

Planning Together for Self-Advocates
Information to Help You Have More Voice and Choice
in Planning Your Life

by

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This document has been edited from the full version of
Planning Together
A Guide For Facilitators, Self-Advocates, Their Families, Friends & Paid Supports
To Help People Plan For A Great Life

Realizations Training & Resources

Planning Together for Self-Advocates
Information to Help You Have More Voice and Choice
in Planning Your Life

Planning in Everyone's Life

- We all do planning in our life at times
- When we plan we think about what we want to do, what we want to have, who we want to spend time with, where we want to go
- We make plans about what will happen soon...like what we want for dinner or what movie we will see
- We also make plans about things that will happen later on...like where we want to go on vacation or what we'll get someone for Christmas
- We make plans about small things, like buying a new sweater or calling a friend
- We also make plans about bigger things like what job we want to have or where we might want to live
- We do planning all the time just by thinking about things
- Sometimes we also ask others who we trust to help us plan

How Planning Can Make Our Lives Better

Planning can help us to:

- Be proud of things we have already done
- Get to know ourselves better
- Think more about what we really want in life
- Have more choices
- Have more friends
- Try out new things
- Get the support we need to do things that are important to us
- Have others understand us and listen to us
- Have others help us get what we want in life
- Get closer to people who are already in our life

Help To Do Planning

- Many times we just make plans on our own
- Sometimes we may ask another person for their ideas on plans we have for ourselves
- And sometimes people will invite a small group of family and friends and one or two support staff to meet together, to help them do some planning

Your Role in Personal Planning

- You are the one who is planning. You are the most important person in this activity. You are the reason for others to come together and support you to plan your life. Everything centers around you and what is important to you.
- The choices you make, the things you like and don't like, what you are good at and what people like about you, the people who are important to you, your ideas about your future, and the help you need to make your dreams come true are what everyone has to understand, respect, and work toward, so that the planning is a success.
- You also have choices about how you want the planning to happen, who you want to invite, what will get talked about (and not talked about) and other details of the meetings.

What You Bring to Your Planning

You bring:

- Information about what you like, your experiences, your gifts and talents, and your ideas for a future that is right for you
- An invitation to those who care about you to help you plan by sharing their ideas and supporting you with respect
- Your relationships with others in the planning group
- Your connections to community

You inspire people through your planning!

How Others Can Help You with Personal Planning

Facilitators

A Planning Facilitator is someone who listens to you and helps you to tell others what you want for your life. She or he also helps others who know you and care about you to listen to you and to share their ideas about what they think you might like.

- A Facilitator helps people in your planning group to work together and figure out how you can get what you want.
- Planning Facilitators will write up all the notes from your planning meetings and share them with you and others at your meetings.
- A Facilitator will also share ideas and connections that will help you get what you want in life. The Facilitator is there with you to keep helping you to make your plans become reality and to connect to what you want in life.

Family and Friends

- They know you really well, often since you were born
- They love you and care about you
- They have ideas about what might make you happy
- They know lots of people who might help

Support Workers

- They know you care about you
- They have ideas about what might make you happy
- They know lots of people who might help

“Helpful” Help

It is important for people who are helping with planning and support to understand what kind of help you want. Sometimes people do things that they think are helpful but it is not what you really want or need. Helpers need to take their cues from you! Here are some things people have said are “helpful” help:

- Really listening to me so that I feel heard and understood
- Willing to take all the time I needed
- Help with the practical things as well as ideas
- Asking me what I needed at the time
- Understanding what I was worried about, but not adding their own worries
- Asking if I’d like to hear their suggestions
- Not being upset when I didn’t use their ideas
- Going at a pace I was comfortable with
- Letting me know their experience with a certain situation, but not thinking that mine had to be the same
- Following through on promises
- Having faith in me

Important Values of Planning

Values are what people think are the right things to do and the right ways we should treat each other. Here are some important Values of Personal Planning:

- The person who is planning decides as much as possible how the planning happens and what gets talked about and not talked about, with help where they want it and need it. This is why it is called **person-centered planning** and **person-directed planning**.
- Personal planning is based on the **person's choices**, and people need to keep trying to understand what the person wants and needs.
- The way that planning happens as well as the written plan are **owned by the person**.
- Planning must look at what the person **likes**, what they are **interested in**, what they are **good at** and their **choices**.
- Each person is **unique**, which means they are **one of a kind**, with their own personal story.
- Personal Planning looks at the person's strengths first and then looks later at their needs as a way to help them get what they want in life.
- **Every part of the person's life** is looked at when they are planning, including: work, friends, travel, home life, possessions, family, friends and romantic relationships, learning and education, spiritual, social, health, and community.
- **Long term and short term** dreams and goals are both important.
- **Family and friends** are an important part of personal planning and need to be included.
- Personal planning looks to the **everyday community** first for **resources**. (**Resources are anyone or anything that helps to make things happen**).

- Planning should be **enjoyable** for everyone involved.
- Personal Planning is **ongoing** over a lifetime; it should grow and change as the person does.
- Personal Planning **must lead to Action!** Dreams left on paper don't make a great life!

What You Need to Remember About the Values of Planning

- You know best who you are and what makes you happy.
- People helping you to plan are expected to listen to what you say, no matter how you communicate, and take what you say seriously.
- You should make choices and have control over your life.
- You have some great ideas about what you want in your life and you have many talents and abilities that will help you get what you want.
- Everybody belongs in the community; the community needs you!
- Your family and others who help you plan also have some good ideas for you, which you can use or not use.
- Everyone who is helping you to plan needs to think of ways to help you live your dreams in the community. A Facilitator should continue to help you to get what you want.
- Having a planning group of people who care about you can help you get a great life.

Communication

If you are going to do planning in your life there needs to be ways for people to learn about who you are and what you want.

Getting all the help you need to communicate is very important to planning.

Jenn Seybert is a young lady from Pennsylvania who uses Facilitated Communication to have a voice. She says:

“My life without communication was 24 years of a living hell...I want you to understand the frustrations we feel and the inability to have our frustrations understood without the means of communication...To those of you who are caregivers, teachers, case managers, parents, and staff, I urge you to think hard of at least five people without communication that you support, who are in a day program, in a group home, or are one of your family or friends...They need your help to find a means to communicate because there IS a way out of silence...Your views about our outward façade must change. It is of great urgency that you begin to look beyond our disability and really get to know us. Giving us a direction and helping us with our choices is what self-determination is all about.

This is where OUR lives begin, with you hearing OUR thoughts and working with us to realize them...Reach out to those of us who are sitting in silence...It is not a simple process, but with trust and perseverance you can make it work.”

*Keynote Speech, Everyday Lives State Conference, 2000
The Pennsylvania Journal on Positive Approaches, Vol.3, No.2*

People need ways to communicate so that they can say what they want in their life.

Some people use words to speak but they might be shy or afraid to speak up. It might also be hard for them to say what they want because nobody has asked them before or because people haven't listened or paid attention when they have spoken.

Other people may use words to speak but it is hard to understand them and often others just give up and pretend they know what the person is saying. Sometimes the person has to repeat their words a number of times before others get their meaning.

Still other people are not able, or choose not to use words to speak. In the past those who are helping people who don't use words have tried to understand what they mean by their "body language". Body language is how we move, whether we are smiling or not and other ways we show how we are feeling, without talking. Having helpers make their "best guesses" about people who don't speak with words is good but we also need to make sure that other ways get used more. Some of these ways are:

Sign

Some people have made up their own sign language and some people have learned or are learning American Sign Language (ASL)

Facilitated Communication

This is done when one person helps another person to point to letters or type what they want to say, by putting their hand on the person's shoulder or arm, or sometimes just by being in the same room with them. Being connected to someone in this way can sometimes help a person to move more easily and point to words or type them.



Electronic Communication Devices

These include Pathfinder, the Gemini, the Mercury, and now ProLoquo2Go and the I Pad, that use computer technology to help someone say what they think.

Often people use more than one kind of help to communicate. They might use Sign at home or with certain people they know and then use an electronic way of speaking when they are out with others.

We all need to make sure everyone has a chance to communicate in all the ways that will help them and that are right for them.

Steps in Personal Planning

Please Note: These Steps are based on planning that is a version of Personal Futures Planning described in Planning Together. Some of the Steps here are the same as MAPS, PATH, Essential Lifestyle Planning and other ways of doing this, even if they have different names. Other Steps here are different, but ALL of the ways of planning have the same Values and ALL of them help the person share positive information about themselves and look at what they want in life and how to get it, with some help.

- 1. Learning About Personal Planning and Choosing the Right Way for You**
- 2. Planning the Planning Meeting**
- 3. Invitations to the Planning Meeting**
- 4. Offering Hospitality...Helping People Feel Welcome**
- 5. Having the First Meeting: Welcome and Introductions**
- 6. Explaining Personal Planning to People at the Meeting**
- 7. Ground Rules**
- 8. Helping People Learn About Your Past**
- 9. Helping People Learn About Your Life Now**
- 10. Some Questions About a Good Life**

11. Helping People Learn About Your Dreams for the Future

12. Talking More About Your Dreams

13. Brainstorming Ideas to Make Dreams Happen

14. Helping People Learn What Supports You Need to Make Your Dreams Happen

15. Problems That Could Get in the Way and Ideas to Solve Them

16. Creating an Action Plan

17. Evaluation: Making Sure Things Are Happening in the Way You Want

1. Planning Step: Learning About Personal Planning and Choosing the Right Way for You

You may be a person who already knows what you want in your life and you might already know about Personal Planning. You could be the one to start things going to plan for your future.

Or you may not have had chances to say what you want in your life, maybe because no one has ever asked you or listened to you seriously. Maybe you don't have any help with communication, or you don't use words to speak. Sometimes people who are supported don't know that there are lots of different ways that they could be part of the community.

If you want to have some planning meetings you can ask someone in your family, or a friend, or a support worker, or you can contact **People First** or **Speaking for Ourselves** groups who will probably know some planning facilitators. Tell them

you want to do planning in your life and ask how you can get to know a planning facilitator. Think about why you want to plan and what you want for your future.

Choices About How You Do Planning

Facilitators

People who want to help others do planning in their lives are doing this in different ways.

- Some people are helping others to plan through the services they work for, such as Associations for Community Living and other support agencies.
- Others are helping people by doing planning that is called **Independent**, which means that the Planning Facilitator does not work for the organization that gives you the day to day support. They also stay involved over time and do more to help you get connected to the things you want in life.

More and more people are now looking at having the choice of an Independent Planning Facilitator. When a Facilitator is independent they often have more freedom to look at ways for you to get what you want that are part of the regular community, outside of services for people who have a disability.

Finding a Facilitator You Like

Just as you should get to hire the support people who work for you, you should get to have a choice about who facilitates your planning.

A Facilitator should help you with every part of planning, but they should never take over or tell you what to do. They are there to listen to what you say whether or not you use words to speak, and to help you get the life you want.

Here are some things that make a good Facilitator:

- Being a “people person”...warm, caring, respectful, and interested in others
- Believing in the Values of personal planning with all their heart
- Being a great listener and honestly wanting to know what others mean by what they say
- Being respectful
- Encouraging and positive
- Creative
- Good at organizing
- Having good connections in the community and skills to help you make connections

Checklist for Self-Advocates About a Facilitator

- Do I feel respected and liked by the facilitator?
- Do I feel listened to and heard?
- Are they pleasant to be around?
- Do they give me all the information I need and want about planning?

- Do they take time to ask me if I understand what they are saying and what I think about it?
- Do they ever ask if they are going too fast?
- Do they take my schedule into consideration when getting together with me?
- Do they ask me if I need a ride?
- Do they ask if I want someone else to come to a meeting with me?
- Do they also share their own ideas, without making me feel I have to agree?
- Do they make the meetings fun and also make sure we get things done?
- Do they do what they say they are going to do, within the time limit we have agreed on?
- Are they helping me connect to what I want for my life?

You need to have all the information you want about how people want to help you to do planning and you should have choices about that.

Here are some places you can go to get more information:

- People First Ontario , People First Canada, or your local People First group
- Ontario Independent Facilitation Network
- Individualized Funding Coalition of Ontario
- Family Alliance of Ontario

Different Ways Facilitators May Use to Help You Plan

Some of the ways Facilitators use to help people plan are:

- **Personal Futures Planning**
- **MAPS**
- **PATH**
- **Essential Lifestyle Planning**

All of these ways look at three different parts of planning, and ask these questions:

1. Who Are You?

- What has been important to you in the past?
- What things and people and activities do you love and make you happy?
- What are your gifts (things you are good at and things people like about you)
- What people do you like and love?
- What do you do during the week, on the weekend, on vacation?

2. What Do You Want In Your Life?

- What do you want in each part of your life...your job, your home, fun, friends, romance, learning, travel...?
- What things do you want now?
- What things do you want to work on for later?

3. How Do We Help You Get What You Want?

- What are ways that you can help yourself to make your dreams come true?
- What can other people do to help you get what you want?

You can ask a facilitator to talk to you about how they do planning and what choices you have about the way they do it. Information about different kinds of planning is included at the end of these Planning Steps.

2. Planning Step: Planning the Planning Meeting

The facilitator will ask you about where you want to have your planning meeting, who you want to invite, when you want it to happen, and what food you'd like to serve.

Here are questions the facilitator will ask you:

- **Where would you like your planning meeting to take place?**

When you are deciding where to have the meeting think about places where you would feel the most comfortable and happy getting together with people you are close to. It should be a place that is quiet enough to hear each other and where everyone will be relaxed.

It could be at:

- Your house or apartment
- The house of a family member or friend
- A meeting room in the community, like in a church or library

If anyone uses a wheelchair or has problems walking, the place will have to be accessible for them.

- **Who do you want to invite to your planning meeting?**

When choosing who to invite to your meeting think about who has great ideas for you and sees all your wonderful qualities. Who are the important people in your life?

Some choices could be people in your family, your friends, a neighbour, someone you know from work, school, or other places in the community. You might also want to invite one or two support workers. Not everyone you know can come to your meeting, but be sure to invite those you are close to and who will support you in planning. Think of people you trust, who want you to have a great life and who see all the possibilities for your future.

- **When do you want to have your first planning meeting?**

When thinking of a time for the meeting, remember that weekdays are often hard for people because of school or work.

Does it matter to you if it is in the evening or on a weekend, because that could make it easier for others to come? Do you want to have the meeting as soon as possible or are there things you want to think about or talk about first?

- **What kind of food would you like to serve your guests?**

Have fun deciding what food to serve but try and keep it simple so it doesn't get in the way of the planning.

Do you want to bake something or go shopping for the refreshments? Usually snacks are better than a meal because they take less time away from the planning.

- **Is there anything else about your planning meeting that is important to you? What will make it the most enjoyable for you and your guests?**

What You Can Expect To Happen at Planning Meetings

- As the person who is planning you should expect to be asked ahead of time to say what you would like your planning meeting to be like, including who will be invited, when and where the planning will take place, what refreshments will be served, etc.
- You should expect that what will happen at the planning meeting will be explained to you ahead of time and that you can ask as many questions as you like. You need to know that planning will help you move forward in getting what you want for the future, but that not everything will likely happen right away. You also need to know that anything you don't want talked about at the meetings will not be discussed.

- At the meeting you will be asked different questions about your life in the past, such as things you used to do and enjoy and people you have known and liked. You will also be asked what is happening in your life right now. Then people will want to know what else you would like, for your future.
- You should expect to be listened to carefully and treated with respect .You will get to make choices about what you want and others will take your choices seriously and help you get what you want.
- You should know that your family and friends and support workers might also share some of their ideas and suggestions about what they think you might like. You can say yes, no, or maybe to these ideas and that will be fine with people.
- You will be asked to use your talents, knowledge, and connections to community as ways to help you have the future you want.

3. Planning Step: Invitations to the Planning Meeting

You may want to call people and ask them to come to your meeting. If you don't want to call or it's hard for you to do that then it could be a family member, friend or the facilitator who makes these calls for you.

You can also help to choose or make the written invitations, which can include the words you use, the kind of paper or card, photocopying, addressing and mailing. These are all ways you can be part of things.

Invitations should ask if people want more information before the meeting. You can go with the facilitator to help explain more about planning if you wish. Some people also say something about themselves and why they want to plan, as part of the invitations that are sent.



Information to Put in the Invitations

What: A planning gathering about your future that includes some of your family, friends and support staff, to talk about what you want in your life and how the group can help you get it.

Where: A place that is hopefully not part of a human service organization. The address, a contact phone number, and directions should be provided.

When: Along with the date, put the starting and ending times of the meeting. Two to three hours is usual.

Who: You may want to say who else is being invited.

How: Does anyone need a ride, an interpreter or other help to participate? Be sure to include a contact number!

A Sample Invitation to a Planning Gathering

Dear

I am sending you this invitation to my planning meeting, as a follow-up to the phone call you received from (me, my mom, whoever made the call) Thank you for agreeing to come.

The meeting will take place on (day, date) at (starting time to ending time) at (location). Directions are enclosed (if they are needed).

The other people who are coming are (others invited)

At my meeting we will all get to know each other a bit more. (Name of facilitator) will be facilitating the meeting and (s/he) will tell everyone a bit about how the planning works.

Then (s/he) will ask me what is important to me, what I like and what I'm good at. Everyone else at the meeting will also have a chance to share what they know about things that matter to me.

Then I will tell everybody what I want for my future. The rest of the group might also say what they think I might like. Then we will all look at ways I can make my dreams for the future start to happen.

Having you at my meeting is really important to me. Thank you for helping me to plan for my future!

Sincerely,

Note: This Sample Invitation is just a suggestion. You should use your own words as much as you want to, to invite people to your meeting.

4. Planning Step: Offering Hospitality and Helping People Feel Welcome

Having a planning meeting is a lot like hosting a party. You want people invited to feel welcome, to take part and to enjoy themselves. Greeting people, taking coats, making introductions, and offering refreshments are all part of hospitality, and hopefully can be done by you and your family and friends. You could be one of the greeters as people arrive. You might also want to take people's coats, and do other things that are part of hosting. This is really good practice for having parties!



5. Planning Step: Having the First Meeting: Welcome and Introductions

The facilitator will ask everyone to introduce themselves, unless they all know each other. Then he or she will ask them to say a little about how they know you. Before or during the introductions you might want to welcome everyone as a group, and thank them for coming. You may also want to say something about your hopes about the planning and your future. It is also ok if you don't want to say anything at this time.

6. Planning Step: Explaining Planning to People at the Meeting

The facilitator will explain some of the most important parts of planning so that everyone supports you in helpful and respectful ways. Some of the point she or he will make are:

- Respecting your choices
- Respecting what you like, your strengths, and what you are good at
- Listening carefully to you and to each other
- Being positive and believing that what you want can happen
- Looking at ways for you to get what you want from the regular community

7. Planning Step: Ground Rules

The facilitator will ask everyone if they have any ideas for Ground Rules about how people in the planning group can work together and how they want the meetings to work around things like times and breaks. Before the facilitator gets people's ideas about Ground Rules they will ask everyone to answer a few questions about being in a group:

- What makes you feel comfortable in a group?
- What can others do to make you feel comfortable?
- What helps you speak up and share your thoughts?
- What helps you listen to others?

Someone should have asked you ahead of time if there are any Ground Rules that are important to **you**. For example, you might need more than one break or you

might want the facilitator to stop once in a while to ask how everybody is doing. It's okay if you don't have any ideas for Ground Rules, but you should have the chance to think about this and talk it over ahead of time if you want to. The facilitator will share some ideas for Ground Rules, listed below:

Some Ideas for Ground Rules

- The person who is planning always comes first. Their wishes, choices and dreams are what we are here to support.
- We will listen carefully and respectfully to the person who is planning and to each other.
- We will honour the person's choices and help them have all the information they need to make their decisions.
- We will focus on the person's passion, gifts and strengths, and dreams.
- We will do our best to be positive, creative, and enthusiastic in helping the person to share their dreams and to make them a reality.
- We will look to the ordinary community to help the person realize their dreams.
- We are here to support the person who is planning, remembering that support means, *"To uphold, maintain, speak in favour of, sustain, assist, take the part of..."*
- We will keep private within our group anything that the person does not want talked about.
- We will be respectful of everyone's opinions and give everyone the chance to explain what they mean.
- If we disagree in the group we will try to solve our problems in kind ways, always keeping in mind that this is the person's life and they get the most say.
- We will try hard to be open to learning and working together and to cooperate.
- We will try to build community within our group.

8. Planning Step: Helping People Learn About Your Past

The facilitator will be asking you and others in the group about what was important to you in the Past when you were little, when you were a teenager and up to about a year or so ago. They will want to know what you liked and didn't like about what you did, about school, about places you went and people who were important to you.

Anything you don't want to talk about from your Past won't be talked about in the planning meeting. Here are some examples of questions about the Past:

- Where did you grow up?
- Do you have brothers and sisters?
- Who else in your family was important to you?
- Did you have pets?
- Did your family go on holidays?
- What did you like to do for fun?
- What parts of school did you like?
- What were you good at?
- What did you want to be when you grew up?
- Who did you play with?
- Were there other grownups you liked?
- What good memories do you have?
- What parts of high school did you like?
- Who were your friends?
- What were you good at in high school?
- What did you do for fun?
- Have you done any volunteering?
- Have you had any jobs?
- Did you have any hobbies?
- Did you go on any trips?
- Did you belong to any clubs or teams?
- What did you want to do when you finished high school?
- What music, movies, TV did you like?
- Did support workers ever help you?

The facilitator will want to know if there are things or people from your Past that are still important to you now, to make sure they can also be part of your future.

9. Planning Step: Helping People Learn About Your Life Now

Next you will be asked to tell people what life is like for you now. Talking about what you like, what you are doing, and how you spend time with others will help you think about what parts of your life are good and what parts you might want to change.

There may be things you enjoy doing but you wish they could happen more often. Or you might want to get together more with some of the people you like. There could also be some things that you don't really want to do, like volunteering at a certain place, or living with someone you don't get along with very well.

This is the time to let people know what's working in your life and what is not. If you are shy about telling the whole group about something that you don't like, you will have chances ahead of time to talk to the facilitator and anyone else you want to about this.

Other people will also be asked to add to what you say about your life now. And they will be asked to say what they like about you and what you are good at. These are called your Gifts. After they do this you will also be asked to say what you are proud of about yourself and what your talents are. You will have chances to think about this ahead of time and even make your own list if you want. It can be hard for all of us to say what we like about ourselves but it helps a lot to know our talents when we are thinking about our future.

Here are some questions that you will be asked:

- What do you most love to do, to be, to have?
- Where do you live and who do you live with?
- What do you do with your time on weekdays, weeknights, and weekends?
- Are you involved with work, volunteering, social activities?
- Who is in your life and how do you spend time with people?
- Who are especially important people to you and how often do you get to see them?
- What do you do for fun?
- What places do you go?
- Do you belong to any groups, clubs or teams?
- Are you taking any courses or learning anything new?
- What are you good at/ What are you proud of about yourself?

- What do you like to spend money on?
- Is church/temple/mosque or some other spiritual practice a part of your life?
- Are there things you are doing, places you go or people you spend time with that aren't enjoyable for you?

“There was a bunch of people at the first meeting. Kathy asked me questions and I tried to answer them. I talked about not getting out much. I talked about having no education...We talked so much we had to have another meeting to finish up. I liked having people really listen to me. I always felt like people didn't really hear me when I talked.

Peg Mumau, *To Dream: Stories of the Glories of Person Centered Planning and Circles of Support*

10. Planning Step: Some Questions About a Good Life

Part of learning about your life now is about how you are supported in ways that give you respect, choices, chances to make friends and to be a real part of community. The facilitator will ask questions about all these topics, so people can learn if the help they are giving will get you the life you want. The idea for these questions came from John O'Brien and Connie Lyle O'Brien in their work on *Framework for Accomplishment*.

The questions about support aren't meant to blame your workers or get anyone in trouble. They are just another way to make sure you have the best life possible.

Choices

Everyone wants to have choice and control in their life.

- What everyday choices do you get to make, such as what you wear, what you eat, how you spend your money?
- What bigger choices do you get to make around what you do during weekdays, weekends, evenings, where you live and who you live with, who you spend time with?

Valued Roles

Each of us wants to be respected for who we are; we also get respect from the roles we have in our community. Below are some roles that many people have:

Parent	Son/Daughter
Friend	Brother/Sister
Employee	Volunteer
Home Owner	Lease Holder
Pet Owner	Licensed Driver
Car Owner	Club Member
Neighbour	Voter
Employer	Bank Account Holder
Student	Credit Card Holder
Partner/Spouse	Tax Payer

What valued roles in community do you have?

How do people show you respect?

Everyday Places and Activities

Having a full life means being where the action is, where community members spend time.

- Which of the places you go all the time are ones where lots of different community members go?
- Which activities that you do all the time are ones where lots of other community members are also taking part?

Chances to Give Back

Most of us feel good about ourselves when we are needed by others and when we can share our gifts and abilities.

- Where do you get chances to do what you are good at?
- Where do you get chances to help others and give back to your community?

Relationships

We are happy when we know we are loved and liked and accepted by people who matter to us.

- What chances do you have to spend time with the people who matter to you?
- What chances do you have to meet new people and get to know them?

11. Planning Step: Helping People Learn About Your Dreams for the Future

Some people have had lots of chances to think about and talk about what they want in their life. Others have never been asked this or they haven't been listened to or helped when they talked about what they want.

Personal planning is a way to help you think about what you want for your future and talk to people who will listen and follow up with you about getting what you want, as much as possible.

You will be asked what you want in each part of your life from a list the facilitator has, and you can add other things as well. Here is a sample list:

Home Life	Possessions (things you own)
Learning (school/community)	Work
Volunteering	Money
Family	Friends
Romance	Fun
Hobbies/Passions	Travel
Spiritual Life	Being Creative
Pets	Giving back to Community
Health/Fitness	Personal Growth

No dream is too big or too small to talk about or work towards.

Other people may have ideas that they think you would like for your future. You are free to say yes, no, or maybe to their suggestions and you can talk ahead of time to the facilitator about how to answer when people give their ideas. You can always say you need to think about it for a while.

You can also talk about some of your dreams for the future that you may not want to work on right away. Sometimes we just want a chance to think about something and how it might work in our life. You will have lots of chances to plan and things can go fast or slow, depending on what you want.

Some of the dreams people have said they wanted are:

- To work at the hockey arena
- To change roommates
- To have more friends
- To play the piano
- To take a cruise
- To meet Shania Twain
- To help make their town physically accessible
- To start dating
- To have a pet grooming business
- To go to rock concerts
- To see their family more
- To get a big screen TV

You can also hear what other people in the planning group have to say about dreams in their own life. Almost everyone has thought about what they'd do if they won the lottery or had a magic wand or were given three wishes. It is fun to talk about this and listen to what others have to say.

12. Planning Step: Talking More About Your Dreams

“I thought the meeting helped a lot. I got a lot of ideas to get started. I knew I could go on with my future. I knew I could do what was best and what was not best...I like talking about what I like to do best. I like to talk about my dream...I have made a lot of friends through my job at Giant Eagle. This was a job I really wanted to get and now I feel very connected to people there.”

Crystal

*To Dream: Stories of the Glories of
Person-Centered Planning and Circles of Support*

The facilitator will ask you to talk a bit more about the dreams for the future that you have already told people about. It will help with the planning if each dream is put into a sentence so that everyone understands what you want.

So, for example, if you have a dream to learn to swim, the sentence could be something like: **“I’d like to learn to swim”** or **“I want to take swimming lessons.”** It is as simple as that.

With some dreams you might be asked to talk about them a bit more. If you said your dream is to have a job in an office, the facilitator might ask you to think about what interests you about an office and what kinds of work you could do there. Depending on what it is about being in an office, the sentence could be, **“I want a job in a large office building, where I get to wear a tie, and I would help by delivering the mail.”** Or it could be, **“I want to run the photocopier and shredder in the church office.”**

As people learn more about all the details of your dreams, they will have a better idea of how to help you make your dreams come true.

13. Planning Step: Brainstorming to Make Dreams Happen

Everyone in your planning group needs to look at all the ways you can get what you want. People will be asked to brainstorm, which means sharing all the ideas everyone can think of. And the group will also be asked to think of all the resources that will help.

Some of the resources are the talents and gifts you have, the things you know, and the people in your life. You might have a dream to go horseback riding and you already know a stable that is welcoming and friendly. Or you may know someone else who rides who can suggest a good place for you to go.

You might have a dream for a certain type of job and some of your gifts and talents will make it easier for you to find that kind of work. By looking again at your Gifts you will get good ideas about resources you have to help your dreams come true.

Other people in your planning group also have resources, which are what they know, what they are good at, and other people they know who could help.

14. Planning Step: Helping People Learn What Supports You'll Need to Make Your Dreams Happen

The facilitator will ask you what help you may need to get what you want for your future. We all need others to help us with some parts of our lives and we need to think about how that support happens. If it doesn't feel helpful to us, then something needs to change!

Think about what people do now that helps you, what you do to help yourself, and what else you might need, to do what you want to do. Sometimes it is hard to think about this on our own. Others may have some good ideas but your opinion matters the most.

Some people have said they need help with the following things:

- Reminders to be ready at a certain time, or to take pills
- Having someone help me think about the choices I could make
- Help to do different tasks on a job, such as filing, folding, putting things away
- Having someone go with me to look up information
- Having another person start or take part in a conversation with myself and others, to take off some of the pressure, without taking over
- Having someone explain things in a respectful way
- Getting a ride

You might need support around something for a while and then you find that you can do it on your own. There may be other things that you will always need help with. This is a time when people need to listen to you really carefully.

15. Planning Step: Problems That Could Get in the Way and Ideas to Solve Them

There may be things that you or others in the planning group think could get in the way of your dreams coming true. It's a good idea to talk about these because it lets everyone solve problems before they really stop things from happening.

It's okay for others to bring up their worries. They just want you to be safe and happy. And maybe they haven't had chances to see all the ways you can do things. The facilitator will help them to get beyond their fears and find ways of working on your dreams.

It is also okay if you are afraid or worried about some parts of achieving your dreams. Planning means some things will be changing in your life and even though these changes are good they can still be scary. If you want to try something but are afraid of how people will act around you or what they will think, or if you are afraid you just can't do it, that is fairly normal, and something that many of us would feel. Try to talk about this with people in the group or the facilitator before, during or after a planning meeting. Things can go more slowly if you want and the facilitator can help you think of small steps that make you comfortable.

16. Planning Step: Creating An Action Plan

The facilitator will ask you if there are things you can do or want to do to help your dreams come true. Some of the Actions you can do with someone else from the planning group

Being involved in some of the Action Steps for your dreams is a great way to learn more things, meet people, and share some of your talents. It also helps to make sure that you are making choices about how the dreams are worked on.

Action Plans say what is going to be done, who is going to do it, when they will do it and if they need any help to do what they say they are going to do.

Sample Action Plan

Dream Statement: *“I want to sell some of the greeting cards I make.”*

Action	Who	When	Help Needed
Introduce Clare to Maura who makes cards and jewelry	Friend, Mia	2 weeks	Reminder 1 week
Introduce Clare to Brooke, who sells her cards & scrapbook pages	Facilitator, Jen	3 weeks	
Check gift stores for merchandise, prices	Clare, Jen, and support workers, Bev and Ava	Next 2 weeks	
Check out Gov't initiatives for new entrepreneurs	Clare and mom	3 weeks	

Dream Statement: "I want to help children who are sick."

Action	Who	When	Help Needed
Make cards and give to kids	Clare	1 week	Information on children's wards
Check out volunteering at hospitals	Clare & support worker, Mike, with help from Jen	3 weeks	Information on support for Clare to volunteer
Check out groups that fundraise for sick kids, to be on a committee & help	Clare, mom, dad	4 weeks	

17. Planning Step: Evaluation: Making Sure Things Are Happening the Way You Want

- People should only take on Actions that they want to do and know they can do, with enough time for the Action to happen.
- A date for the next meeting should be set while the group is still together.
- The write-up of the Plan should be true and clear and sent out promptly.
- There should be some communication between the facilitator and the person who is planning, and some paid and non- paid members of the planning group between meetings.
- People should help each other to carry out the Action Plan.
- At the beginning of each meeting everyone should check to see if they did what they said they were going to do on the Action Plan.

Celebrations

Be sure you and the planning group celebrate as your dreams begin to happen. It is important to make time to celebrate large and small successes.

Celebrations can be a big party or just taking a few minutes at the start of a meeting to talk about something good that has happened.

Good Luck!

Make Your Dreams Come True and Have A Great Life!



Books and Other Information About Ways to Plan

Individualized Funding Coalition of Ontario

- *“Creating a Good life in Community: A Guide on Person-Directed Planning”*
www.individualizedfunding.ca

Joyce, Susannah

- *Planning Together: A Guide for Facilitators, Self-Advocates, Their Families Friends & Paid Supports To Help People Plan For A Great Life*
- *“friends in/deed: focus planning to help people develop and sustain friendships”*
- *Meeting The Challenge: A Guide For Respectful, Effective Planning, Advocacy & Support With People Who Have Puzzling Behaviour*

Realizations Training & Resources 519-433-2387

susannahjoyce@rogers.com

www.realizationstraining.com

Logan, Vickie L.

- *“Blaze A Trail...Your Way”*

RR# 4, St. Marys, Ontario N4X 1C7 vlogan@295.ca

Lord, John; Leavitt, Barb & Dingwall, Charlotte

Facilitating an Everyday Life

Inclusion Press 416-658-5363 www.inclusion.com

Mount, Beth

- ***“Personal Futures Planning”***

Graphic Futures 25 West 81st Street, #16B. New York, NY, 10024
212-362-9492 www.capacityworks.com/mountresume.

O’Brien, John and O’Brien, Connie Lyle, eds.

- ***“A Little Book About Person-Centered Planning”***
- ***“Implementing Person-Centered Planning”***

Inclusion Press 416-658-5363 www.inclusion.com

Pearpoint, Jack, O’Brien, John & Kahn, Lynda, n

- ***The PATH and MAPS Workbook :Person Centered Ways To Build Community***

Inclusion Press 416-658-5363 www.inclusion.com

Smull, Michael, et al,

- ***“Essential Lifestyle Planning for Everyone”***

www.learningcommunity.us