

THE JOURNEY

Towards Person-Centered Excellence

Social Connectedness for Maryland Participants

Social connection and meaningful relationships are the heart and foundation of building a well rounded life. Liberty is partnered with The Council on Quality and Leadership (CQL) and National Core Indicator (NCI) to understand people’s preferences for relationships and community connection.

Over the past few years in Maryland, lots of supports were put in place to help people stay connected, reconnect and build new relationships with people who are important to them. These efforts show 63% of people do not feel lonely, however, the other 37% of people report feeling lonely often or sometimes (Maryland FY23 NCI survey results). We can help reduce the feeling of loneliness by continuing to learn about people’s preferences for developing relationships and community connections, which will help identify the supports needed to do so.

Note: In addition to Maryland data, the infographics on this page highlight the latest national CQL data which shows consistent trends of increased provider efforts to support people to connect with others and the areas in which those efforts can be enhanced.

People with disabilities interact with other members of the community



25.3% of people with disabilities fulfilled a variety of social roles

People with disabilities are 33.0x more likely to perform different social roles when organizational supports are in place

When people with disabilities perform different social roles, they are 4.4x more likely to have friends

Keeping Connected

The friendships, relationships, and other bonds we form are a foundational part of the human experience. Support staff can play a meaningful role in helping people with disabilities develop and nurture these connections with others. The starting point involves discovery – finding out what types of connections people want, how often they want them, and the supports they desire along the way.

84.7% OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES HAD FRIENDS

50.2% OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES WERE SATISFIED WITH THE NUMBER OF FRIENDS THEY HAD

35.1% OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES WERE SATISFIED WITH THE AMOUNT OF CONTACT WITH THEIR FRIENDS

63.3% OF ORGANIZATIONS KNEW & UNDERSTOOD PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES' PREFERENCES FOR INTIMATE RELATIONSHIPS

49.3% OF ORGANIZATIONS PROVIDED SUPPORT FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES TO PURSUE, FORM, & MAINTAIN INTIMATE RELATIONSHIPS

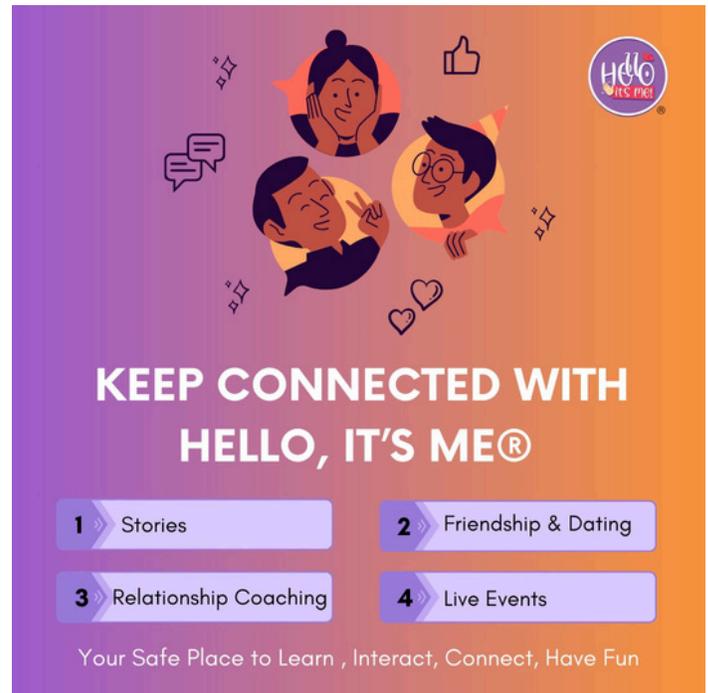
SPOTLIGHT

Hello It's Me! is a new app, pioneering a progressive movement towards true, meaningful relationships for people with intellectual/developmental disabilities. The app, available on the App Store, Google Play, and desktop, is co-created by Focus EduVation (a leading provider of eLearning solutions, higher education, and corporate training based in Woburn, Massachusetts). Unfortunately, it is common for those with I/DD to report feelings of loneliness and minimal social interactions between themselves and others in the community. Kevin Drumheller, a Maryland resident and CEO of a I/DD service provider agency, noticed the need for an app like *Hello It's Me!* during COVID. Everything shut down, and supports transitioned to a virtual model. "I knew there had to be something better [to support people in forming connections], but realized I had to make it," explained Kevin. *Hello It's Me!* provides educational tools focused around friendships and relationships. Dr. Karen

Harvey, an expert in trauma informed care and positive identity development for those with I/DD, collaborated with Kevin to turn real-life stories from her professional experience into 'create-your-own-adventure'-style simulations. Now, *Hello It's Me!* has grown into something much larger. *Hello It's Me!* users can access relationship coaches and special content like cooking demonstrations, dance parties, exercise classes, etc.

The Charting the Life Course model served as a framework for developing prompts for *Hello It's Me!* users to create detailed profiles about themselves. Most importantly, *Hello It's Me!* users can connect via their profiles and cultivate new relationships-- whether that is a romantic partner, or a new friend. A membership to access the *Hello It's Me!* app qualifies as assistive technology for DDA participants with friendship and relationship-related goals through the Organized Health Care Delivery System (OHCDs) providers. This has allowed several participants in Maryland to access the one-of-a-kind resources and connect with others.

Liberty Healthcare wants to thank Kevin Drumheller for his time in sharing about this newly developed tool and paving the way towards connection and friendship for those with I/DD all over the nation! Learn more about *Hello It's Me!* on their website, <https://hello-itsme.com/>.



DON'T FORGET!

Liberty Healthcare will begin sending generated email notifications to providers from the software platform, LibertyTraks. These messages will not contain PHI, and will be sent from a third party, unmonitored email account. Please do not reply to these messages. To ensure these messages are not sent to your spam folder, please request your IT department to whitelist the following email address: no-reply@socialsolutions.com.



TIP OF THE MONTH



We encourage providers to consider creating one shared email address for your organization's leadership team. This helps ensure any communications from Liberty Healthcare are reaching all of the necessary parties!