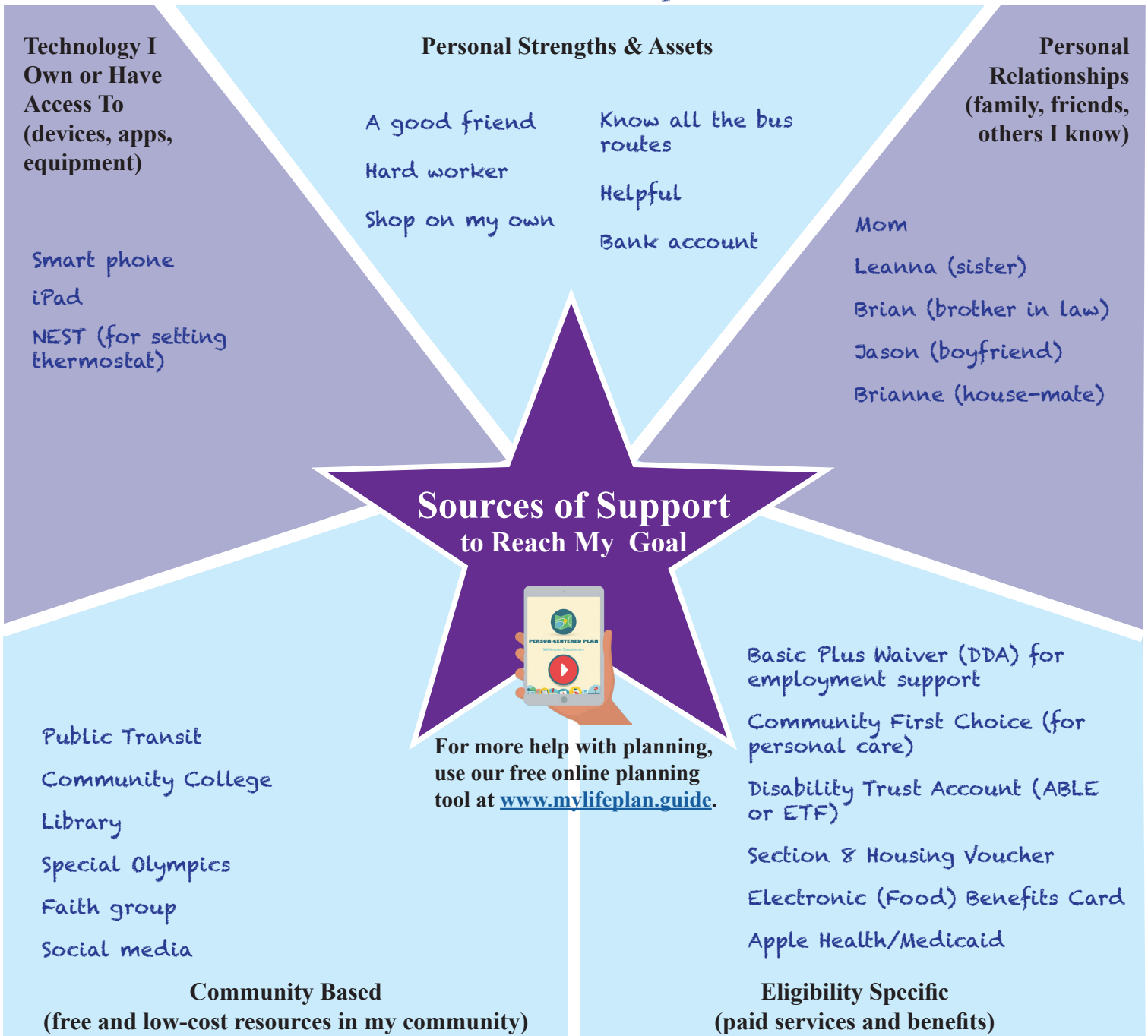




Adults (Age 35 and Up)

Growing, learning and achieving does not end at adulthood. It continues throughout life, and at your own pace. The following **STAR FORM** offers examples of how to identify people and resources to help reach your goal of living a life that is meaningful to you. Download your own **STAR FORM** at informingfamilies.org/star.

Clara's Goal: Living my own life



Informing Families Today and Tomorrow

Informing Families is a collaboration between the Washington State Developmental Disabilities Council (DDC), Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA) and other partners throughout the state. We offer trusted news and information that empowers individuals and families to be active participants in planning and creating opportunities to live a full, inclusive life. Sign up here: informingfamilies.org/news.

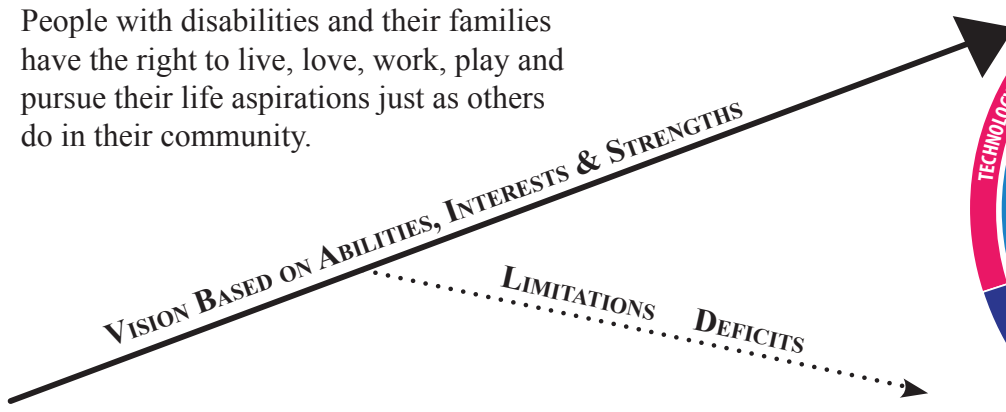
Growing

Learning

Achieving

Core Belief:

People with disabilities and their families have the right to live, love, work, play and pursue their life aspirations just as others do in their community.



Source: Community of Practice @ lifecoursetools.com

TIPS FOR PARENTS

Support a vision that builds on your son/daughter's strengths, interests, and abilities.

Reaching milestones in relationships, education, work and retirement is no different for adults with intellectual/developmental disabilities (I/DD) than anyone else. Just like developmental milestones in childhood and youth, achievements in adulthood may take a little longer to reach. However, with support and planning, a fulfilling and meaningful adult life is not only possible, it's a right.

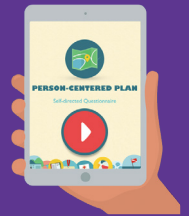
In thinking about the future, set goals that build on your family member's strengths, interests, and abilities, rather than limitations and deficits. Create a plan for each year that includes long term goals and dreams, and the people/supports/services needed to reach them. *My Life Plan* (side bar) is a free online tool to help you get started.

Things to Consider:

- ▶ Help your son/daughter develop a social network with friends, neighbors, faith community, and others in your community who share common interests. Help them get to know, and be known by, people they see regularly at their favorite stores, coffee shops, restaurants, etc. Small, everyday connections can lead to more opportunities, increased safety, and reduced isolation.
- ▶ Have conversations with siblings about their roles and responsibilities, now and in the future.
- ▶ Consider supported decision-making as an alternative to guardianship. Learn more: informingfamilies.org/sdm.
- ▶ Connect with support groups for yourself, siblings, and your family member with a disability (see back page for a listing.)

My Life Plan

My Life Plan is a free online planning tool to help you and your family member identify strengths, interests, abilities, and the supports needed to reach goals that are specific to your son/daughter's life.



The questions have been designed with input from families and professionals to identify age-specific questions. All age groups are organized by the same seven categories across the lifespan:

- ✦ Home Living
- ✦ Community Living
- ✦ Lifelong Learning
- ✦ Social Activities
- ✦ Education/Employment/Retirement
- ✦ Health & Safety
- ✦ Protection & Advocacy

To use this free online planning tool visit: mylifeplan.guide.

My Life Plan is a free resource created by the Washington State DD Council and The Arc of Washington State.

Support for Independent Living

Whether living in their family homes or independently, the ultimate goal for individuals is to be able to live the life they want, and for family caregivers to be provided with the assistance and support they need.

Many individuals continue to live in their family home, with their parents as the primary care providers; however, for those considering moving out of the family home, the following questions can help you think about the kinds of supports needed to create a safe, healthy, and full life in the community:

WHAT DAILY LIVING SKILLS ARE NEEDED?

Make a list of daily living skills your son/daughter has, skills s/he needs to learn, and tasks s/he needs help with. Examples: Kitchen safety, recognizing an emergency and knowing whom to contact, shopping, meal preparation, house cleaning, hygiene, riding the bus, paying bills, etc.

WHO CAN PROVIDE SUPPORT?

The Developmental Disabilities Administration (dshs.wa.gov/dda) offers a variety of home and community-based programs that provide in-home support, skills training, employment services, assistive technology, therapies, environmental modifications, peer mentoring, nurse delegation, and more. In addition to paid services, think of ways to include family and friends as part of your son/daughter's network of support.

WHAT'S THE BEST LIVING ARRANGEMENT?

Many adults with I/DD live with one or two house-mates as a way to share expenses and (depending on the situation) in-home supports, while others live on their own with care providers who help with specific daily living activities a few hours a day. If your son/daughter needs services, their DDA Case Resource Manager can walk you through the options and help figure out the best combination of services and living arrangement.



WHAT ARE SOME AFFORDABLE HOUSING OPTIONS?

The Housing Choice Voucher Program, also known as Section 8, is a rental subsidy that follows you wherever you choose to rent in the area, as long as the landlord accepts Section 8 assistance. Contact your local Public Housing Authority to apply: [hud.gov](https://www.hud.gov). There are other options as well, such as non-voucher (project-based) low-income housing and even home ownership. For more information, visit: informingfamilies.org/housing.

HOW CAN MY SON/DAUGHTER AFFORD THE COST?

Cash benefit programs, such as Supplemental Security Income (SSI), can be used to pay for housing, food, utilities and other living expenses. SSI is the primary source of income for most adults with an intellectual/developmental disability. If a parent is deceased or retired, an adult child with a disability may qualify for Supplemental Security Disability Income (SSDI), which is a higher amount than SSI. Contact the Social Security Administration (SSA) to apply: [ssa.gov](https://www.ssa.gov).



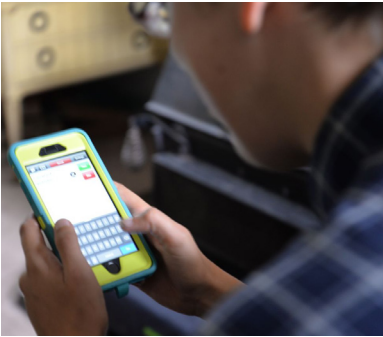
Assistive Technology: Help @ Home and Community

Technology and assistive devices can play a big role in creating independence. From smart phones that control home electronics to personal emergency response systems and apps that monitor blood sugar, technology increases access to people, information, and opportunities. Here are some tips and resources to get started:

{ TIPS }

Identify the Task First. Device Second.

There are a lot of options out there, and no one device is right for every individual. For an extensive database of AT products, categorized by function, visit AbleData's product's page: abledata.com.



Try Before You Buy

Make sure the device and/or apps are right for your son or daughter. The Washington Assistive Technology Act Program will lend devices for up to six weeks for a small fee: watap.org.

{ RESOURCES }

Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA)
Several programs include assistive technology in their covered services. Visit: dshs.wa.gov/dda.

Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR)
Adults with disabilities and high school transition students are eligible for services, including job-related assistive technology: dshs.wa.gov/dvr.

Washington Assistive Technology Act Program
Information, referrals, training and device loans: watap.org.

Washington Access Fund
Low interest loans and matched savings accounts for low-income households: washingtonaccessfund.org.

SUPPORT & PLANNING for the WHOLE FAMILY

Whether you need support today or in the future, it's just as important to create a plan for yourself as it is for your family member, and for everyone to have a meaningful and fulfilling life.

The Role of Siblings

If there are adult siblings, have a discussion with them about their needs, expectations, and role(s) in providing support when you are not able to do that. Make sure they have all the things they need to know about their brother/sister's source of income, expenses, contact information for service providers, medical information, and guardianship (if it's needed).

Family Caregiver Support

The Family Caregiver Support Program is available to unpaid caregivers of adults needing care. The program helps find local resources/services, caregiver support groups and counseling; training on specific caregiving topics; and respite care.

Services are offered free or at low cost. Certain eligibility requirements may apply and availability varies from community to community.

Find the telephone number for your local Family Caregiver Support Program at: dshs.wa.gov/AL TSA/resources.



SELF-ADVOCACY & SIBLING SUPPORT GROUPS

People First of Washington

Chapters throughout the state offer support, activities, and training to its members in finding their voice, connecting with each other, and being respected members of their communities.

peoplefirstofwashington.org

SibNet

Online support for adult siblings. Sibnet is part of the Sibling Support Project.

siblingsupport.org