

WELCOME!



Making New
Friends Safely

Values
into action



Special thanks to the Pennsylvania Developmental Disabilities Council for funding this project!



Learning Session Agenda

- Background and Introductions
- What does friendship look like?
- How does structure help us find friends?
- Painting your friendship picture
- Ways to find your people
- Tips for staying safe when meeting new people

Introductions

Values
into action



Values
into action

Our values underpin everything we do:

Adapting with you to live your life, your way

Respecting you and your choices

Dedicated to you and your ambitions

Kind to you without exception

Transforming services with you

Open minded to you

Accountable to you and yours

True Friendships – Purpose

About True Friendships Project:

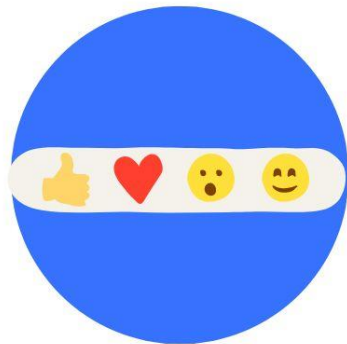
True Friendships hopes to make it easier for people with disabilities to make and keep friendships. The True Friendships project is focused on creating opportunity and capacity for friendships for all.

True Friendships– Project Partners

- Temple University, Institute on Disabilities
- Disability Pride PA
- PA's Education for All Coalition, Inc. – PEAC
- Open Future Learning

Let's Zoom!

How to Use Zoom Features



Reactions

Like or agree with something that was said or on a slide? Leave a thumbs up or clapping emoji using Zoom Reactions on the bottom of your Zoom screen! Use the Raise Hand emoji if you want to speak! We want to hear from you!



Chat

Feel free to add your thoughts, ideas, or questions to the chat throughout the module! We can help bring focus to the chat as needed! :)



Closed Captions

You can enable Closed Captions by clicking "show captions" at the bottom of your Zoom screen.

Why We are Here

- Meeting new people can be hard, and sometimes scary. But it doesn't have to be!
- We can create safety by drawing on lessons from past experiences and planning for our friendship journeys.
- Everyone's journey is unique; make it your own!

Step 1: What Does Friendship Look Like?



Friends are people who:

- Spend time with you
- Support you
- Do fun things with you
- Share similar interests and beliefs as you
- Make you feel happy
- Make you feel safe

Tell us! Who is someone in your life that makes you feel happy and safe?

What Friendship Means to YOU



Open Future Video: Friendship Defined/About Friendship (55 seconds), Steve Dymond explains what friendship means to him.

[Team shares examples of what friendship means to them and one of the friendships in their lives]

Tell Us! What does friendship mean to you?

Why is Structure Important?

Structure in your friendship journey can be helpful and keep you safe in a lot of ways. It can:

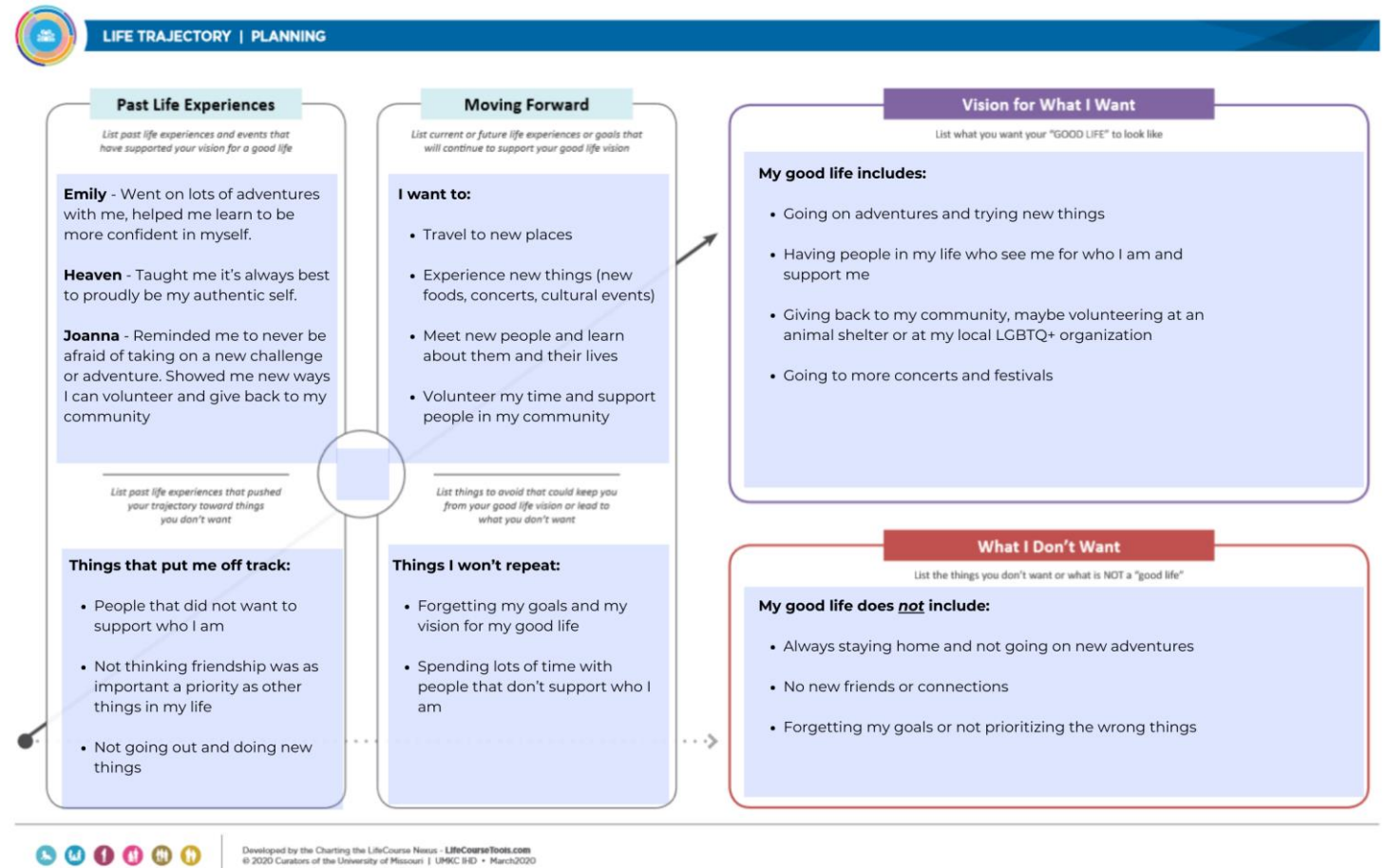
- Remind you of your goals.
- Help you remember what you want to avoid.
- Remind you that you have a plan and you can make it happen!



Step 2: Painting Your Friendship Picture

Charting the LifeCourse: Life Trajectory Planning Tool

- Can be used to help envision what you want from your friendships.
- Can do by yourself or with someone's support.
- Don't have to do it all at once! You can think about the questions and come back to it.



Step 2: Good Life Vision



LIFE TRAJECTORY | PLANNING

Past Life Experiences

List past life experiences and events that have supported your vision for a good life

Emily - Went on lots of adventures with me, helped me learn to be more confident in myself.

Heaven - Taught me it's always best to proudly be my authentic self.

Joanna - Reminded me to never be afraid of taking on a new challenge or adventure. Showed me new ways I can volunteer and give back to my community

Moving Forward

List current or future life experiences or goals that will continue to support your good life vision

I want to:

- Travel to new places
- Experience new things (new foods, concerts, cultural events)
- Meet new people and learn about them and their lives
- Volunteer my time and support people in my community

Vision for What I Want

List what you want your "GOOD LIFE" to look like

My good life includes:

- Going on adventures and trying new things
- Having people in my life who see me for who I am and support me
- Giving back to my community, maybe volunteering at an animal shelter or at my local LGBTQ+ organization
- Going to more concerts and festivals

Step 2: What to Avoid in the Future

List past life experiences that pushed your trajectory toward things you don't want

Things that put me off track:

- People that did not want to support who I am
- Not thinking friendship was as important a priority as other things in my life
- Not going out and doing new things

List things to avoid that could keep you from your good life vision or lead to what you don't want

Things I won't repeat:

- Forgetting my goals and my vision for my good life
- Spending lots of time with people that don't support who I am

What I Don't Want

List the things you don't want or what is NOT a "good life"

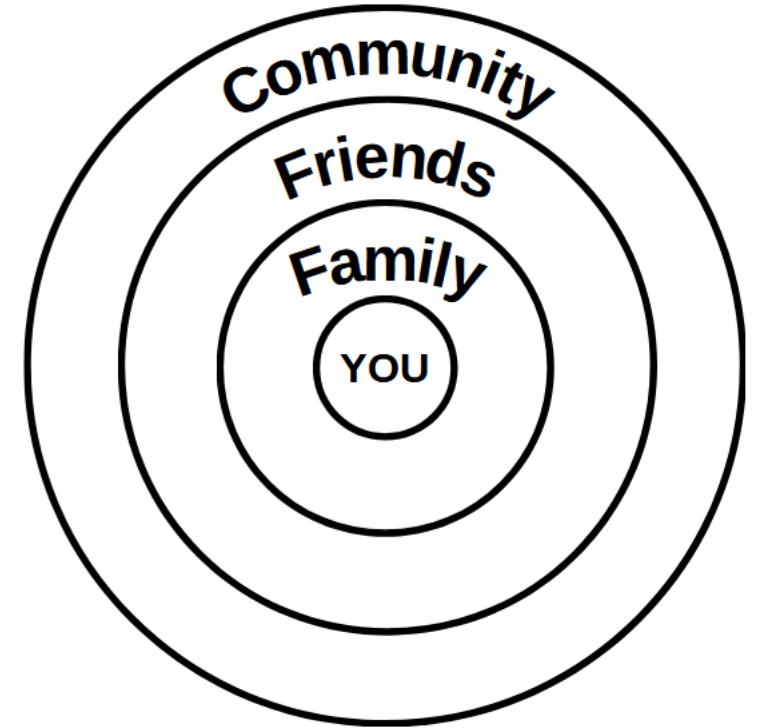
My good life does not include:

- Always staying home and not going on new adventures
- No new friends or connections
- Forgetting my goals or not prioritizing the wrong things

Step 3: Find Your People Through Others

Use existing connections

- Meeting others through people you already trust can be safer and easier.
- Think about who you already know who has connections in the community.
- Ask people you trust for recommendations.



Tell Us! Is there someone in your life that might be able to help you make new connections? Who is that person?

Step 3: Find Your People in New Places

Starting from scratch

- Decide what is safe for you.
- Look for places with people who share your interests. Get creative!
- Find out what's going on in your community
 - Libraries
 - Community gardens
 - Animal park/daycare
 - Comic book shops



Tell Us! Where are some places you could meet new people?

Tips for Staying Safe on Your Friendship Journey

Staying Safe In Person

- Meet new people in public places
- Make sure someone knows where you're going
- For events, look into who/what organization is hosting them
- Use the buddy system

Staying Safe Online

- Watch out for fake profiles
- If someone is sending you messages that make you feel unsafe, you can block them
- If you're not sure if someone or a website is safe, ask someone you trust

These are some general tips, but you need to decide what works best for you.

You can find more tips in our Relationship Resource Guide!

Questions?

Values
into action

Upcoming Events



Technical Assistance Sessions

For self-advocates / family members:

Wednesday, June 12th, 6:00pm – 7:00 pm

For professionals:

Thursday, June 20th, 10:00 am – 11:00 am

More Learning Sessions

Coming later in 2024

Topics that will be covered:

- Relationships: Healthy vs Toxic
- Sustaining Friendships

Thank you!



True Friendships Contacts

Project email – AuthenticFriendships@viapa.org

**Robert Zotynia, Self-Advocate Advisor,
Co-coordinator of Project Advisory Workgroup**
RZotynia@gmail.com

**Jamie Lisberger, Self-Advocate Advisor,
Co-coordinator of Project Advisory Workgroup**

**Tina Steinbacher, Co-coordinator of Project Advisory
Workgroup**
KristinaS@viapa.org

Alex Brosseau, Grants and Initiatives Project Coordinator
AlexB@viapa.org

Amy Jedele, Project Director
AmyJ@viapa.org