

Sometimes adults with severe-profound intellectual disabilities end up on the edge of interactions. Their unique needs in interactions mean that sometimes they miss out on the company that they need.

HOP, or the Hanging Out Program, is a simple approach for making sure people don't miss out. It is both an approach and an attitude for being with people.

HOP is easy to use and implement.

Opportunity for reflection is built into HOP, alongside a way of documenting what has been learnt.

*HOP was developed by Sheridan Forster while working at Yooralla First Base, in St Albans, Victoria. Sheridan is a Speech Pathologist and researcher interested in interactions between disability support workers and adults with profound intellectual and multiple disabilities.*



HOP

Hanging Out Program  
Interaction for  
People at Risk of Isolation



HOP has been proudly supported by the Centre for Developmental Disabilities Health Victoria (CDDHV). CDDHV are committed to contributing to improved outcomes in the health and wellbeing of adults with developmental disability. For more information about CDDHV go to [www.cddh.monash.org](http://www.cddh.monash.org)

Contact address: PO Box 2267, Portman St, Oakleigh, 3166,  
Victoria, AUSTRALIA  
Telephone: +0405 190 509  
E-mail: sheridanf@yahoo.com  
Self-published

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reprinted or reproduced or utilised in any form or by any electronic, mechanical or other means now known or here after invented, including photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system without written permission from the publisher, except in accordance with the provisions of the Copyright Act, 1968. Page 11 may be photocopied for use with this program.

2008  
Forster, Sheridan  
HOP: Hanging Out Program: Interaction for people at risk of isolation.  
©  
ISBN 978-0-646-50376-9

## Acknowledgements

Sincere thanks to the staff and clients from Yooralla First Base, St Albans. In particular, thanks to Caroline McMillan and Kim Lording who both inspired and co-developed HOP to be a real option, in real life, with real outcomes. Thank you also to the guys who allowed me to use photos of great moments in interaction. Finally, thanks to Christopher Tognon, teacher, friend, and great person to hang out with!

Caldwell, P. (2000). *You don't know what it's like: Finding ways of building relationships with people with severe learning disabilities, autistic spectrum disorder and other impairments*. Brighton, East Sussex: Pavilion.

Dobson, S., Carey, L., Conyers, I., Upadhyaya, S., & Raghavan, R. (2004). Learning about touch: An exploratory study to identify the learning needs of staff supporting people with complex needs. *Journal of Learning Disabilities*, 8(2), 113-129.

Dobson, S., Upadhyaya, S., Conyers, I., & Raghavan, R. (2002). Touch in the care of people with profound and complex needs: A review of the literature. *Journal of Intellectual Disabilities*, 6(4), 351-362.

Firth, G. (2008). A dual aspect process model of Intensive Interaction. *British Journal of Learning Disabilities*, (accepted for publication)

Forster, S. L., & Iacono, T. (2008). Disability support workers' experience of interaction with a person with profound intellectual disability. *Journal of Intellectual & Developmental Disability*, 33(2), 137-147.

Hewett, D. (2007). Do touch: Physical contact and people who have severe, profound and multiple learning difficulties. *Support for Learning*, 22(3), 116-123.

Hewett, D., & Nind, M. (Eds.). (1998). *Interaction in action: Reflections on the use of Intensive Interaction*. London: David Fulton.

Hingsburger, D. (2000). *First contact: Charting inner space: Thoughts about establishing contact with people who have significant developmental disabilities*. Eastman, Quebec: Diverse City Press.

McLinden, M., & McCall, S. (2002). *Learning through touch: Supporting children with visual impairment and additional difficulties*. London: David Fulton.

Nind, M., & Hewett, D. (1996). When age-appropriateness isn't appropriate. In J. Coupe O'Kane & J. Goldbart (Eds.), *Whose choice? Contentious issues for those working with people with learning difficulties* (pp. 48-57). London: David Fulton.

Nind, M., & Hewett, D. (2001). *A practical guide to Intensive Interaction*. Kidderminster: British Institute of Learning Disabilities.

Nind, M., & Hewett, D. (2005). *Access to communication: Developing basic communication with people with severe learning difficulties* (2 ed.). London: David Fulton.

PLMD Network. (2001). *Valuing people with profound and multiple disabilities: Response to "Valuing People"*. Retrieved November 24, 2004, from www.mencap.org.uk/download/vp\_plmd.pdf

Ware, J. (2003). *Creating a responsive environment: For people with profound and multiple learning difficulties* (2nd ed.). London: David Fulton.

Ware, J. (2004). Ascertaining the views of people with profound and multiple learning disabilities. *British Journal Learning Disability*, 32(4), 175-179.

## Where to from here?

HOP brings an attitude and an approach

BUT

HOP does not tell you what to do and when to do it.

Teams need to work out:

- Which people with a disability will benefit from HOP?
- Which staff are going to do HOP?
- When are they going to do HOP?
- How are they going to make sure that HOP sessions are not going to be disrupted?
- Who is going to review HOP records?

# HOP

## Hangging Out

## Program

Interaction for people at risk  
of isolation

Sheridan Forster

A guide for people supporting adults  
with profound intellectual and  
multiple disabilities in services.

What is HOP? .....	1
Why HOP? .....	2
What is the HOP attitude? .....	4
What skills do staff need? .....	5
What is the HOP approach? .....	6
Ideas for interactions .....	8
Recording what happened .....	10
HOP recording examples .....	12
Reviewing recordings .....	14
Reviewing HOP .....	15
Things to think about .....	16
Improving HOP .....	17
Where to from here? .....	18
Bibliography .....	19

Some people take to HOP like a duck to water. They just seem to be intuitive and easily build interactions with people. Other people struggle to work out what do in HOP.

Reflecting on what happens in interactions between parents and young infants can help give ideas of things to try in interactions. This is not suggesting that the people that we are working with are infants. It is saying that a knowledge of early learning can help when having interactions with people with profound intellectual and multiple disabilities.

There are many books and videos available on early learning skills.

HOP can also be improved through an understanding of other more sophisticated approaches like Intensive Interaction (see references). Understanding sensory processing can also improve the quality of interactions. Allied health professionals may be able to help you with these practices.

# Things to think about...

# What is HOP?

Being involved in HOP may bring up many issues. It is important that staff have an opportunity to be able to discuss these issues in an open and professional environment. It is important that issues are addressed in a way that supports good team work, ethical practice, and enhancing the quality of the service given to a person with a disability. In some cases external support may be required to inform discussions, such as speaking with an expert in the area, or referring to literature.

- Some issues that may arise:
- use of touch in interactions
  - use of children's songs in interactions
  - interacting with people that you don't particularly like
  - using play in interactions
  - interacting with people who might hurt you or yourself
  - not having time for HOP
  - doing "HOP" but not recording HOP
  - responding to other service users when you are in HOP with somebody.

HOP stands for the Hanging Out Program. HOP is both an approach and an attitude.

The approach is simple: spend 10 minutes interacting with a person, giving them 100% of your attention.

The attitude is also simple: all people need interaction with other people!

This booklet gives a little more information about the simple, but powerful, HOP.

HOP is not a prescribed program, but there are some principles underlying it. For HOP to work it needs to be modified to fit the place in which it is being used. Make HOP yours!

- HOP is the Hanging Out Program.
- It is about spending time with a person.
- HOP is a way of spending time with a person and a way of thinking about the person.



HOP started in a day service for adults with disabilities. The people there had a wide variety of skills and needs. Some of the people had speech or communication devices. They were good at starting conversations. Other people did not have any formal communication systems. They used facial expression, body language, and sounds to communicate. Sometimes they withdrew into themselves or fell asleep because the things around didn't make sense to them. These people were at risk of isolation; they were missing out on spending time with other people.

We had to think of a way to make sure that people were getting the most out of their day. Staff did not have much time for training or much time for planning their work. We had to come up with something that was easy to learn and simple to implement.

We came up with HOP as a way of making sure that nobody missed out. It was a way of ensuring that nobody went through the day without having spent some time in interaction with another person.

The HOP program also needs to be reviewed. Staff need to consider whether HOP is working for them. They may need to look at different ways of scheduling HOP, for example, having HOP time for everyone in the afternoon, or a HOP schedule, doing HOP with a person everyday or once a week.

HOP should also be reviewed from the perspective of how people are feeling about doing HOP. For example, are they finding it hard to do HOP with particular people, do they need new ideas, are they becoming stale?

HOP can be adapted to the place and situation — as long as it is always the approach of spending time with a person, giving them 100% attention, with an attitude that all people need interaction.

# Reviewing recordings

It is important that the HOP record sheets do not become shredded paper for stuffing boxes.

Every few weeks somebody needs to read through the record sheets and make a short summary of things that have been working, things that haven't been working, and things to try.

Looking at recording sheets can help services decide on new resources that need to be purchased based on what people are interested in.

## **Example: Some things learnt in term 1**

**Things that worked:** massage on arms & legs, different tastes, really close face to face

**Responses to look for:** smiles, sucking, laughs, making sounds, holding looks

**Things that didn't work so well:** lying on her back (she fell asleep), complex rhymes

**Important learning points:** Anita needs active attention; this means touch and close contact. Keep trying if Anita seems dozy, if you leave her she'll just sleep, but if you interact she may join in.

There is a not a lot of research on interactions with people who are at risk of isolation, but the research that is there says that people sometimes only get a few minutes of interactions everyday at their school or day service (think about adding up all those 3 second greetings and touching base with people).

Sometimes the interactions given to people are not real interactions at all. For example, if somebody is deafblind and a person says "hello" from a few metres away, they have not really said hello to the person in a way that they could understand. Some people show very delayed responses; by the time they can respond, their interaction partner has already left! That's not interaction at all.

## **Starting with a problem**

Some people were missing out on interactions:

- they couldn't start interactions with other people,
- they had difficulty keeping the interactions going, and
- they had very unique interaction styles.

# What is the HOP attitude?

The HOP attitude includes:

- All people benefit from interactions.
- All people want to connect with another person—but this is hard for some people.
- Enjoying the company of another person is one of the most fundamental communication skills that needs to be supported.
- Part of our role in supporting people with multiple disabilities is engaging with them.
- Engagement must be meaningful to the person with a disability and the interaction partner.
- If the person can not understand the “language” of the support person, then the support person must adapt their language. It should match the language of the person with a disability and what is meaningful to them.
- Communicating with people with multiple disabilities is everyone’s job, including managers, all staff, and even other service users!

Staff name: John  
 Date: 14<sup>th</sup> Feb 2007  
 Place: \_\_\_\_\_

What happened? Anita was very sleepy initially but with lots of tapping each others hands and gentle rhythmic tapping on her arms.

Client name: Anita  
 Time: \_\_\_\_\_


It worked well? Gentle she came quite alert and happy, say on her arms and cheeks.

Didn't work so well? Eye contact, verbal prompts.

Would you try in the future? As much tactile work as possible

Other experience human touch (appropriate of course!) \_\_\_\_\_

&  
 zah!  
 ze





# HOP recording examples

# What skills do staff need?

- What skills do staff need?
- A "give it a go" attitude.
  - The willingness to spend time with someone.
  - The ability to observe what is meaningful to the person.
  - The flexibility to drop things that are not working, and come up with something else.
  - Skills to reflect on what they have done and write it down.

Staff name: Cath Client name: Anita  
 Date: 25th June 2007 Time: 10.4  
 Place: Therapy  
 What happened? Anita was trying to blow bubbles. I was bubbles from a height above Anita.  
 What worked well? The big bubbles that took a long time  
 What didn't work so well? The little bubbles  
 What would you try in the future? \_\_\_\_\_  
 Client name: Av  
 Staff name: Bec Time: 2.3  
 Date: 19th April 2007  
 Place: Lounge had a chat about day service and mentioned  
 What happened? looking + response!  
 different names - holding her hand - first there was stillness  
 What worked well? holding her hand & smiling & eye contact  
 then she began squeezing my thumb & smiling to another  
 Redirecting my attention to another  
 What didn't work so well? Redirecting my attention to another  
 person while still holding hands - she looked away & no squeeze  
 What did't work so well? 1 topic at a time -  
 person while still holding hands  
 thumb no more!  
 What would you try in the future? 1 topic at a time -  
 speaking slower! 😊

# What is the HOP approach?

## HOP

The HOP approach is very simple. It is about putting aside 10 minutes to spend with a person. In this 10 minutes 100% of the worker's attention is given to the person with a disability.

What you do in the time is up to you, but it is essential that you are focusing on the person.

Sometimes the best way to start HOP is to just sit with the person, watch what they watch, listen to what they listen to, feel what they feel.

Spend 10 minutes with  
the person giving them  
100% of your attention

Staff name: \_\_\_\_\_ Client name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Place: \_\_\_\_\_

What happened? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What worked well? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What didn't work so well? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What would you try in the future? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

(Make lots of copies of this page!)

# Recording what happened

Take 2—3 minutes to write down what happened. Keep it simple, catching your thoughts of what you felt was significant.

This record will be important for helping to tune into the person with a disability. It will be helpful for colleagues. It will also be a record of outcomes of being involved in HOP.

We have found that it is a good record to be able to show parents.

Try different things with the person and watch how they respond. Do they respond quickly, slowly, negatively, positively, with interest, or withdrawal?

Sometimes people respond best to things that they already do themselves. Observe what they do if you repeat a sound or a movement that they make?

What is the quality of interaction? Is it slow, quick, loud, soft, simple, repetitive ...?

Above all does it seem to be meaningful to the person that you are with?

**Record what happened  
in the 10 minutes**

# Ideas for interactions

- Watching things moving in space
- Being face to face
- Squeezing each other's hands
- Having sneezing conversations
  - Tickling
  - Swinging arms
  - Building anticipation
  - Reaching out for things
  - Play hitting/kicking fights
  - Copy cat faces
  - Finger watching
  - Arm wrestles
  - Blinks and winks
- "High five, low five, too slow"
- Anything that you can take turns in
  - "Round and round the garden"
  - Sound play
- Play face slaps: if you get your face in front of the person's hands it can be like slow motion kung fu!
  - Air blow on hands or cheeks
  - Raspberries and stick your tongue out
  - Gossip whispers

These things must always be done with a **spirit of respect** towards the person. They must not be done in a negative, domineering, or threatening way.

Some people worry that copying a person is putting them down. Copying people can be done in a way that is **respectful**, joining in, and sharing with a person. It also means that they have a ready made way of responding back, by doing the same thing.

Always look for the person's reaction and **stop things** if they clearly don't like them. But don't give up on a person, just explore a different avenue.

**Once you've found something that works see what happens when you pause for a second. Does the person anticipate that you are going to do something? Do they show you that they notice something different?**

Always remember that **YOU** are the best piece of multi-sensory equipment around. You are the most flexible, adaptable, responsive, and interesting piece of equipment!