

# Why are relationships important for people with intellectual disabilities – my experience

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# Why should we have friends?

- We can help each other
- We are not alone
- We spend time together
- Sometimes, one friendship can turn into a couple

# What about me?

- I have friends and this is good for me NOW
- With some of them, I can talk about intimate matters
- With some of my friends, I can go out and have fun
- With my friends, I can overcome difficulties
- I feel free to tell them if something is not ok

# My friends

- Roxana
- At first, she was my colleague
- After I changed my job, she kept calling me and asking me out
- Now she is my best friend



# My friends

- Anca
- She teaches me new things
- We spend time together and she helps me when I am upset



# My friends

- Zoli
- My supporter and my friend
- He encourages me and makes me feel safe
- He is always there for me when I need him



# My friends

- Bodo
- She always makes me laugh
- She is an example for me
- She encourages me
- She is always ready to help me



# My friends

- Luiza
- We get out very often
- Helps me prepare food (she is a very good cook )
- I am helping her get her own apartment





# My friends

- Martin
- He visits me very often
- He helps me when he can
- I can count on him



# My friends

- Fana
- Although she is in London, we see us on skype
- She encourages me to live independently
- She is an example of courage and success



# In the beginning

- I had no friends except for my colleagues from institution
- Only few of them decided to move
- I was very scared
- I preferred people from institutions as my friends



# My first years living in community...

- I didn't trust people
- I couldn't count on them
- I was very dissapointed as people avoided me
- I didn't have the right support

# My first years living in community...

- I had no idea how to make friends
- It was difficult but everybody expected me to be an example of success
- I didn't want to be a disappointment and I wanted to be like everybody else

# Relationships that failed

- I offered people trust and they disappointed me
- People I considered my friends dumped me, lied to me and took advantage of me
- These things made me distrustful
- It is better with no friends than with people who don't deserve me

# How did I manage to make friends

- People got to know me and appreciated me for being onest and caring
- I appreciated their patience and affection
  - I got rid of my fear and I tried
- I still find it hard to make new friends
- I have two categories of friends:
  1. people that grew in residential institutions just like me
  2. professionals that later became my friends

# In the end, I would say

- We need to believe in our ability to make friends
- We need to let people get close to us but be very careful
- Have patience
- Encourage people to know us as we are





If it weren't for my friends, I would  
have been back in residential  
institutions now!