

*Monthly tips and resources featured in **What's Next?** are created for young adults, their families, and supporters who are exploring options for life after high school in Indiana.*

## Person-centered planning: Putting you in control

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Person-centered planning can be a wonderful way to figure out your own “what’s next.” It’s a process that artfully blends team building, goal determination, and self-discovery. The great thing is that a person-centered plan places everyone on your team on the same path and supplies them with a map and a to-do list.

### Why do I need a plan?

Planning gives you, as a young adult, the chance to have some control. It helps avoid confusion, because the plan tells everyone what you want to accomplish and what you need to do to achieve your goals. It also gives the people working with you the chance to learn more about your desires and interests as well as the types of supports you need. You might also want your team to know about the things you don’t like.

Let’s say you like gardening and growing vegetables, but you don’t enjoy being outside for long periods of time. Or you want to live in an apartment, but you need room to pace and talk out loud in order to process your day. That could affect where you work, live and your choice of roommates. Your team needs to know those things.

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## Who's on my team?

That's up to you. Possibly your parents, your employment service provider, your personal care team, a favorite cousin, a coach who knows you well. You want to build your plan with people who are willing to support you and take on a few tasks while you're on your path. (Check out the [first issue of \*What's Next?\*](#) for more thoughts on building your team.)

## When should I participate in a plan?

That might depend on what your ultimate goal is. If your plan involves where you will live or work, you might want to begin your person-centered planning before you leave high school. The plan can be a very useful tool when you and your family or team are figuring out which employment or community service providers you could choose to work with. But it's okay if you've already left school and haven't created a plan yet. Start now!

You can create more than one person-centered plan. It's not a once-in-a-lifetime planning session. It's an ongoing goal-setting, problem-solving process used to help people plan for their future.

## Two examples

As you'll see below, there are different types of person-centered plan tools. Check out the Resource section on page 4 for more information and examples of how they're used.

### Jared

Jared (not his real name) really wanted to go to college. He was taking classes at Ivy Tech, but his dream was to attend a four-year university, even though he really wasn't sure what type of career he wanted. Jared, who has autism, dysgraphia, anxieties, executive function challenges, and symptoms of Tourette's, worked with his parents and his team on a type of plan called a **PATH**. A facilitator from a local employment services agency helped Jared and his team answer questions about what Jared's ultimate working and living goals would be—his North Star. Another team member drew pictures and made notes on a large poster.

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With the completed plan, Jared was able to see what he and his team would need to work on next so that he could take steps toward his goal. It's taken time, but Jared is now a senior at Ball State University.

### Jesse

Jesse (not her real name) was in middle school when Jesse and her parents decided to begin planning for the future. They met with a few key people Jesse had chosen and began using the **LifeCourse Framework**. Jesse has cerebral palsy and uses a power chair for mobility as well as special technology for communication. LifeCourse, supported by Indiana's Bureau of Developmental Disability Services, is a series of planning tools to help individuals think about their preferences. These preferences can not only include where they want to live and work, but also how they want to be involved in their communities and the types of supports they'll need to achieve their vision. LifeCourse calls this "living a good life."

With LifeCourse, Jesse was able to express her preferences for working indoors in a quiet space, participating in a nearby church youth group, and living in an apartment with two roommates. Jesse also used the tools to let the team know what working and social situations she disliked or wasn't interested in pursuing. By the time Jesse left high school, she was already working part-time at the local library and attending game nights with the youth group. Jesse's team had applied for services and supports and had begun investigating apartment options.

A properly designed person-centered plan can give you the chance to develop personal relationships, experience community involvement, increase control over your own life, and develop the skills you need to accomplish your goals.

## What if I have new goals?

Remember, a person-centered plan is not a one-time event or document. It's a process that can help you set goals, change your path if necessary, plan next steps, and identify supports. It doesn't matter if you're 18, 28, or 58. If you think you need a new plan to take a second look at those goals, talk with your team and set up a meeting!

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## Resources

- [Lifecourse Framework](#) (scroll down to download the Quick Reference Tools)
- [LifeCourse Integrated Support Star—Relationships](#) (video)
- [MAPS](#)
- [PATH Planning](#)
- [What Person-Centered Planning Is and Why It's Important](#) (video)

## Reminder! Questions for Adria and Michael?

In [last month's issue of \*What's Next?\*](#), we invited you to submit your questions to our colleagues Michael and Adria about work, supports, apartment living, and how they're redefining what it means to be independent. In our December issue, we'll print their answers. **Send your questions by November 12, 2021**, to [CCLC@indiana.edu](mailto:CCLC@indiana.edu).

**What's Next?** is a project of the Center on Community Living and Careers and the Indiana Department of Education.

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