

The Importance of Belonging with David Pitonyak

Community Living Brant recently hosted a three day workshop with [David Pitonyak](#) from March 18-20, 2009. David, who is from Blacksburg Virginia, is well known for his workshops and seminars on a variety of topics, including supporting people with difficult behaviours and supporting the needs of a person's friends, family, and caregivers. Over the three days, staff from Community Living Brant and 11 other agencies from our community and across the province listened to David's message. He spoke to the group about the impact of loneliness in the lives of people who experience disabilities, especially for people who have what we call difficult behaviours. There was discussion around how to build positive and enduring relationships in people's lives to reduce people's loneliness. People heard about the importance of having someone in your life that holds and tells your story- something that is very often missing in the lives of the people we support. David shared many stories about people he has met and how their lives have been affected by loneliness. Those who had the opportunity to hear David speak left with a stronger understanding of importance of meaningful relationships and how the absence or presence of these relationships can dramatically affect people's lives.