

# PFA Tips

## Charting the LifeCourse™

### Framework 101: An Introduction

#### What is Charting the LifeCourse (CtLC) Framework?

CtLC is a powerful set of principles and tools with the potential to transform the lives of people with developmental disabilities, their families and the community! Its core belief states that ALL people have the right to live, love, learn, work, play and pursue their life aspirations in their community.

CtLC comes to Maryland via the National Community of Practice for Supporting Families of which Maryland participates. It was created by families to help individuals and families of all abilities, at any age or stage of life develop a vision for a good life, think about what they need to know and do, identify how to find or develop supports, and discover what it takes to live the lives they want based on current support structures that focus on self-determination, community living, social capital and economic sufficiency. The emphasis is on planning for life outcomes, not just services. ([lifecoursetools.com](http://lifecoursetools.com))

#### How can people with developmental disabilities and their families use CtLC?

CtLC can be applied in a myriad of ways. Most often it is used when working with people with developmental disabilities and their families to create a vision for their "Good Life;" identify resources and supports that will point them in a positive trajectory towards this vision; and figure out their next steps while recognizing the person within the context of family

and the community. It can also be applied to any aspect of the person's vision or a smaller goal within it. For example, I've been using the principles and tools with my beautiful daughter Maggie (who has multiple disabilities) who has a huge vision for her life, comprised of several smaller goals including her desire to strengthen her relationship and connection with her brothers. She has three of them, and they want to strengthen their relationships too. The challenge is finding the time and dealing with the logistics since two of her brothers live out of state. All of them work, have families, and lead busy lives, including Maggie.

Applying the principles of CtLC allowed my family to have several conversations about our relationships, free of preconceived notions, while honoring each member's interests, strengths and needs. As a result, we each spoke freely and were supported to strengthen our relationships in ways important to us. Consequently, none of us felt overburdened, or that we were imposing on the others. Instead, we utilized the Integrated Support Star to identify several resources within our family that could be utilized to support Maggie, her brothers, and parents to ultimately strengthen our relationships. As a result, two of her brothers participated in her Person Centered Planning meeting via Facetime, and will do so in the future. In addition, the activity has inspired our family to participate in an upcoming family-accessible-vacation (hopefully, the 1<sup>st</sup> of many) with a focus on fun and making memories.



CtLC framework can be utilized in creative ways to meet the many challenges people and families face, i.e. the Individual Education Plan (IEP) meeting, Person Centered Planning prep, Transition from High School to Adult Life, and even planning for an accessible-family-vacation. When applied, CtLC offers hope, direction, resolution, and connection to and through community making a "Good Life" a possibility for ALL!

**CtLC 2nd Principle: Family Systems and Cycles** The roles people have within a family system are likely to change and develop in the course of a lifetime. Individuals and families need supports that access all facets of life and adjust as roles and needs of all family members change as they age through the family cycles.

*"We first used the CtLC Framework and Tools while updating my daughter's Individual Plan in Self-Directed Services. It helped us to focus on her vision for a good life and what steps were necessary to help her achieve this. The true value was shown, though, when we were asked to write a resume for a potential employment opportunity. The words were just not there until I realized that all the information that was needed could be found in her Trajectory and Integrated Star."*  
Babette Smith, Parent

continued on page 2

**What are the principles and tools of CtLC framework?**

The chart below illustrates the principles of CtLC framework beginning with its Core Belief that ALL people have the right to live, love, learn, work, play and pursue their life aspirations in their community. Embodied in these principles is that the person with developmental disabilities is regarded within the context of the family and community.

<b>Core Belief</b>	<b>All people have the right to live, love, learn, work, play and pursue their life aspirations in their community.</b>
	<b>ALL People</b> All people, regardless of age, ability or family role, are considered in our vision, values, policies and practices for supporting individuals and families. All families have choices and access to supports they need, whether they are known to the disability service system or not.
	<b>Family System and Cycles</b> People exist and have give-and-take roles within a family system, which adjust as the individual members change and age. Individuals and families need supports that access all facets of life and adjust as roles and needs of all family members change as they age through the family cycles.
	<b>Life Outcomes</b> Individuals and families focus on life experiences that point the trajectory toward a good quality of life based on current support structures that focus on self-determination, community living, social capital and economic sufficiency, the emphasis is on planning for life outcomes, not just services.
	<b>Life Domains</b> People lead whole lives made up of specific, connected, and integrated life domains that are important to a good quality of life, including daily living, safety and security, community living, healthy lifestyle, social and spirituality, and citizenship and advocacy.
	<b>Life Stages &amp; Trajectory</b> Individuals and families can focus on a specific life stage, with an awareness of how prior, current and future life stages and experiences impact and influence life trajectory. It is important to have a vision for a good, quality of life, and have opportunities, experiences and support to move the life trajectory in a positive direction.
	<b>Individual &amp; Family Supports</b> Supports address all facets of life and adjust as roles and needs of all family members change. Types of support might include discovery and navigation (information, education, skill building), connecting and networking (peer support), and goods and services (daily living and financial supports).
	<b>Integrated Delivery of Supports</b> Individuals and families utilize an array of integrated supports to achieve the envisioned good life, including those that are publicly or privately funded and based on eligibility, community supports that are available to anyone, relationship based supports, and technology. Taken into account are the assets and strengths of the individual and family.
	<b>Policy &amp; Systems</b> Individuals and families are satisfactorily involved in policy making so that they influence planning, policy, implementation, evaluation and revision of the practices that affect them. Every program, organization, system and policy maker must always think about a person in the context of family.

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**Additional Resources**

To learn more about CtLC framework visit CHARTING the LifeCourse™ at [lifecoursetools.com](http://lifecoursetools.com) housed at the UMKC Institute for Human Development for more information and resources.

To learn where and when CtLC presentations or workshops are being offered in Maryland please contact Mary Anne Kane-Breschi, Director of Family Supports for the Developmental Disability Administration at 410.767.8880, or [mary.kane-breschi@maryland.gov](mailto:mary.kane-breschi@maryland.gov).

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