



THE COMMUNITY GUIDE

The role of the “community guide” has taken on a greater role in all of Dawn Farm’s programs. In order for Dawn Farm to effectively serve the real needs of addicts and alcoholics, the qualities of a community guide are essential.

WHAT IS A “COMMUNITY GUIDE”

In the Dawn Farm Community of Programs, the community guide provides support for the person(s) who may seek to enter the recovering community. Community guides are effective at building community relationships and establishing informal connections between people. They introduce people to community and community life, incorporating the new person as a member—not as a client in need of services.

1. Community guides have a capacity to see possibilities and potential where others see problems. They focus on strengths—not on trying to “fix” people.
2. Community guides are themselves well-connected to what might be called the "communities within the community." Their strength is associational; their capacity to help grows stronger as a result of their ongoing contribution to community life.
3. Community guides can make things happen because they are trusted within the community rather than because they have letters or titles linked to their names. Trust is derived from the basic *connect- edness* of the guide.
4. Community guides believe that the community is a "reservoir of hospitality" that needs only to be tapped. They understand that the community is ready and willing to care for each individual, if the individual wants to join. The guide introduces the excluded person to community life, confident of the hospitality they will receive.
5. Community guides know that a person’s real engagement with the community doesn't begin until the guide disengages. The guide knows how to say good-bye.

Guides understand that each member of the community is important to the whole. The guide respects the strengths of the community and is committed to reducing dependence while encouraging *interdependence*. The gifts of the community guide are unique, driven by creativity and insight, informal by nature and committed to uncovering the capacity of the individual and the whole community. Dawn Farm remains committed to this type of grassroots caregiver and seeks to incorporate these strengths into all of our programs.

(Reference: The Careless Society: Community and its Counterfeits, ©1995 by John McKnight)

