

VISION

Crafting a Vision for Life

A Vision for Life

It is important - even essential - to hold before us a positive, well-articulated vision of a good life for each person. This vision can provide us with direction in times of confusion when one must choose between many choices. The vision can provide us with ideas and possibilities in times of trouble, with a way of setting priorities in times of scarce resources, and with hope. A clear vision which is communicated among and shared by the people who care for the person most is our best hope for a good life for them, now and in the future.

We want this person's life to contain the same things that all of us would include to describe a good and meaningful life for ourselves:

- connections to family, friends, and a wide range of acquaintances - people who value them for their own unique combination of character, gifts, talents, and strengths
- a sense of belonging - people who value their presence and miss the person when they are not present
- a few close and committed relationships with family members and friends, and an ever-widening circle of those committed to be with them on their life's journey
- respect of those with whom they come into contact
- a way to communicate with at least a small circle of people who understand them well and care to listen to the deeper messages within their actions and responses to situations
- a place or places to give, participate, and contribute in meaningful ways that are recognized, appreciated and welcomed
- to be educated in a local and inclusive school alongside peers without disability
- continual opportunities to grow and expectations that they will grow and learn throughout their lifetime
- spending their days in personally fulfilling ways
- meaningful employment
- a place to call home
- safety and security in one's home and wherever they go in their community and wider abroad
- good health as a result of living a healthy lifestyle
- the opportunity to make good, well-supported choices and to be involved with governing the direction of their life
- the opportunity to work on a few of life's dreams at any given time
- a satisfying spiritual life
- hope for the future

We are committed to finding ways to achieve or sustain the vision of this life for and with this person. The vision for a good life for the person will include the following (similar to above but some elements are grouped):

Interests, attributes, strengths, and skills

- Exploring avenues of interest
- Opening doors
- Lifelong learning

What gets the person's attention? What sparks curiosity? What excites the person? What skill or talent can they offer others? What is something useful they can offer others? What strengths do they hold? What are the person's natural attributes? Do they have a flair for something?

Family

- Ongoing relationships, not dependent upon parents (during teenage years and adulthood)
- Respect and belonging
- Connections throughout time
- Holding many family roles – daughter, aunt, niece and cousin

When will I see my family? When will they come to my house and when will I go to theirs? What will happen for birthdays, Christmas and other celebrations? Who will make sure that I am included?

Friends and Other Relationships

- Personal committed relationships
- Ongoing nature of developing new relationships and deepening others
- Mutual respect, shared interests
- Opportunities to be a friend, as well as having friends
- Intimate relationships

Where and how will I meet people and make friends? What kinds of things do I want to do with friends? Do I want a life partner or a boy/girlfriend? What are my interests that I would share with friends?

Lifelong Growing and Learning

- Preschool, school and college
- Courses, interest groups, formal pursuit of knowledge
- Travel, and other ways of learning through experience - learning to ride a bike, road safety, using public transport, getting a drivers license
- Opportunities to make real choices, be supported in more complex decision-making
- Participating in the other choices which govern your life
- Growing ways of effectively communicating choices
- Positive interpretations of choices that have been made
- Support circles as a way of offering and safeguarding choice
- Engaging and understanding civic duties
- Adaptive devices to make learning more possible, accessible

How will I keep learning and growing as a person? How will I remember to keep trying new things? Who will help me figure out how to afford to keep learning new things? How can I do this in a way that is exciting and not very scary?

How Person Spends Their Days

- Contributing to home, neighbourhood, community
- Holding a range of valued social roles connected to school, work, volunteering, pursuing interests, etc., and the importance of safeguarding these
- Following the rhythms and routines that are typical and valued and followed by age and gender peers in the community
- Work - part time, full time, ideal number of hours, ideal time of day/night and when during the week
- Opportunities to contribute to their community

What will I do during the week? on weekends? in the evenings? How will I be a good neighbour and help others in my community? How will I make a difference in my lifetime? What contributions do I have to make? What activities am I interested in after school hours? How will I earn money? How will I pay my rent or mortgage and food and more?

Home

- Issues of safety and security
- A place of peace, where you can be your true self
- Welcome, and place that others want to be
- Where this is – either a precise address, or a neighbourhood, or a type of dwelling
- With whom this might be shared

Where will I live and with whom? What will my home look like and feel like? What is important to have in my home? What kind of neighbourhood do I want to live in? How will I be safe in my home?

Health

- Healthy lifestyle choices - food, exercise, avoiding intoxicants, regular check ups
- Specific follow up for any conditions or health concerns

How will I stay healthy and well? Who will help remind me to take care of myself, be a role model for healthy living, and go with me to medical appointments? Who will help me make medical decisions?

Recreation, Leisure and Hobbies

- Importance of maintaining a balance in life
- As opportunity to grow and learn
- As a place to meet people and make friends
- As a place and time to participate and contribute to one's community
- Exploring art, sport, music, dance, chess club, car club... as opportunities for each person to grow and develop interests

How will I have fun and follow my interests? Who will I do things together with? How will I be able to explore and try new things? How will I discover my growing and evolving community?

Spiritual

- Church and other formal religions
- Other means of connecting spiritually, connecting with nature, practicing mindfulness
- Tradition, ritual and other private and personal ways of living a life of meaning

Where will I practice important spiritual pursuits? What place will spirituality take in my life? Who will make sure that I am a part of a spiritual community?

Cultural, Civic, Lifestyle

- Belonging to a specific cultural or ethnic group – traditions, holidays, etc.
- Political or civic affiliations
- Lifestyle preferences

How will I be a part of my cultural community? What will I do during elections? Who will help me explore the options and possibilities?

Finances

- Annual income need
- Support requirements
- Other adaptive services
- Special funding needs (e.g., own home in future, transportation, travel, communication tools)

How will I manage my budget? How will I get the extras I need to make my life run well? Who will help me plan for the future (Circle of support, Imagine More etc), or help with government agencies (DSP or NDIS)?

Voice, Rights and Responsibilities, Autonomy

- Opportunities to have a say, govern own life directions
- Shared decision making and how that might work
- Significant areas where autonomy is important

How can I make sure that my ideas and opinions are heard by the right people? How will I know what to do if I think I am being ignored? How can I stay in control of my own life, yet still get the help and guidance I need?

Dreams

- possible identification of hopes and dreams, even those that now seem remote or even impossible

What are my biggest dreams? How can I be sure that others will continue to help me work toward my dreams? How can I resist settling for whatever is offered?

Cautions, Vulnerabilities and Frailties

(not to be included in the vision statement, rather a consideration)

This is not so much a Vision life area, but rather an overall statement about the ways in which this person may be at risk of being given bad things in life. Some of the ways that people with disabilities are vulnerable is in how the rest of society perceives them when they don't know them and their deepest qualities very well. So, people with disabilities are often vulnerable to:

- being seen as invisible, unimportant or of no value
- being seen as essentially a burden on others, rather than a person of value
- being seen as unable to contribute or be productive
- being surrounded by very low or no expectations
- being treated as a child for all their lives
- being seen as sick or multiply disabled when they are robust and have only one disabling condition
- being pitied and helped when they don't need it, rendering them helpless
- being ridiculed
- being rejected and seen as not belonging, not being able to belong
- being relegated to "one of them" not one of us
- being seen as dangerous, a menace, someone to be kept away
- being seen as deserving of different treatment, and undeserving of a typical, ordinary life

Even as these vulnerabilities are painful to think about, being aware of them, naming them and safeguarding against them (making sure none of the Vision statements or future plans feed into the vulnerability, making sure there are high expectations, etc.). Therefore, include the vulnerabilities that are in the life of the person:

VISION STATEMENT

The information you have gathered in the previous sections will now help you to craft your vision statement: