

# **Listen, Learn, Plan**

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

**Conversations with Family  
and Support Services**

**Developed by  
© Smull & ASA, 2001**



### 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.

Michael Smull  
Support Development Associates  
3245 Harness Creek Road  
Annapolis, Maryland 21403  
(410) 626-2707  
FAX 626-2708  
e-mail <mwsnull@compuserve.com>

Allen, Shea & Associates  
1780 Third Street  
Napa, CA 94559  
(707) 258-1326  
FAX 258-8354  
e-mail <asa@napanet.net>

**M. Smull and Friends website** <[www.allenshea.com/friends.html](http://www.allenshea.com/friends.html)>

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**

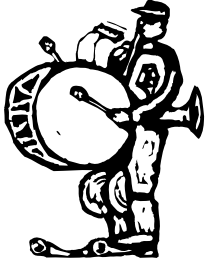
by Allen, Shea & Associates

**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 Family and Support Services**

### **Introduction**

This format is used to develop a conversation with close family members and support service providers of the focus person who know and care about him or her and who 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.*

## **Listen, Learn, Plan**

---

### Talking to People Who Know and Care:

Name of the Person with  
Whom You are Planning:

Name of the Person Interviewed:

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 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**

## **Listen, Learn, Plan**

---

What things do you like to do?



What things does he or she like to do? at home? at work? at program? at college? for fun? around town? on vacation? What kind of music does he or she like? What kind of movies? What kind of food? How about hobbies?



**List of Favorite Things . . .**

**Things He or She Doesn't Like  
or Doesn't Like to Do . . .**

## 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?

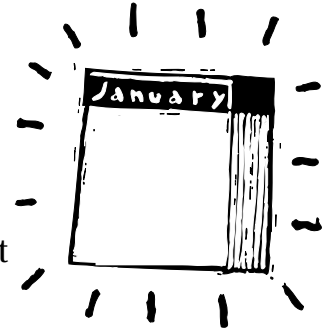
## **Listen, Learn, Plan**

---

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?



The week day



What does this individual's Monday through Friday morning look like right now? What does he or she do when first getting up? Eat for breakfast? Leave for work? Next, what would be his or her best Monday through Friday morning? If it could be anything, what would it be? Finally, what would be the worst Monday through Friday morning? What kinds of things make him or her mad, sad, frustrated in the morning? What kinds of things bug him or her when first getting up?

What does Monday through Friday day look like right now? What happens when first getting to work or program? What kinds of work or activities occur now? Next, what would be the best Monday through Friday day? If anything, what would it be? What kinds of activities make him or her happy? Who would he or she do it with? Finally, what would be the worst Monday through Friday day? What kinds of things make this individual mad, sad, frustrated during the day? What places (or people) would he or she like to stay away from?

What does Monday through Friday night look like right now? What happens when first getting home? What's for dinner? What kinds of activities? Next, what would be a best Monday through Friday night? If anything, what would it be? What kinds of activities make this person happy? Who would he or she do it with? Finally, what would be the worst Monday through Friday night? What kinds of things make him or her mad, sad, frustrated during the evening?

Do not do all of a typical day, then a good day, then a bad day. Take 'horizontal' slices of time - what is a typical, good, bad, morning like.

**Your Notes:**

What did you find out? .....➔



Best Week Day Would Be

When first get up



Week Day Right Now

When first get up



Worst Week Day Would Be

When first get up



Best Week Day Would Be

During the day



Week Day Right Now

During the day



Worst Week Day Would Be

During the day



Best Week Day Would Be

At night



Week Day Right Now

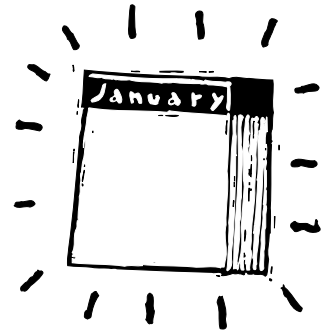
At night



Worst Week Day Would Be

At night

What is different about the weekend?



What does Saturday and Sunday morning look like right now? What happens when he or she first gets up? What time is it? Eat for breakfast? Next, what would be the best Saturday and Sunday morning? If anything, what would it be? Finally, what would be the worst Saturday and Sunday morning? What kinds of things make him or her mad, sad, frustrated in the morning?

What does Saturday and Sunday look like right now? What kinds of activities occur now? Next, what would be the best Saturday and Sunday? If anything, what would it be? What kinds of activities make this individual happy? Who would he or she do it with? Finally, what would be the worst Saturday and Sunday? What kinds of things make this person mad, sad, frustrated during the day? What places (or people) would he or she like to stay away from?

What does your Saturday and Sunday night look like right now? What's for dinner? What kinds of activities? Next, what would be the best Saturday and Sunday night? If anything, what would it be? What kinds of activities make him or happy? Who would he or she do it with? Finally, what would be the worst Saturday and Sunday night? What kinds of things make this person mad, sad, frustrated during the evening?

Again, remember not to take a whole, typical Saturday or Sunday. Take pieces of time and ask for the typical, best and worst version of it.

**Your Notes:**

What did you find out? .....➔



Best Weekend Would Be

When first get up



Weekend Right Now

When first get up



Worst Weekend Would Be

When first get up



Best Weekend Would Be

During the day



Weekend Right Now

During the day



Worst Weekend Would Be

During the day



Best Weekend Would Be

At night



Weekend Right Now

At night



Worst Weekend Would Be

At night



## **Additional Information (if needed): Positive Rituals Survey**

Positive rituals ease us through our days and help us mark special occasions. For each of the following questions, include as much detail as you can. Do not be trapped by the space provided, use extra sheets of paper. Remember that the more physical assistance someone needs and the less they are able to talk about their support needs, the more detail is needed for the positive rituals and routines. Positive rituals that detail intimate personal care can be part of someone's "private" plan that you only show certain people.

1. List some of the individual's daily rituals. Pay particular attention to the beginning of the day and the end of the day rituals. Each of us have specific activities that we do every morning including whether we brush our teeth before bathing, during our shower, before we leave the bathroom, or after breakfast, that comprise our morning rituals.

List morning (getting up) rituals -

List nighttime (going to bed) rituals -

## **Listen, Learn, Plan**

---

2. List some of your the individual's rituals of transition - What does he or she do everyday when arriving at work, school or training? When arriving home from work, school or training?

List arriving at work, school or training rituals -

List arriving at home rituals -

3. List some of the individual's weekly rituals -

List Sunday rituals (if there are a couple of different ways, list them all)-

List any regular weekly rituals (friends that always visited, TV shows always watched) -

4. List some of the individual's rituals of celebration and comfort -

Indicate how he/she likes to celebrate when something good happens.-

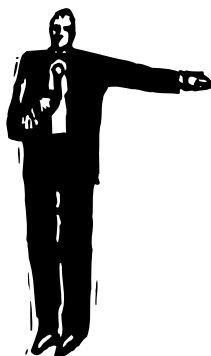
Indicate how he/she comforts him or herself when something unpleasant happens, how does he/she make him or herself feel better?

5. List some holiday rituals -

What has to happen in order for it to be his or her birthday?

What foods have to be on the table at which holidays?

What does he or she have to do during some holidays (e.g., go look at the Christmas lights)?



# 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**.

<b>What is happening</b>	<b>_____ does</b>	<b>We think it means</b>	<b>And we should</b>

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

### **Hopes and Dreams for the Future**

What are your hopes and dreams for this individual? What would be his or her best future? For example:

Where does he or she live? with whom? what kind of support?

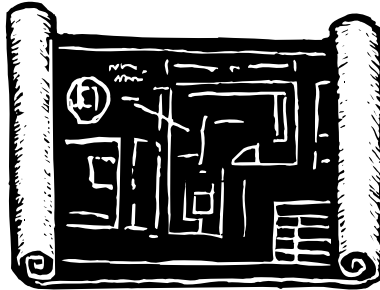
What does he or she do during the day?

What would the individual do for fun?

Remember, there are no right or wrong answers! Just take a few minutes and think about what could be and don't worry about things that might get in the way.



**Hopes and Dreams for the Future are . . .**



# **Listen, Learn, Plan**

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

**Conversations with Family  
and Support Services**

**© Smull & ASA, 2001**