

# FACT SHEET

## LONGITUDINAL PLANNING: PATH



PATH is a person-centered planning process that starts in the future and works backwards identifying the steps that will make the plan a possible future outcome.

### 1 What is PATH?



Path is a person-centered planning process that defines strategies for aligning and increasing the energy available to make progress on complex problems. It is a way for a person and members of their support circles to affirm the values that guide them; vividly depict their vision; feel the tension between their vision and their current reality; identify the people to enroll in making progress; specify the ways they will build skills, knowledge and stamina necessary for the work; sketch strategies that will move them toward their vision; and define exactly who will take responsibility for which immediate next steps (O'Brien & O'Brien, 1998).

PATH evolved from the MAPS process. It was designed and developed by John O'Brien, Marsha Forest, and Jack Pearpoint. It offers an opportunity to extend the MAPS steps and to put into place a plan of action. PATH can be a self-sustaining planning process and a tool to address long and short-range planning. This is an eight-step process, an exercise in thinking backwards to attain a desired goal. During the PATH, everyone becomes a member of the team with the problems and challenges becoming shared goals. The spectrum of talents and energy available are the driving force of the planning process.

The process requires co-facilitation: a process facilitator, who facilitates the meeting and a graphic recorder, who generates an image record of the information being expressed.

### 2 How does the PATH process work?



PATH draws on people's capacities to imagine different futures, and to think backwards from a future possibility and tell fruitful stories about how that possibility might come to be.

The template puts present time on the left and future time to the right. The process moves the planning circle from the purpose that calls the focus person to join in its creation to a definite future time a year or more away. Then it shifts to a description of the present before moving back to a future point halfway to the desired future and works back to potential accomplishments in the month(s) following the meeting and the day after the meeting.

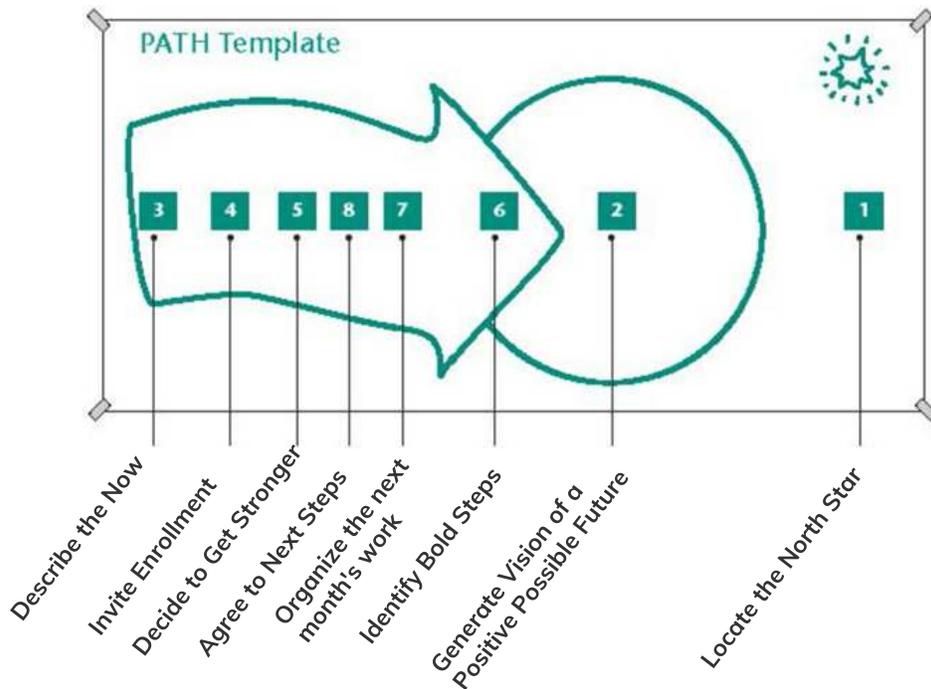


### 3 Getting Started:

When using PATH for person centered planning, the individual must be at the center of the process. A snapshot of the eight steps/conversations follows:

- Step 1:** Locate the North Star - (overall big picture, what is the end goal) that gives long term direction & explores meaning.
- Step 2:** Create Visions of a Positive and Possible Future (about a year out).
- Step 3:** Acknowledge 'the Now' (note shift in direction - the order matters!)
- Step 4:** Invite Enrollment of people sharing this commitment.
- Step 5:** Decide ways to build strengths needed to reach the goals.
- Step 6:** Identify key 'Bold Steps' in the direction of the Future Vision(s).
- Step 7:** Plan the 'Next Month's Work' - who, what, when.
- Step 8:** Agree on First Steps - Immediate action - Get Started Now.

- \* Be creative and think outside of the box!
- \* Ensure you have enough time, this process may need to be covered over more than one meeting.
- \* Include the person at the center of the process.



### Additional Resources:

References for PATH

The PATH & MAPS Handbook: Person-Centered Ways to Build Community O'Brien, J., Pearpoint, J., Kahn, L., (2010). Toronto, Canada: Inclusion Press

Person-Centered Planning with MAPS & PATH: A Workbook for Facilitators O'Brien, J., Pearpoint, J. (2010). Toronto, Canada: Inclusion Press

PATH, a Workbook for Planning Positive Possible Futures. Pearpoint, J., O'Brien, J., Forest, M., (1993). Toronto, Ontario, Canada: Inclusion Press.

Hints for Graphic Facilitators. Pearpoint, J., (2002). Toronto, Canada: Inclusion Press.

Facilitation for Inclusion with PATH & MAPS (DVD): Pearpoint, J., Kahn, L., (2011). Toronto, Canada: Inclusion Press

The PATH DVD & The MAPS DVD: Toronto, Canada: Inclusion Press

Additional Resources: [www.inclusion.com](http://www.inclusion.com)