# Building Friendships (Beyond Presence)

# In Person Event with Option to Attend Online (Text Only)

# What this workshop is 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.

# Guest Speaker

**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 Details

Attend in person at Box Hill Golf Club or you can attend online. This ½ day event is held on 21 March 2025, from 9.30 am to 12.30 pm. If attending in person, lunch is served at 12.30 pm – 1 pm where you can connect with others.

# How to Book Your Ticket

To book a ticket please visit our [Humanitix Booking Link](https://events.humanitix.com/beyond-presence-march-2025)

# Ticket Information

Ticket prices start from AUD$35.00 and includes GST unless otherwise stated.

The ticket price includes access to the content and handout material. If attending in person, the price includes lunch. If attending online, the price includes access to the streaming service.

Registrations are only available online. Please read our [ticket terms and conditions and refund policy](https://www.belongingmatters.org/policiesandprocedures) before booking your ticket.

**Registrations close on 14 March 2025.**

# 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.

For further information please phone 03 9739 8333 or email [info@belongingmatters.org](mailto:info@belongingmatters.org)