


WORKING TOWARD THE GOOD LIFE:

Let's Plan for the Future

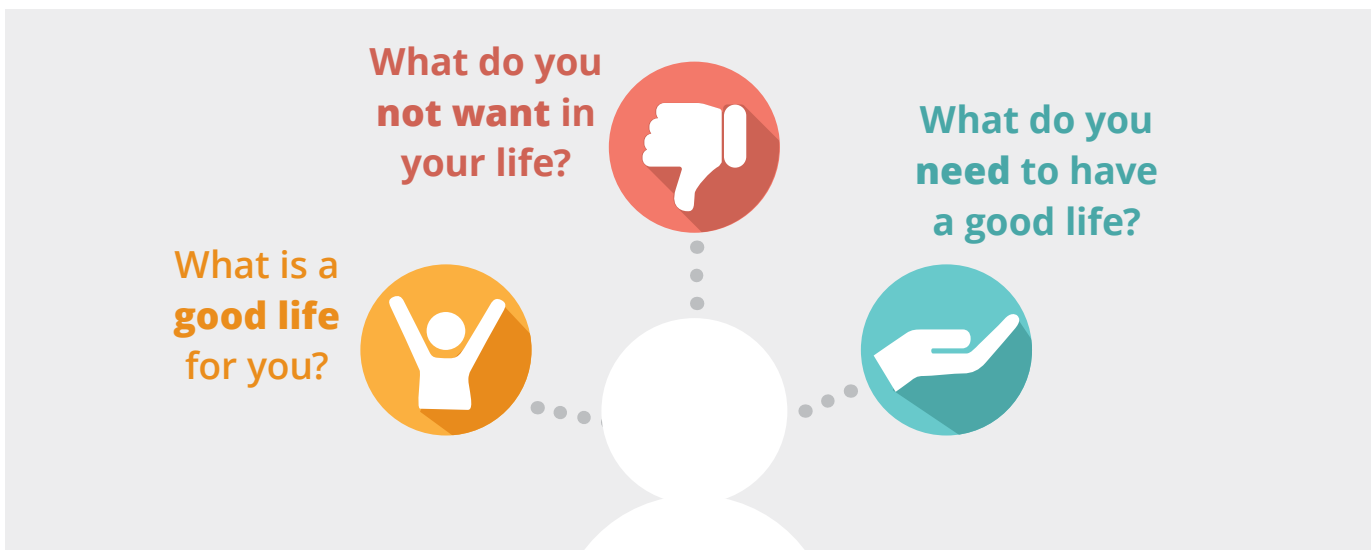
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Introduction

The LifeCourse Framework guides thinking and the way we approach supporting individuals with disabilities and their families. Even though it was originally created for people with disabilities, this universally-designed framework may be used by any person or family making a life plan, regardless of life circumstances. All people have the right to live, love, learn, work, play and pursue their life aspirations in their community.

The LifeCourse Framework can help us ask and answer questions like:



The framework can help you figure out problems and make choices.

In Indiana, the Division of Disability and Rehabilitative (DDRS) uses the LifeCourse Framework as their guide to transform and deliver holistic services and supports that assist individuals and families realize their best life.

This workbook is designed to introduce you to a different way of thinking and talking about the future, and how to get there.

Who are you thinking about for this workbook?

This workbook helps me plan with and/or for:

LifeCourse Overview

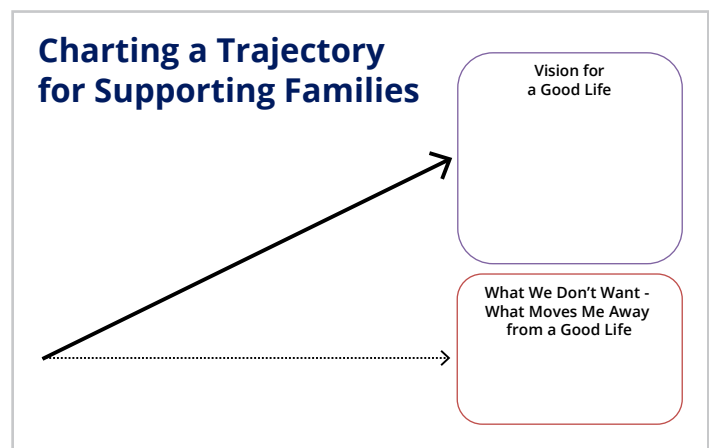
LifeCourse encourages us to have **high expectations** for what life can be like and then explore what needs to happen to get there. In this workbook, we are using it to consider planning from when a person is in high school, to when they transition to adulthood. However, the LifeCourse framework can be used to plan for a person's future at any age. Parents may use this framework for small babies, and adult children may use it with their aging parents who will need extra supports through time. You can also use it yourself as you consider the next phase in your life, or a decision that needs to be made.

There are a number of tools that we can use to plan and figure out what we need. Let's learn more about some of the tools that can help us plan for the future.

Developing a Vision

Charting a Trajectory for the Good Life

To the right, you will see that the trajectory has two arrows. One arrow upward leads to a box, where we can identify what our vision for a good life looks like. There is another dotted arrow below that aims toward things we don't want. Events or decisions may get us closer to the vision or move us away from the vision.



Later in this workbook, we will spend time planning for the transition to adulthood using this tool.

Changing the Conversation

Thinking Differently About Services and Supports

Everyone uses a variety of supports and resources in their daily life and to achieve living out their best life. People with disabilities are no different. **The Integrated Supports Star** below helps us visualize all the different types of supports and solutions available to a person. To the right of the star, the circles show that a person is part of a family. The family and person are part of the community. Traditionally, disability services wrapped around the person without considering or including the family and community. By providing integrated supports that include the family and community, people gain greater independence, build meaningful relationships, and are better supported to achieve greater outcomes while living their good life.

We will learn more about how to use the star later in this workbook.



Personal and Family Level Quality of Life Domains

The following domains, or areas of life, are ways to think about all the parts of a person's life. Life is messy. All these domains or areas of life are interrelated and connected. That means that things like employment can impact other areas of your daily life – for instance, your safety and security or social and spirituality domains. While we must all prioritize some domains over others at different times in our lives, we should consider each domain to achieve a fulfilled life.



Daily Life and Employment (school/education, employment, volunteering, routines, life skills)



Community Living (housing, living options, home adaptations and modifications, community access, transportation)



Social and Spirituality (friends, relationships, leisure activities, personal networks, faith community)



Healthy Living (medical, behavioral, nutrition, wellness, affordable care)



Safety and Security (emergencies, well-being, legal rights and issues, guardianship options and alternatives)



Advocacy and Engagement (valued roles, making choices, setting goals, responsibility, leadership, peer support)

How Does Employment Fit into A Good Life?

We'd now like to spend some time talking about and thinking about employment as a part of each person's good life. In the last section, we talked about thinking differently about support and reaching high expectations. We apply this thinking to employment too. Everyone, regardless of support needs, can work. We expect that individuals who learn differently, need different supports, and communicate differently, can be employed and help businesses.

For most adults, employment is an important way to stay out of poverty.

But beyond having enough money, work has other benefits. For example:

- Working helps people have better mental health
- Working is a way that you can meet more people and have friends
- Work can help you feel accomplished

Take a moment and consider what employment has meant to you, and those you care about.

Employment First

Employment First, means that **employment** in the general workforce should be the first and preferred option for individuals with disabilities who receive supports and services. Simply put, Employment First means real jobs, real wages.

Employment First is a national movement, and many states (including Indiana) have policies and laws that support the state aligning programs with policy. Here, we talk about what Employment First can mean for you or someone you care about. After we talk about employment, we'll consider how employment might fit into your vision for the future.

We can expect that work looks different for everyone. We also expect that **everyone** can work. While work looks different for everyone, we expect that all individuals will do real work for real pay. Specifically, this means that you:

- Are paid at or above minimum wage, like anyone else in a similar position
- Get the same benefits as someone in that position
- Work with people who don't have disabilities
- Get opportunities for advancement similar to other employees without disabilities in similar positions

When a person gets a job that meets all of these criteria, it's called **competitive integrated employment**. We expect that this is the first and preferred option for how adults spend their day, including individuals with disabilities.

Everyone, including people with disabilities, has strengths and skills that can help a person get and stay employed. Everyone also has different conditions under which they will work best and needs different kinds of supports for work. Work looks different for everyone. It's important to remember that regardless of needs, disability, or strengths, **everyone** can work. We just have to figure out what work looks like.

Working Toward the Good Life

Employment looks different for everyone. Most people need help to do their job, and many people have jobs that have been customized to fit their needs and strengths. There are too many ways to mention, but here are a few ways that we all customize our jobs to be a part of a good life:

- Get help and make friends with coworkers
- Do things we are good at, and swap tasks when we aren't so good at them
- Find jobs with schedules that work for us and our family
- Use technology, like computers and phones, to help us do our job

There are lots of organizations that help people go to work. For example, your teacher may help you get connected with Vocational Rehabilitation or Workforce Development. You will also learn about what work can look like through classes at your school, or work experiences in your community. Professionals can help get you connected to training and resources to find work that is a part of your good life. These services are based on what you need, and are really different for everyone. They help support everyone with a disability to get real jobs at real wages.

[Find more information on resources on the back cover.](#)

Take a moment to think about how work might be part of your good life.

In the next section, we will have an activity where we figure out how work and the good life go together.

What is a Good Life for You?

Each of us has things we want and don't want in our life. LifeCourse helps us have **high expectations** for what life can be like and helps us figure out how to get there.

Here is a **trajectory** for Angel, a young adult who recently finished school. You will see that people, being connected, active, and healthy are important to Angel. When she and her family think about how employment fits into a good life, you see similar themes. There are lots of people and connections that are important. She also identifies things she doesn't want, or things that stop her from reaching her good life. Angel benefits from visual supports to explain concepts, so she and her family use them here.

LIFE TRAJECTORY | EXPLORING EMPLOYMENT

What has helped?

List things that have happened in the past that have helped you get closer to your good life and job/career visions.

Family
Education
Community

My Vision for a Good Life and Job/Career

My vision for a job or career

Money!

Coworkers

Social Network

Active and on the move

My vision for a good life

Strong and healthy body and relationships

Natural supports, including people and technology

Consistent schedule and tasks

What has gotten in the way?

List things that happened in the past that stopped you or got in the way of your good life or job/career visions.

Staying at home all day
Not feeling good

Dislikes

What I don't want for my job or career

Getting dirty

Being by myself

What I don't want in my life

Don't know what to do or what to expect

Developed by the Charting the LifeCourse Nexus - LifeCourseTools.com
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Example developed by Public Consulting Group 2020

When people share what they want in their good life, we often want similar things for ourselves and our families. Most people share that at the end of the day, they

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want to enjoy time with people who are important to them and have enough money to do things they enjoy. Of course, who and how we spend our time varies by person. Each person's good life is unique to them.

When we think about the good life for a family member with a disability, we should have high expectations. While each person's good life looks different than another person, we should expect a high quality of life for everyone. It may be that we have the same expectations, but how a person is supported in getting there looks different.

What are the things you want for your good life?

What is your vision for the good life when it comes to employment?

What do you not want in your life?

Sometimes it's hard to think about what exactly a good life looks like in the future, but it can be much easier to say what we don't want in life.

What are the things you do not want in your life? This can be related to your life or work.

Your Turn: Create a Trajectory

Now that we have thought about what we want and don't want in our life, let's map it out on a trajectory. You can write words, draw pictures, or cut and paste things that are a part of your good life, or things you don't want in life. Talk with people who are important to you about the trajectory you develop. Your teachers, Pre-ETS instructors, and family may have additional ideas.



What has helped?

List things that have happened in the past that have helped you get closer to your good life and job/career visions.

My Vision for a Good Life and Job/Career

My vision for a job or career

My vision for a good life

What has gotten in the way?

List things that happened in the past that stopped you or got in the way of your good life or job/career visions.

Dislikes

What I don't want for my job or career

What I don't want in my life



Figuring Things Out: Integrated Supports Star

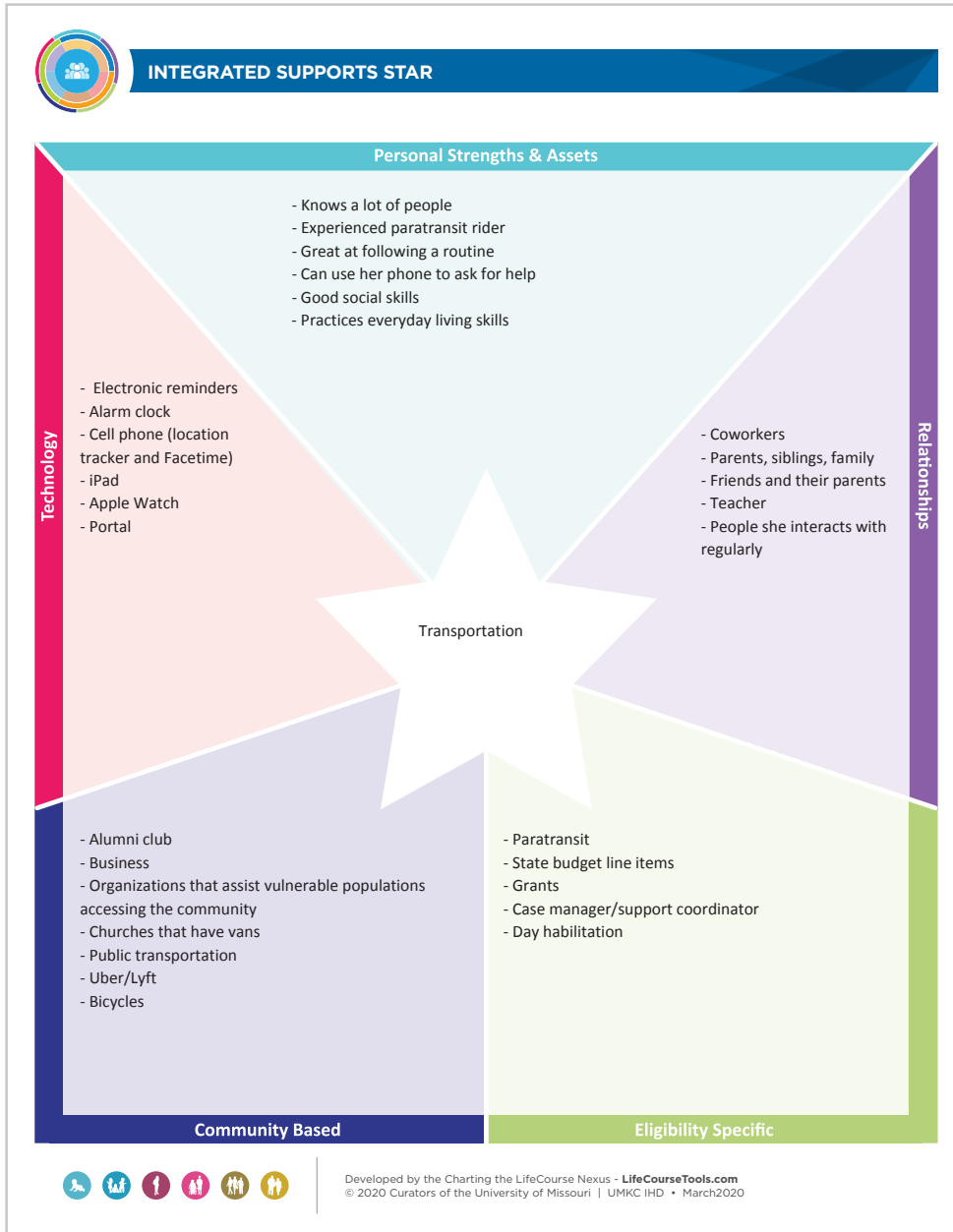
We all need help sometimes. Sometimes we need help figuring out how to do our job, cook dinner, or figure out how we are going to get to our friend's house. We all get help from lots of different places and people. Sometimes we use technology, people who we trust, community supports, or supports that are available specifically for people with disabilities. We also can use our own strengths and skills to help ourselves!

In the LifeCourse framework, we can work through a problem, and figure out how to get help using the **Integrated Supports Star**. The integrated supports star shows us that we can get help from a combination of places. Instead of thinking first about eligibility specific services, we think widely about the resources available to us.

To use this tool, put the challenge in the middle of the star. Then, list resources and ideas under each of the colored sections, that relate to each section. When you complete the tool, you will have a visual representation of all the resources available to you. You can use this to figure out how to overcome the challenge.

Example: Figuring Out Transportation

Here is an example in action. Earlier in the workbook, we learned about Angel, who recently finished school and is now in the adult world. While Angel wanted to work, she and her family were concerned about figuring out transportation. Angel's parents worked, and they could not always bring her to work. This is a challenge that many people face. Angel's family used the Integrated Supports Star to think about how to overcome the challenge.



Take a look at the resources they identified.

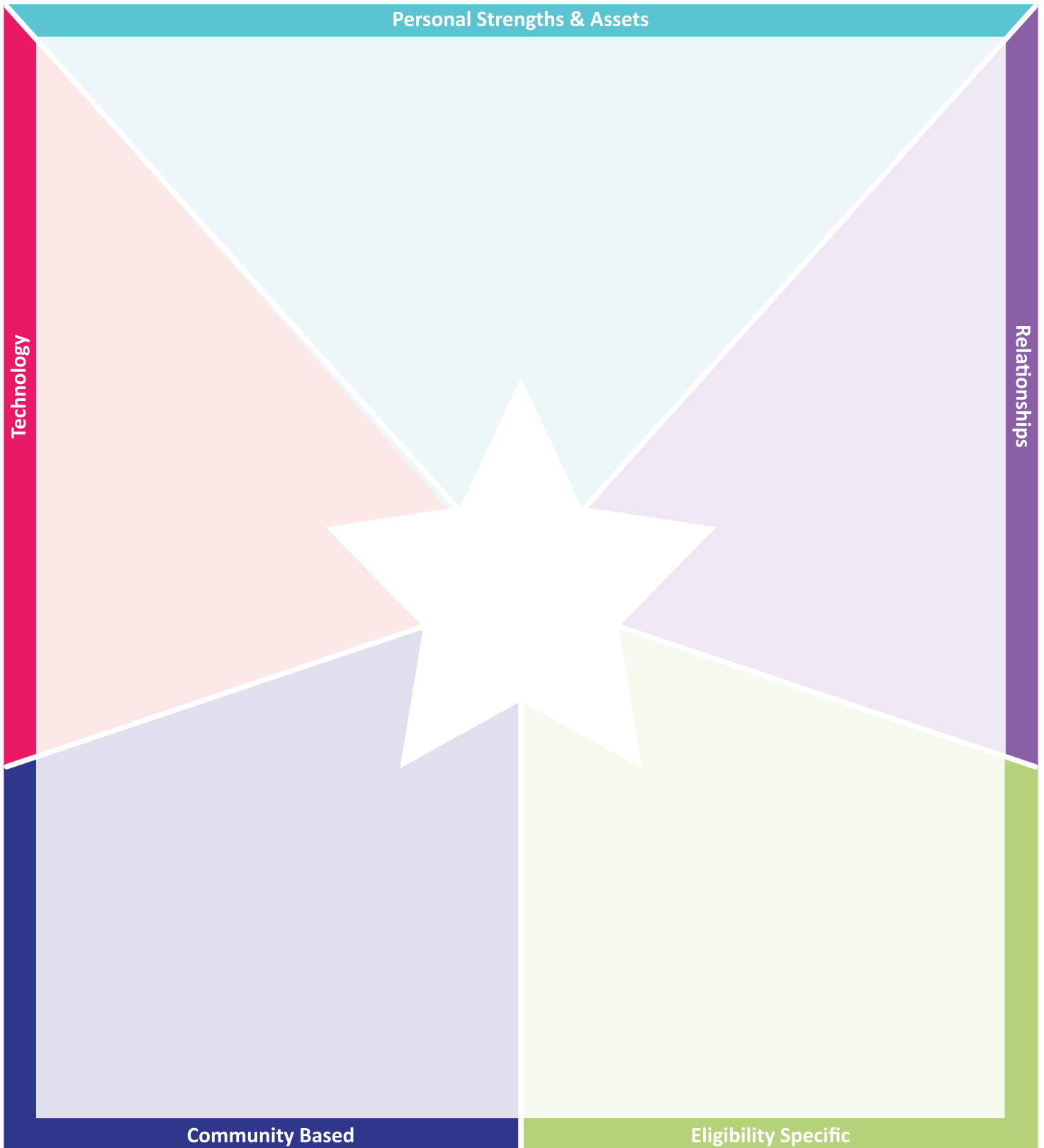
You may find that you have some of the same resources available to you, and some are unique to Angel.

Your Turn: Figure Out a Challenge

The **Integrated Supports Star** can be used to work through lots of different situations or challenges. Think of a challenge related to reaching your good life. When completing the tool, you will identify potential solutions to this challenge. You can use the example on the previous page if you need some help. Put the challenge in the middle of the star. Then, list out resources or ideas you have under each of the different sections.

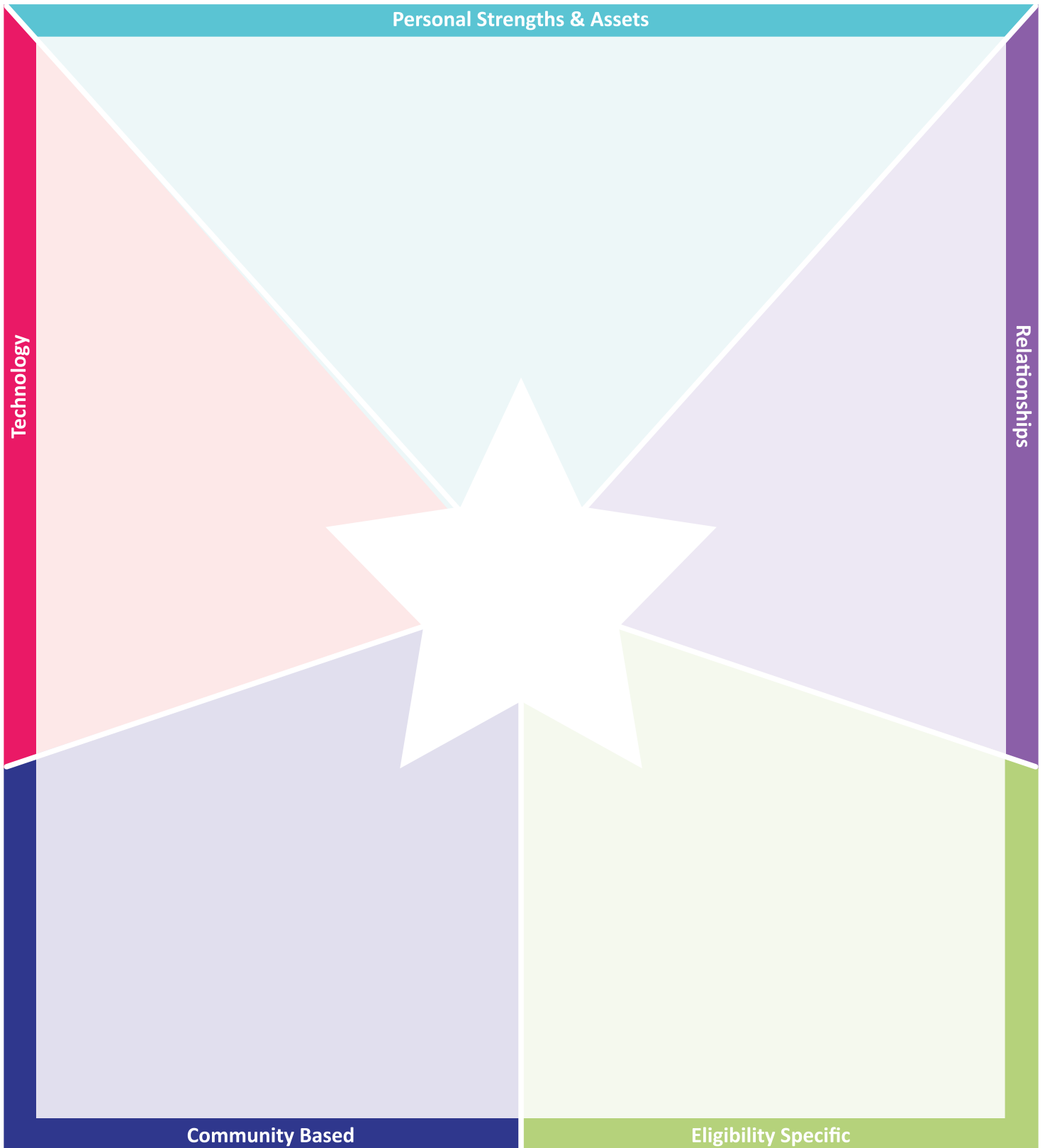


INTEGRATED SUPPORTS STAR





INTEGRATED SUPPORTS STAR





Past Life Experiences

List past life experiences and events that have prepared or supported my family member to move towards a vision for a good life

Moving Forward

List current or future life experiences or goals that will continue to support my family member to move towards a vision for a good life

My Vision for My Family Member's Good Life

List past life experiences that pushed my family member's trajectory toward things they did not want or I did not want for them

List barriers or things to avoid that might get in the way of my family member taking steps to reach their goals

What I Don't Want







LIFE DOMAIN VISION TOOL | PERSON CENTERED

Name of Person Completing: _____

Date: _____

On Behalf of: _____

LIFE DOMAIN	DESCRIPTION	MY VISION FOR MY FUTURE	PRIORITY
	Daily Life & Employment: What do I think I will do or want to do during the day in my adult life? What kind of job or career would I like?		
	Community Living: Where would I like to live in my adult life? Will I live alone or with someone else?		
	Social & Spirituality: How will I connect with spiritual and leisure activities, and have friendships and relationships in my adult life?		
	Healthy Living: How will I live a healthy lifestyle and manage health care supports in my adult life?		
	Safety & Security: How will I stay safe from financial, emotional, physical or sexual harm in my adult life?		
	Advocacy & Engagement: What kind of valued roles and responsibilities do I or will I have, and how can I have control of how my own life is lived?		
	Supports for Family: How do I want my family to still be involved and engaged in my adult life?		
	Supports & Services: What support will I need to live as independently as possible in my adult life, and where will my supports come from?		













LIFE DOMAIN VISION TOOL | FAMILY PERSPECTIVE

Name of Person Completing: _____

Date: _____

On Behalf of: _____

LIFE DOMAIN	DESCRIPTION	MY VISION FOR MY FAMILY MEMBER'S FUTURE	PRIORITY
	Daily Life & Employment: What do I think my family member will do during the day in their adult life? What kind of job or career might they want?		
	Community Living: Where and with whom do I think my family member will live in their adult life?		
	Social & Spirituality: How will they connect with spiritual and leisure activities, and have friendship, and relationships in their adult life?		
	Healthy Living: How will they live a healthy lifestyle and manage health care supports in their adult life?		
	Safety & Security: How will my family member be safe from financial, emotional, physical or sexual harm in their adult life?		
	Advocacy & Engagement: How do I think they will have valued roles, responsibilities, and control of how their own life is lived as an adult?		
	Supports for Family: What supports does our family unit need now or will need in the future?		
	Supports & Services: What supports and services might my family member need in the future to lead the kind of life they want as independently as possible?		



Conclusion and Extra Help

There are lots of ways we can use the LifeCourse Framework to help us create a vision for the good life and figure out how to make it happen. This way of thinking can be used to make big decisions and little decisions, too.

This workbook is an introduction to the LifeCourse. For more information about LifeCourse, visit www.lifecoursetools.com or call the University of Missouri-Kansas City Institute for Human Development at (800) 779-8652.

There are different places and people in Indiana that can help you reach your good life. The following places can help get you connected to training and resources.

Division of Disability and Rehabilitative Services (DDRS):

800-545-7763 | www.in.gov/fssa/2328.htm

Vocational Rehabilitation or Pre-ETS:

877-241-8144 | www.in.gov/fssa/ddrs/2636.htm

WorkOne:

1-800-457-8283 | www.in.gov/dwd/WorkOne/locations.html

Arc of Indiana: 317-977-2375 or 800-382-9100 | arcind.org/

IN*SOURCE (Indiana Resource Center for Families with Special Needs):

(574) 234-7101 or (800) 332-4433 | insource.org/

If you need help meeting essential needs, dial 211.