

# Participation House Community Mapping: Not disabled, Differently Abled

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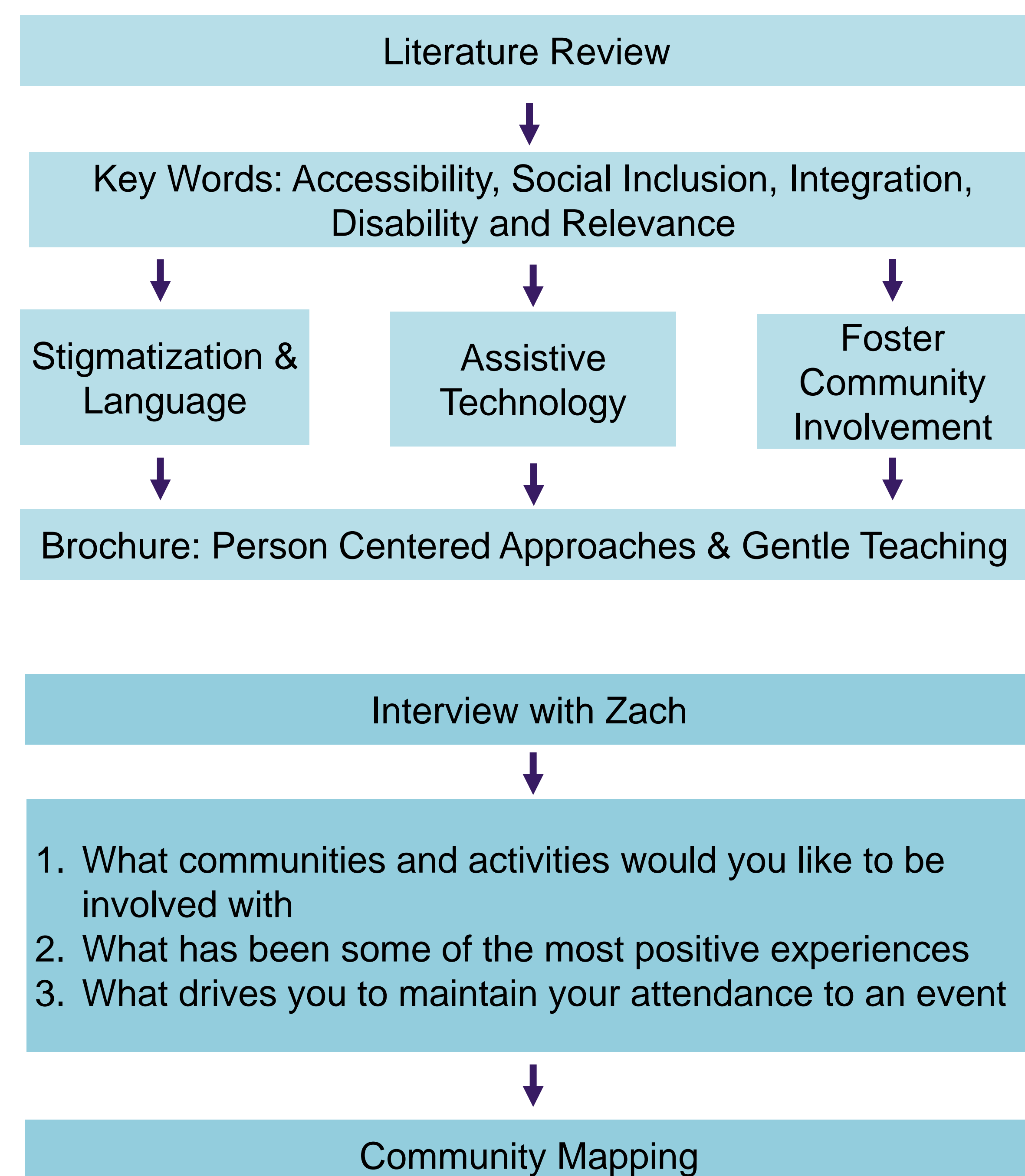
## Introduction

The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms (Heritage, 2016) states every individual is considered equal regardless of race, religion, national or ethnic origin, colour, sex, age or physical or mental disability. However, people living with physical or mental disabilities are inherently disadvantaged in regards to community access. Despite societal progress in aspects of physical accessibility, the institutional model of care and existing stigmatization impedes people with disabilities to actively engage and connect to their community. Therefore, the purpose of this project is to bridge a gap that exists between those living with a disability and their community.

## Project Aim

Determine the key strategies for social inclusion and integration through literature review. Create an community map for one individual that outlines their areas of interest and the community services available around them.

## Methods



## Results: Social Capital for Zach

Zach is very passionate about hands-on activities and like working with animals. He is very friendly, reliable, and always interested in socializing with people sharing a similar interest.

However, he does not like long, lecture-style conversations but prefers activities in a sociable setting instead.

When starting something new, Zach can be shy. In these situations, Zach is more comfortable to begin with small groups then gravitate towards a bigger group after some friendships have been made.

Aside from hobbies listed above, Zach is also interested in shopping, pottery making and explore buildings.

### About Zach

#### Horseback Riding

- **SARI Therapeutic Riding:** weekly 30min sessions for therapeutic riding or wagon driving.
- **Warwick Equestrian:** runs year-long riding school program for all ages and levels. Provide horses for lease to capable students, allow them to take care of a horse without having to purchase one. Also hosts a variety of horse shows throughout summer months
- **London Humane Society:** volunteer opportunities that offer direct contact with animals (e.g weekly dog walks, cat socials) or behind-the-scenes activities such as events organizing and fundraisings.

#### Riding & Biking

- **London Cycling Club** (Apr-Oct): weekly cycling tours around the city on Saturdays and Sundays that accommodates everyone's pace and ability. Also include social events such as monthly Pub Meet.
- **London Cycle Link:** volunteer organization that works to pinpoint and improve flaws, propose infrastructures that will help make London a more bike-friendly city. Also hold biking events such as Glow Ride to promote outdoor biking and socializing.
- **Wilderness Adventurers of Ontario:** organize a variety of winter and summer outdoor activities (cycling, camping, kayaking, skiing etc.) to bring together people with a shared passion for the outdoors. Alongside the trips, there are social events such as spring picnic, fall corn roasts, Christmas party, and slide night.

#### Woodwork & Crafts

- **Lee Valley Woodworking:** in-store seminar sessions suitable for beginners to build up skills in different areas of woodworking. Example classes: carving, pyrography, and scroll sawing.
- **London Community Woodshop:** include community programs, and workshops with local artisans. Offer memberships that grant access to quality equipment in a fully furnished shop that allows individuals to practice their techniques & get creative.
- **Fanshawe College:** the Community Integration through Co-operative Education (CICE) program is designed for adults with learning, cognitive or developmental disabilities to achieve higher education and gain applicable career-related skills. Graduates will be qualified for entry-level jobs.
- **Habitat for Humanity GTA:** non-profit housing organization that build homes for families in need of housing in Brampton, Toronto, and York Region. Organization recruit volunteers to help with building construction and fundraising.

## Two Fundamental Components in Fostering Community Inclusion

### Relevance

A community is a group of people who share something in common. Having relevance in a community means having the same meaningful interests and relating to the passion held in the group. Of course, it is the goal to connect individuals with the communities they are passionate and interested in. However, this automatic relevance is not always enough to foster meaningful inclusion into a community.

#### Methods to Establish Relevance:

- **Promote & share similarities:** groups become more cohesive and inclusive when members see shared similarities in passion, engagement, and commitment amongst each other.
- **Link with a gatekeeper:** gatekeepers in community can be the event organizer, team captain, group leader etc. Linking with the gatekeeper is a good way to share relevance and passion, foster meaningful relationships, and make the individual a recognizable face in the community.

### Regularity

Regularity is fundamental in building meaningful, continuous involvement in the community and making the individual a relevant member. The more community members see an individual, the more members see in their humanity and similarities to themselves, and look past the initial differences in abilities.

#### Methods to Establish Regularity:

- **Form a three-person team:** a three-person team with a shared interest and attend the same activities will help to build a supervising and support system between the group members. Psychology has also shown that triplets work better than pairs at keeping the system going.
- **Use positive reinforcement:** some form of reward can be put in place after attendance of an activity to encourage regularity. During the beginning phase, the attendee should be rewarded for each attendance. Overtime, rewards can be given periodically in a random order to maintain attendance.
- **Implement a token system:** attendance of all participants can be tracked and publicly displayed. The most frequent or participating attendees can be rewarded in the end

Changing perspectives on disability benefits the community in London because it addresses the need to redistribute our resources towards our aging population, it strengthens the educational experience by teaching tolerance and respect for differences, and it creates a sense of community with disabled and non-disabled people having a sense of togetherness

## Acknowledgements and References

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### References:

1. Heritage, G. of C. C. (2016, March 23). Rights of people with disabilities. Retrieved October 19, 2017, from <http://www.canada.pch.gc.ca/eng/1448633334025>