

Supported Living – Cultivating Community

Because people with disabilities have historically been separated from their communities to receive in services that are “attached” to property, direct support professionals must help the person develop connections in the community. To develop a better understanding of the necessity of developing relationships for persons with disabilities, it is recommended that direct support professionals review the following videos. In these short videos, Dr. David Pitonyak provides unique insights on the challenges that people with disabilities face and how important it is that direct support professionals approach support from a place of respect and compassion. Most of these videos are available on Dr. Pitonyak’s website: www.dimagine.com.

- [David Pitonyak - Jumping into the Chaos of Things](#)
- [David Pitonyak - Coverage or Relationships?](#)
- [David Pitonyak - The Work of Adolescence](#)
- [David Pitonyak - Being Needed by the Pack](#)
- [David Pitonyak - Being Hardwired for Belonging](#)

On his website, Dr. Pitonyak offers a written explanation about how seven questions may be used to understand what a person is trying to communicate with difficult behaviors. This short video explains the seven question in a very clear and concise manner:

- [David Pitonyak - 7 Questions](#)

Derrick Dufresne is the founder of Community Resource Associates, Inc. (CRA), a firm that is dedicated to promoting full community inclusion for individuals with disabilities. He has provided consultation services throughout the United States. Derrick worked extensively with the Supported Living: Making the Difference initiative. On February 1, 2012, Derrick was interviewed by the Minnesota Governor’s Council on Developmental Disabilities. The interview has been broken into a series of short videos. These short videos provide an experienced perspective on several topics that should be discussed to set the culture of a supporting living agency:

- [Derrick Dufresne - Early Work History in Northern Virginia](#)
- [Derrick Dufresne - The Early History of Behavioral Approaches](#)
- [Derrick Dufresne - The Use of Shock](#)
- [Derrick Dufresne - Look for Underlying Pain that may Cause Behavioral Issues](#)
- [Derrick Dufresne - Staff Can Be Negative Reinforcers](#)
- [Derrick Dufresne - Positive Behavior Supports](#)
- [Derrick Dufresne - Listening](#)
- [Derrick Dufresne - Trust and Relationships](#)

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Much work has been done nationally to help people with disabilities become included members of their communities. The [Friends: Connecting People with Disabilities and Community Members Manual](#) and [Friends: Connecting People with Disabilities and Community Members Activity Worksheets](#) developed by the [Institute on Community Integration at the University of Minnesota](#) are available for free. These resources provide useful tools to guide the development of the development of community connections for people with disabilities.

The North Carolina Council on Developmental Disabilities (NCCDD) is currently funding an initiative called [Natural Support Network Development](#). This initiative is designed to promote supportive strategies toward expanding non-paid natural supports for people with disabilities. The Natural Support Network Development initiative will continue the learning community that was established with the Supported Living: Making the Difference initiative.