

Relationship building: Let's start with just one thing!

June 16, 2021



Windsor-Essex Family Network & My Home My Choice Initiative



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AGENDA

- ▶ Welcome & Introduction
- ▶ Short vignettes – two family leaders share what their family member has done, and what may be next
- ▶ Ideas: for building and expanding on relationships
- ▶ My Neighbourhood: A Jane's Walk 2021 Video
- ▶ Let's start with one thing: Identifying a one next thing?
- ▶ More Ideas: getting involved in your neighbourhood/community

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Relationships are important in everyone's life.

This is true for many reasons:

- ▶ *for staying safe*
- ▶ *for just figuring out some of life's decisions or next steps by talking with others we trust*
- ▶ *for feeling stronger and having the courage to try new things*

Even though we know it is important for all of us to have different relationships in our lives, families who are supporting a son, daughter, sister, brother or grandchild with disabilities find this to be one of the hardest things to do. That is to intentionally help with building relationships, or to make the invitation to be part of a support circle.

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Things to think about today:

We may not realize that we already are working on relationship building in small ways, or that there are some easy things we can start with and not feel so overwhelmed.

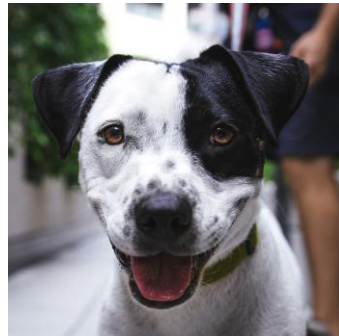
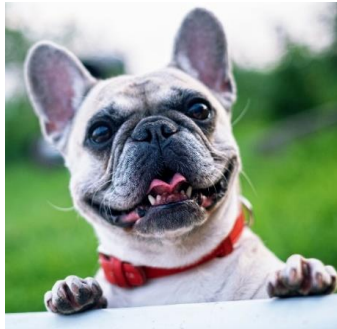
This gathering will help many of us to look at how we might take on just one small manageable thing. It may help us to figure out what our one 'small thing' will be! And, maybe set some other goals for the future.

One of the easiest things to start with may be a SMILE . . .

Smile!



Even these animals are smiling!



When you smile at someone, they usually smile back! It's good to practice. Take a look at the faces on these last two slides – it's hard not to smile back!

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Say Hello!



- ▶ Nod your head
 - ▶ Tip your hat
 - ▶ Do a quick wave
 - ▶ Say Hello out loud
- AND even smile!



- ***Start by saying hello to the first person you see today.***
- ***Then say hello to other people you pass by. Start making it a habit.***
- ***Remember that you don't always have to say the words! There are different ways to say hello. . .***



Walk the neighbourhood. Get to know your neighbours! Wave to them when outside!



- *Think about someone who lives alone, make a small delivery to them.*
- *When you are going for coffee, ask, “Can we pick up a coffee for you?”*
- *Rake a lawn, shovel snow, pull weeds – offer to assist your neighbours!*

Have a few business cards on hand to share with people you meet.

Are you an artist? Do you make products? Do you do odd jobs?

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Holidays are a good time to make connections.

Bake cookies and give them to a neighbor or friend. Dress up your porch or front window for the neighbours enjoyment and to spark conversation later!

Show appreciation.

Tell people when they have done something good, or look nice - let them know you noticed.

Even members of your family.



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***Do the same thing at the same place,
and the same time every week!***



- Walk a certain trail, same route, same time OR go down your sidewalk. You may find the same people out walking at the same time each day.
- Take part in a community garden
- Go for coffee or get take-out at the same time, in the same place.
- Later when things open up more: Go to the local pool, gym, etc.

Put your own order in at the coffee shop or take-out restaurant. Ask you family or support worker to be invisible and stay in the back ground. . . . Practice.

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Shop your small local stores when you can OR go to a local farmer's market!

Remember same time, same place!

Families shared a few locations to consider:

- Downtown Winsor Farmer's Market on Pelissier St.
- Riberdy's, in Tecumseh along Riverside Dr. East
- LaSalle has a few different stands along the way
- Amherstburg market at the end of Howard Ave.,
(near the white church by the GL Heritage Brewing Company.)
- Harrow Market, near Danielle's on Sinasac St. W
- Market in Colchester, near Christ Church & Bagot St.
- Leamington, Kingsville, Essex, Harrow offer lots of opportunities along the road ways!



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Invite your family to a games day or night in person and outside, OR host a games night virtually with others outside your family, until things open up more.



Family members can be ‘friends’ also. Think about the people in your extended family:

Siblings, cousins, aunts, uncles, nieces, nephews, grandparents. . .Who might you get to know better? What other family relationships might you explore?

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Have emails and phone numbers of the people you know in an easy to find place or an address book you like

Make a list of everyone you know. Think about who you might like to invite to help you with thinking about your future!



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Reminding ourselves why others will want to get to know us and to hear from us is another step we can take . . .

Here is what we can do for ourselves:

- ▶ Ask those who are closest to you what they like and appreciate about you or what your gifts and strengths are.
- ▶ Write down some of your gifts and talents - in words or pictures - whatever is best for you. Get help if you need it.
- ▶ Put this list where you will see it often. You could post it in your room on a bulletin board or a mirror - somewhere it can remind you what a great person you are.

Let it be your inspiration and encouragement that you are someone that others appreciate having in their life!

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Suzie . . .

- Great smiler - gives people compliments
- Exerciser - wants to stay fit
- Puzzle enthusiast - enjoys puzzles
- Volunteer - likes giving back
- Walker - loves long walks outside
- Swimmer - swims whenever she can
- Cleaner - is good at kitchen clean-up
- Helper - likes to help others

More to think about for the future when things are more opened up:

- ▶ ***Follow a local sports team*** through some amateur leagues: like baseball or soccer at the park, OR the Windsor Spitfires, or the Windsor Express Basketball team. You will get to know others who come to the games.
- ▶ ***Think about joining a faith community*** - a church, synagogue or other gathering place. Participate in some of their social opportunities or volunteer to help out.
- ▶ ***Take a class at local community centre*** - pick something you would love to do.
- ▶ ***Are you a collector? If not, start to collect something you are interested in.*** Find others who share your passion. Examples: stamps, baseball cards, hats, buttons, coins. Join a Facebook group.





Scout out what is in your neighbourhood and the opportunities that are there for connections. Map it out on paper to get ready; set some goals.

Prepare yourself to get involved in your community somehow. You could join a committee, help with an event, hand out flyers! Exploring the possibilities may surprise you. Check out this example:

My Neighbourhood: A Jane's Walk 2021 Video

<https://youtu.be/RemZdcPxVRI>

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More things to think about:

A focus for many individuals in the past has been to participate in ‘activities’. Yet participating in activities is different than getting to know people, and having a purpose or a role. Going to the mall and shopping may not result in getting to know people or making friends.

- ▶ A tip for success is to start shifting our focus, and our thinking away from ‘activities’ to ‘connections with people’ and to ‘valued roles’.
- ▶ Important questions we can start asking ourselves is: “Will we meet someone with similar interests there?” “Could it lead to getting to know someone new?” It’s about opening up the possibilities!
- ▶ Remember to think about where you will see the same people, at the same time, in the same place over time. Ask yourself how you may get involved with others there. Am I following my passions, my interests and what I love to do? Am I exploring a way to volunteer on a regular basis - another good way to meet people.

***Passions, hobbies, collections,
- shared interests matter!
They lead to conversations and
relationships***



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There is a great deal more that can be said about relationship building.

There are various different ways to build a relationships, a network or a support circle in one's life.

We will be providing some links to resources on our website for those who want to learn more!

Contact information for those who have questions:

info@windsoressexfamnet.ca

Thank You!