



Overview of the Trajectory Principle:

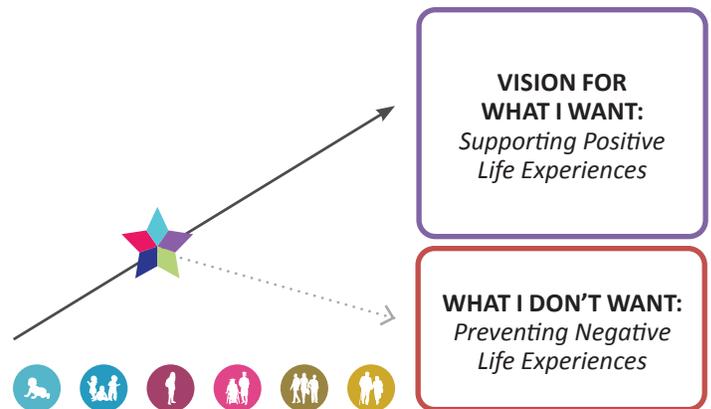
Life is a journey for everyone. In each stage of life we are paving a path that leads towards a vision for the future. This path or Trajectory will have ups and downs where there is a need to stop and consider what to do next. The Trajectory Principle and tool will help you define your vision and how your past experiences have helped or hindered you in meeting your goals. You will be able to set goals and list out what may get in your way. The higher the expectations, the more opportunities and experiences will be possible, and will lead toward achieving goals and dreams.

Who Should Use it and Why?

The Trajectory tool is a visual aid to guide and help a person explore and plan things in their life. It can be used by anyone at any stage or age of life, for short-term or long-term goals or even problem-solving day-to-day life. The Trajectory can be used as a self-exploration tool to reflect on their own life and organize their next steps or by support teams for developing person centered plans to guide services and supports. It is flexible and easy to use so that it can be used at any time you want to explore the next steps in the good life journey.

Important Things to Remember about the Trajectory:

- The Trajectory is a strengths-based concept designed to help think about life, both short and long term. It can also be used to promote discussion, self-awareness, shared knowledge and facilitate planning with a person and their support team.
- It is important for everyone to think about the future, no matter what the age. For some people, this may be hard to think about or describe. If this happens, start with the things they don't want for the future. Thinking about fears, dislikes or concerns can sometimes help identify what IS wanted. It might also be helpful to consider all the different life domains.
- Each one of us has our own unique life trajectory shaped by our beliefs, cultures, and experiences. Some of these are happy and some of them we want to forget. It is important to be sensitive to asking people about their past life experiences because it might bring back memories that are hard to talk about.
- Be mindful that asking someone about their life can be very personal and sensitive. It can also be hard for family members to think about the future or to consider what might happen if they are no longer able to provide support. It is important to recognize and be responsive to the diversity of experiences, situations and reactions when planning.
- Completing the Trajectory for the sake of completing the tool should never be the goal. The tool is designed to help with having interactive conversations and visually organizing thoughts and ideas.



How the Tool is Organized:

The Trajectory is a visual tool organized in two major sections, **Vision** and **Experiences**. The Vision section, on the right hand side, is further broken down into what is wanted and what is NOT wanted. The Experiences boxes on the left and middle are organized by “past experiences” and “moving forward”. This easy to use format organizes the information in a way that enables discussion or review of the current and future Trajectory. There is no “right” or “wrong” answer or order to follow when completing the tool. The focus should be on a person’s goals, wishes, and desired outcomes.



Suggestions for How to Complete and Use the Trajectory:

Decide the Purpose:

The Trajectory tool will help begin planning for achieving a person’s vision or goals. Start by having a conversation about what is going on right now. Determine the time frame being planned for. Are more short term goals being considered (something achievable in the next month or year), or a longer-term vision (something that takes longer and is further away, like five or ten years, or at a certain age or after a life event)? When developing a formal person-centered plan for services, help the person think about the goals they want to accomplish in the next year, and to reflect on the past year. There is a circle in the middle of the page to write the age or name of the person or it could be used to write the date.

Explore Each Part of the Trajectory:

You can start anywhere on this tool. We recommend starting with the “**Vision**” boxes because what is listed here will keep the focus on the person’s vision or be a reminder of exactly what is not wanted. Next, have a conversation about the things in the past that helped or stood in the way of achieving the desired vision. List what worked or didn’t work in “**Past Life Experience**” column. If thinking long-term, they might want to think back many years, or if planning for the current year, it might be helpful to only look back at the past year. Then, in the “**Moving Forward**” boxes, discuss and list in the upper section the experiences and activities that could help gain what is needed to reach the desired vision, and in the lower section list the things be a barrier or could move the Trajectory toward what is not wanted. It is a good idea to go over the Trajectory one more time with the person you are completing it with to make sure you have correctly depicted what they have said or meant, and to avoid inadvertently reflecting your own vision or ideas.

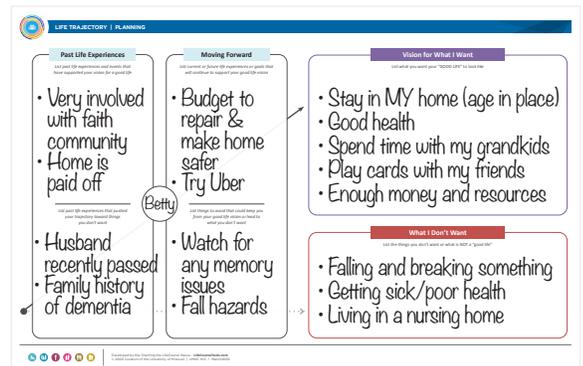
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On-going Use of the Trajectory:

The Trajectory is designed to be used over and over again. It should be updated and changed to reflect progress, growth and new goals. It can be repeated for each new situation that needs to be addressed. It is designed to become a problem-solving, planning, or progress tracking process, not a tool to be completed and filed away. It can help with preparing for a meeting or be used during a meeting to keep the focus on what is important to the person being supported. The Trajectory can be shared with others or kept private to use as notes or to help the person communicate.

Betty’s Trajectory

Betty is 83 years old and still lives in the home she shared with her husband who passed away last year. Betty is close with her 2 adult children and spends lots of time with her 5 grandchildren. Lately her family has noticed it’s getting harder for her to get around the house and she has started to forget more things. They are concerned about her living alone. She wants her family to know what she wants for her life in case something happens to her. Betty completed a trajectory with her adult son and plans on using it to talk to the rest of the family about her wishes and is going to share it with her care coordinator from her local Area Agency on Aging so they can identify services and supports so she can stay at home.



This product is created in collaboration with the Administration for Community Living (ACL) to support No Wrong Door (NWD) Systems. NWD Systems make it easier for people to learn about and use long-term services and supports (LTSS) by developing coordinated systems of access through streamlined partnerships, technology and resources. A function of a state’s NWD System is Person-Centered Counseling (PCC). PCC is an interactive process in which a trained counselor supports individuals seeking LTSS (including family members or others, if they choose) to make decisions based on their needs and preferences.

