

# Defining social inclusion of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities: An ecological model of social networks and community participation.

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Review article

### Defining social inclusion of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities: An ecological model of social networks and community participation

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#### Highlights

- Our review of social inclusion literature finds several conflicting definitions.
- Hence, we propose a definition and ecological model of social inclusion.
- Our definition focuses on interpersonal relationships and community participation.

- â€¢ Our ecological model includes individual, interpersonal, and community variables.
- â€¢ We describe future research that our definition and ecological model can inform.

## Abstract

Social inclusion is an important goal for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, families, service providers, and policymakers; however, the *concept* of social inclusion remains unclear, largely due to multiple and conflicting definitions in research and policy. We define social inclusion as the interaction between two major life domains: interpersonal relationships and community participation. We then propose an ecological model of social inclusion that includes individual, interpersonal, organizational, community, and socio-political factors. We identify four areas of research that our ecological model of social inclusion can move forward: (1) organizational implementation of social inclusion; (2) social inclusion of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities living with their families, (3) social inclusion of people along a broader spectrum of disability, and (4) the potential role of self-advocacy organizations in promoting social inclusion.



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## Keywords

Social inclusion; Intellectual disabilities; Developmental disabilities; Interpersonal relationships; Community participation; Ecological model

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