

Listen, Learn, Plan

**A Guide for
Developing Preliminary
Essential Lifestyle Plans**

**Conversations with
Relatives and Friends**

**Developed by
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A Note

This guide was developed for use by facilitators for their work in developing preliminary plans. Those who wish to reproduce it for other purposes should seek permission from Michael Smull or Allen, Shea & Associates.

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Originally developed by Michael Smull and Bill Allen

References:

Developing First Plans

by Michael Smull and Bill Allen

Families Planning Together

by Michael Smull and Bill Allen

Listen to Me!

by USARC/PACE and Allen, Shea & Associates in collaboration with Michael Smull, Steve Sweet, Claudia Bolton and Pam Lopez Greene

Your Personal Passport

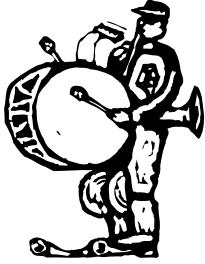
by Allen, Shea & Associates

Getting to Know You

by Claudia Bolton and Bill Allen

Reviewing Essential Lifestyle plans: Criteria for Best Plans

by Michael W. Smull, Helen Sanderson, & Susan Burke Harrison



Talking to Relatives and Friends

Introduction

This format is used to develop a conversation with relatives and friends of the focus person who know and care about him or her, but do not know about daily routines and rituals in great detail.

Listening to others

Each person you talk to will have important contributions to make and may become important participants in the individual's plan. As you talk with people you need to help them articulate their concerns as specifically as possible. The more general the concern the more difficult it is to address. For example, if someone tells you that they think that the individual is vulnerable and they are worried about safety, try to find out as much as you can about what this means.

Remember, this is a conversation and not an interview

While you should think about what you want to learn you must be prepared to learn things that you did not anticipate. If you just have an interview (by asking a set of prepared questions) you will learn only what you expected to learn. If you have a conversation (and listen carefully) you will learn things that are important and that no-one suggested in advance. In each conversation you want to avoid:

Questions that are close ended. Questions whose answer is yes or no (e.g. Does the individual seem easy to get along with?) and questions whose answer is one or the other (e.g., Do you see the individual living in a house or an apartment?).

Questions that have a built in answer (e.g. Would the individual benefit from having more opportunities to make friends?). Keep in mind that some of the built-in answers are a bit more subtle, they come with a head nod, a change of inflection, etc.

Questions where people who are eager to please simply look to you for the answer.

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Talking to People Who Know and Care



Name of Person with
Whom You are Planning:

Name of Family or Friend:

What is your relationship to the person?

How long have you known him or her?

How much time do you typically spend with him or her?

What do you like the most about him or her?

What do you admire the most about him or her?

When was the last time you had fun together, what did you do?

Other Notes:



What are some great things about this individual?

What are some great things about the individual? What do people like about him or her? What do other people like or admire about the individual? What are some things he or she is good at? proud of? What are some nice things that people say about this individual?

These are important things to think about when you are figuring out the kinds of services and supports someone might need.

Great Things About the Individual

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Unlimited Power Questions

If you were given unlimited power, authority and money and you were asked to help him or her have a great day and/or a great week-

What would you do?

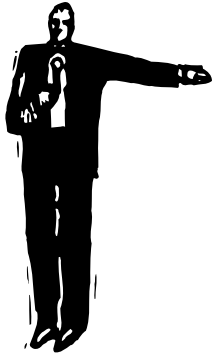
What would the day/week be like?

If you had the same power, authority and money but your evil twin took over and was determined to help him or her have a really awful day/ week -

What would you do?

What would the day /week be like?

Imagine that you are supporting him or her and you have an emergency that means you suddenly have to leave. The person who will “fill in” has arrived and you have two minutes to give advice, suggestions, or tips about supporting him or her, what would you say?



Listen to Me Communicate

This part of the workbook is designed to support people who do not use words to talk, or who have difficulty in communicating with words. This section is also useful for people who do use words to talk but are difficult to understand and as a way of recording how we communicate with people who have difficulty in understanding what we say.

The heading **what is happening** describes the circumstances that seem to affect what the person does. For example, it could be the place, the people around, or the activity that affect someone's behavior. The heading **(person's name) does** describes what the person does in terms that are clear to a reader who has not seen it and would still recognize it. For people where it is something hard to describe (e.g., a facial expression), a picture or even a video recording may be preferred. The heading **We think it means** describes the meaning that people think is present. It is not uncommon for there to be more than one meaning for a single behavior. Where this is the case, all of the meanings should be listed. The heading **And we should** describes what those who provide support are to do in response to what the person is saying with their behavior. The responses under this heading give a careful reviewer a great deal of insight into how the person's communication is perceived and supported.

The following page has a sample to help you get started.

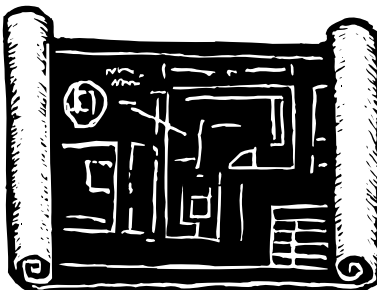
What is happening	Julia _____ does	We think it means	And we should
Julia is quiet and uncommunicative	Sits with her hands covering her face	Something has happened at the program to upset her	Sit down with her and ask her what's wrong. Encourage her to voice her feelings. Give her time to talk.
Julia is quiet and uncommunicative	Lies down or goes to be alone	She does not feel well (is ill or has a headache)	Ask her what's wrong. She may need encouragement to talk. If she is not well, give her the option to go home for Tylenol and come back or stay home.



It's easiest to start with **what the person does**, then move on to **what we think it means** and then outward to **what is happening** and we should.

What is happening	_____ does	We think it means	And we should

What is happening	_____ does	We think it means	And we should



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