

Published by JFA Purple Orange
104 Greenhill Road, Unley SA 5061 AUSTRALIA

Author
Robbi Williams

Telephone: + 61 (8) 8373 8333
Fax: + 61 (8) 8373 8373
Email: admin@purpleorange.org.au
Website: www.purpleorange.org.au

JFA Purple Orange

JFA Purple Orange is the social policy arm of the Julia Farr Association Inc. We are a non-government, social profit organisation that conducts research and engages in dialogue with people with lived experience of disability to develop policy and practice. Our work is anchored on the principles of Personhood and Citizenship.

Copyright

This publication is copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study, research, criticism or review, as permitted under the *Copyright Act*, no part of this publication may be reproduced by any process without written permission.

Requests for re-prints should be directed to JFA Purple Orange.

© August 2014 Julia Farr Association Inc.

ISBN: 978-0-9925883-0-4



Model of Citizenship Support **Summary Reference Guide**

About a Good Life

Each of us seeks to build a good life for ourselves. We're all different but there are some things we might commonly hope for – friends, family, a good job, enough money to live on, good health, a place of our own, opportunities to grow and learn.

About Citizenship

Many of the elements of a good life involve the person taking an active role – friend, parent, son, daughter, worker, customer, cook, traveller, volunteer, student, sports fan, club member etc. These roles are meaningful to the person and typically will be valued by other people. Collectively, these valued roles can be called *Citizenship* – how we find our valued place in the world. A key to a good life is how a person takes up roles valued by themselves and by others. Citizenship is dynamic – it is active and can change. For example, your Citizenship can drop when you are sick because the illness interferes with your capacity to work, parent, maintain family relationships, see friends, go shopping, and so on. Once you feel better, you can take up these valued roles again and regain your Citizenship.

Citizenship is not the same as Citizenship. Citizenship is about being a member of a country, and involves rights and obligations. Citizenship is static - it doesn't change; it is very rare you can lose your citizenship, but you *can* lose your Citizenship.

About Life Chances

For most people, a good life with lots of valued roles doesn't just land in their lap. It has to be built. Part of this depends on the choices the person makes, but largely it depends on the availability of life chances – assets and opportunities a person can call on.

About the Four Capitals

One way to think about life chances is to think about the different types of assets we have in our lives. For Citizenship, there are four different types of assets, or *Capital*. These are: Personal Capital, Knowledge Capital, Material Capital and Social Capital.

These apply to any person, and can help explain what might be helpful for someone to build a good life for themselves. This is particularly important for someone who doesn't yet have sufficient access to good life chances.

Personal Capital

This is about how the person sees themselves in a positive way, including having valued roles in community life. It includes how the person sees their strengths and gifts, and whether the person can plan for a positive future for themselves where they are growing as a person and taking up valued roles. Crucially, it is about the person's central involvement in the decisions that affect their life and how they approach risk.

Many people living with disability may not have had ordinary life experiences to help build a positive view of themselves and the possibilities in their life. Often, families and individuals have to spend so much of their time 'treading water', struggling to get the supports they might need, meaning there is no time or energy left to imagine how things could be different.

This means it is very important a service agency thinks about how it helps the person to reclaim the right to imagine a good life full of ordinary valued roles. This includes helping the person connect with their strengths and gifts and helping the person plan a very personal and positive future they can genuinely move towards.

How you can help a person's Personal Capital

Think about the impact of your own work on the person's Personal Capital. To build your helpfulness:

- find ways to make sure your actions are always respectful of the person as a unique and valued human being
- find ways to make sure you truly *listen* to the person, through what they do as much as what they say
- think deeply about the idea that each person you support can take up valued roles in community life, and find ways to consistently demonstrate this in the way you help the person.



Personal
Capital

Knowledge Capital

This is about what a person knows and can do. It is also about what information is available to the person. For example, most people now take for granted an internet connection and a smart phone/tablet for browsing online. Information is very important and not having access to it can really affect a person's life chances.



Knowledge Capital

We feel this deeply, for example, when we lose our smart phone, when our online connection is down, or when we can no longer use a skill or knowledge because of an injury. Life is about growing and learning; it is important to have opportunities that help us build new knowledge, skills and wisdom.

Many people living with disability may not have had the same opportunities as other people to use and grow their knowledge and skills. This could be for a number of reasons, including because a knowledge building (e.g. a school, college or apprenticeship workplace) is not accessible, or because of other people's low expectations about what the person is capable of, or because of support issues. This means a service agency needs to think about how it supports a person to make full use of existing skills and knowledge and build new skills and knowledge. It also means a service agency needs to think about how it makes information available to the people it supports, and whether it is filtering that information because of its own concerns and needs.

How you can help a person's Knowledge Capital

Think about the impact of your own work on the person's Knowledge Capital. To build your helpfulness:

- find ways to routinely support the person to make full use of the knowledge and skills they already have
- find ways to routinely support the person to grow knowledge and skills through new experiences and learning
- be mindful of the types of information you might be filtering, and find ways to make sure this doesn't hinder the person from making an informed choice.

Material Capital

This is about the tangible things we have in our lives. Some things we personally control, like our money, home and possessions, while other things we share with people, like public transport, workplaces, the beach, shopping malls, schools etc.



Material Capital

Possibly the most important piece of Material Capital is having enough money to live on, and for most people this means having a living wage. The money in our pocket brings choices; no money, no choices.

Unfortunately, many people living with disability and their families are living on a lower income, often because of difficulties accessing fair paid work. This is catastrophic to the person's life chances. Similarly, access issues and attitudes prevent people living with disability from using public amenities. This is also catastrophic because community amenities are an important gateway to new opportunities and experiences.

This means a service agency needs to think about how it supports a person so their possessions are respected. Also, the agency's support should help the chances of the person moving into proper waged employment. The agency needs to avoid creating arrangements, like special buses and group outings that stop the person using ordinary community amenities in the same way as other people.

How you can help a person's Material Capital

Think about the impact of your own work on the person's Material Capital. To build your helpfulness find ways to routinely support the person:

- in a way that is respectful of the person's possessions and their control of those possessions - this is particularly important if you are supporting the person at their home
- in ways that maintain and build skills that can help the person find and keep waged employment
- in ways that mean they regularly access community amenities on the same basis as other people.

Social Capital

This is about having people in our lives who we know and who know us. Having people in our lives fulfils many needs – companionship, emotional support, material assistance, new opportunities, etc. The people in our lives represent our *Social Capital*.



Some of these relationships will be deeper and more intimate, while others will be lighter, maybe specific to a place. All these relationships, deeper and lighter, can bring familiarity, comfort, joy, and *belonging* – where we're valued, and it will be noticed if we're not around.

At the start of life, relationships begin with the immediate family in our lives, and as we develop typical life experiences we connect with new people – childhood playmates, schoolmates, co-workers, customers, flatmates, neighbours, club members, etc. This diversity brings us opportunities to grow. Outside of family, our deepest and most important relationships begin with meeting each of those people for the very first time somewhere. This is why ordinary regular opportunities to connect are critical to the growth and maintenance of our Social Capital.

This means a service agency needs to consider how it supports each person to maintain contact with the important people in their lives and to meet new people. Critically, a service agency needs to think about how it supports connection with a diverse range of people, not just staff and other people living with disability.

How you can help a person's Social Capital

Think about the impact of your own work on the person's Social Capital. To build your helpfulness:

- find ways to routinely support the person to maintain regular connection with the people they identify as important in their life
- find ways to routinely support the person to meet new people in ordinary valued ways
- find ways to avoid making negative assumptions about which types of ordinary valued relationships might be beyond a person
- find ways to support the person so that other people in the community truly and directly connect with that person as a valued human being.

Rising to the Challenge of Citizenship Support

For hundreds of years, conventional disability support has tended to make the person living with disability a passive recipient of care instead of an active valued member of the wider community. The person becomes a spectator of life instead of an actor in life.

Conventional patterns of support can result in:

- the person (and their family) having lower expectations of their own value and what might be possible in their life, with no significant control of their destiny
- the person having greatly reduced opportunities to access a successful education and other opportunities for lifelong learning and growth
- the person having much lower access to waged employment, personal possessions, a home of their own, and mainstream community amenities
- the person having a much narrower pool of friends and acquaintances in their life, and even being isolated and lonely.

This has to change, and there is not a moment to lose. This means each worker (whether paid or volunteer) needs to think deeply about each person they support, and make sure every action genuinely helps the person to grow their life chances. The *Model of Citizenship Support* gives you a framework for this, by focusing on four types of life chances - the Four Capitals - so you can be truly helpful in what you do.

The most important thing is your own leadership. This means you become a leader in your own practice, taking personal responsibility to make sure each and every action you take helps build the person's life chances. Hold yourself truly accountable for this.

