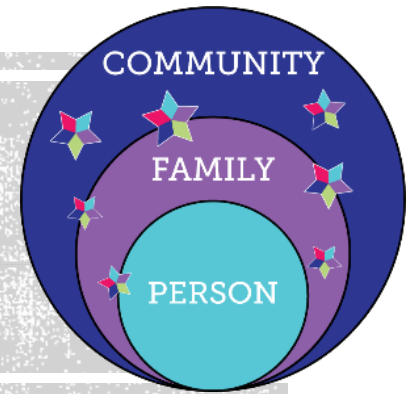




SUPPORTING COMMUNITY INCLUSION: THE ROLE OF THE SUPPORTS COORDINATOR

Intended Audience: Supports Coordinators
Presented by: ODP's Quality Management
Workgroup

EVERYDAY LIFE - COMMUNITY



Social connectedness is an important determinant of health (2020, Michalski, Diemert, Helliwell, Goel, Rosella).



Community engagement is a powerful vehicle to bring environmental and behavioral change that will improve the health of the community and its members (PennState Dept. of Agricultural Economics)



“Being involved in community life creates opportunities for new experiences and interests, the potential to develop friendships, and the ability to make a contribution to the community. An interdependent life, where people with and without disabilities are connected, enriches all of our lives” (2021, ODP EDL)

NATIONAL CORE INDICATORS IDD: NATIONAL REPORT 2023- 2024 SATISFACTION WITH COMMUNITY INCLUSION SCALE

8/28/2026



National Report 2023-24

- Wants to go out shopping more, less or the same amount as last month: **23%**
- Wants to go out for entertainment more, less, or the same amount as last month: **27%**
- Wants to go out to a restaurant or coffee shop more, less or the same amount as last month: **29%**
- Wants to go out to a religious service or spiritual practice more, less or the same amount as last month: **12%**
- Person wants to be part of more community groups: **31%**
- Satisfaction with community inclusion scale: **73%**

Ways to Improve

- A big focus in many service agencies is for individuals to participate in community activities. Going to an activity is different than interacting with and getting to know people at an event or during a shared activity.
- Simply going to a restaurant, store, or stopping at the movies is not necessarily going to achieve community engagement or the feeling of being connected to one's community.



Big tip

See the same people
in the same places
over time.

Places where there's chances
for meaningful interactions,
contribution and reciprocity!

Presence ≠ Participation

HOW CAN SUPPORT COORDINATORS HELP?



CHOICE AND CONTROL OF ACTIVITIES

Providing Individuals with
information and
opportunities to have
experiences



Having experiences
which helps Individuals
make informed choices
about future experiences

- Making an informed choice involves more than asking someone if they want to do something or a simple yes-or-no conversation.

CHOICE & CONTROL: HELPING WITH COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

“What would you like SC’s to know about helping you be involved in your community?”

Understand and know the person

- What are their favorite things? What do they care about? What do they like to do? Would they be interested in trying new things?

Know the area

- What events are coming up? What spaces are accessible? Has the SC visited the individual’s community ?

Individuals want a person-centered approach to community planning

REMOVING BARRIERS / PLANNING AHEAD



**“What are
some barriers
to being a
part of your
community?”**

- Money – ensuring the individual can afford the activity
- Staffing
- Accessibility
- More training
- Wanting staff who will engage and assist the individual with building relationships in the community

EXPLORING INTERESTS

Ask out-of-the-box questions to help explore new interests

- “I know in your ISP it says you like going to a Christian church. Did you ever want to try another type of spiritual setting?”
- “I see that you like to read, did you ever consider joining a book club in your area?”
- “I know you like to exercise, have you considered joining a running group?”
- “I saw that you go to the same restaurants often, would you like to try another type of food you have not experienced yet? Want to look up some ideas together?”

Use Social Media, listservs, newsletters, looking at bulletin boards hanging at local shops, etc..



IMPORTANCE OF PLANNING AHEAD

- Some events are in the evenings
- Ensuring the individual has budgeted for the activity
- Transportation
- Some individuals want to go to a religious service on a regular basis and may need 1:1 staff to do this
- Ensure staffing is available for each individual (not everyone enjoys or wants to participate in the same activity)
- Finding appropriate staff – “getting staff that are really applying themselves at the event and helping build relationships” – self-advocate

IMPORTANCE OF PLANNING AHEAD (2)

- Finding out if the physical space is accessible for the individual
- Finding out how big/small the event is
- Weather conditions
- Technology accommodations
- Time of event
- To ease anxiety or concerns about how long the individual wants to stay / how long the event typically lasts
- Preparing for noise or sensory levels of the event

WHEN SHOULD SC'S START PLANNING?

ANYTIME & EVERY TIME YOU WORK WITH THE INDIVIDUAL

*Every interaction is
a planning
opportunity*

Support the individual to develop outcomes and priorities for community involvement based upon their strengths, preferences, and willingness to explore new things.

- *Doesn't have to be during ISP meetings only; this could be a conversation at every monitoring or visit.*

Discuss the benefits of community services and spending time in the community.

OTHER QUESTIONS TO ASK

Is the individual spending as much time in the community as they want?



Have there been discussions with the individual to promote and increase opportunities?



Are there opportunities to build meaningful connections with other people at this community location or activity?



Does the setting allow for the individual to develop natural supports through consistent, scheduled visits?

LIFECOURSE TOOLS: HOW TO USE THEM CREATIVELY

“In my opinion, the worst thing a SC can do is simply funnel somebody into a space they don't want to be in or have no interest in because it fits the SC or provider's idea of 'community' ”

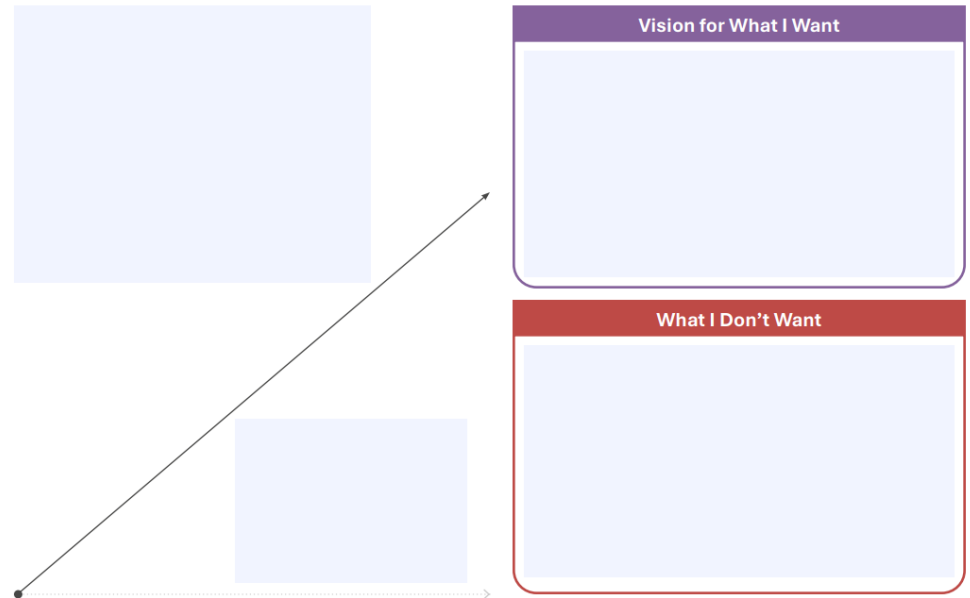
– self advocate

LIFECOURSE TRAJECTORY (ONE OF MANY TOOLS)

8/28/2026



Life Trajectory | Exploring



Charting the LifeCourse
Framework and Tools

Charting the LifeCourse Framework and Tools, iconography, and assets developed by the LifeCourse Nexus
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<https://www.lifecoursetools.com/>

EXPLORING INTERESTS / NON-INTERESTS

What interests does the individual have? What are they not interested in?

One way to start, is to have a conversation about what they do or do not like

What do they like?

~~on for What I Want~~

What do they not like?

~~on't Want~~



EXAMPLE: KM



Life Trajectory | Exploring

Ideas for being apart of KM's community:

- Does her local rec center have a softball team?
- Does she attend a local gym?
- Are there any birding clubs?
- Does she frequent the dog park to meet other locals?
- Is there a wine club where she can meet people?
- Are there art classes in her community?
- Did someone ask her if she wants to try another type of spiritual service that she hasn't tried before?
- Does her favorite band have a fan page or something similar she can connect with people?
- Is she interested in learning how to tattoo or maybe henna? Are there local groups? What about job opps?

Community involvement to avoid:

- golf clubs
- venues or spaces she can't take a break if she needs
- cooking classes (unless she want to learn and maybe her interest will change?)
- no super early classes/groups

Vision for What I Want

- She's physically active (softball, strength training)
- She likes to try new things
- She loves her dogs, and really all animals (especially birds)
- She likes nature
- She likes wine
- She's into art (ceramics & drawing)
- She likes to try new crafts
- She says she's spiritual
- She loves concerts
- She loves tattoos

What I Don't Want

- She hates golf (even dislikes mini-golf)
- She doesn't love crowds
- She doesn't love to cook
- She doesn't love being alone everyday
- She doesn't like being around flames (like glass blowing or metal work)
- She doesn't love super early mornings
- She doesn't like being outside when it's really hot (she doesn't mind the cold at all)

What KM Likes

~~What I Want~~

- She's physically active (softball, strength training)
- She likes to try new things
- She loves her dogs, and really all animals
- She likes nature
- She likes wine
- She's creative & into art
- She says she's spiritual
- She loves live music

What KM does not Like

~~I Don't Want~~

- She hates golf (doesn't even like mini-golf)
- She doesn't like crowds
- She doesn't love to cook
- She doesn't like being alone everyday
- She doesn't love super early mornings
- She doesn't like being outside when it's really hot (she doesn't mind the cold at all)



Ideas for participating in their community:

Vision for

What I Want

ng)

From learning what interests / non-interests the individual has, what are some ideas for community involvement?

Community involvement to avoid:

What I Don't Want

- She hates golf (doesn't even like mini-golf)
- She doesn't like crowds
- She doesn't love to cook
- She doesn't like being alone everyday
- She doesn't love super early mornings
- She doesn't like being outside when it's really hot (she doesn't mind the cold at all)

EXPLORING IDEAS BASED ON LIKES

What KM Likes

~~What I Want~~

- She's physically active (softball, strength training)
- She likes to try new things
- She loves her dogs, and really all animals
- She likes nature
- She likes wine
- She's creative & into art
- She says she's spiritual
- She loves live music

Ideas for participating in their community:

- Does her local rec center have a softball team?
- Are there any local animal shelters / non-profits / stores she may want to volunteer / work at?
- Are there any local nature clubs?
- Is there a wine club? Or are there local winerys that hold weekly/bi-weekly events that she could get to know other locals in her community?
- Are there any art classes/clubs?
- Has she explored other spiritual/religious services other then the ones she's tried? Does she want to explore other spiritual things?

EXPLORING WHAT TO AVOID BASED ON DISLIKES

Community
involvement to avoid:

Community involvement to avoid:

-golf clubs

-venues or spaces she can't take a
break if she needs

-cooking classes (unless she want to
learn and maybe her interest will
change?)

-no super early classes/groups

What do they not like?

~~What I Don't Want~~

-She hates golf (doesn't even like mini-golf)

-She doesn't like crowds

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-She doesn't love super early mornings

-She doesn't like being outside when it's really hot (she doesn't
mind the cold at all)

EXAMPLE HOW TO USE LC TOOLS FOR EMPLOYMENT

Employment or volunteer ideas for KM:

- Working at a gym?
- volunteer at an animal shelter?
- Any jobs/volunteer opportunities at any local county parks?
- working at a local art store?
- Any job openings at a local tattoo shop for front of the shop?
- any local record / music stores hiring?

Community / jobs to avoid:

- nothing golf related
- maybe avoid jobs such as at a festival
- would she be okay working at a restaurant?
- no early morning shifts?
- avoid jobs that are 100% outside?

Vision for What I Want

- She's physically active (softball, strength training)
- She likes to try new things
- She loves her dogs, and really all animals (especially birds)
- She likes nature
- She likes wine
- She's into art (ceramics & drawing)
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VOLUNTEER



Charting the LifeCourse Exploring Trajectory, Letter Sized

RESOURCES

Resources:

SAU1: [Self Advocates United as 1](#)

LifeCourse Tools: [Person-Centered - LifeCourse Nexus](#)

ODP customer service mailbox: RA-customerservice@pa.gov

ISP Manual: [Individual Support Plan | Department of Human Services | Commonwealth of Pennsylvania](#)

Goldbook: [ODP Information – MyODP](#)

