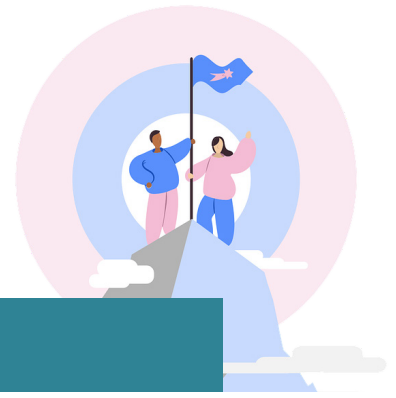


# Tools for Building Meaningful Lives

## The Positive Personal Profile



### The Positive Personal Profile: What is it?

The Positive Personal Profile (PPP) summarizes an individual's strengths, interests, and personal preferences to help build meaningful community connections and target employment opportunities. Teachers, social workers, and service providers can use this information to customize services and supports. For many, the PPP's emphasis on strengths over deficits re-frames how they see themselves and think about community engagement and employment.

Figure 1: Example of a Positive Personal Profile

Name: John

Date: 8/15/2021

<p><b>Dreams and Goals</b></p> <p>I want to work - live in my own apartment. Wants to learn to ride a bike. Or maybe learn karate. Want to have a girlfriend.</p>	<p><b>Interests</b></p> <p>Has a police scanner- monitors calls. Does "ride-alongs with police. Volunteered at fire house. Loves Geo-caching- does this with two friends. Likes going out to restaurants (loves Mexican food). Likes playing with his two labs. Collects patches from police, fire dept, first responders and/or public services.</p>
<p><b>Talents, Skills and Knowledge</b></p> <p>Can read/write simple sentences. Can match numbers, letters and dates. Great with using the internet to find things and reading maps. Knows a lot about Public transit, Public safety and services. Loves organizing things - putting things back where they go - keeps his room immaculate. Organizes/alphabetizes his patch collection.</p>	<p><b>Learning Styles</b></p> <p>Needs repeated practice to learn new skills. Modeling cues work best - auditory processing issues? Needs routine and structure.</p>
<p><b>Values</b></p> <p>Family and friends. Helping people. Following the rules, doing what is right, Public service-supporting &amp; helping others.</p>	<p><b>Positive Personality Traits</b></p> <p>Quiet, but loves people. Great sense of humor - loves to laugh. Loves to help others. Works hard to do things "on his own, very organized."</p>
<p><b>Environmental Preferences</b></p> <p>Likes friendly, fun environments. Loves to move around, going places. Likes fun, rowdy people. Likes to be outside. Likes routine tasks. Likes structured, organized places.</p>	<p><b>Dislikes</b></p> <p>People staring or yelling at him. Doesn't like speaking in front of groups. Doesn't like "desk" work or school. Places that are too chaotic or noisy. Bad or mean people.</p>
<p><b>Life and Work Experiences</b></p> <p>Bussed tables and janitorial skills while in school (hated it). Worked as a courtesy clerk at Safeway (hated it). Spent a lot of time in the hospital when young.</p>	<p><b>Support System</b></p> <p>Mom, Dad and sister (living at home). Best friends: Sam and Jose.</p>
<p><b>Specific Challenges</b></p> <p>Flexibility - transitions and change are difficult. Prioritizing and judgment can be hard. Verbal directions don't work too well. Stutters when he gets overwhelmed or is nervous.</p>	<p><b>Solutions and Accommodations</b></p> <p>Checklist works well. Set job duties. Back of house roles, not customer service.</p>
<p><b>Career Ideas and Possibilities to Explore</b></p> <p>Uniform suppliers for public services and first responders. Cleaning/restocking ambulances. Police Academy. 911 or 311 dispatch centers. Red Cross, Transit Center, Tourist information centers. Supporting land survey crews. Material management in a hospital. TSA agent.</p>	

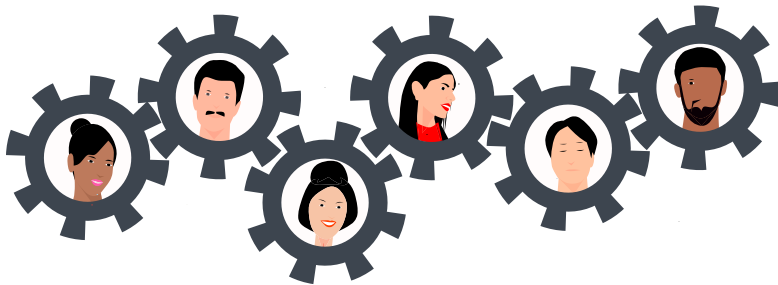
## Why Use It?

When asked to talk about their interests and preferences, or their personal goals, some people may have difficulty answering these questions, especially those with more limited life experiences. The PPP can help jumpstart or guide such discovery efforts. During an intake process, teachers, social workers, and services providers can use the PPP as a starting point and roadmap for developing person-centered service plan. Community Instructors can use it to pinpoint areas where more information is needed and to identify potential social opportunities and community connections that might be worth exploring. Job Developers can use it for targeting employment settings where the person's attributes and skills will be beneficial. It can also function as a crib sheet of sorts for writing a resume or preparing for an interview.

## How to Complete It?

The PPP should be given to numerous people: the individual, family, neighbors, and anyone who knows the person well. Having multiple people complete a profile provides a broad perspective on the individual. People should be told to fill out as much as they can and not to worry if they can't fill in every box.

The next step is to schedule a profiling meeting to share peoples' insights. This can be done with a core team or everyone who completed a profile. The group works together to consolidate their profiles into a single document that highlights the most important findings and themes.



The PPP should be considered a living document. Teachers, social workers, and service providers should review and update the PPP with individuals whenever new things are discovered or the information changes, especially before service planning meetings. Reviewing and updating an individual's PPP prior to a service planning meeting can help the person pinpoint new goals and actively participate in the service planning process.

### Figure 2: What do I write on a Positive Personal Profile?

**Dreams and Goals:** What do you really want out of life and work? What do you hope your life will look like in 3 to 5 years? What would you like to accomplish? What would make your life fun and satisfying to you?

**Interests:** What activities energize you physically, mentally, emotionally, and/or spiritually? What activities have you been most enthusiastic about? What hobbies and leisure-time pursuits do you work hard at? What have you been most involved in? What do you like to read and/or talk about the most?

**Talents, Skills and Knowledge:** What are your natural gifts? These can be in music, math, making friends easily, noticing small details, speaking a second language - to name a few. What special skills and knowledge have you acquired through education, training or practice? Think about times you have been complimented for doing something well. What were you doing?

**Learning Styles:** How do you prefer to receive and process information? How do you learn best (e.g. reading, writing, hands-on, listening, watching others/demonstrations)?

**Values:** What are the most important aspects of your life? What guides your actions and activities? What issues or causes resonate for you?

**Positive Personality Traits:** When people say good things about you, what do they say? What traits do you have that will help you be successful at work? Are you easy going or easily frustrated? Are you a quiet person or boisterous? Do you "go with the flow" or are you outspoken? Do you have any hot buttons?

**Environmental Preferences:** What type of work environment energizes you? What type helps you to focus? What do you need in the environment to be successful at your job?

**Dislikes:** What are your "deal breakers?" What type of job or job setting would you NOT like? What is it about that situation that you do not like?

**Life and Work Experience:** What unique life experiences contribute to who you are and what you think? What work experiences have contributed to what you want to do?

**Support System:** With whom can you talk when you need a pep talk or honest feedback? Who is on your cheerleading squad?

**Specific Challenges:** What professional weaknesses or areas of inexperience do you have that could impact your job search? What limitations do you think your disability imposes on your job search?

**Solutions to Your Challenges:** How do you plan to minimize your weaknesses? What work arounds or technology do you use to get the job done? Are there tasks or situations you should avoid in order to manage your disability?

## Setting Goals, Making Meaningful Community Connections

The PPP clarifies what a person wants to do and what that individual needs to learn to be successful in today's world. Teachers and service providers can use this information to connect people with others who have similar interests or passions, making the development of friendships a little easier.

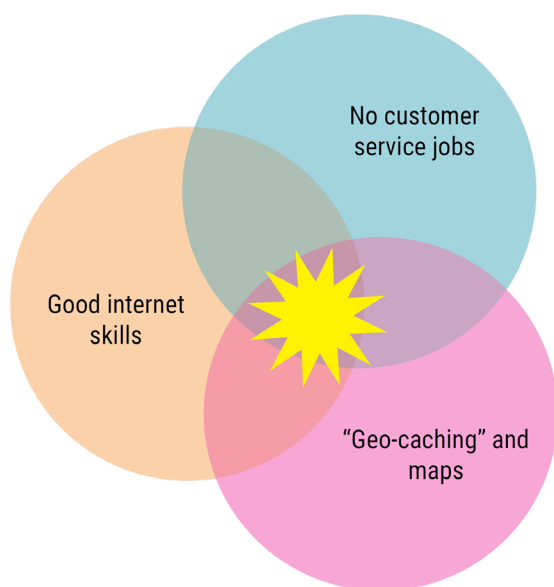
## Targeting Employment Opportunities

In addition to targeting social opportunities, the PPP is an invaluable tool for rehabilitation counselors and job developers. It provides critical information for targeting employment placements. While its main focus is on the individual's talents and interests, it also includes useful information about work experiences, environmental preferences, and dislikes (or deal breakers) Job Developers can use the profile to pinpoint employment settings and tasks in which a job-seeker's unique skill set will be valued and where the individual will *sparkle*.



*Figure 3: Examples of Venn Diagrams*

Use Venn Diagrams to target employment settings based on the candidate's unique characteristics.



## Brainstorming with Venn Diagrams

One effective way to target potential employment opportunities using a jobseeker's profile is to conduct a brainstorming session using Venn diagrams.

- Bring together a group of people who know the individual well - the bigger the better. Having family, friends, neighbors and others in the room makes the meeting more fun and makes finding a job a "team effort". Having a large group guarantees there will be lots of different ideas, perspectives and experiences in the room. The group's personal networks and professional connections can also be tapped for "warm contacts" when an ideal employer is identified.
- Make it visual- have a large whiteboard or poster paper on the wall to do various combinations in multiple Venn diagrams. Make sure people have access to the internet so the group can research ideas in real time.
- Have the job seeker share their PPP with the group and highlight important themes and attributes.
- Using the PPP, drop three characteristics into a Venn diagram (one in each circle). Anchor each diagram with a hard skill, experience, or talent. Then add a passion or personality trait. This can be a hobby, or a value – something that motivates the job seeker. The third circle can be filled with anything else in the profile; drop in an environmental preference or preferred population to serve or even a dislike or "deal breaker". Play around with this concept, creating 2 or 3 different diagrams. See Figure 3 for more examples.
- With each diagram, have the group brainstorm potential employment situations, settings, and job tasks that match the combination, asking "Where is the bullseye?" and "What jobs and employers does this combination bring to mind?"
- Do multiple diagrams to try and identify 10 specific jobs and/or businesses where the jobseeker's unique characteristics would be an asset.

Using the Positive Personal Profile and brainstorming with Venn diagrams focus the discussion on a job-seeker's strengths, minimizes their disabilities. It helps job seekers and their support networks to think creatively about the local employment market and imagine the possibilities.

### **Maria B.** *Mother of a young woman with IDD*

"This is the first meeting I have attended that made me think my daughter can be employed. Now I see her as a worker."