Transition to Retirement: Outcomes from a 3-year study of inclusive community participation.

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The Research Project

› **Title:** Transition to Retirement for Older Adults with a Chronic Disability: Increasing Community Capacity

› **Project:** part-funded by the Australian Research Council (ARC)

› **Industry partners:** part-funded by the Australian Foundation For Disability (Sydney), St. John of God, Accord (Melbourne)
CONTEXT: Retirement as a Risky Proposition

PART 1 FOCUS GROUPS (Bigby et al., 2011)

- Part 1 of our study involved focus groups of service users, disability service staff, and family members.
- These groups approach retirement for people with a disability with anxiety and perceive retirement as a risk to future well-being and participation.
- Supported employees commented about retirement:
  - ...you sit at home and you don’t do anything
  - ...you’re sitting at home and you’ve nothing to do ...you go downhill quickly
  - I’ve got my friends here (at work) you know I go home and I go to work that’s enough for me ...no-one thinks of retiring...
Active Mentoring (Natural support)

- One day per week, instead of working, the person attends a **mainstream community group** of their choice and receives support from group members who volunteer to be *mentors*.

- Mentors trained to provide effective support and ensure activities are available.
Key Features of Active Mentoring to Promote Inclusion

**SUPPORT FROM MENTORS**

- **Social support** – greetings, conversation, introductions
- **Support for participation** in activities
  - Prompts for *when* to do an activity
  - Support for *how* to do an activity
  - Support for fitting in with group norms (unwritten rules)
  - Feedback and praise

**CONSISTENT ACTIVITIES**

- Group meets *weekly* at the same time and place.
- Identifying a *specific activity/role* that the person can learn to take responsibility for (with support from mentors).

**PERSON-CENTREDNESS**

- *One* person with disability per group.
- Group that fits with the person’s interests (so the activity is enjoyable).
Graeme is greeted by his mentors Martin and Olympia and supported to sign in (DVD clip Graeme 1).

Mentor Olympia teaches Graeme how to pot seedlings (DVD clip Graeme 4).
Intervention Participants (all 45 years or older)

INTERVENTION GROUP

- **29** individuals volunteered to drop one day at disability-specific employment/day program and join a mainstream community or volunteer group.
  - **Gender**: 18 (62%) men, 11 (38%) women
  - **Age**: 46 – 72 years, Mean = 57.4
  - **Primary Diagnosis**: 20 (69%) intellectual disability, 1 (3%) mental health, 4 (14%) physical disability, 1 (3%) vision, 1 (3%) hearing, 2 (7%) acquired brain injury
  - **Employment**: 26 (90%) supported employment (9 F/T, 17 P/T), 3 (10%) day program
  - **Living arrangements**: 4 (14%) independent, 12 (41%) group home, 9 (31%) hostel, 4 (14%) family.
COMPARISON GROUP

- People who were *individually matched* to an intervention participant (matched as closely as possible based on work/day program placement, living arrangements, age group, disability type) but *continued to attend work/day program as usual*.

- **No significant difference** between intervention and comparison groups in:
  - Primary disability diagnosis (ID 69%)
  - F/T (28%) or P/T (60%) employment status or day program attendance 912%
  - Living arrangements (group home 45%)
  - Gender (male 72%)

- Comparison group (mean = 53.8 years) **significantly** (*p* = .035) **younger** than intervention group (mean = 57.4 years).
Intervention and Data Collection Timeline

Intervention participant:
Pre-test & interview

6 months at community group, 1 day/week

Post-test & interview

Matched comparison participant:
Pre-test

Continued working as usual during 6-month period

Post-test
Outcomes Assessed

INTERVENTION GROUP ONLY

- Number of people who joined and attended a mainstream community group or volunteering opportunity.

- Nature of the community group/volunteering.

- Change in hours at community group, number retired, new social contacts, time spent with new social contacts, weekly work hours.

- Views about participating after 6 months attending a group (not all participants were able to be interviewed because of communication difficulties).
25 people (86% of intervention participants) successfully joined a mainstream community or volunteer group.

**People with a lifelong disability 45 years or older commencing research intervention**

- **Attend community or volunteer group during 6-month intervention**
  - $n=25$

- **Continues to attend community or volunteer group**
  - $n=21$

**Did not finish 6-month intervention**
- $n=4$

- **Acute physical illness; withdrew**
  - $n=1$

- **Trial at 3 groups; withdrew**
  - $n=1$

- **Attended a community group for between 3 and 5 months**
  - $n=2$

- **No longer going to intervention group**
  - $n=4$

- **Returned to full-time work**
  - $n=1$

- **Acute mental illness; hospitalised**
  - $n=1$

- **Day program staff unable to continue 1:1 support + safety concerns at Men’s Shed**
  - $n=1$

- **Participant died**
  - $n=1$
**Type of Volunteering Opportunity or Community Group**

**MEN** \((n = 17)\)

**VOLUNTEERING**
- Community (soup) kitchen \((n = 1)\)
- Community nursery \((n = 1)\)
- Aviation museum* \((n = 1)\)
- Lifeline charity shop* \((n = 1)\)

**COMMUNITY GROUP**
- Men’s shed* \((n = 8)\)
  - Seniors group \((n = 1)\)
  - Seniors choir \((n = 1)\)
  - Lawn bowls club \((n = 1)\)
  - Seniors 10-pin bowling league \((n = 1)\)
  - Community garden \((n = 1)\)

* Single sex group

**WOMEN** \((n = 10)\)

**VOLUNTEERING**
- Cat protection society* \((n = 1)\)
- Community (plant) nursery \((n = 1)\)
- Frail-aged social group \((n = 1)\)

**COMMUNITY GROUP**
- Exercise* and social group \((n = 1)\)
  - Community (teaching) kitchen \((n = 1)\)
  - Seniors group \((n = 4)\)
  - Walking and knitting group \((n = 1)\)

Volunteering **8 hours** per week or more allows you to retain the **mobility allowance**
Intervention Group Outcomes

› **Hours.** Participants attended their community group for an average **3.6** hours (range 1-6).

› **Social contacts.** Participants had ongoing social contact with an average of **4.04** (SD=1.15) new people at their community group (range 2-5).

› **Retirement.** 3 intervention participants (10%) retired fully during the research project.
INTERVENTION GROUP: Change from pre-test to post-test (6 months later)

Participation in All Community Groups

- Pre-test: 2.18 hours per week
- Post-test: 5.35 hours per week

**p < .001**
Weekly Hours Spent with New Inclusive Social Contacts

Weekly Hours

3.3

p < .001

0.3

Pre-test
Post-test
Weekly Work Hours

Pre-test: 26.6
Post-test: 22.5

$p = .002$
Participants’ Views About the Group They Joined

Findings from participant interviews after 6 months attending the group

**POSITIVE**
- **All** participants stated that they enjoyed going to their group.

  - I’ll keep on doing it for the rest of my life, bowling (lawn bowls).
  - I find it really good going there (community garden).
  - People are so nice .. We talk about all sorts of things (seniors social group).
  - They’re my mates...they look after me, they talk to me…and sometimes I help them (men’s shed).

**NEGATIVE**
- **No** participants reported any negative views about their group.
Standardised assessments administered by interview at pre-test and post-test 6 months later.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome</th>
<th>Self-report</th>
<th>Proxy-report</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Depression</td>
<td>Glasgow Depression Scale</td>
<td>Glasgow Depression Scale – Carer Supplement</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Mini PAS-ADD Interview</td>
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<td>Life events</td>
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<td>Loneliness</td>
<td><em>UCLA Loneliness Scale</em></td>
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<td>Modified Worker Loneliness Questionnaire</td>
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<td>Social satisfaction</td>
<td>Modified Worker Loneliness Questionnaire</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quality of Life</td>
<td><em>SF-36v2 Health Survey</em></td>
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* Scale designed for the general community, with normative data available.
## Outcomes Analysis

**Comparison of corrected post-test scores (pre-test score as covariate)**

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Depression</td>
<td>Glasgow Depression Scale</td>
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<td>Glasgow Depression Scale – Carer Supplement (x life events)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Life events</td>
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<td>Modified Worker Loneliness Questionnaire</td>
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*ns* not significant
## Worker Loneliness Questionnaire: Factors and Items

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FACTORS</th>
<th>ITEMS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Aloneness</strong></td>
<td>- Is it easy for you to make friends?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(6 items)</td>
<td>- Is it hard for you to make friends?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$\alpha = .75$</td>
<td>- Do you feel alone?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Is it hard to get people to like you?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Do you feel left out of things?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Are you lonely?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Social Satisfaction</strong></td>
<td>- Do you have people to talk to?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(6 items)</td>
<td>- Do you have lots of friends?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$\alpha = .63$</td>
<td>- Can you find a friend when you need one?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Are there people you can go to when you need help?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Do people like you?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Do you have friends?</td>
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Post-Test Social Satisfaction: Corrected Means (covariate pre-test social satisfaction)

Corrected Social Satisfaction by Group

\[ F(1, 43) = 10.61, \ p = .002 \]
\[ \eta^2_p = .20 \ (\text{large effect size}) \]
At post-test after intervention group participants had experienced 6 months of weekly attendance at a mainstream volunteering opportunity or community group:

- Intervention group participants **social satisfaction increased from pre-test post-test** ($p < .05$).
- They reported feeling **significantly more socially satisfied** than comparison group members at post-test.
- Social satisfaction involved **having friends and social support** (from friends).
› Graeme describes what he enjoys about of volunteering at the community nursery: activity, social contact, community participation (travel) (DVD clip Graeme 6).

› Laurie describes having a chat and making new friends at the community choir (DVD clip Laurie 3).
Sample items: Events experienced in the last two years

- Death of a first degree relative
- Serious problem with a close friend, neighbour or relative
- Death of a close family friend, carer or other relative
- Unemployed/seeking work for more than one month
- Retirement from work
- Laid off or sacked from work
- Serious illness of close relative, friend or carer
- Move of house or residence
- Something valuable lost or stolen
- Broke off a steady relationship (a girlfriend or boyfriend)
- Problems with police or other authority
- Separation or divorce
- Major financial crisis
- Alcohol problem
- Sexual problem
- Drug problem
Job loss and retirement are stressful and may be associated with depression.

Findings from Part 1 focus groups revealed participants (including people with a disability) saw retirement as a risk to future well-being, social contact and participation.

The meaningful activity, having friends and social support of the TTR intervention were *protective against depression* for individuals experiencing multiple life events (but this finding was inconsistent across depression measures).
TTR intervention protective against depression for individuals experiencing multiple life events

Interaction $p = .004$
Conclusions: Effectiveness and Generalisability

EFFECTIVENESS

- **86%** of intervention group participants participated in a mainstream community or volunteer group
  - The model was *largely very successful* in bringing about sustained membership of these groups.

GENERALISABILITY

- Most participants were **supported employees with mild/moderate disability** and little or **no evident challenging behaviour** (not formally assessed) and **capable of routine self-care**
  - It remains to be seen whether this approach could be generalised successfully to individuals with more severe disability, challenging behaviour, or in need of personal care (e.g., toileting).
Conclusions: Outcomes

FINDINGS

- Concerns about retirement resulting in lack of participation, social isolation, loneliness and depression were not supported by our data.

- Some evidence that participation in a community group was protective against depression (but inconsistent).

- Baseline scores on depression and loneliness were low leaving little room for improvement (but considerable room to detect deterioration).

- Note that most intervention group participants did not retire fully, just reduced work by 1 day, so this study is not a direct test of total retirement.

BENEFITS

- At post-test, intervention group participants reported feeling significantly more socially satisfied than comparison group members.

- This finding suggests that intervention group participants felt that they have friends and social support (from friends) at least in part as a result of their experiences at a mainstream community or volunteer group.

- High levels of social interaction while attending the group, but almost no examples of contact with other group members outside the group.
The TTR manual and DVD was designed to be used by or with:

- People with disability
- Disability staff
- Families

› 162-page manual and 63-minute DVD

› Manual:
  - 9 chapters designed for practitioners with practical guidance for implementation:
  - Links to DVD clips, Vignettes, Tips
  - 2 Appendices: Travel training, Forms

› DVD:
  - Includes individual stories of 6 men and women who volunteered or joined a community group

› Available online at http://purl.library.usyd.edu.au/sup/9781743323274
Ongoing TTR Service Delivery by AFFORD

› AFFORD appointed a *Transition to Retirement* Coordinator in 2010

› This 3-year research project saw **26** AFFORD employees transitioning to retirement by joining mainstream community groups. **AFFORD continues to support these individuals, most of whom continue to attend their community group(s) years later. Several have retired fully.**

› AFFORD continues to run the TTR program which now supports **45** employees in their transition to retirement


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