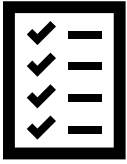


# Instructions for Building A Wellness Guide



The *Wellness Guide* included here is designed to “guide” you and your support system in highlighting and communicating important wellness areas and needs. It can help accomplish the following:

1. Guide thinking for you (and your family),
2. Guide any talks you need to have with your support team,
3. Guide review of what’s working and not working in important areas of your life, and
4. Guide talks with any doctors or professionals you see

In all of these ways, the Guide can support achievement of positive life changes and outcomes and assure anyone who supports you or has a relationship with you knows what matters most.

## *Why it’s a Guide and not a Plan*

You (your family member) have probably had a lot of “Plans” of various types that must be followed – at home, in school, at work. Providers and professionals write most of these. Even though these may be to help those who may support you in some way to do that well – it can still feel like a lot of life is about what others want or think you need to do.

The Wellness Guide is designed to be different – it empowers you to make a meaningful, well life. It does this by guiding us, those who support you, to what is important to and important for you. It also guides us on what we must do to help support you in achieving a meaningful, well life. It is different from the typical “plan” because it guarantees what you CAN do. It is a document that changes as your life and interests change giving you the power/authority to be the “writer” of your own wellness. It tells the reader what matters to you the most – what is essential for you to have, do, and be with to have a meaningful, well life. It is designed to be SOLELY authored by you.

It tells providers and professionals what we MUST consider before recommending any support/treatment and if any of these recommendations are to be adopted and used effectively. It “guides” us in the work we do so that we understand and honor you in that work. We all set out on a course in life but as we encounter new things, ideas and choices we get to follow new paths or change directions sometimes in ways we could not have anticipated earlier in our journey – if we follow this Guide as intended hopefully it will keep us “on track” in our role to effectively provide support along the journey but not to dictate the path.

In your Guide you highlight your NON-NEGOTIABLES. It helps anyone supporting you to know that when in doubt, this is the MOST IMPORTANT stuff to get right in any day, week, and month.

Remember, the Guide should be updated as often as you ask or if you learn new things. The next page has some tips for how you can use the Guide.

# Using Your Wellness Guide

## Using Wellness Guide as Communication Tool



1. With family and friends who support you
  - a. To give supporters reminders about the most important things to you/your child. The Guide can ground any discussions even with those who know and love you/your child best in the reminder of what makes for a Well life for this individual.
  - b. To prioritize when time is limited. When people who support you/your child know the activities and interests you/your child enjoys and need most as well as those you/your child really enjoy particularly with people in your/their life, then even when life gets busy they can prioritize the time for the things that make the most difference.
  - c. To change and grow as you/your child goes through different life stages. Input from family and friends also may change during these times and the Guide can help in assuring the issues are discussed and adjusted as appropriate over time.
  - d. To dream bigger because it serves as a reminder that a full, well life has all these components in it even if they seem a little scary or risky.
2. With teachers/school staff
  - a. You/your child can bring the Guide to school and share it with teachers, support staff and other school personnel so they can have a better understanding of what works best for you/your child to maintain wellness.
  - b. Supporting wellness not only matters to you/your child but is a much easier and more preventive approach for the school if presented early in interactions and IEP planning.
  - c. The Guide can assist throughout school time in framing discussions about what's working and what's not and if some area needs to be revisited.
  - d. Over time there will be teachers and other school staff who invest in relationships with you/your child and may even be able to add important information to the Guide based on their experiences. And as the school and extracurricular life expands new activities and friends will be added.
3. With support staff/provider
  - a. The Guide should be the foundational piece of staff instructions for the provider.
  - b. The Guide should be used in staff hiring and matching. Staff who have different beliefs and interests will be less likely to support access to and engagement in the areas outlined in the Guide even if they are well intended and caring people.
  - c. Understanding the important information in the Guide can enhance use of other person centered tools.
    1. The Guide will include the most core features of important to AND important for when done well. There will be other important to and for information but not likely as urgent and impactful as what is contained here.
    2. The Guide will contain the relationships that should be most close to Center in any relationship map (comparing these depending on what is completed first can really provide a check in on what info really makes sense).
    3. The Guide helps with using the Donut management tool (while it won't directly tell us what falls into each category it helps to orient what matters most to the individual and what CANNOT be our decision to make.)
    4. The Guide should be referenced anytime the What's Working And What's Not Working tool (or one like it) is used as the areas in the Guide should be checked.

5. The Guide can lead the way in ideas about building more connections and relationships, areas of your/your child's community that might be explored for more involvement, areas of independence that may be most important, and vocational considerations that might be explored. Other preferences may be present but the information in the Guide is the most meaningful and impactful to explore particularly if things are currently missing.
- d. The Guide should be a living document that the provider updates as often as the individual requests and as new information is learned.
4. With professionals
  - a. Since a 1-2 page summary can be used as the Guide, this document should be brought and shared with professionals.
  - b. No professional treatment – even when needed – can be effective if wellness considerations are missed.
  - c. Knowing the information in the Guide may give the professional ideas about how to shape treatment approach to be more effective and meet your/your child's needs.
  - d. You/your child may reveal things to the professional that they have permission to share to enrich the Guide.

#### General Tips for Integrating into Plan and Supports



1. Make sure what is in this Guide gets put into your/your child's plan as ESSENTIAL support components
  - a. This represents a more meaningful version of your/your child's non-negotiables
  - b. It needs to be detailed and specific
2. Make sure this is talked about and remembered ANY time the plan and supports are discussed
3. You can author this piece directly