

# Friendship Matters

A co-learning experience for people with developmental disability and their support workers

**Limited Places Available**



## What is Friendship Matters about?

Having good friends makes life more meaningful and fun. Friendships give us other people to talk to, learn from and share our interests and time with. They also provide support in times of need.

Having a range of friends is particularly important for people with developmental disabilities (intellectual disability or autism), particularly friends who can stand by the person and provide advocacy and support. Friends are also an important safeguard for the future when families are no longer able to provide support.

Often, we hear from people with developmental disabilities that they are lonely and don't have many friends without a disability. Knowing how to make and keep friends can be hard, and this can be even harder for people with developmental disabilities when in the community.

There are a number of important factors in supporting a greater likelihood of friendship for people with developmental disabilities. These include being in the community in valued roles where friendships have the potential to develop, learning the nuanced skills to make and sustain friendships and having skilled supporters, especially support workers, who realise they have a critical role to play in fostering connection and the positive conditions for friendships to develop.

The Friendship Matters Course will bring people with developmental disabilities and those who support them together in a co-learning experience to understand the important role we can all play in supporting greater opportunities for friendships to develop and grow.

### The following topics will be covered:

- The benefits of friendship.
- Why friendship is important particularly for people who have developmental disability.
- The differences between types of friendships and relationships.
- How and where to make friends.
- How support workers/supporters can better understand their role and specific actions they can take to create a context for friendship to flourish and sustain
- How to develop competencies to enhance ability and confidence in making friends.

## Who is the Friendship Matters course for?

The Friendship Matters Course is an opportunity for people with developmental disabilities and their supporters to come together as a team to learn about friendship and share their experiences and ideas while exploring each other's role in further enhancing friendship.

Supporters cannot come alone; they need to come with a person that they are supporting.

## Who will facilitate the course?



**Teresa Micallef** has always chosen to work at the cutting edge of change in community and has worked alongside people with disabilities and their families for over 20 years. For 9 years she was the Coordinator of a family governed service called Living Distinctive Lives in which each person with intellectual disability and/or autism developed lived in their own home and pursue their interests and passions in the community. Currently Teresa is the Project Manager of Building Community Networks at Belonging Matters which facilitates Circle of Support. Teresa has been impressed by the power, creativity and resilience of people who experience disability, their families and networks to foster community pathways and opportunities for genuine inclusion.



**Carmine Laghi** has worked with people with disabilities and their families for 30 years. Training originally as a special education teacher, he went on to work in disability services with a focus on crafting individual lives with people centred on building an identity as a valued member of their local community where they had the opportunity to find meaningful activity and genuine freely given relationship.

## Event Booking Information



**Session 1:** 18 November 2024  
**Session 2:** 25 November 2024  
**Session 3:** 2 December 2024  
**Session 4:** 10 February 2025



All sessions will run from:  
1.45 pm until 4.45 pm AEST

### In Person

**Sessions 1, 2 and 3 are in person:**



Balwyn Library Meeting Room 1  
336 Whitehorse Road  
Balwyn, Victoria

**Refreshments:** Light afternoon tea will be provided.

### Online

**Session 4 Only:**



Session 4 is hosted on the video platform Zoom

## Ticket Pricing

This event is free to attend.  
Places are limited, please book early.

Please see the [Humanitix event listing](#) for full details.

Registrations close on 8 November 2024.

Your registration will include afternoon tea.

## Accessibility

This course will use teaching methods that are accessible and engaging for people with developmental disabilities.

For further information please contact Belonging Matters.

Registrations are through Humanitix

[REGISTER NOW](#)

