



## Creating a Personal Profile

(Excerpted from PCT online course modules #6)

A person-centered approach begins with the development of a **Personal Profile**. The purpose of developing a personal profile is to gather information from the person and their trusted team that will form the basis of the person-centered plan and can be used by the person to share with others. The facilitator guides the person and their team to identify strengths, capacities, things that are important **TO** and **FOR** the person, as well as best ways to support the person.

### What are the things that others like and admire about the person?

- What positive adjectives describe the person?
- What is the person good at – gifts, capacities and strengths?
- What is the person's personal identity, faith, family culture?

### What is important to the person?

- Which people and relationships are important to the person?
- Are there cultural factors important to the person?
- What works/doesn't work for the person – things to avoid?
- What are his/her hopes and dreams, vision for the future?

### What is important for the person?

- What are critical health and safety issues?
- Does the person have a special diet or food preparation considerations?
- What equipment does the person find necessary or helpful?

The profile is a way to introduce the person to others positively, describing their uniqueness and how best to support them. Goals, directions for change, types of supports, and an action plan are all then based on this profile.

Often a person's personal identity and family culture are strengths to celebrate as part of a person's profile. Identify any aspects of the person's culture that might be important for planning and/or to include in the personal profile, for example, community connections, traditions, routines, and diet. You should discuss these options with the person you are supporting to get their ideas for how they want to present their profile. Be sure to consider and be sensitive to the person's family context and any cultural considerations.

A Personal Profile should be colorful, easy to read and understand, as well as include information that helps the reader get to know the person and what is important to that person. Be sure to keep the language of the personal profile in words you might wish others to use to introduce you. Avoid terms you would only use about disability or professional jargon or labels.

Whenever possible use the person's own words or language or images easily understood.

Personal profiles begin with basics, including name/nickname. There could also be a picture of the person in the profile.

**Example: John Doe**

The next several topics should include the following:

- **Who Am I? Example:** A younger sibling to two sisters and two brothers from an Italian/Portuguese heritage, happy jokester, sensory oriented, a housemate, a friend, a helper, energetic, affectionate, and animal lover.
- **What is Important to Me: Example:** Spending time with family (holidays and weekends), Looking nice (I don't like strings or tags.) Being with others (helps me feel safe). Utilizing my communication book so I can express myself. Sticking to the routine. Updating my calendar so I know what is next in my day. Going to church weekly. Attending my community day program Monday - Friday.
- **My Idea of Fun: Example:** Throwing balls, listening to music, swimming, coloring, painting bowling, sitting on my swing, splashing in a bath, going to the beach, dancing, walking in a park, roller coasters.

- **My Family Friends and Community Connections: Example:** Carol-mom, Fred-dad, Susie-sister, Patricia-sister, Frank-brother, Keri-best friend, Sue-friend have lunch together, McDermott pool weekly swim, Citizen's Bank banking, Warwick Animal Shelter volunteer on Saturdays with support, St. Mary's Church Sunday Worship
- **Please Help Me: Example:** Budget my money, guide me through daily routines with reminders, identify risk and stay safe in the community, plan rides and schedule time with friends and family, continue to build my independence and encourage participation, explore new activities, keep my communication book updated, stay relaxed and follow sensory programming, going to doctor's appointments and maintaining my health.

Other resources

### **From Beth Mount, "Making a Difference"**

#### **Who Am I – My Style**

Describing what works to create engagement, pleasure, energy and aliveness and what usually creates disconnection, frustration, boredom and deadness (I call this, the kiss of death). You can create two columns - what works/what doesn't work. Get input from the person, from those who know and love them and from your observations. This will guide how best to support your focal person and things to be mindful of in pursuing new goals and experiences.

#### **Who Am I – My Capacities and Gifts**

**Gifts of the Head:** These are things that a person knows about and also could share this information with others. This could be knowledge, experience and info – organizing things, sports trivia, solving puzzles, local history, travel routes, self-advocacy

**Gifts of the Hands:** These are things a person knows how to do and would willingly share with others. These are skills. For example: cooking, gardening, playing a musical instrument, dancing,

fixing things, singing, creating art, working hard, using a computer, being meticulous and detailed, etc.

**Gifts of the Heart:** These are things a person is passionate about; those things deeply cared about and the rewards of relationships that this person brings to others. Could be: welcoming people, patience, courage, sensitivity, high energy, ability to listen, passion for justice, love of nature, spiritual gifts, community life etc.

**Gifts of History and Identity:** Experiences, knowledge responsibilities, customs – types of belonging that comes with particular family, religion, ethnic group

### **From Michael Smull**

Especially helpful when your focal person doesn't have a functional communication system or may be saddled with a "severe reputation" because of certain behaviors. Things to capture:

- What people like and admire about person
- What is important to the person
- Ideal daily routine / weekend routine
- Important rituals
- Severe behavior = label trap. When supporting someone with a severe reputation, we must listen even harder to understand what the person wants and needs. Learn about their history and life experiences.
- Choice and control are often central to behavioral difficulties – get creative about ensuring that the person has as much control over schedule and routine as possible. Create a list of what choices and control the person has and think about how that can be expanded
- Recognize and honor the person's natural rhythms and strong preferences, and define for all his/her non-negotiables i.e., what s/he needs to be happy
- Help people move toward lifestyle that works better by describing the ideal lifestyle

**Jack Pearpoint/ John O'Brien/ Lynda Kahn**

**Questions that you may want to consider depending on the specific focal person:**

- When person is at their very best, what do they bring to others?
- What gifts does the person have that someone else needs?
- What brings out the very best in me?
- What can the past teach you about his/her gifts?
- What is the person's nightmare / point of vulnerability?
- How does this person make a positive difference?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-VYE9cVofTg&t=1s> – creating a personal profile with someone who doesn't talk