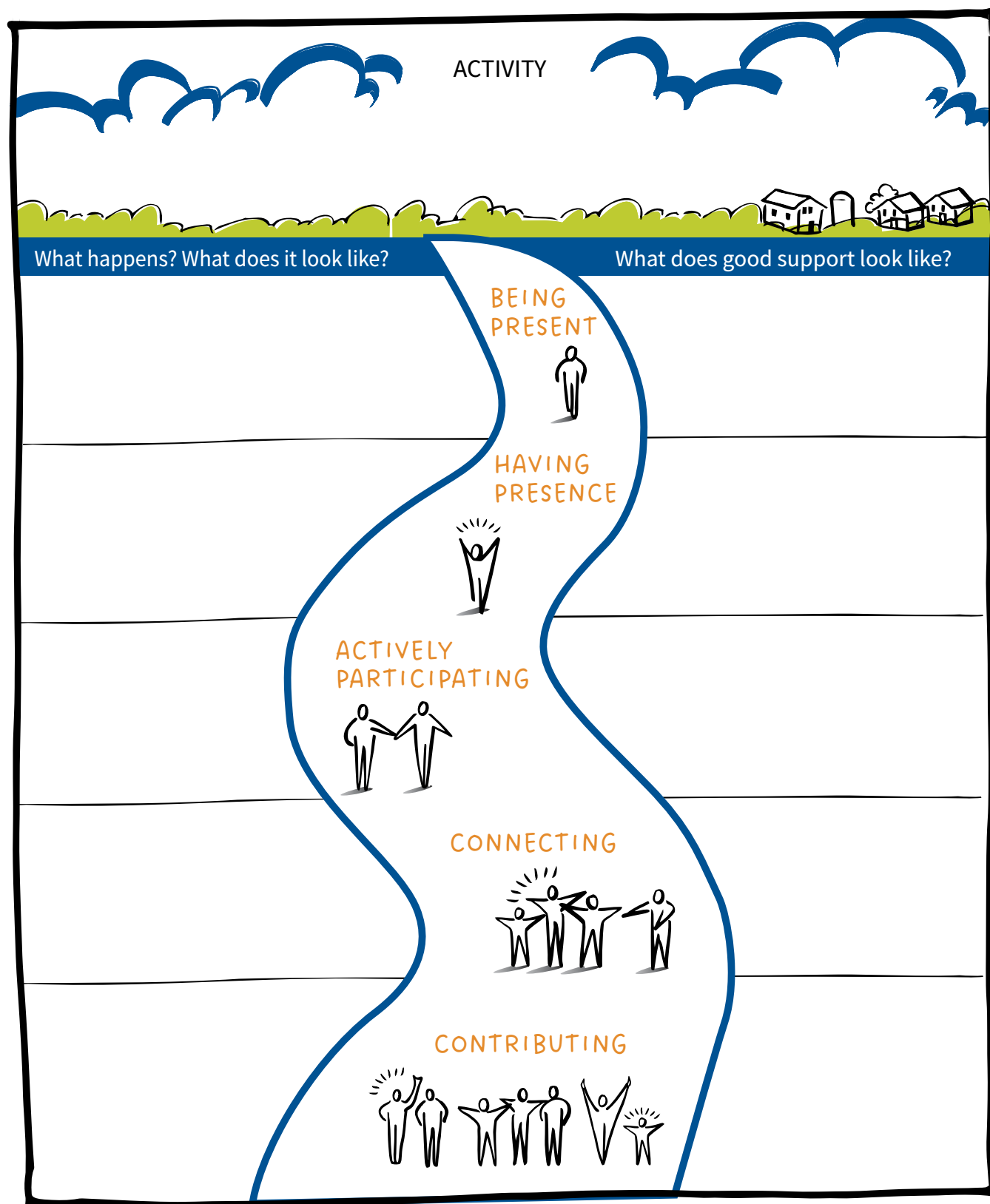
HAVING PRESENCE - People notice you, you notice others, you start knowing the “unwritten rules”

PARTICIPATING - You are engaging, talking to people, following the rules.

CONNECTING - Greater participation, learning about others, people are learning about you, expecting you to be there.

CONTRIBUTING - You give to others using your gifts and skills

Presence to Contribution



Commitment Card

As you think about the need for people to be a valued member in their community, who is someone you support that would benefit from community integration?

What is one thing you will try with them using the resources shared in this video?

What action (s) do you want to take forward?

What will be your first step? By when?



helen sanderson
associates

USA  