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An initiative of Family Advocacy

Getting the Good Life

**What can life look like for a person
with disability?**

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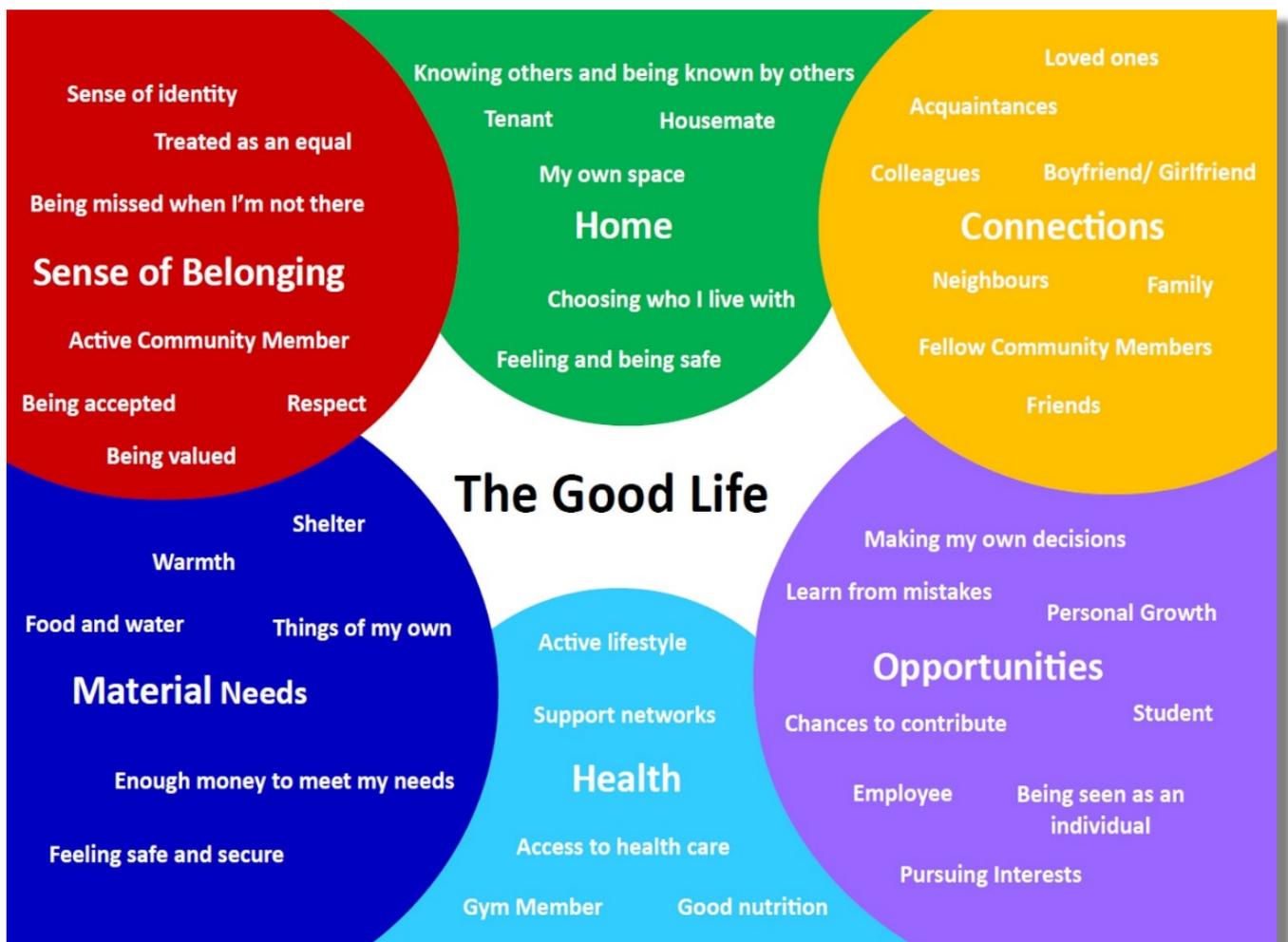
Getting the Good Life

The Good Life is a phrase in common use and to some may mean a life of luxury and comfort with few troubles and worries. For others it is a life that brings happiness and contentment. Rather than a celebrity lifestyle, they would list the simple things of life as the most important. Things such as family, friends, connection to the wider community, a sense of belonging, opportunities to learn and develop, meaningful work and vocations, a place to call home, personal and financial security and the chance to follow dreams and passions.

So, for people with disability is the good life any different?

Absolutely not!

Our common humanity is the reason we all share these life-giving things as significant to our ongoing wellbeing. So, it is important we vision what this could mean for a person with disability and plan strategically to make it a reality. High expectations are key to making excellent efforts towards assisting people to live the good life. This is not to ignore the fact that it is not always easy for everyone to experience all of these things all of the time but that their pursuit is essential, if a full life is to be experienced. Some situations will need particular careful thinking and planning to make happen but this provides good focus for putting effort and resources into what matters most.



A Vision for the Good Life

Thinking about the good life for a person with disability can be inspired by looking at the typical lives of people of a similar age. This can keep the focus on making sure the person's life is full of the ordinary, good things of life that are appropriate to his or her age group. Age appropriateness is important for ensuring that an individual lives a life understood and valued by other people because of shared commonality of experiences.

No matter what a person's age is, you can ask what is important to and for the person of that same age to generate ideas for what the good life would comprise of. Think about his or her peers without disability, including brothers or sisters, so that experiences remain typical and common to many.

The table below shows what is important to and for Sarah at different times of her life. Sarah doesn't have a disability, so that the list is about human experience not disability.

What is important to me and for me?					
 Sarah aged 5		 Sarah aged 15		 Sarah aged 25	
Important to me	Important for me	Important to me	Important for me	Important to me	Important for me
play family friends toys things to try e.g. sport, art, music, dance fun	being loved happy home safety and security good start to school health	friends independence personal space personal image casual work being respected family social media recreation	being loved happy home safety and security good education self-esteem health	friends family/partner own home job independence education travel car purpose	being loved steady income safety future plans healthy lifestyle

The lists in this table are not exhaustive and you should be able to add to them.



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