



# MY LIFE, MY CHOICE, MY COMMUNITY

Thriving in Your  
Neighbourhood

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WEBCAST+  
**WORKBOOK**

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the  
**fundamentals**  
of **future planning**

A 6-PART P4P **WEBCAST+** SERIES



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## PART ONE: **INTRODUCTION**

All individuals have gifts and positive contributions they can make to their communities. At P4P, community means being involved in everyday places, doing everyday things with everyday people. Adopting this type of mindset opens up all kinds of opportunities for individuals to actively participate in and contribute to their community.

If we've learned anything during the pandemic, it's that our life and our joy begins in our community and our relationships. Not having the opportunity to connect with others and to be involved in the things that interest and matter most to us, has created a massive void in our collective lives. Many people living with a disability have lived this reality for decades.

### **A HISTORY OF EXCLUSION**

Historically, we've systematically excluded people with a disability from their communities and have limited their opportunities in all aspects of life.

It was not that long ago that institutions for people with a disability were closed in Ontario (but there are still many institutions open in other provinces). When they first opened, societal attitudes towards people with an intellectual disability were much different. As people were removed their families and neighbourhoods and housed in massive institutions, we as a society believed that people with a disability were dangerous, and disordered, were a burden to society and their families and were incorrigible.

### **SHIFTING ATTITUDES**



As attitudes began to shift in the mid 1900's and beyond, we came to believe that people with a disability certainly didn't belong in institutions, but they couldn't fully participate in our communities either. As people left the institutions, we set up an array of special services - day programs, sheltered workshops, residential facilities and special schools that simulated life.

While certainly better than institutional life, those living in a world of special programs and services also experienced very limited lives, cut off from the many mainstream opportunities those living without a disability enjoy.

We now know that all people, regardless of ability, can participate in and contribute to their community. Children with a disability can thrive in regular classrooms and can participate in regular community activities. Adults with a disability are proving themselves as valued employees working in companies, are pursuing their dreams and passions while fulfilling valued roles and are living in their own homes and apartments.

## A MOVEMENT TOWARDS INCLUSION

Many people still utilize segregated services for a variety of reasons. Change can be slow but opportunities for all people to live full lives as contributing citizens are growing.

A movement is underway to recognize the rights of people with a disability to live full lives as individuals in community:

- Advocacy groups, such as [People First](#) and [Inclusion Canada](#), are leading nationally.
- Provincial organizations like [Community Living Ontario](#), [Family Alliance Ontario](#), [Partners for Planning](#) and the [Ontario Independent Facilitation Network](#) are leading in Ontario.
- Many progressive service agencies have closed their segregated programs in order to provide individualized, community focused supports. [From Presence to Citizenship](#) is a movement organized by a group of progressive agencies that provide learning opportunities focused on community inclusion and individualized supports.
- Changes in government policy provide funds directly to people with a disability so that they can purchase supports that they need to be successful in their communities as individuals.

As more and more people commit to supporting people with a disability to participate and contribute to their communities and to live full everyday lives, our communities become stronger and more diverse and we all benefit in the end.



## STORIES OF CONTRIBUTION AND PARTICIPATION

Check out a few of the personal profiles available on the Planning Network that demonstrate the many ways that people with a disability are participating in and contributing to their communities:

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### ***Crafting a Good Life: Andrew Werner***

Meet Andrew Werner: businessman, artist, swimmer and environmental organizer. (Featured in the webcast)



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### ***Crafting a Good Life: Tiffany Dawe***

Learn how Tiffany Dawe and her mother, Linda, crafted a life full of friendship, opportunity and community.



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### ***College Guy***

College Guy tells the story of Andrew and his journey to starting a post-secondary education and living in residence.



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### ***Julian Escallon: Man of Many Passions***

Julian Escallon, a remarkable man, shares his worldview, accomplishments and goals. (Featured in the webcast)



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### ***Lynn's Homemade Plan***

Learn how Lynn and her parents realized her dream to live in her own home.

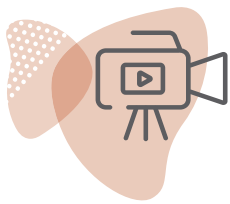


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### ***Tony Downer: Taking Care of Business***

Entrepreneur Tony Downer talks about starting his own business and succeeding at work.





## PART TWO: **WATCH THE WEBCAST**

Tuesday, November 9, 2021 - 7:00 PM

The My Life, My Choice, My Community Webcast will start at 7PM and will run for approximately one hour. The webcast will be available to watch again for one month after the original air date.

If you would like to test your computer setup check out the [TEST LINK](#). If the test video plays smoothly and the sound is good, you should be fine.

On Tuesday, November 9, [LAUNCH WEBCAST PLAYER](#) before 7:00PM

### **OUR PRESENTERS**



**Janet Klees**, Executive Director, Durham Association for Family Resources and Support

Janet is a long-time consultant, writer, teacher and supporter of family-directed supports for family members in real community one person at a time. Her work focuses on individually-designed arrangements. She is especially concerned that families are well supported to think through practical, principled ways to ensure that their family members live meaningful, involved and secure lives within their communities. Janet is an author and two of her books relevant to tonight's topic are "[We Come Bearing Gifts](#)" and "[Our Presence has Roots](#)".

Janet leads a workshop entitled Building a Context for Relationships that addresses many of the issues covered in our webcast. Check the [Durham Association for Family Resources and Support](#) website for future workshop dates.



**Anna Bruno**, Webcast Host

Anna has worked with families and their children living with varying abilities for over 10 years in a variety of capacities. Anna worked as a Social Worker at Grandview Children Centre for 8 years. She is committed to ongoing learning and a reflective, collaborative approach to her work. Anna belongs to the circles of support of a few individuals and while offering her own time has also gained much including a good knowledge base of how circles function and how to support people towards achieving a good life rooted in their community.

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**Julian Escallon**, Filmmaker and Disability Advocate

Julian Escallon is a young man of many talents. Born in Colombia, he moved to Canada with the hope of establishing an independent life. Julian is a public speaker, filmmaker, musician, content creator, employee and artist. He is a disability advocate and a strong believer that everyone has a right to work and be independent.

You can learn more about Julian through his company, [Tulipan Productions](#), access a Covid film course he participated in, view his [Covid 19 Storytelling Film](#), and follow him on [Instagram](#).

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**Carolyn Fast**, Consultant, [C Fast Consulting](#)

Carolyn Fast has over fifteen years of experience in facilitation, community development and project management. She creatively looks for ways to nurture relationships and build community connections that serve as the foundation from which a collective vision can grow. A proficient leader, she specializes in helping individuals, families and organizations develop and implement strategies that strengthen people, enhance organizations and revitalize neighbourhoods.

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**Genia Stephen**, Founder of Good Things in Life

Genia is a registered midwife, speaker, podcast host and the founder of [Good Things in Life](#), an online community offering resources, courses and networking opportunities for a community of parents with a shared vision of the good things in life for their children with a disability. She is studying for an MSc in Evidence-Based Health Care.

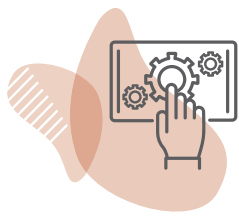
Genia is developing a new video series, [Ending IEP Agony](#) to support parents in developing confidence with the structure of an IEP and understand how to use IEP's to promote inclusion and gain clarity about supports that will lead to safety and success in school.

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## WHAT YOU WILL LEARN

- How exploring your loved one's interests and connecting with your community can lead to a life full of opportunity, abundance and purpose.
- A framework for discovering and creating valued roles and community opportunities with and for your family member.
- Expand your perceptions of what is possible for your family member.
- Access a variety of video profiles featuring people living everyday lives.
- Connect with other families in our Virtual Discussion Groups.



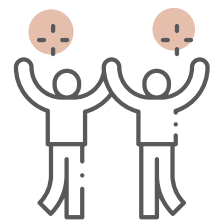


## PART THREE: **TAKE ACTION**

Much of the content for this booklet has been adapted from Janet Klee's workshop, Building a Context for Relationships. The workshop is designed for families and provides a framework and practical strategies to support their family members to live meaningful, involved and secure lives within their communities. Check the [Durham Association for Family Resources and Support](#) website for future workshop dates.

### **FOCUSING ON VALUED ROLES RATHER THAN ACTIVITIES**

As parents and supporters, there is a strong tendency to support someone with a disability to create an adult life by focusing on available activities. The default position for many of us supporting an adult with a disability is to find those things people can do that will occupy their week. We look at a person's schedule like we would a school timetable - swimming Tuesday and Thursday morning, literacy class Wednesday afternoon, library visit Friday morning and so on.

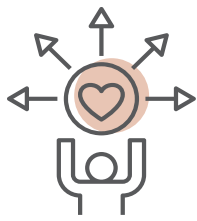


Focusing on activities is often ineffective in supporting someone to have a good life. Every week looks the same and there is often little vision or progress and when one activity ends or becomes monotonous, you're left struggling to find another random activity to fill the time slot.

In contrast, focusing on developing valued roles is an approach that is much more fruitful and can result in supporting someone to live a full life and supports them to grow and learn, develop supportive relationships and contribute to their community.

It's not unlike how many of us approach our own lives. Think back to when you graduated from school. Did you immediately begin scheduling random activities? No. You most likely started with an area of interest or passion.

For example, someone passionate in writing will look at how writers spend their lives and who they are. They may look to advertising copy writers, authors, digital media creators, teachers, speech writers, technical writers, etc. With this information, they'll make critical life decisions based on the roles that appeal to them most.



As they take on a particular role, they'll connect with others, develop their skills and careers, expand their opportunities and will contribute to a community of people who share their focus. The roles they're involved with will in many ways determine who they are and the opportunities that are available to them.

But roles aren't limited to our work lives. We have valued roles in our homes and families, in recreational activities and throughout our neighbourhoods and communities.

If we can support someone with a disability to develop three or four valued roles in which they can contribute in various aspects of their lives, they will have more than enough to fill their days and weeks and no two weeks will ever look the same. The difference is their lives will be based on their gifts and will support them to learn and grow, to develop new relationships with others who share their interests and passions. In essence, we can support people with a disability to create their own life and to become valued contributing adults.

## → **ACTION STEP ONE:** **Check out the My Life, My Choice, My Community Framework and Worksheets**

### ***A FRAMEWORK FOR DISCOVERING AND DEVELOPING VALUED ROLES***

Working through these questions can help a person discover individual roles based on their interests and passions. This framework can be applied to any area of life.



#### **1. What are the interests, skills and passions of the person?**

It may take time to determine what these are. In fact, you may want to plan for a discovery period where you and the person you're supporting try new ideas, visit different places, and find those things that excite and light up the person.

In the webcast, Janet discusses someone's passion for dogs, another for music, and another, a fascination with colour and shapes (art).

## **2. Where are the places that others who share this interest gather?**

What are the places in your family, neighbourhood or community where you will find others with the same interests?

## **3. How would you describe the roles of other people in this place?**

The other people in the places with the shared interest are fulfilling what you might call their role in this context. You're not describing what they do but what their role is.

Hint: A role will finish this sentence

- He is a ...
- She could be a ...
- Other people are the ...

## **4. Now move to your family member and ask the same question. Who could they be in this place or could they become in this place?**

These answers will help identify roles for your family member and not activities (ie., what are they doing with their time). Look at the types of roles that may be a good fit for your family member in this place. Hint: A role will never end in "...ing".

## **5. What contributions can your family member make in this role and at this place.**

The focus here is on identifying how your family member will contribute to the place in their role. People who contribute and share their gifts become valued participants.

## **6. Who are the other people (non-disabled, non-paid or intentional support) present with whom this person might connect, chat, become friends and more?**

One of the most important benefits of focusing on valued roles based on passions and interests is that it creates an opportunity to develop relationships with other people who share their interests. For all of us, meeting people who share our interests is one of the best ways to meet new people. If the person has someone supporting them, ensure that their objective is to become a bridge to new friendships.

## DISCOVERING VALUED ROLES WORKSHEET SAMPLE

Identify a passion/interest your family member has.	Gardening
<p>List places others who share the interest gather.</p> <p>Places don't have to be physical but could be groups that meet in different places (even virtually).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community Garden</li> <li>• Floral Shop</li> <li>• Public Parks &amp; Gardens</li> <li>• Farmers Markets</li> <li>• Landscaping Companies</li> <li>• Neighbour's Gardens</li> <li>• Local College Floral Studies Department</li> <li>• Wildflower &amp; Natural History Groups</li> </ul>
Who are the other people in these places?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Florists</li> <li>• Gardeners</li> <li>• Community Garden Volunteers</li> <li>• Park Volunteers</li> <li>• Landscapers</li> <li>• Market Vendors</li> <li>• Floral Designers</li> <li>• Student Gardeners</li> <li>• Assistant Gardeners</li> <li>• Photographers</li> <li>• Coordinators and Organizers</li> <li>• Greeters and Hosts</li> </ul>
<p>Who could your family member become in this place?</p> <p>Identify a few roles that could be a good fit.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vendor Assistant at Farmers Market</li> <li>• Garden Hobbyist at Home</li> <li>• Neighbourhood Park Volunteer</li> </ul>

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## WORKSHEET SAMPLE (Continued)

<p><b>What contributions could your family member make in this role and place?</b></p>	<p><b>Vendor Assistant at Farmers Market</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• greet customers</li><li>• wrap flowers for customers</li><li>• re-stock tables</li><li>• take photos of the stalls for other vendors</li><li>• manage social media posts to promote the market and the vendor</li></ul> <p><b>Garden Hobbyist at Home</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• grow flowers at home and beautify the backyard</li><li>• create beautiful floral displays</li><li>• share flowers with neighbours and friends</li><li>• tie flowers in lovely bundles and leave them on the porch of elderly neighbours</li><li>• collect and package packets of seeds and share with other gardeners</li><li>• take photos of her flowers and make cards for friends or for Christmas greetings</li></ul> <p><b>Neighbourhood Park Volunteer</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• support the local park volunteers by providing refreshments</li><li>• help weed gardens</li><li>• take charge or “adopt” a section of the park for extra attention and bring others to help care for it</li><li>• write a blog about the park and the volunteer efforts and share it with others</li></ul>
<p><b>Who are the other people in the place that your family member could meet and get to know?</b></p> <p><b>People who benefit from your family members contribution and may reciprocate.</b></p>	<p><b>Vendor Assistant at Farmer’s Market</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• other staff</li><li>• other stall owners who may also benefit from the persons contributions</li><li>• regular market customers</li><li>• Farmer’s Market marketers</li></ul> <p><b>Garden Hobbyist at Home</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• other neighbours who are gardeners</li><li>• people at the local gardening shop</li><li>• neighbours who receive her flowers</li><li>• extended family who will see her differently</li><li>• elderly neighbour who appreciates her gifts</li><li>• other gardeners who use her seeds</li></ul> <p><b>Neighbourhood Park Volunteer</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• park volunteers</li><li>• neighbours using the park</li><li>• volunteer coordinator</li><li>• neighbours she invites to help in her section</li><li>• people she asks to edit her blog</li></ul>

## ***DISCOVERING VALUED ROLES WORKSHEET***

Identify a passion/interest your family member has.

List places others who share the interest gather.

Who are the other people in these places?

Who could your family member become in this place?

Identify a few roles that could be a good fit.

What contributions could your family member make in this role and place?

Who are the other people in the place that your family member could meet and get to know?

People who benefit from your family members contribution and may reciprocate.

## → ACTION STEP TWO: Get Support from our Family Networks

Family Networks can be a great source of inspiration and information. Check out the [P4P Family Network Directory](#) to search for a Family Network in your area. Those networks in the directory that are affiliates of Family Alliance Ontario are committed to supporting families to create individualized opportunities in community.

## → ACTION STEP THREE: Order *Safe & Secure* (2020 Edition)



Available in hard copy and a digital version, [Safe & Secure - Seven Steps on the Path to a Good Life for People with a Disability](#) is a book that provides a comprehensive overview of critical planning objectives for families. The book is free and can be downloaded as an e-book on the Planning Network. There is a nominal cost for shipping the hard copy.

## → ACTION STEP FOUR: Keep Learning

We've compiled a variety of resources that will deepen your understanding of critical planning issues and keep you on track.

- [Action Guide: Planning the Future You Want](#): A practical guide to assist parents and caregivers in planning a future for a relative with a disability.
- [Action Guide: Thriving After High School](#): A guide to building and maintaining a thriving life once the framework and routine of school is over.
- [Understanding Independent Facilitation](#): A short introduction to independent facilitation
- [Ontario Independent Facilitation Network](#): OIFN is a growing network made up of independent facilitators, people with a disability, family members and others from across Ontario.
- [Dance in the Shadows: Meet Rebecca](#): Rebecca Beayni is a young woman whose life's work is aimed at inviting people to dream of a more compassionate society where everyone's gifts are recognized and welcome.
- [Ending the IEP Agony Video Series](#): Developed by panellist Genia Stephen, this series helps parents gain confidence with the structure of an IEP, understand how to use their child's IEP to promote inclusion and gain clarity about supports that will lead to safety and success in school.

## → ACTION STEP FIVE: Wrapping Up

Before we finish up, we would like to ask for your help. The Fundamentals of Future Planning Series is a new free resource we've created for families supporting a child or adult with a disability.



We have incorporated a number of new approaches for online education and engagement and we need your feedback. Please take 2 minutes to complete our [SURVEY](#). We kept it short and wish to thank you in advance.





Now if you're ready, register for other webcasts in our

## **The Fundamentals of Future Planning Webcast+ Series**

**Nurturing Supportive Relationships** - Wed, Nov 24, 2021

**Creative Options for Home** - Tues, Dec 7, 2021

### ***Congratulations!***

You've completed the My Life, My Choice, My Community Workbook.

The P4P Planning Network offers **FREE resources** designed to empower people with a disability and their families to create meaningful lives and secure futures, firmly rooted in community.

**smart strategies | creative tools | sustainable solutions**



**PLANNING  
NETWORK**