



# Guide to support life project activation in early care

A benefit of the social services catalogue



European Regional Development Fund ERDF

“A way to make Europe”

# CONTENT

<b>Introduction: Why a guide to activate life projects.....</b>	<b>4</b>
Objective.....	6
Who is it aimed at?.....	6
Target population. Profiles of beneficiaries .....	7
What are its roots? .....	7
<b>1. Life project .....</b>	<b>8</b>
Contents .....	8
Qualities.....	8
Components .....	8
Values .....	8
Purpose.....	9
Goals.....	9
Actions.....	9
Coherence .....	9
Areas of life project .....	9
<b>2. Life project activation service: content of benefit.....</b>	<b>10</b>
Benefit .....	10
Elements.....	10
Life project.....	11
Support plan .....	11
Access requirements and conditions.....	12
Regulation.....	12
Care environments .....	13
Results .....	13
<b>3. Paradigm shift in care.....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>4. An integrative model based on meaning .....</b>	<b>18</b>
Elements of life project .....	18
Meaningfulness in life .....	19
Values: “what is important to the family” .....	20
Sources of importance.....	21
Levels and actions.....	24
<b>5. Itinerary-process and life project activation methodologies in early care.....</b>	<b>25</b>
a. Welcome.....	25
b. Assignment of Case Coordinator .....	26
c. Evaluation and design of support plan .....	26
c.1. Interaction to get to know the family “I want to get to know you” .....	26
c.1.1. Information gathering.....	28

c.1.2. Closure and contextualisation .....	29
c.2. Clarification. "A little more about what is important to you and what you expect from the future" .....	30
c.3. Interview on routines.....	32
c.4. Specification of supports .....	33
c.4.1. Establishing committed actions: "Moving from words to actions" .....	33
c.4.1.1. Characteristics of objectives and actions .....	34
c.4.1.2. Specifying objectives and actions .....	34
c.4.2. Drawing up the support plan: "The map of the journey".....	35
c.5. Support group .....	37
d. Identification of barriers. "How can I help you?".....	37
e. Monitoring.....	38
<b>6. Professionals .....</b>	<b>39</b>
Meaningfulness for professionals.....	39
Professional competencies.....	40
Ethics .....	42
Protection of privacy and personal information.....	42
Scientific evidence on meaningfulness and life project .....	43
<b>Annexes .....</b>	<b>44</b>
Annex 1.1: Conversations based on what is important.....	44
Annex 1.2: Tools. Characteristics of metaphors and experiential exercises.....	50
Annex 1.3: Metaphors for closure (establishment of support context) and contextualisation .....	54
Annex 1.4: Practical notebook.....	59
Annex 2.1: Metaphors and exercises to clarify what is important .....	71
Annex 2.2: Values and strengths.....	85
Annex 3.1: Metaphors and exercises to establish committed actions .....	96
Annex 4: Support group.....	114
Annex 5: Recommendations for life transitions .....	117
Annex 6: Value dimensions .....	119
Annex 7. Application to a real case .....	122
Annex 8. Bibliography.....	130
<b>Participants in the elaboration of the document .....</b>	<b>132</b>

*"I realise that if I were stable, prudent and static, I would live in death. Therefore, I accept the confusion, uncertainty, fear, and emotional ups and downs. Because that is the price I am willing to pay for a fluid, perplexing, and exciting life".*

Carl Rogers, "On becoming a person" (1979)

## Introduction: Why a guide to activate life projects?

Recently, a person who, having had a very active life, was immobilised by a degenerative disease, was asked: "what is your vision of life now?" And she answered: "now I see it more than ever as an opportunity to create value by being happy". This person was getting involved in the struggle to advance the care of people suffering from the same disease. She had found a reason to live in a moment of special vulnerability, something that mattered to her, that was worthwhile and gave meaning to her life.

Science is confirming that people who perceive that their daily life has meaning, a purpose, are healthier, more active and more satisfied.

Sometimes, new realities hit human beings and we go through situations or circumstances in which we are not able to do what gave meaning and joy to our life. Throughout our lives, we go through moments in which we reflect on the direction of our future and our life project. Sometimes we see clearly, we know what we want, but at other times, we are in doubt and seek the support of a family member, friend or person we trust, sharing our doubts.

Many of the families served by early care services find themselves at a time in their lives when they have to deal with situations that alter the life project of each member and need help in imagining a life where the situation of vulnerability is integrated into their project, resulting in a more meaningful life. They need to know their goals and values to build a rich and meaningful life and existence beyond the situation they are experiencing.

Many professionals and services are already doing very relevant work in this regard, with very positive results. The implementation of family-centred practices (FCP) in early care has come to incorporate a more contextual model of development, empowering and providing families with resources and strategies that impact on a child's healthy development and meaningful family life. These important practical contributions, without being entirely visible, have taught us to support in greater detail the activation of the families' life project.

This guide is about how to support individuals/families in a non-invasive manner to connect with what is important in their lives, when suddenly, the possibility of a disability in their child produces a major disruption in their expectations and life plan. It therefore aims to bring an essence of vital meaning to the family-centred practices and natural environments already in place.

It is not, therefore, a matter of how to get rid of something bad or negative, nor about how to implement each of the steps of the technical intervention, but about how to help approach and **build** a meaningful personal and family life by bringing out what is important for the family nucleus and by connecting each of the work objectives for the child and the family with what they value.

The opportunities brought by adopting a family-centred approach to early care are directed at several levels.

1. To improve results by actively helping families to find the key elements to face their present situation and to orient themselves toward a satisfactory and meaningful life, in accordance with their own values, history and identity as a family.
2. To achieve care and planning centred on the person and the family, on their values and on what is worthwhile for them.
3. To delve deeper in the integral and trans-sectoral attention, approaching the provision of support to the person as an indivisible whole.
4. To take advantage of potential synergies between the different formal and informal resources that support the person and the family.

There are different situations of need that require a person/family to face an adaptation in their life project based on important life transitions. For example, the reorganisation of parents' expectations regarding their child's life when faced with a diagnosis of disability.

A doctor who had to give the news about the presence of disability or alterations of newborns among his duties, recounted: *"I used to say to the parents: I am sorry, you have had a child with a disability. Until one day a father said to me: "You tell me the news, I'll see if I'm sorry or not".*

In the case of early care, other specific scenarios may also present themselves in relation to what has just been discussed. For example, those families in which warning signs are detected in the development of a son or daughter, signs that could lead to a disability, face a situation that, according to their circumstances, could generate a significant disruption in their family life project, and in the life projects of each of the members of the family unit. Some consequences of this would be:

- Altering expectations regarding their son or daughter's life;
- Generating anxiety in the face of the unknown;
- Generating attitudes and feelings derived from the parents' previous conception of the disability;
- Disturbances can occur in family relations, with friends, in the professional activity of the members of the family nucleus, in their daily life circumstances, in their access to leisure, in results in training, development or learning contexts...

The moment when news of the diagnosis or the presence of significant developmental warnings is given constitutes one of the **critical moments** when these disturbances may occur and when support may be needed to reorganise family expectations for both the child and other family members.

Marta, mother of an 18-month-old boy, conceived through In Vitro Fertilisation and born after 3 previous abortions, who has just been diagnosed by genetic test as "Autosomal dominant mental retardation 29":  
*"I thought that after so many failures, we could have some rest and enjoyment with Hugo's birth... and now we find this ... ALL OF THIS IS SHIT!"*

However, there are other scenarios in which disturbances can also occur, although with different degrees of intensity in each case:

- The moment of transmitting that news to the family, friends and/or surroundings.
- Facing daily life through the disability, both at home and in other environments (community, professional...).
- Getting it right and accessing appropriate support services.
- The entry into the educational field.
- The family's transition away from early care towards the educational environment.
- Having or not having access to relevant information based on evidence-based knowledge.

In all these cases, in addition to providing support to promote the child's development and autonomy, as well as training in parenting skills, other support may be needed aimed at helping **the family to discover 'what really matters'**, and to **develop a positive outlook especially on their child**, so that the disability or developmental impairment does not overshadow their life, and they can even find and create meaning in it all.

## Objective

In response to the situations and needs outlined above, the guide presented here aims to develop a context of **family-centred care** that incorporates the most current scientific developments. In this context, the procedures for **activating the life project** in a non-invasive manner, respecting and taking into consideration what the person and family in a situation of social vulnerability values, take on special relevance.

In other words, it aims to give effectiveness to the Life Project Support Service benefit within the framework of the specificity of early care services.

## Who is it aimed at?

Early care professionals, especially the professional of reference who will serve as a coordinator of the supports needed to enable meaningful living and ensure that those supports respect the family's interests and life expectations. Similarly, the focus of the guide is on all members involved in the mission of supporting the family in addressing life changes and developing a meaningful life.

Early care professionals have always shown a special sensitivity to the situations that families face in this field, so they are the key to offer a service of this kind, with the maximum human warmth and based on a strong professional commitment.

## Target population. Profiles of beneficiaries

In the field of early care, it is understood that, potentially, any family that enters the early care service, motivated by the detection of a warning in the development or risk of a disability, will benefit from the support service for the activation of the life project (care based on what is important for the family), **its development being implicit from the first contact.**

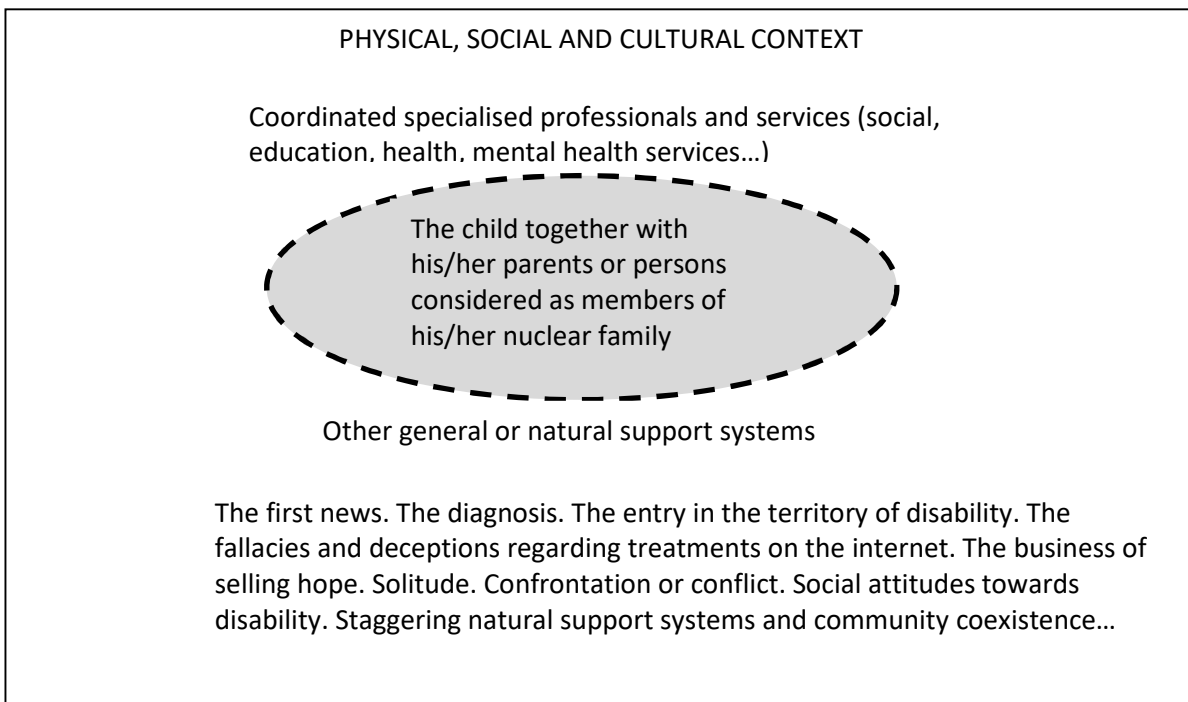
Specifically, these would be families with one or more children under six years of age with developmental disorders or at risk of suffering them.

## What are its roots?

In order to approach the reading and application of this guide, it is advisable to know and to understand the philosophical roots that nourish and permeate the present guide and that have to do with a way of understanding the human being and his/her behaviour. It is important to emphasise that this perspective establishes a point of view that is neither better nor worse than others, but rather different, and that to understand all its developmental ramifications, it is necessary to place oneself within this perspective.

The premises that derive from these roots are, on the one hand, that human behaviour makes sense in the context in which it originates. Therefore, to understand a behaviour it is necessary to know the context in which it occurs. At the same time, it approaches behaviour from a functional point of view, which implies that two actions can be equal in form (e.g. crying) but have different functions (the child who cries to obtain some gift from his environment is not the same as the child who cries to communicate physical pain).

Contextually, this would be the meaning of the service described in this guide.







# 1. Life project

## Contents

For the purposes of this benefit, a life project is understood to be **the set of purposes, objectives, goals, activities and expectations that give meaning to the life of each person and family, that are connected to their values on the basis of ethics, justice and universal human rights, and that serve as a guide to maintain the chosen direction and to live a life with meaning.**

It includes both the decisions made by the family and the expectations it has of itself in relation to the environment in which it is integrated.

## Qualities

- The human being as a project for the future requires self-determination, which is the main component of quality of life. Self-determination is expressed through the life project that is continuously updated. Furthermore, self-determination is the essence of the freedom and dignity of the person to set his/her goals, aspirations and expectations, which affect the very meaning of existence.
- The life project of each family seeks to maintain control of its own life, avoiding the **defencelessness learned** and promoting **empowerment** (both in the choice of value directions, as in the learning of skills needed to support the development of the child).
- It builds the perception of one's family history, giving meaning to existence, through decisions and choices.
- It involves the identity of the family, what it wants to be.
- The life project depends on the moment, on the circumstances.
- The contents that give meaning to life can be conscious and manifest or remain hidden: they can be discovered.
- Some contents change and others remain over time.

## Components

### Values

Values characterise what is important to the person/family. They describe the personal qualities that one wishes to embody in one's actions, the kind of person/family one wants to be, and the fundamental principles that guide and motivate one's journey through life. They define that direction which, when followed, is associated with a feeling of satisfaction in living life as one wants it and that life is worth living.

**Example:** *being a present and willing parent.*

## Purpose

It is the subjective experience of possessing a system of general objectives that provides a sense of direction in life (McKnight and Kashdan, 2009).

## Goals

It is about what we want to achieve, also defining different goals that the person/family sets for themselves in order to maintain the direction set by their values.

**Example 1:** *learning how to best support my child's development in all areas*

**Goal 1:** to get advice on how best to support my child's development and manage my emotions in difficult times.

**Example 2:** *being a healthy person so I can be present with my child as much as possible.*

**Goal 1:** to move my body to a greater extent.

**Goal 2:** to take care of my nutrition.

## Actions

These are those behaviours that the person sets in motion to achieve the proposed goals and objectives.

**Example 1:** I will attend sessions with the psychologist once a week.

**Example 2:** - I will go to the gym 2 days a week to do yoga.

- I will take one less spoonful of sugar with my coffee.

## Coherence

Degree of relationship between the actions a person takes and his/her values, that is, with what the person considers as important.

The meaning of life is associated with the **coherence** between a person's actions and goals and his/her personal values (what is important).

**Example:** *a person wants to move more and starts to walk for 15 minutes, increasing very gradually the time taken to move their body as they go along and the positive dynamic makes them move even further in that direction.*

Similarly, this feeling of life decreases when the person's behaviour and the goals they set for themselves take them away from what really matters to them.

**Example:** *a person wants to move their body but they don't go out because they feel lazy or tired. Their later discomfort leads them to remain inactive on the couch for hours eating between meals.*

## Life project areas

Different areas of the life project must be taken into account, although the intervention may be in all of them or in specific ones, and with different intensities depending on each family situation:

- Organisation of a meaningful and quality **daily life**: this implies the support to foster among the family members a daily activity coherent with the interests, desires and purposes in settings such as the home, workplace, everyday community life, leisure and hobby environments, etc.

- Support in identifying **purposes**, goals or challenges that provide special motivation for their connection to a meaningful family life.
- **Support for deep life transitions:** situations, such as those described above (moment of receiving the diagnosis, etc.) where families must substantially reorganise their lives to cope with them.

The different profiles and care environments will determine, to a great extent, the most relevant areas of the life project.

## 2. Life project activation support service: Content of benefit

### Benefit

It is defined as a technical action to support the family and each of its members:

- Thus, they can **activate their life project**:
  - by identifying the purposes and goals, activities and situations that give meaning to their lives,
  - on the basis of their values, hopes and dreams, tastes, desires,
  - seeking and promoting opportunities within the context.
- **Empowering them** to maintain control of their own lives:
  - from their personal strengths,
  - in the context of a circle of people they trust, preferably made up of people from their natural network of relationships.
- Seek opportunities to enable **family-centred care and practices**
  - according to each stage of the life cycle and the social role,
  - facilitating transitions or changes that the family faces.
- It is included as an essential component of other supports such as early care service provision.

### Elements

The elements that will be specified in the support service for the activation of the life project are the following:

## Life project

- Identifying the life that the family wishes to live. This is the path that the family draws up in order to achieve objectives and goals that give meaning to its life and to activate actions in the present without losing sight of the future to be built on a day-to-day basis.
- The life project will describe the image of the future that the family wants to achieve and the way to get there over time.
- It can be flexible in its format. It can range from a reflection on what is important (the values) and some objectives described in a general manner, to a much more concrete expression of commitments in the form of actions and their timing. This will be determined by the different areas and by the existence or not of barriers at the personal level.
- It includes the areas that are relevant to each personal or family situation:
  - Everyday life: from the basic activities of daily life to the instrumental ones. Daily, weekly, yearly routines, etc.
  - The purposes, goals or challenges that the family sets for itself.
  - In-depth reorganisation of the life project in some aspect in situations that involve, for example, important life transitions.
- The life project will be the basis for the organisation of the support that the family needs.
- It refers to both quality of life and a meaningful existence, which makes life worth living.

## Support plan

- This is the set of actions for support and facilitation that the family needs to be able to activate and/or develop their life project and enjoy a meaningful life. The ingredients are the family values (what is important) for their child and for the whole family.
- The support plan addresses the family's priorities by providing skills, resources, services, training, overcoming barriers, etc., all connected to the underlying values.
- It will be established when the family needs and wants it.
- The life project will be the basis for the organisation of the support that the family needs.
- The support plan rests on two pillars:
  - How best to help the child achieve the best developmental outcomes while preserving the quality of life in all its dimensions.
  - How to support the family to help their child achieve those outcomes and to foster a meaningful family life (connected to their values).
- It will cover all the dimensions that are part of the personal and social development, and includes both informal support from people in their family and social environment, existing support in their community and support provided by social services and in coordination, where appropriate, with other social welfare systems.

- The life project may include more issues than those covered by the support plan benefit that is the subject of this guide. Therefore, the final support plan will be the result of the shared and agreed upon covenant with the family regarding the life project and the resources offered by the service.

### **Access requirements and conditions**

Without prejudice to the provisions of the regulation, the main requirements and conditions for access are the following:

- Belonging to one of the above-mentioned profiles.
- Being a beneficiary of the early care service.

### **Regulation**

- Law 16/2010, of 20 December, on Social Services of Castilla y León and the Catalogue of Social Services.
- It is of an essential nature.
- It is compatible with the rest of the benefits of the catalogue.
- Ownership: Administration of the Region of Castilla y León and the Local Administration.
- No financial contribution from the user.

## Care environments

The life project activation support service is implemented both in residential and day care settings and in those programmes or services of outpatient technical support.

Below are some basic differences and similarities between these settings:

<b>Areas</b>	<b>Residential and day-care centres</b>	<b>Outpatient technical support services</b>
<b>Daily life</b>	It takes place in the institution that determines the details of routines, personal contacts and objects of people's daily lives. It takes on the utmost importance. The service is responsible for the details of daily life.	It takes place in the person's home with their family unit and community environment. The reorganisation decided by the family is supported. The service is not responsible for the details of daily life.
<b>Purposes, goals</b>	Although it is desirable, people do not always propose or require a reflection on their purpose.	It can be the main object of the service in some cases.
<b>Deep life transitions</b>	Daily life necessarily, and on demand purposes or personal growth.	Coping with major life changes is prevalent.

For the purposes of this guide aimed at activating the life project of children and families who come to early care services, the outpatient environment will be taken as a reference. As mentioned above, different settings will result in different levels of depth of care and support activities. Without losing sight of the other proposed areas, daily life and deep life transitions will be the predominant areas of work with people attending early care.

## Results

The benefit will be aimed at achieving significant and valued results, for and by the family: having a life project based on the meaning of what matters to the family, connected to its values.

The action should be directed to one or more areas of the life project and the result can be observed through one or more of the following indicators:

- Organisation of daily life. Includes weekly, monthly and yearly routines.
- Established life purpose or goals.
- Deep life transition identified for personal growth.

## 3. Paradigm shift in care

Social services are moving in all areas from a model based on the service or the benefits, which implies fragmentation, discontinuity and incoherence, to another based on comprehensive care and centred on the person and the family.

This person-centred approach to care has become increasingly widespread in recent years and has been adopted by both the World Health Organisation (WHO) and the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).

In general, person-centred care is based on a number of basic principles:

- It implies recognising the individuality and uniqueness of the person. The belief and feeling that the person is valuable as he/she is, with all his/her strengths and vulnerabilities. As Wilson (2015) points out, *“Vulnerability is not what differentiates us human beings, it is what unites us”*.
- Respect for the values, preferences and needs expressed by people.
- Integration of care.
- Information, communication and education.
- Physical comfort.
- Emotional support in moments of anxiety and fear.
- Involvement of family and friends.
- Access to care.
- Transition and continuity.

According to Teresa Martínez:

*“Person-centred care models provide a radically different vision from other, more classic approaches. Some authors have differentiated between person-centred and service- or organisation-centred models. Although the latter also seek individualised care, the role of the user in their care is clearly different”*.

The life project activation benefit, where an approach based on meaning is adopted, should deepen the focus of care on the individual and the family.

“A conception of disability centred on the person as opposed to one centred on the deficit implies the need to rethink the services, as these were created within the culture of the deficit and now require their transformation towards the culture of the person, of citizenship, of quality of life”

Javier Tamarit, Murcia, III International Congress on Autism - 2014

With regard to the care of persons with dependency and/or a disability in an outpatient setting, it is worth highlighting Person-Centred Planning (in the case of a disability), Psychosocial Rehabilitation (in the case of persons with mental disorders) and **Family-Centred Practices-FCP (in early care)**. All seem to be suitable models because they focus on the interests of the person or the family and disregard symptomatic control or compensation for the disability in order to build a meaningful life.

The following table indicates the difference between person-centred and service-centred models. Even when referring to the person, this differentiation also has explanatory and informative value in relation to family-centred approaches.

**Person-centred models**

focus on the person's capabilities and skills.

Their intervention is global and they refer to life plans.

Decisions are shared with users, friends, family, professionals.

They see people within their community and their usual environment.

They bring people closer together by discovering common experiences.

They outline a desirable lifestyle, with an unlimited number of desirable experiences.

They focus on quality of life.

They create person-centred planning teams to solve problems as they arise.

They make those who work directly responsible for making good decisions.

They organise actions in the community to include users, the family and workers.

They respond to needs based on shared responsibilities and personal commitment.

Services can be tailored and responsive to individuals. Resources can be distributed to serve people's interests.

**Service-centred models**

focus on deficits and needs; they tend to label.

They intervene at more specific levels: behavioural deficiencies, alterations, pathologies, etc.

The decisions depend fundamentally on the professionals.

They frame people, as in the context of social services.

They distance people from each other by emphasising their differences.

They plan life composed of programmes with a limited number of options.

They focus on filling the places that a service offers.

They rely on standard interdisciplinary teams.

They delegate work to those who work directly.

They organise meetings for professionals.

They respond to needs based on job descriptions.

Services are not responsive to individual needs. They are limited to a pre-set menu. They maintain professional interests.

New initiatives are worthwhile even if they have a small scale.

New initiatives are only worthwhile if they can be implemented on a large scale.

They use a familiar and clear language.

They use a clinical and technical language.



*Adapted from Sevilla J; Abellán R; Herrera G; Pardo C; Casas X; Fernández R (2009). Source: Teresa Martínez, 2013.*

This guide aims to contribute to the models already put into practice with a pragmatic development of the basic principles that serve as a foundation for the knowledge of human behaviour, allowing for the flexible development of methodologies and strategies that focus on **what is important** and **what is a life worth living for the person**.

This perspective has important implications in terms of the professional role and the qualities of the interactions that are established between the person providing the support and the person or environment receiving the support.

Some of these qualities are indicated below:

- **Horizontality:** the professional gives the vision of what he/she perceives from his/her perspective. This is neither better nor worse, it is a different perspective.
- **Active listening:** he/she is attentive to the information that the person(s) emit(s) in all its forms.
- **Validation:** the professional ratifies both verbally and non-verbally what is expressed. He/she respects personal decisions, preferences and options. The service adapts to the person/family and not the person to the service.
- **Connection and closeness:** interactions as natural and close as possible.
- **Empathy:** put oneself in the person's shoes to experience and understand what the person may be experiencing.
- **Allowing the presence of vulnerability:** the professional makes self-revelations and generates an environment where vulnerability is allowed, *"it is what unites us, not what differentiates us"*.

The following text (García-Sánchez et al., 2014)<sup>1</sup> explains the characteristics of a model centred on what is important for the family; as can be seen, it is a model that is aligned with what has previously been set out in general terms as a person-centred approach.

*Family-centred model: professionals consider families as equal partners; as necessary collaborators in a common enterprise, which is to facilitate and improve the child's development possibilities. The intervention is individualized, flexible and sensitive to the needs of each child and family. The identification of these needs is carried out with the help of the family itself. The intervention focuses on strengthening and supporting family functioning, especially in terms of generating contextually mediated learning opportunities for the child, taking care that families do not reproduce therapeutic intervention models at home. The professional is constantly concerned that the families are the ones who will make the final decisions, within a planned strategy to enhance their competence, their adherence and commitment to the project of actions to be carried out.*

If it were necessary to indicate in a short paragraph what the family-centred model consists in (also sometimes referred to as an approach or, as is the case below, as family-centred practice), the following words of Linda Leal would be worthwhile:

---

<sup>1</sup> García-Sánchez, F. A., Escorcia, C. T., Sánchez-López, M. C., Orcajada, N., & Hernández-Pérez, E. (2014) *Atención temprana centrada en la familia*. *Siglo Cero*, 45(3): 6-27.

“family-centred practice is not a single strategy or method for interacting with families. It is an overall philosophy by which professionals can help families develop their strengths and increase their sense of competence”. (Leal, 1999)<sup>2</sup>

From this perspective, and following this same author, the current vision of the family would be characterised by:

- Family empowerment (change of roles with professionals, collaboration, coordination of support, transdisciplinary competences).
- Focus on strengths (rather than just pathologies and limitations).
- The entire family (including the person with a disability) is a support unit (as opposed to the model focusing on the person with a disability and his/her mother/father).

Consistent with these approaches, early family-centred care:

- respects the rights of the child and the family;
- contributes to the development of the child and his/her family;
- makes the family competent to face both the present and the future with greater possibilities of success;
- uses professional practices based on evidence and ethics;
- also implements relational and participatory practices.

This last point is worth emphasising to a greater extent, since there is broad consensus among professional teams in early care that their practices should include relational practices (fostering a climate of active listening, empathy and trust), participatory practices (fostering the empowerment of the family for decision making) and technical quality practices (based on evidence from research, on comparing professional experiences, and on the perspective and knowledge of the families themselves), considering their integration into a single system (Cañadas Pérez, M, 2018).<sup>3</sup>

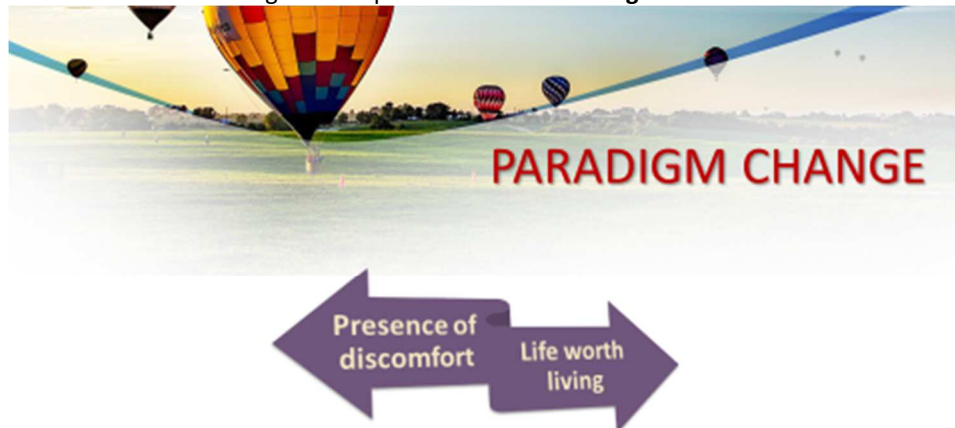
---

<sup>2</sup> Leal, L. (2009) *Un enfoque de la discapacidad intelectual centrado en la familia*. Madrid: Cuadernos de Buenas Prácticas FEAPS.

<sup>3</sup> Cañadas Pérez, M. (2018) Jornadas Formativas *“Implementación y mejora de la Atención Temprana en Castilla y León”*. Gerencia de Servicios Sociales, Valladolid.

## 4. An integrative model based on meaning

The change of direction discussed previously can be translated into a change in the focus of care. The focus shifts from a medical/welfare model based on identifying and reducing symptoms (presence of discomfort) to the provision of support to facilitate self-determination, the search for well-being and the promotion of a **meaningful life**.



This turn is associated with a paradigm shift in the attention to social vulnerability, some examples of it being Person-Centred Care (PCC), Person-Centred Planning (PCP), Family-Centred Planning (FCP) or Psychosocial Rehabilitation. All of them focus on building a life based on what matters to the person.

A focus on meaning and on what makes life worthwhile allows the individual to develop and progress as a person, makes suffering more acceptable and enables people to be more flexible and resilient (Hayes, Strosahl and Wilson, 1999).<sup>4</sup>

In this context, **the activation of the life project** is an intervention based on the values (what is important) of the person, understood as those **important directions that provide a guide to support the actions that give meaning to the life of the individual**.

It is a **constructive** process in the sense that it does not seek to destroy anything, but rather starts from the person's current situation, in our case that of the family, and motivates and helps them to build life and meaning.

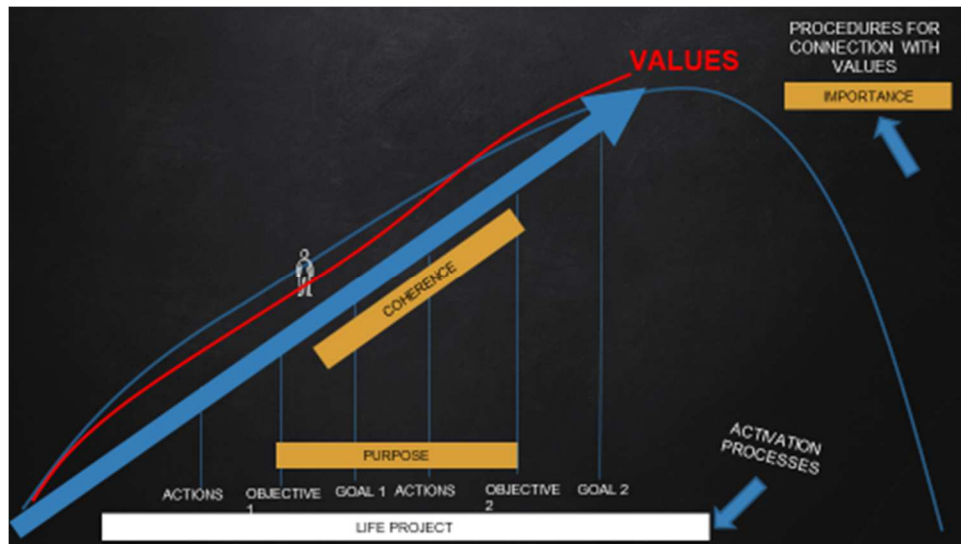
The most important implication of this point is that interactions are focused on values, on what the person/family cares about **from the outset**. As actions consistent with these values are being fostered over time, the family is trained in **personal empowerment** and management in the face of potential barriers.

### Elements of life project

The life project is determined by the planning and articulation of actions, objectives and goals consistent with what is important to the person. Therefore, the life project is composed of: a) the committed **actions**, objectives and goals; b) the **relationship of coherence** of all of these with what is important to the person; and c) the guidance provided by the **values** as well as those important directions for the person.

These elements are represented in the following table.

<sup>4</sup> Hayes, S. C., Strosahl, K., & Wilson, K. G. (1999) *Acceptance and Commitment Therapy: An experiential approach to behavior change*. New York: Guilford Press.



Salgado (2018)

The actions, objectives and goals include, on the one hand, those that the family can carry out on its own

For example: *"we are going on hiking trips with Pablo to encourage contact with nature and to improve his motor skills"*

And on the other hand, those for which it needs assistance, and which will be articulated in the **support plan** (see section 5: the life project support plan)

For example: *"in order to support our child in communicating better what he feels, we will receive advice from the speech therapist and bring what we learn there to the home environment"*

## Meaningfulness in life

People, and in our case families, can move towards, or away from, what is important to them, the kind of life they want to live, the qualities they want to enhance or the footprint they want to leave (Bailey, Ciarrochi, Harris 2013).<sup>5</sup>

If the family moves **towards** what is important to it, it will feel satisfaction and coherence. On the contrary, if it moves **away**, exhaustion and disappointment will occur and it will not achieve coherence and meaning in its actions. Therefore, meaningfulness in life is determined to a great extent by carrying out actions consistent with what matters to the family.

The alignment of actions with what is important will be facilitated and encouraged if pleasant thoughts and feelings are involved in their realisation. However, if these thoughts and feelings are not supportive or encouraging, then taking actions in the direction of what is important presents a greater difficulty.

We can differentiate two types of **coherence** in this case. One that is achieved by carrying out actions that are coherent with what we think and feel, and the other, based on the launch of actions that are coherent with what is important. The first has great power, derived from learning and social reinforcement. However, coherence with what is important is associated with the fact that at the end of the day, we feel an important satisfaction with ourselves and with the fact of noticing that we are going in the direction that we value.

<sup>5</sup> Ciarrochi, J., Bailey, A. & Harris, R. (2013) *The Weight Escape*. Boston: Shambala.

In short, the **promotion of coherence** with what is **important**, as the basis for a meaningful life, will be another of the fundamental aspects of the activation of the life project.

## Values: “what is important to the family”

Values are *directions*, they refer to what is important to the family and the mere experience of contact with them has a power that motivates actions.

*They have to do with the deepest part of the person and belong to the person. They are what guides and motivates existing actions, and their care and promotion are related to personal satisfaction, the feeling of living the life that one wants and that life is worth living.* These are chosen concepts that are linked to patterns of action, which provide a sense of meaning and which can coordinate our behaviour in the long term (e.g. acting with love towards one’s partner or being present with one’s children).<sup>6</sup>

The characteristics that define values include the following:

- They are qualities of actions that indicate what is important and valued by the family, and by each person who is part of it.
- They are inherent to the person and cannot be considered as right or wrong.
- They provide a direction, a guide that sets out the valued path and a line on which to set significant actions.
- They are a process, not an outcome. In this sense, they are different from objectives and actions.

### **Examples**

*Value:* “It is important for me to be a parent who is present, involved and loving”.

*Objective:* “I will be more involved in my children’s activities”.

*Action:* “On Monday, Wednesday and Friday afternoons, I will come home at lunchtime so that we can eat all together and I will take Paul to the swimming pool”.

- They are choices, not decisions. That is, they connect with the depths of our essence and are not based on a weighting of pros and cons.
- They are something that can be nurtured, empowered at every moment and with every action.
- They are qualities of actions, not feelings.

There is a consensus on the fact that there are two main sets of values:

- Those putting the focus on oneself: **personal growth**.
- Those putting the focus on others and on the environment: values of **helping others**.

---

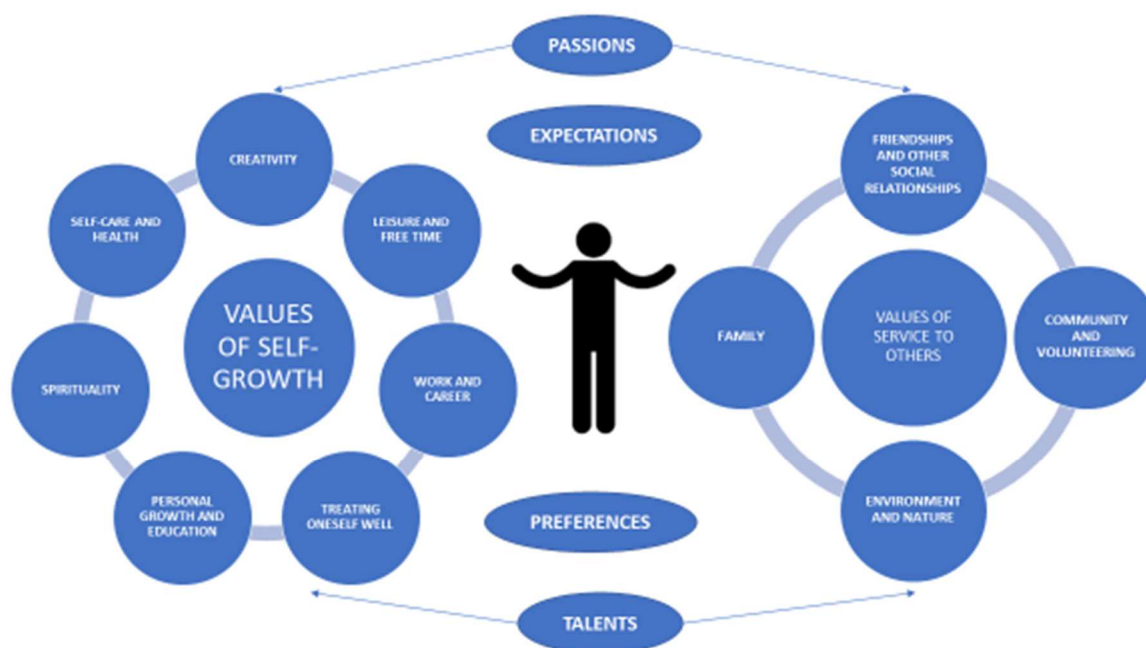
<sup>6</sup> Hayes, S. C., Strosahl, K., & Wilson, K. G. (1999) *Acceptance and Commitment Therapy: An experiential approach to behavior change*. New York: Guilford Press.

The figure below (adapted from McKay, Forsyth and Eifert, 2010)<sup>7</sup> reflects the individual as the focus of care. From the person emerge his or her passions, expectations, challenges, talents and preferences, which are useful elements for the clarification and discovery of the underlying values. It can also help to work with values, to immerse oneself in feelings of pain and suffering in various settings (deep life transitions), which often occurs in early care.

On both sides and connected to the above, the two large sets of values (dimensions) are represented with some areas that are usually important for almost all people. For more details on each of the areas, see **Annex 6: Value Dimensions**.

One of the main activities in the process of activating the life project will be the clarification of values through **interactions based on what is important** to the person (see Annex 1.1: conversations based on what is important)

*Salgado (2018) adapted from McKay, Forsyth & Eifert (2010)*



The activation benefit of the Life Project would be framed in an action aimed at bringing out what is important for the family (its values) with the objective of fostering committed and coherent actions and generating a favourable context for the family and the child (providing the necessary support).

### Important sources

There are a number of aspects that are often **important sources** for various reasons for most people. Their knowledge provides a broader and more flexible vision of the different care contexts for the development of activities, proposals or support.

<sup>7</sup> McKay, M., Forsyth, J.P. & Eifert, G.H. (2010) *Your life on purpose: how to find what matters & create the life you want*. Oakland: New Harbinger.

- **Belonging:** Feeling a member and contributing is an important source for the construction of meaning. Human beings are social beings and belonging has an important anthropological value. For our ancestors, in their life on the savannah, if someone was expelled from the group, they were defenceless in the face of danger and died. Therefore, it will be important, in the professional development, to take into account everything that helps the person to feel included, to experience that he or she is a member of the group and that he or she makes a contribution (e.g. starting a conversation, highlighting the belonging in an activity, welcoming, taking into account, etc.).
- **Transcendence:** It refers to a situation in which someone is connected to something bigger, such as admiring art or writing (passions). Whenever we find ourselves in a zone in which we seem to lose our sense of time by being in contact with nature or something bigger. It also has to do with the ability to find meaning in our actions beyond our own life. It is about looking far ahead in order to act today, that is, what footprint do we want to leave, which will remain even when we are no longer here.
- **Contribution:** Associated with the above components and even including them, it is the importance of feeling that we contribute and provide something to others. This makes us feel that we are part of something bigger and that we can transcend it. It does not refer to what one wants to achieve, but to the sense of giving. How to use one's strengths to serve others.
- **Personal growth:** Personal growth and development is also an important component for many people. Related to this is the presence of personal challenges. That is to say, growth from the situation of each person, to continue moving forward, to set one more step for oneself and to approach that which is valued. They can be great challenges (such as being able to maintain the passion for music and to play an instrument in spite of having lost the sense of hearing, by developing a way to feel the music through one's bare feet) or less striking ones (to manage every day to do one more length in the swimming pool as a way to cultivate a healthy life).

In short, the **proposal and development of activities that connect with these important sources** will be a global action to be developed throughout the process.

To learn more about the important sources, see Esfahany (2017).<sup>8</sup>

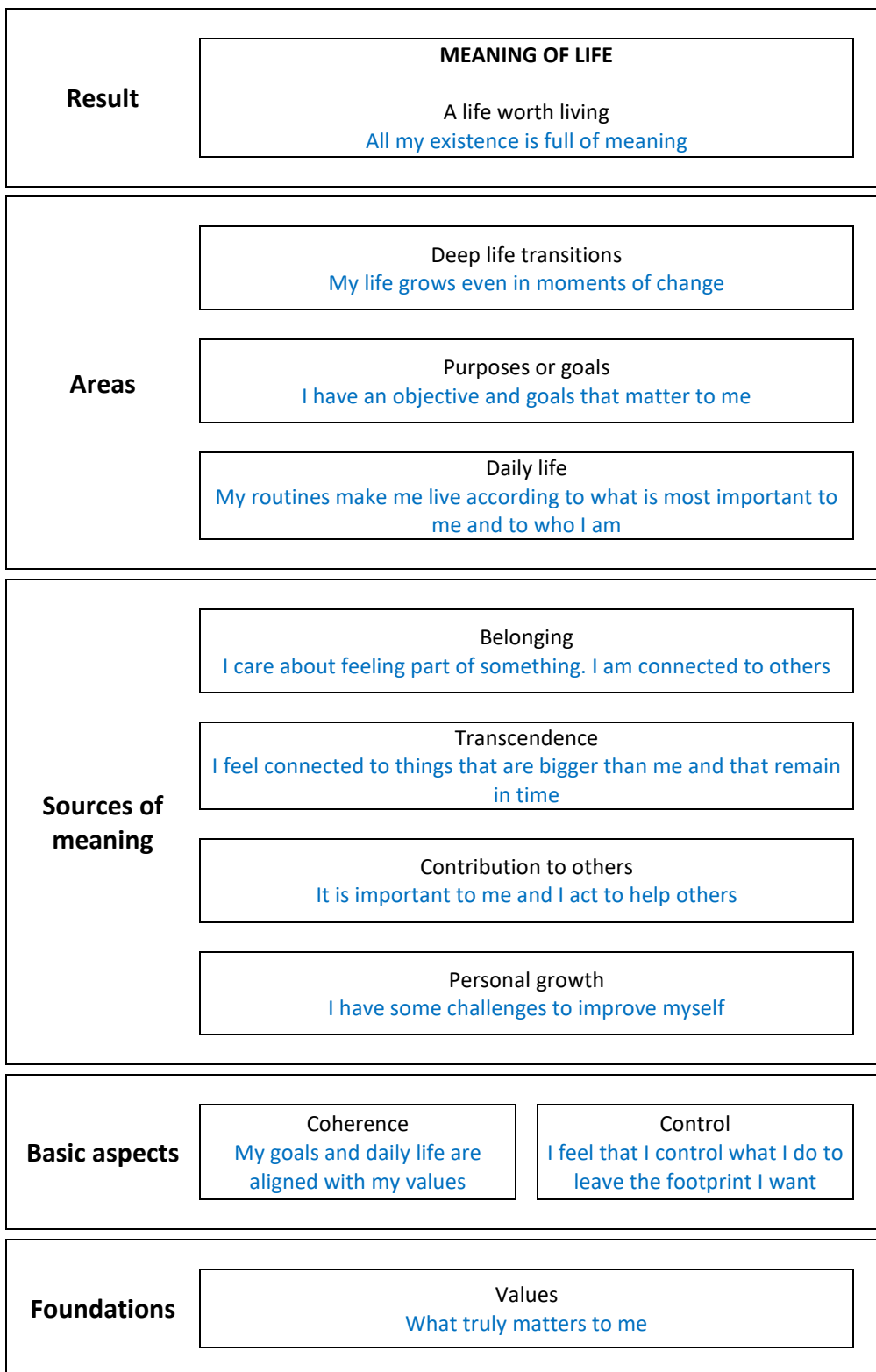
In short, as a conclusion to everything addressed in this section, below is a summary table of the model that incorporates the concepts and elements of the life project.

---

<sup>8</sup> Esfahany, E. (2017) *El arte de cultivar una vida con sentido*. Barcelona: Urano.



# Life project



## Levels and actions

The different proposed areas of the life project (see section 2) define, on a practical level, different levels of depth in the work of activating the life project in order to guarantee and respect the minimum interference in the interests and life of the person.

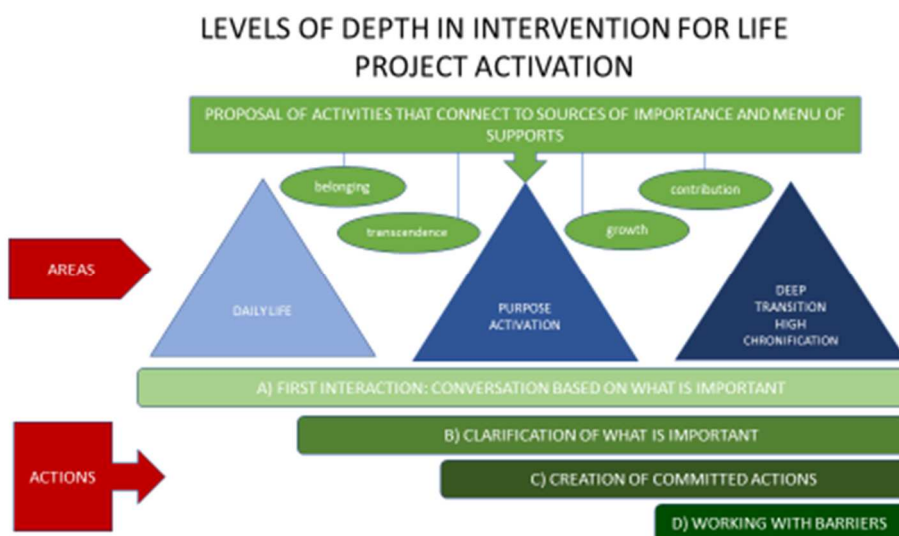
The table below shows the areas and levels of depth, as well as the actions required in each of them. These actions describe an itinerary of actions to support the activation of the life project and are developed in the following section.

- A. First interaction: conversation based on what is important.
- B. Clarification of what is important.
- C. Creation of committed actions.
- D. Working with barriers.
- E. Proposals and support.

Since not all families will have the same needs for the activation of the life project, the actions to be implemented in each case will have a different intensity, as previously stated.

In the following table, the different levels of depth of work in the activation of the life project and the different actions required at each of these levels are represented. Thus, on occasions, the family will be able to recover or build a significant daily life through a special interaction and the support of the development of its values in the natural environment. At other times, further clarification and specification of committed actions, or special work with psychological barriers, may be necessary. All these supports will be included in the support plan (see process in the itinerary, section 5).

*Salgado (2018)*



## 5. Itinerary-process and activation methodologies of life project in early care

The process of activating the life project from the early care service aims to enable care and technical support based on what is important for the family and to facilitate transitions or personal changes that improve the quality of life and life satisfaction of the beneficiary families. This process has the following specific characteristics:

- Interactions with the family are not daily but rather more distant in time. Their periodicity will be set according to the situation.
- The work to generate closeness through interactions spaced over time becomes relevant.
- The clarification and translation of the areas/dimensions of value into purposes (qualities) as well as the concretion of goals, objectives and committed actions for the period between sessions becomes very important. E.g. Being a caring and reassuring parent.
- Supports are connected to what is important to the family and child and aim to meet their needs and priorities by providing skills and resources.

### a. Welcome

**Access to life project activation support will be implicitly developed through the first contact with the family when accessing early care.**

The first contact made by the team with the family is through the welcome interview, which is conducted by the social worker or any available team member (who will not necessarily be the case coordinator).

This first contact with the family has the following objectives:

- To make the family feel welcome.
- To collect the identification data.
- To identify the demand and adjust expectations.
- To involve parents from the outset.
- To provide information on the early care service from family-centred practices (see example below).

*“Our way of working will be focused on seeking the greatest effectiveness for the development of your child and for you as a family to live a meaningful life. We will focus on you, on what is important to you and on what life is and should be like for you. We will take into account your needs and priorities, help you manage your day-to-day life and develop strategies that will help your child develop autonomy and independence in all areas of life. To do this, we will have several meetings/appointments to get to know you all, you as a family and all those people who are significant for you and who, at certain times, are a source of support in the care of your child (extended family, nursery, paediatrician, friends...); that is important to us. In one of them we will review the daily routines. We are very aware that from the time your child gets up until he/she goes to bed, you do a lot of things, many of which you do perfectly and others you may need support for. We are going to support you so that your child grows in independence and autonomy and that the family also grows on the basis of everything that is important to you.”*

## **b. Assignment of Case Coordinator**

The next step will be the team meeting for the purpose of assigning the case coordinator.

***The case coordinator is the professional of reference who coordinates the supports and the whole process of activation of the life project.***

In general, we can point out that, after the welcome interview and the team meeting to assign the **case coordinator**, we would move on to the first interaction focused on getting to know the family and what is important to them.

## **c. Evaluation and design of support plan**

### **c.1. Interaction to get to know the family “I want to get to know you”**

This interaction is composed of a **conversation based on the interests and values** of each parent and the family as a whole. The objective is to know the essence and identity of the people who make up the family nucleus, their expectations as a family before having their child, what their life is like at present, how they feel (or have felt) in the face of the diagnosis of some developmental disorder or risk of suffering from it, some warning, etc. In other words, it is a matter of getting to know everything that emerges as important on the basis of: a) what they like, what they are passionate about and what they are good at; and b) what makes them suffer and what makes them feel uneasy.

It has been observed that, in the interaction aimed at getting to know each member of the family, emphasising that children do not need to reach any point to be someone and have value, that they are already someone by the mere fact of being born, is reassuring and releases the tension from the family. This provides a healthy and supportive context for family-centred practices and acts as a brake on the struggle to reach some standards.

***The professional approaches each of the family members to get to know them, to know what they care about and to make the person feel that their child is unique and singular, that they are already someone and have value as a person by being born.***

In this conversation, values emerge in a context of a dialogue characterised by naturalness, closeness and validation (For further details, see **Annex 1.1 on conversations based on what is important**).

This knowledge-gathering session, in addition to positively **contextualising** the benefit of life project activation, allows for the **recapitulation of relevant information** through the **life history** and the framing of meaningful life support and assistance for the family.

These types of conversations are based on **natural interactions**, not a survey or a series of questions to be answered. It is a conversation with the following characteristics that mark its essence:

- **Horizontality**: between the professional and the person.
- **Connection** with the other.
- **Validation**: do not judge what the person exposes.
- **Proximity**: these are interactions that develop trust and security.
- **Vulnerability**: the expression of vulnerability is allowed and can also be reflected in the self-revelations of the professional.

The following are a number of conclusions drawn from the experience with such discussions in the specific context of early care:

- This first interaction serves the family to see the child's situation from another perspective. The **focus is on the child** and not on the emotions.
- It helps family members expose, in an autonomous manner, **natural strategies** that are already proving **useful**. For example: *"In the park, Hugo finds it difficult to go and play with other children, he is very cautious and that makes us think that he will have problems in the future. But if we let him, little by little he gets close"*. It is important that, in this type of interaction, the parents themselves draw the conclusions. For example: *Professional: "and what conclusion would you draw from it?" Father/mother: "that he goes at his own pace, that he does it when he gains confidence"*.
- It is important to **empower** parents, putting the child and their parental imprint at the centre of everything. Whatever regulates their actions with their child should be their child's development, growth, autonomy and happiness rather than the emotions that are present in difficult moments or the compensation of vulnerability.

- A close and warm interaction produces **openness** in the family, encourages relaxation and **reduces tension and infighting**. It provides a supportive context that is close to what is important for the family and allows the parents to focus on what is necessary for their child at that moment for their **emotional well-being** and to enable **optimal family growth**.
- - It has been found that it is worthwhile to avoid or not to make reference or comments associated with comparison and standardization.
- - A **de-pathologising and reassuring** tone is important, emphasising the validation of what the person feels and thinks. Learning to maintain the direction of what is important in the relationship with their child (despite complicated thoughts and feelings) will also be a relevant form of support.

*It is not the questions themselves that are important, but the essence of the interaction that results from them: naturalness, closeness, vulnerability and validation.*

### *c.1.1. Information gathering*

As indicated above, during the initial contact, the **life history** of the individuals and the family will be made from a constructive perspective and not based solely on problems (it is not a question of making the history of the problem). The following relevant aspects will be collected in a natural manner (not in an interview format):

- **Life up to the present**
  - Childhood
  - Youth
  - Adulthood
  - Current time
- **What I like and am passionate about**
  - Passions
  - Talents
  - What is important: values of personal growth and values of service to others
  - Preferred Routines
  - Important people
  - Supporting contexts
- **What makes me suffer**
  - Associated values of personal growth and of service
- **Life together**
  - Family life history
  - About the diagnosis of our child's disability
  - Impact on family life of the situation associated with your child
  - What life used to be like and what it is like now

These aspects are not separate and disconnected from each other. In other words, the conversation aimed at getting to know the person (and family) through their history since childhood is not just a simple biographical review, but also a review of those activities and things that they were passionate about, the talents and routines both of the past and present, with the aim of getting to know the essence of the person and what is important for the family more deeply and closely.

***The (self) knowledge of the person and the family based on their history is a key element for the emergence of what is important, for achieving success in the formalisation of purposes and their impact on the development and quality of life of their child and their own.***

In a simple way, a summary table is presented below in a simple way to serve as a reference for bringing to light this information.

MY VALUES OF PERSONAL GROWTH	MY TALENTS	MY PASSIONS	MY VALUES OF SERVICE TO OTHERS

### *c.1.2. Closure and contextualisation*

It refers to the explanation, on the one hand, of the essence of the family-centred approach and, on the other, of the supportive attitude of the team and the qualities that will define the interaction: family-centred, trusting, horizontal, close and supportive. The closure of the interaction aimed at getting to know the family is carried out through the **contextualisation** of the support for the activation of the life project. In a close and friendly way, the professional will highlight, through *metaphors or simple exercises*, that the approach will be centred on the interests and what is important for the family (e.g. metaphor of the garden, the novel of your life, exercise of the finger or any metaphor that they have provided during the conversation) and will contextualise the support relationship (e.g. the boat, the two mountains, etc.) by emphasising the following points:

- Let us focus on the family, on what is important to them.
- We are there to help you navigate your way to a meaningful life.
- Emphasising the horizontal role between the professional and the persons.
- Family members will set the direction and pace of progress.
- Highlighting the process and not the result.

We present below an example of contextualisation:

*"I thank you very much for allowing us to get to know you. It will be very important for us to be able to support you in any way we can and therefore also in the "name of the child". Now I would like to ask your permission to comment a little on what the work or support that we offer you from here will consist of. What we are going to do is focus mainly on you, on the type of mother or father you want to be, the type of qualities you want to promote, the imprint you want to leave (specify according to what came up in the conversation) and of course, on promoting those values or things that are important to you in relation to your child (specify according to what came up in the conversation, for example, as I was told for you it is important that your child is increasingly independent, autonomous and happy). We will ask your permission to kindly give you our point of view regarding each situation in which we can help you. This point of view is not better or worse, but a different perspective... In short, we will help you to row in the direction you want to have a meaningful family life and for that, all the support or help will be connected to that direction that will make you feel satisfied as parents."*

**Annex 1.3: metaphors for concluding the interaction aimed at knowing the person and contextualisation** presents the basic elements of contextualisation, as well as examples of metaphors and exercises that may be useful.

Additional information about an effective application of the different tools is available in **Annex 1.2: Tools. Characteristics of metaphors and experiential exercises.**

In certain areas (e.g. in the organisation of meaningful daily life) the first interaction and the emergence of what is important will be enough to be able to move on to the interview on routines and address the proposal of the support plan that will allow them to live a meaningful life. In other cases, it will be necessary to concretise all this to a greater extent. This is reflected in the following steps.

c.2. Clarification. "A little more about what is important to you and what you expect from the future".

As discussed at the end of the previous point, for some individuals or families going through major life change situations, such as families coming into early care, they may require more in-depth work and support.

Through the essence of new close interactions (or in the first one) and specific activities, the objective will be to clarify the value directions and to concretise **purposes or values (qualities)** with which the person and/or the family identify.

The final objective of this step is that, by means of small sentences, the person delimits with greater precision the qualities with which he or she will be satisfied on a daily basis. What qualities do you want to enhance as a parent? What emerges, from the bottom of your heart, as most important in your role as a parent? What actions would be filled with those qualities?



In this step, each of the important areas are translated into qualities that can be developed by the person in each moment.

For example: in the first interaction, a person may state that the family area (and in particular the children's area) is very important. We can further develop that area through questions such as "if you lived the way you would like to live in this area, what qualities would you like to develop as a parent?" The person can point out that he or she wants to be a parent who is present, loving and caring.

As can be seen in this example, this step to find purposes is not about the person's feelings, but about capturing the essence of what is most important in that particular area in the form of a value direction.

This clarification work is not about the results that the family wants to achieve, that is, it is not about what the child can or cannot achieve, or about changing what other people do or what one says one should do, it is about intentions or statements on how one wants to live one's life in that area that matters to them, beyond the results that their child can achieve in relation to what leads them to early care.

This is about you. What would it be like if you were living your life in a way that makes you feel satisfied with yourself?

Other examples of purpose statements are shown below:

- "Being a lively parent"
- "Being a persistent parent"
- "Being healthy, a person who maintains his/her best physical condition"
- "Being a fun person".

Greater clarity on this point requires differentiation between values and objectives. **Values**, unlike **objectives** and **goals**, are not finalised, nor achieved. Values are directions that provide us with an anchor and a guide to align multiple activities and objectives, which nurture that value (they irrigate it). In short, values can always be cultivated or enhanced; they have to do with the process and not with the results.

In short, the differences between objectives and values are as follows:

- A goal can be achieved or reached whereas values are not reached, they are directions (you never reach a town called North, we can always go further North).
- A goal or action can be easy or difficult to achieve.
- We can measure progress towards a goal.
- Once a goal is achieved, a new one appears.

Let us look at some explanatory examples:

VALUE	OBJECTIVES/ACTIONS
<b>Being persistent in spite of the problems</b>	Learn self-care strategies / Get professional advice to learn how to manage my nervousness and my urge to make faster progress.
<b>Contributing to the family</b>	I want to get more involved / Leave work at 3pm so I can take my child to the swimming pool.

VALUE	OBJECTIVES/ACTIONS
<b>Being a family that values leisure and contact with nature</b>	We want to increase the number of outings and our leisure time together and as a couple / we will make one excursion per month to the countryside – and we will go out for dinner as a couple another day per month.

Some exercises that can help the practitioner in clarification are set out in **Annex 2.1: Metaphors and exercises to clarify what is important.**

To help clarify and move from general areas to purposes (qualities) you can help yourself from a broad, though not exhaustive, list of values and strengths that you will find in **Annex 2.2: values and strengths.**

### c.3. Interview on routines

After the first interaction aimed at knowing and clarifying what is important for the family, an **interview on routines** is planned. This will be done in an informal, close manner and asking the families how their life has been in the last 15 days. *“In order to support you, I would like to know how your life has been in the last weeks”.*

It would be done as a way of reviewing routines in a natural way (maintaining the essence of interactions based on what is important to the family) without having to pass extensive questionnaires and tests.

The objective of the interview on routines is to know how the child is learning and participating in the daily routines, what the priorities and desires of the parents are for the future of their child (and of the family as a whole) and finally, to know the support needs perceived by the family to move forward in the value directions.

Some recommendations for interviewing on routines are outlined below:

- The basis for this interview can be found in the previous contact with the family: *“Next day we will talk about the day-to-day life in your family. I invite you to think about all the routines that you do every day and what they mean to you, that is, if each routine means a moment of satisfaction, of stress, if you are happy with the way it happens or if you would like to change something so that it goes in line with what we have talked about that is important for you (you can provide them with a small script to help them with their reflections)”.*
- It is important that it is also a close interaction so that a fluid conversation takes place.

- Show empathy and positive behaviour.
- Ideally, the interaction should be paperless, so that papers do not take the centre stage of the conversation (if necessary, use a blank sheet of paper and make very brief notes. The rest of the content can be written down at the end).
- Do not ask direct, nor directed, questions. It is preferable to have a more open approach, around "tell me how is the day to day in your life", "how have these last fifteen days been in your life". It is important that the family can express their own opinions without being led to what is important for the interviewer.
- Identify the most satisfactory moments of the day to day and the most complex ones: what happens in them, how the parents feel, what they would like to change and what for.
- Avoid advice, unnecessary questions, or making value judgments.
- Show interest in the family, not just the child's needs (how what brings them to early care makes it difficult for them to participate in routines).

The information gathered in the interview on routines will facilitate the next step which is the concretion of the **support plan**.

The aspects to be collected and specified in this interview are:

- **My life in the last 15 days:** routine life.
- **Our objectives, goals and wishes today and for the future of our child and for us:**
  - How can we help?

#### c.4. Specification of supports

##### *c.4.1. Establishing committed actions: "Moving from words to actions".*

All the previous steps are very important, but the objective of the work on the activation of the life project that requires greater depth is the concretion of small actions (baby steps) that are under the control of the person and that they are willing to carry out because they serve the purpose of a meaningful life.

This point of the process has to do with the passage from purposes to objectives and committed actions for the value directions. Progress in implementation requires the proposal of short and medium-term objectives and the generation of patterns of action consistent with what is important to the person and the family.

**The creation of committed actions is a step-by-step process of acting to create a whole and meaningful life that is faithful to one's wishes, desires and what is important in spite of the circumstances.**

It may also be that the situation that has brought the family into early care generates an urge to get out of the situation quickly, to hurry, or to compensate for a disability. This haste is not in keeping with the necessary process, and it is essential to: a) take **small steps** (baby steps); and b) change an attitude that puts the struggle at the service of compensating for vulnerabilities into a struggle/constancy at the service of building a meaningful life whatever the situation.

**It would be, therefore, a matter of showing the family the process of valuing the kind of qualities that are important, adjusting to the characteristics of the moment, maximising the probability of success.**

#### c.4.1.1. Characteristics of objectives and actions

The characteristics of the objectives and actions to be considered are set out below. These characteristics must be taken into account by the professional in order to guarantee success and avoid unattainable proposals.

- They have to be specific and achievable. For example: “tomorrow I’m going out for a walk at 10:00 and I’ll be there for 15 minutes”.
- Practical and adjusted to the person’s abilities. For example: “I’m going to play with my son/daughter in the afternoon from 5 to 6 pm”.
- Avoid goals based on feelings or emotions. For example: “I want to have less anxiety tomorrow”.
- Avoid overly broad and unattainable goals or actions. For example: “next week I’m going to the gym every day for two hours”, when it is a person who has not exercised for many years.
- They should be linked to personal values and to what the parents consider important for their child. For example: as a **personal value**, “I want to be a loving parent”. At the level of what is **important for the child**, “I want to encourage my child to be more and more autonomous. This would make me feel satisfied as a parent”.

#### c.4.1.2. Specifying objectives and actions

In order to work on the specification of objectives and actions connected with the qualities to be developed, some of the following questions may be asked:

- “What would every interaction with your child be like if you showed him/her love?”
- “What behaviour would you show to your child to express peace of mind?”
- “What little action, what little baby step could you take to make your satisfaction level in this area go up half a point?”
- “With what little action towards those qualities you’ve told me you want to enhance, could you commit yourself, knowing you’re going to fulfil it one hundred percent?”
- “What could you do tomorrow or the next day to go to bed satisfied with what you’ve done, feeling you’ve nurtured what matters most to you?”

The person would choose the important areas to work on as well as the committed actions. The mission of the professional is to motivate and facilitate actions, as well as to prevent any characteristic of the proposal that would put at risk the probability of success. For example: *it is very common that the person in a state of vulnerability, in his/her eagerness to get out of the situation, sets him/herself unattainable goals or goes*

*too fast. If the professional perceives this, he/she may urge the person to slow down and motivate him/her to divide the actions or objectives into smaller ones, trying not to climb many steps at once. All of this is also at the service of building a meaningful, wholesome life for the child and the family.*

Several useful tools for establishing committed actions can be found in **Annex 3.1: Metaphors and exercises for establishing committed actions.**

In **Annex 1.4: Practical notebook**, you will find the corresponding sections to reflect the short-term objectives and the actions committed to these objectives.

#### *c.4.2. Drawing up the support plan: “The map of the journey”*

The next step in the process would be the **elaboration of the support plan** that will cover all the dimensions that are part of personal, family and social development, including formal supports (paediatrician, early education centre...) informal supports (extended family, community activities...) and those provided by the early care team to the family environment to generate knowledge, train and shape abilities in natural environments. The support plan will be agreed upon with the family and will take into account the values, priorities, and objectives that the family has set for itself.

**Example:** Family priorities based on autonomy and independence.

- We want you to explore more and to be able to reach more places on your own so you can be more independent. That way you can have fun and learn more in an autonomous manner.
- So that he/she can eat on his/her own, now he/she can't.
- I would like to be able to return to my job on a part-time basis.

*These could be objectives or priorities that the family sets for itself and that mark the direction of the **support plan** to be established later.*

The plan provides supports that fit and meet the family's deepest priorities and interests both for its child and for the family context as a whole. It therefore builds on the values and on what is important to the family, and rests on two pillars.

1. How best to help the child achieve the best developmental outcomes while preserving the quality of life in all dimensions.
2. How to support the family to help their child achieve those outcomes and foster a meaningful family life (connected to their values).

It will specify:

- What they want to achieve and what for.
- What they need.
- Who or what will provide the support (the early care team's own resources, other formal and/or informal resources).

- Where and when it will be implemented (in the care unit, at home, at the nursery school, park or other settings).

Furthermore, it will address two questions:

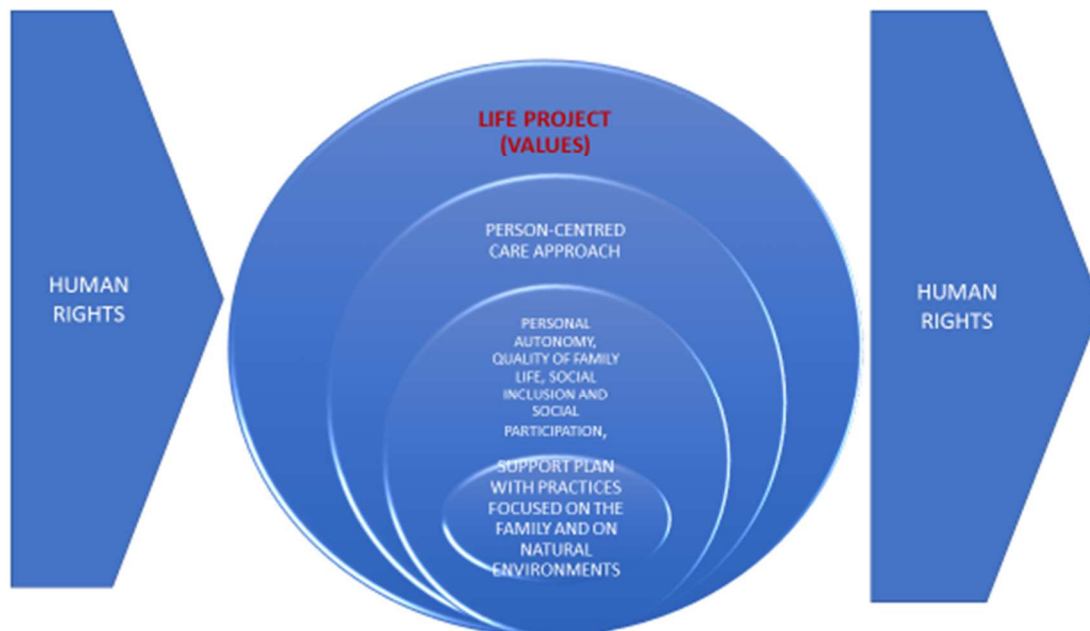
- What is the best way to help the child achieve developmental outcomes?
- What can early family care provide to help the child advance in the development of valued qualities, in a way that facilitates autonomy and independence and gradually improves the quality of life?

**As if it were a journey, the support plan identifies the starting point (clarifies to the family where they are now) the direction and destination (family's vision of where they want to go), the stages of the journey and the necessary supports.**

- **How the child is learning and participating in daily routines.**
- **How they would like the child to participate and what for. Family priorities.**
- **How they would like to be as parents and as a family.**
- **Necessary supports.**
- **Concretion.**

That is, the development of the **support plan** requires not only specifying meaningful objectives, goals and actions in both the family and the child, but also defining whether the family requires support to implement those actions and, if so, deciding who will provide that support and when.

## SUPPORT FOR ACTIVATION OF LIFE PROJECT IN EARLY CARE



Salgado et al. (2019)

### c.5. Support group

The most advisable methodology to carry out the support plan would be to hold a planning meeting with the **support group** in which the reference professional or support coordinator, the family and the child represented by the family and any other person or professional considered of special relevance (grandparent, uncle, etc.) are present. This is a small group committed to supporting and ensuring that all supports serve the independence and autonomy of the child, as well as the interests and values of the family.

This strategy should be understood as an **option** to be considered, but not as an obligation. In other words, it will be proposed voluntarily, and those significant people chosen by the family itself will participate.

- The planning meeting begins by sharing the strengths and needs that have emerged from the child with all those in attendance, as well as the strengths and values that stand out from the family, and states the child's learning characteristics at present.
- Then, the parents' concerns, resources, and priorities are raised, and what they require in order to achieve their objectives.
- The different members of the group are then asked what contribution they can make, including technical support that can be implemented from early care. so that the child learns the different skills to serve their independence, autonomy and improved quality of life.

The **plan** (which is a living document) specifies the supports associated with the learning characteristics of the child, those that have to do with the implementation of these in the natural environment under the premise of being contextualised in what is **important for the family** and fostering a meaningful family life.

See **Annex 4.2: Characteristics and functions of support group.**

### d. Identification of barriers. "How can I help you?"

Sometimes, the professional case coordinator may perceive psychological barriers when implementing committed actions (high levels of unpleasant emotions, conflict of values, etc.) and even during interactions about what is important. All this can make it advisable to refer the person to another professional (or to incorporate another professional to the support group) or to propose psychological support (if the professional of reference/case coordinator is a psychologist) aimed at training specific social and personal skills to effectively address unpleasant thoughts and emotions that may arise in complex situations.

In some specific cases, the very work of supporting the activation of the life project can get stuck by psychological and emotional barriers that take attention away from what is important. In these situations, it is convenient that the professional does not get caught up in this demand and reformulates the help and technical support as something that will train the person so that the psychological barriers have a lesser impact on their life when it comes to enhancing what is important for them as far as their child is concerned. In other words, psychological support would be a support aligned with what is important to the family.

In short, it is common for families to come to early care teams with feelings of anxiety, guilt and distress. Sometimes these are managed appropriately, but at other times their presence encourages behaviour that is more focused on avoiding discomfort and away from what is important to the person him/herself. It is in these cases where more specific psychological support or referral is needed.

Dealing with this type of particular, more complex situations in which these barriers are observed will require specific training for professionals.

### **e. Monitoring**

It will be important to follow up on the actions that the family intends to take in order to nurture what is important to them. This monitoring will not be carried out through censorship or reproof, but with a constructive attitude. To this end, it is important that the professional:

- Emphasises that learning any skill is a step-by-step process, encouraging not to falter.
- Encourages attitudes such as patience and perseverance.
- Reinforces learning, which means valuing what is important to them.
- Directs attention to what emerges as most important in terms of the relationship, development and quality of life of the child and family.
- Always considers the process of “growing through a meaningful life” rather than the concrete result of an action.
- Values the achievements, connecting the launch of significant actions with the sensation of personal satisfaction. It is especially important to reinforce what the family achieves and help to bring to light what has worked.

The following is a summary table of the itinerary-guide.





Salgado (2019)

## 6. Professionals

### Meaningfulness for professionals

**Each organisation, centre or service can create positive meaning oriented also to its professionals** and enable them to activate or discover meaning in what they do.

Getting involved in an intense personal work about what gives meaning to each professional action will be fundamental for the realisation of useful interventions to help other people and to move towards the type of professional one wants to be.

It will be important for professionals to engage in experiential activities that help them reflect on and connect with what is important to them in the professional field. What are the values and the type of imprint they would like to leave on the people and/or families they help? It is important to carry out awareness-raising activities about those thoughts and feelings that act as barriers when moving in the direction valued as a professional and that can emerge in the face of certain interactions, as well as training in coping skills to deal with these barriers.

## Professional skills

In general, we can point out that interactions that focus on what is important will have special characteristics that require the following professional skills (for more on interactions see Annex 1.1):

- The interaction will be symmetrical, so humility is needed from the support person to share our skills and knowledge, giving our perspective, which is neither better nor worse, just a different perspective.
- Listening in a special way, being in contact and focused on the person.
- Showing closeness in a natural way.
- Expressing empathy, love, kindness and transparency.
- Learning to get out of a problem-solving mode.
- Unconditionally validating the person's experience. Acting with awareness (noting what we experience and sharing it) and courage.
- Taking risks. Going beyond our personal barriers and what prevents us from connecting with what is important to the other person.
- Sharing painful stories, loss, shame, etc. (self-revelation). Vulnerability is what unites us, not what differentiates us.
- Mutual and deep support.
- Focusing the conversation not only on problems or illnesses.

It is necessary to consider, at all times of the process, the importance of teamwork, both within the team (intra-team) and with other teams (inter-team), to activate the life project:

- Intra-teamwork: transdisciplinary work or collaborative work within the same team, ensuring evidence-based knowledge from each professional in the team, placed at the disposal of the team as a whole and of the service to be provided.
- Inter-teamwork: networking with other professionals (from other social resources, health, education...), always ensuring the right, willingness and preferences of the family, thus avoiding the work bias of thinking more about the teams than the family.

Blue-Banning et al. (2004)<sup>9</sup> raise the following issues as essential, according to the opinion of families, to achieve true harmony and partnership in the relationship between the family and the person(s) in the professional team offering support:

*“Six themes for a collaborative partnership between families and professionals:*

- **Communication:** *The quality of communication is positive, understandable, respectful between all members and at all levels of the alliance. The quantity of communication is also at a level that enables efficient and effective coordination and understanding between all members.*
  - *Indicators: Sharing resources, being clear, being honest, communicating positively, being tactful, being open, listening, communicating frequently, coordinating information.*
- **Commitment:** *Members of the alliance share a sense of security regarding: a) each other's devotion and loyalty to the child and family; and b) the belief of each of them in the importance of the goals being pursued for the child and the family.*

---

<sup>9</sup> Blue-Banning, M; Summers, J. A.; Frankland, H. C.; Nelson, L. L. and Beegle, G. (2004) Dimensions of Family and Professional Partnerships: Constructive Guidelines for Collaboration. *Exceptional Children*, 70, 2, 167-184.

- *Indicators: Demonstrate commitment, be flexible, see work as ‘more than a job’, see the child and family as ‘more than a case’, encourage the child and family, be accessible to the child and family, be consistent, be sensitive to emotions.*
- **Equality:** *Alliance members have a sense of equity in decision-making and service implementation, and work actively to ensure that other alliance members feel equally powerful in their ability to influence outcomes for children and their families.*
  - *Indicators: Avoiding the use of ‘force’ (e.g. professional authority), empowering members, validating others, advocating for children and families with other professionals, allowing reciprocity among members, willingness to explore other options, nurturing harmony among all partners, ‘sitting at the table’/ avoiding corporatism, acting as ‘equal’.*
- **Skills:** *Alliance members perceive that the rest of the team demonstrates competency, including the ability of service providers to fulfil their roles and demonstrate ‘best practice’ approaches to working with children and families.*
  - *Indicators: Taking action, having expectations about the child’s progress, meeting individual special needs, considering the child and family as a whole, willingness to learn.*
- **Trust:** *Alliance members share a sense of security about the reliability of each other’s character, ability, strength or confidence.*
  - *Indicators: Be reliable, protect the child, be discreet.*
- **Respect:** *Alliance members look upon their teammates with esteem and demonstrate this esteem through actions and communications.*
  - *Indicators: Value the child, do not just judge, be polite, exercise non-discrimination, avoid intrusion” (op. cit., p. 174).*

These same authors indicate the following, which is highly consistent with what has just been pointed out:

- The asymmetry of power and authority is the main difficulty in relations between professionals and families.
- The main problem for the development of a true partnership between families and professionals is the failure to establish collaborative, empowering and trusting relationships between families and professionals providing support services.

The following text by García-Sánchez et al. (2014) is also of great interest for this area:

It is necessary to “ensure, in the interaction that has to take place between the professional and the main caregiver, the principles of participation, horizontality and flexibility:

- **Participation:** *the adult learner is not merely a recipient; he or she can and should interact with the facilitator of his or her learning by exchanging experiences. In addition, the adult has a deep need for self-direction in his or her actions and, above all, in his or her learning.*
- **Horizontality:** *the learning facilitator and the adult learner have similar qualitative characteristics (adulthood and experience); although with different quantitative characteristics. For example, in our case different levels of knowledge about the child’s developmental psychology, the characteristics of the disability, or about the temperamental traits and tastes and preferences of that particular child with a first and last name.*
- **Flexibility:** *each adult, in order to learn, needs a learning time in accordance with his or her aptitudes and skills, and the person guiding his or her learning must know how to respect this time”.*

## Ethics

The technical actions derived from a focus on what is important for the person rest on a basic pillar: the **recognition of the dignity of the person** through **respect for the life project** and the **free development of the personality**.

Under these pillars, the daily work of professionals will have an ethical basis for action and will be guided by the 4 principles enunciated from bioethics (non-maleficence, justice, autonomy and beneficence).

### The four principles of bioethics

**The principle of non-maleficence** obliges professionals not to do harm (physical, psychological or social) to the person or his or her family members, as well as to carry out good practices in care. In the daily professional practice, this is translated in the obligation to carry out those actions that are indicated, because they suppose benefits for the people, and to avoid those that are contraindicated because they generate damage or risks of injury for them.

**The principle of justice** places a moral obligation on professionals not to discriminate against any person on social grounds and to distribute resources equitably among persons of similar need.

**The principle of autonomy** dictates that professionals in social care centres should promote and respect people's decisions. This implies recognising the right of all people to have and express their own opinions, as well as to identify and carry out care based on their values, beliefs and life projects.

**The principle of beneficence** urges professionals in the care resources to do good to people. This translates into seeking the greatest benefit for the person based on the subjective concept of the person's own well-being, and if this is unknown, the greatest objective quality of life to be expected.

If ethical conflicts arise for the professional in the process of supporting the activation and development of a person's life project, these can be channelled through local ethics committees or the Castilla y León Social Services Ethics Committee (CESSCYL).

## Protection of privacy and personal information

We want people to trust professionals, which is why it is necessary to ensure protection.

The person will expressly authorise professional support activities.

The person will expressly indicate with which professionals he/she wishes to share the contents of his/her life project.

Organisational measures will be taken to guarantee the person's confidentiality and privacy.

## Scientific evidence on meaningfulness and life project

The evidence on which social interventions are based comes both from the experience of individuals and from science professionals.

There is a body of scientific evidence on:

- a) The meaning of life, life purposes: its measurement and its relationship to health and well-being.
- b) Activities that promote the perception of satisfaction with life.
- c) Evaluation of information programmes to improve the purpose and meaning of life.
- d) Processes involved in post-traumatic personal growth.
- e) Purpose and sense of life in scenarios involving different social services: persons with disabilities, persons with dependence attended to in centres with long-term care, persons with mental disorder, gender violence.
- f) Information and value-based techniques.
- g) Person-centred care approach.

The recommendations given by the Early Childhood Technical Assistance Centre (ECTA) and the Division for Early Childhood of the Council for Exceptional Children (DEC) should also be taken into account.

## Annexes

### Annex 1.1: Conversations based on what is important

#### IMPORTANCE OF SPECIAL CONVERSATIONS

“If we have values, we will be better able to live with our existential anguish”  
Wong

In relation to levels of depth, when addressing the special conversations between support professionals and individuals, we can address the following key questions:

- What are value-based conversations for?
- Why is it useful to learn how to implement them?
- How do they work?

The whole process of help is supported by language. Many professionals rely on language and conversation to support the construction of a meaningful life for people.

Sometimes the conversations can be directed at diseases, problems or disorders to be solved, since these determine, in many cases, the quality of life of the person. These conversations try to directly motivate behaviour change through the proposal of specialised guidelines and advice.

In professions that support and help others, there is usually a reflex called righting (Miller and Rollnick, 2015),<sup>10</sup> referring to the tendency or desire that arises to alleviate or quickly change something that we consider to be on the wrong track, and we do so by resorting to a more directive style: “what you have to do is...”

*“The righting reflex starts from the belief that you must convince or persuade the person to change or to do the right thing”* (Miller and Rollnick, 2015) with us deciding what is right based on supposed scientific or professional values. We believe that, with the right questions, reasons and speeches, the person will be able to see the light and change. We start from the idea that the person is not able to perceive his/her reality in an adequate way and that they maintain problematic (if not pathological) barriers in front of the change that we must demolish. As the authors point out, *“This perspective calls forth a massive righting reflex from the helper: confront the person with reality, provide the solution, and when you meet resistance turn up the volume”* (White and Miller, 2007).<sup>11</sup> These effects can be found in multiple areas: health, social services and even education.

This mode of interaction, while it has been able to serve a limited number of people, have left others feeling misunderstood, unheard, irritated, embarrassed, wanting to leave, and powerless. On top of that, it is a problem-centred interaction and moves away from a perspective based on respect for what is important and on the growth of the person’s meaningful life.

---

<sup>10</sup> Miller, W. & Rollnick, S. (2015) *Entrevista Motivacional*. Paidós.

<sup>11</sup> White, W.L. & Miller, W.R. (2007) The use of confrontation in addiction treatment: History, science, and time for a change. *The Counselor*, 8 (4) 12-30.

Another type of interaction is that which organises conversations so that people themselves are inclined to mobilise towards their own values and interests.

In the field of social services and within the paradigm of Person-Centred Care, a type of conversation aimed at putting these personal values and interests at the centre has proven useful.

**Interactions based on what is important are designed so that someone with the intention of helping organises the conversations so that people persuade themselves to take actions that are aligned with their own values and interests.**

People who suffer or are in complicated life situations are usually people who know their dilemmas well and have been in touch with their internal debate for a long time, and have even on many occasions felt guilty and punished themselves personally because things are not getting any better. They become very hard on themselves and somehow try to save themselves from the outside world.

What seems obvious, and much research has already shown this, is that an open and/or defensive attitude or a discourse towards change or maintenance will depend fundamentally on the relationship created between the professional and the person.

**That is, resistance and motivation occur in an interpersonal context.**

To help people, therefore, it is not the therapist who must state the reasons for change, but it is the person who proposes reasons for change. This leads to a change of style and essence in the supportive relationship. It is a transition from a directive style to a more collaborative style and in line with the care based on the interests or on what is important for the person.

***It is important to be aware that a style characterised by blaming, judging or labelling the person for being resistant or unmotivated is not a good idea.***

On the contrary, we have to understand the person's discourse of denial (if any) in a context where showing vulnerability is not reinforced, where the diagnostic label is not neutral and where the person needs to safeguard his or herself.

In this context, therefore, it is important that the outcome of the professional interaction with the person who is susceptible to receive support makes him/her feel involved, willing to cooperate, to keep talking, hopeful, accepted, listened to, safe, respected and connected.

***A huge body of scientific evidence shows that our ability to create close connections not only increases our mental and physical health, but helps us live longer***

## CONVERSATIONS BASED ON WHAT IS IMPORTANT: CLOSE CONNECTIONS

Quite a few studies indicate that, beyond the support strategy applied, the type of relationship or interaction developed will be the key element in the effectiveness of any care process.

Supporting the activation of the life project requires making contact with what is important to the person in order to motivate the implementation of behaviours aligned with his/her values. It is important to get the person in touch as long as possible with what positively reinforces him/her (not only in the short term but on an extended timeline). In other words, we have to make the person's experience in the present overshadowed by what motivates him/her and what he/she values.

In this context, the first phase of the activation process of the life project will require the identification and recognition of his/her values (of what is important). And for the development of this objective, the most basic tool is the deep knowledge of the person and his/her life history through words and natural interactions.

### How do we make people feel that we care about them?

Interactions that are centred on the person and that also revolve around what gives meaning to his or her life are, as Kholenberg and Tsai call them, extraordinary interactions. Those interactions that, through body language, eye contact and smiles, let the person we are interested in knowing who they are, and what their heart is feeling.

In this difficult task, we have to get people to reveal intimate aspects about themselves and their lives. And this will only be possible if we are able to generate extraordinary, intense, meaningful and profound interactions (Kholenberg and Tsai, 2017).

D Such interactions are characterised by **horizontality**, where the professional does not acquire the value of an expert who knows a lot about something and will tell the other person what to do or what decision to make. It is an interaction where **closeness, connection, being genuine and listening with acceptance**, making **self-revelations** and expressing **affection** is going to be important.

In turn, all this requires an **awareness** of what is happening in the present moment, in the social connection. Specifically, it is desirable to become aware of oneself, of the other and of what is happening between the two.

Let's talk about what matters to the person from what moves him/her, what he/she is **passionate about** and what makes him/her **suffer**.

**In order to conform to a model that focuses on what is important to the person and away from symptomatic reduction, it is advisable to begin the interaction by getting to know the life history of the person (of each of the members of the couple) with warmth, acceptance and without judgment, identifying what he or she is passionate about, likes or is good at and everything that is important as a parent, partner, etc.**

Therefore, conversations based on what is important (values) are not closed and cold surveys, but are interactions that have the following peculiarities:

- **Vitality.** When conversations make contact with what is important they become active and dynamic. It means that a pattern of conversation is being generated based on construction and coherence with that which is valued. To do this, it can help to listen to meaningful music, a favourite film, ask about someone you admire or find noble, specify the qualities that stand out from that person, etc. If a conversation is losing its dynamism, it becomes very repetitive and excessively



Intellectualised, and it is possible that a pattern of conversation based on problems and avoidance is occurring.

- **Experience of choice.** It is important that the conversations have the quality of helping to build, in the person, the capacity to choose and make decisions within the situation. To do this, it is important to focus on coherence with values, on what he or she chooses at that moment.
- **Oriented to the present.** Something that is valued, is valued in the here and now, and we have to do the act of valuing it in this precise moment. It is important, therefore, to learn how to bring the extended moment into the present moment, that is, to make the long-term reinforcing consequences become so in the present moment.
- **Be open to the feeling of vulnerability.** The values are also within the pain and intense emotionality. When people experience contact with values and with the fact that historically there may be actions that have moved them away from the value direction, intense emotions and emotionality may appear. Being willing to keep this present and validating it generates confidence and teaches a new relationship with it all.
- **Expand the impact of actions in the future (legacy).** Most people dream of a better world but feel powerless to do so. We forget that we are interconnected and that actions create a footprint for the future; we influence others. What a person does has an impact in the moment, but it is also lasting and if we are able through conversation to expand the effect of the action, there is a renewed sense of purpose and meaning that comes from a sense of transcendence and being part of something bigger.
- **Change of focus.** Conversations about values need a change of focus, moving from a congruence with thoughts and feelings (why does it happen, why do you do this?) to a congruence with what the person cares about (why would it be useful to do this? What action would give value to that which matters to you?).

## Difficulties

The following are some difficulties that may arise in the development of discussions on values and that are important to take into account:

- Talking about values or teaching values rather than bringing them to light and feeling them.
- Using standard questions as if it were an interview. Interaction in conversations on values should be as natural as possible.
- Thinking that everything is clear to you. Sometimes the search for cognitive clarity, in the case of what is important, leads to an excess of rumination, hyper-reflexivity and loss of vitality in the conversation.
- Reflecting the commitments of others. Avoiding conversations about values that are socially seen as important or that come from other people who are important to the user (i.e., verbalising what is socially expected to be said about what is truly important). It is relevant that it is about what is really important to the person.
- That the person says: "I don't know what I care about" or "I don't have values" and that the professional gets hooked on it.
- Focusing on results can also be a drawback. That is, focusing the interaction on what the person wants to achieve more than what is important to the person in that outcome (Example: "I want them to come and visit me", reflects that family and social contact are important to that person).

## First interaction

The first interaction is a conversation aimed at getting to know the person, the couple, their life history and what is important to them on the basis of:

1. Those activities and situations that they like and are passionate about.
2. Those activities and situations that generate discomfort and suffering.

**It is important to start the interaction by focusing on the person's knowledge and not talking about the problems. It is not a matter of talking about the history of problems to be solved and about suffering (if any), but about the essence of the person.**

Some essential aspects to highlight in the first interaction are set out below:

- The first interaction would be aimed at strengths, passions and talents, although situations of pain and suffering would also emerge throughout the conversation.
- It would not be a structured interview, but rather a small set of questions (not exhaustive) that would allow the implementation of a close interaction focused mainly on values and the person himself.
- It would review in a natural way the life history of the person (although later other specific tools can be used for this purpose). The life history allows to approach the cumulative character of the experience, to work and change narratives and to know moments, people, activities and situations, both pleasant and unpleasant that are connected with values.
- It would seek, therefore, in addition to knowing and focusing on the person, to explore the underlying values that make it possible to expand the range of activities or actions with the function of connecting to the guiding values and making the person live a life with meaning.

The **life history** is a tool, whether it is done in a structured way or through special interactions, that allows to gain knowledge of the person, of the moments, situations and people that have had special interest and relevance in their life (both positive and negative) and allows to know the values and passions that are implicit in all this.

It is also a useful strategy to motivate new narratives through the framing of what the person experiences within his/her history, promoting self-knowledge, treating oneself well and to encourage ways of continuing to write history from the present. The potential of this tool is great if it is applied with enough depth.

### **How may close connections be facilitated?**

In order to generate that closeness that allows the other person to feel that they are being listened to and that he or she is important, a series of recommendations are set out below:

- Share skills and knowledge, **give your perspective**, which is neither better nor worse, it is just a different perspective.
- Through this type of connection, you will get to know the person in greater depth.
- **Be yourself, be genuine.**
- Listen with **warmth**.
- Listen in a special way. Let him/her know he/she is being **listened to**, both verbally and through eye contact, smiling and body language.

- **Do not judge**, and rather validate what the person feels and thinks. It is what the person experiences in those moments.
- Strive to make the **interaction as natural as possible**. Take care of the physical space, the moment, tone of voice, etc., so that the interaction does not seem like an examination.
- Try to make the conversation **based not only on problems and solutions**.
- Make **a life history that is not connected to problems** (it is not the history of a certain problem). In other words, the objective of the life history is to know the essence of the person.
- Act with **awareness**, noting what you experience and being courageous in expressing kindness, love and transparency.
- **Share** stories of pain, loss, shame, etc. (self-revelation). Vulnerability is not what differentiates us, it is what unites us.

*It is not the specific questions that are relevant in conversations based on what is important, but the essence and spirit that flows from them that should characterise a person-centred style.*

## Annex 1.2: Tools. Characteristics of metaphors and experiential exercises

On occasions, due to very diverse aspects and situations, it is difficult to bring people into contact with what matters to them and gives meaning to their lives. Consequently, it will be necessary to use useful procedures to support the process of activating their life project.

The objective of the annexes referring to the tools are as follows:

- Generating a toolkit for professionals to help people get in touch with what matters to them.
- Teaching people to value activating a life purpose and motivating the realisation of actions consistent with what is important. To this end, the toolkit will be aimed at:
  - Identifying areas of importance, strengths and talents.
  - Clarifying the value directions.
  - Activating the purpose (construction of objectives, goals and actions).
  - Identifying barriers (if any).

In general, the objective is to make it easier for people to get in touch with the course marked by the compass (meaning of life), to plan the different objectives, to help them find alternative ways to live a rich (strengths), full and meaningful life and to teach them to navigate different situations so that the person keeps the course under any kind of condition.

### Tools

Tools are instruments that allow us to implement our work in an effective way. Although it is true that they are made for specific objectives, learning to adapt them to each situation or case will give them tremendous flexibility.

Applying the tools in a mechanical way, without knowing what the function is that it has to fulfill for a particular person or family, would be like having a "toolbox in our house" and when it comes to carrying out a job (changing a lamp) we open the box and take the first tool that we find (e.g. pliers). In this way, the application of such a tool will be quite unproductive.

An inadequate and mechanical application can lead to the use of one tool after another and to an excess of activities, resulting in an aversive situation for people.

For all these reasons, we present below the fundamental characteristics corresponding to a good application of the tools with the aim of getting people to make contact with what they value and to motivate them to undertake actions that are coherent with it. The application of each of the tools must be adjusted to a deep functional analysis of the particular situation.

Within the tools, there are also interactions and conversations based on what is important, the characteristics of which can be found in Annex 1.1.

The different instruments used also have to adopt a person-centred (family) perspective in such a way that it is useful to the person and not so much to the professional (which does not mean that it cannot be useful to both). We must differentiate, therefore, when an activity, exercise etc, is used with a function for the centre or professional, and when it is used to make the person connect with what is important to him/her.

Let us look at an example below:

**My people or support network**  
 This is an exercise that helps the professional know who the people are and what support is available (it serves the professional).  
 How can we make this activity work for the person? What adaptations can we make to connect with what matters to them?  
 To do this, it is important to not only know the people who can provide support, but also why they are important. Other questions can be used for this purpose, such as the following:  
 What do they mean to you? How is the relationship with that person, is it how you like it to be? Why is a certain person far away? Is there someone from the people you have placed at a greater distance from you who means a lot to you, who is important to you and you would like to see closer to you? Would you like a different picture of that relationship? What would you be willing to do to get that picture?

Throughout the following annexes, you will find different tools (metaphors and experiential exercises) for different moments of the itinerary in the work of activation of the life project. The tools are general and will require some adaptation in the application to the field of early care.

The following table shows the different tool annexes and the application phase:

ANNEX	TOOLS	PHASE
<b>Annex 1.1</b>	Conversations based on what is important	First contact and clarification
<b>Annex 1.3</b>	Metaphors to close the session and contextualisation	First contact
<b>Annex 1.4</b>	Practical Notebook	First contact
<b>Annex 2.1</b>	Metaphors and exercises to clarify what is important	Clarification
<b>Annex 2.2</b>	Values and strengths	Clarification
<b>Annex 3.1</b>	Metaphors and exercises for establishing committed actions	Establishment of committed actions
	Global exercises focusing on what is important	Clarification and establishment of committed actions

### Characteristics

There are several types of tools that the reader will find in the annexes:

- Conversations based on what is important.
- Life history: reminiscences.
- Metaphors.

- Experiential exercises.
- Written exercises.
- Closed-eye exercises.

As mentioned above, the discussions based on what is important and on the life history have been dealt with in more detail in Annex 1.1.

### **Metaphors and experiential exercises**

As noted above, working on values requires that it be experiential in order to bring out motivation. In this sense, the use of metaphors and experiential exercises, which allow the person to distance him/herself from the cognitive debate and make contact with the implicit functions of what is important, will be highly recommended tools in different phases of the activation process of the life project.

### **Written exercises**

The written exercises give a greater structure to the results of the intervention, make the results explicit and serve as a reminder throughout the process.

### **Closed-eye exercises**

Closed-eye exercises, visualisations or awareness-raising exercises allow:

- Keeping the participant in the present moment.
- Taking the person to different contexts (e.g. passions, losses, other's perspective...) where the important emerges without having to experience the real consequences.
- They also allow the person to experience other temporary moments and other consequences. This human capacity will be of great help by:
- Putting the person in their own skin at different times and see what was important there.
- Taking the perspective of others as a way to connect with the values of service to others.
- Becoming aware of personal barriers and practice what it would be like to move in the desired direction.

### **Life history (reminiscences)**

The life history is a tool, whether it is done in a structured way or through special interactions. It allows getting to know the person, the moments, situations and people who have had special interest and relevance in their life (both positive and negative) and it allows to know the values and passions that are implicit in all this.

It is also a useful strategy to motivate new narratives through the framing of what the person experiences within his/her history, promoting self-knowledge, treating oneself well and encouraging ways of continuing to write history from the present.

The potential of this tool is great if it is applied with enough depth.

The life history in the field of early care includes not only that which relates to each of the members of the couple separately, but also that which relates to life together.

### Effective application

The following are some fundamental keys to the effective application of metaphors and experiential exercises:

- The use of metaphors and experiential exercises allow the person to **experience what is important and not so much talk about it**. Work on values is not cognitive, it is not a debate. It is more about touching the emotional, that which really motivates and moves the person, but not from what is expected of him or her, but from what really moves him or her.
- The aim of these tools is to **take the person to different contexts where values emerge** (what is important). To this end, the exercises and metaphors can take the person to see him/herself in different moments of his/her history, in different contexts, and see what is there that matters to him/her. E.g. Seeing oneself in 20 years' time as one would like to live and as one would like to be as a parent, grandparent, professional, friend, etc.
- This kind of tool **allows a better validation** of what the person thinks and feels. It makes it easier for the person to feel listened to and understood without value judgments.
- Metaphors or experiential exercises **should not be counted or read**. The point is that their essence, what they want to say is present in the conversation, and that it makes the person connect with his/her feelings. Taking the time to dwell on the metaphor is important.
- Although a kit of metaphors and exercises will be proposed, the best metaphors are those that **approach the characteristics of the person, their profession or some personal experience**. For example: in the case of a person who was convicted of assaulting gardening work in the community, given his knowledge of garden care issues, using the metaphor of the flower garden can be very useful.
- The best metaphors are **those given by the person him/herself or those elaborated at that moment by the professional** according to what the person is exposing. For this reason, it is important to have specific training in the elaboration and application of metaphors, which allows one to be able to improvise.
- What the metaphors and experiential exercises want to reflect **must be identified by the person** and not by the professional. In case of difficulties to connect with what is meant, the professional can use keys such as: What do you think I mean by your garden? What would the flowers be for you?
- At certain times, it can be very useful to use physical aids (pictures, drawings, objects, etc.). For example, materialising the direction valued by drawing a line on the ground or with a rope.
- It is important not to get ahead of the person, that is, not to explain things to them, nor to reason.
- The tools that you will find in the annexes are **written in general terms**, so that they can be adapted to the circumstances and characteristics of any person. Some of them will certainly need specific adaptations according to different application contexts.

## **Annex 1.3: Metaphors for closure (setting the supporting context) and contextualisation**

### **Closure (establishment of the supporting context) and contextualisation**

It refers to the specification, on the one hand, of the essence of the approach centred on the interests of the person (and/or the family) and, on the other hand, of the supportive attitude of the professional and the qualities that will define the interaction: centred on the interests of the person, trust, horizontality, closeness and support.

The tools exposed in this section can be used in other sections due to their flexible and multidimensional character. For example, the “metaphor of the garden” although it is widely used to clarify what is important, can be a very useful tool in the closing of the first session if the person has done work related to gardening in his/her life.

**All of these tools are general, so they will require specific adaptation to the early care setting (e.g., use them in the plural if both partners are in the interaction).**



**METAPHOR  
"THE BOAT"**

*(Adaptation from Páez Blarrina and Gutierrez Martínez, 2012)<sup>12</sup>*

It consists of a simple metaphor that tries to make the person experience that the professional is there to support him/her in his/her decisions, that the professional will help him/her, but that he/she will be the one to choose the valuable direction.

"Imagine that we are both in a boat, each with a paddle. I am there with you to help you row, I am going to row with you. But you choose the direction, where we are going. You are going to choose where to steer the boat based on the places you care about and only you, and no one else, can choose for you; not even me. It is important that when we start rowing we coordinate well in terms of when to row, how to row, at what pace to row, with what direction; because otherwise we are going to be going around with the boat and not getting anywhere you care about. When we see ourselves going in circles in the boat, we will have to stop, look where you want to go, and get organised to row in that direction. Similarly, you will also choose the pace of navigation, you decide whether to go more or less quickly. As in the previous case, it is important to agree on this and I will row at the pace you tell me to."

**METAPHOR  
"THE TWO MOUNTAINS"**

*(Adaptation of the metaphor of the two climbers of Wilson and Luciano, 2002)<sup>13</sup>*

The process of addressing what is important to you can be something similar to climbing a mountain. Imagine that you are climbing such a mountain, you work at it and when you look up you see a part of the way. I will climb a parallel mountain, which is next to yours, and my role is to tell you what I see from my perspective, from the path I am walking. It will be a different perspective, I will observe different things and I will tell you, neither better nor worse, I will only let you know what I see. And it will be different from what you are perceiving from your position".

The aim of this metaphor is to approach the context of the interaction as an exchange of information, where the position of the professional is not directive. To present the professional's perspective as a different point of view from that of the client. Neither better nor worse, just different.

**METAPHOR  
"THE EARTHQUAKE"**

*(Carlos Fco Salgado Pascual)*

We all know of recent cases of earthquakes that have devastated entire countries, for example, Haiti. Imagine that we want to help Haiti after the earthquake. What can we do? Could we help them by destroying the earthquake? Can we eliminate the catastrophe? What would we have to do? Indeed, the goal is to help them build, and to do so from the destruction. We have to start building despite seeing that much of what we see around us is in ruins. That's what we're going to do in the support process, we are not interested in eliminating something, but in building from what is there.

---

<sup>12</sup> Páez, M., & Gutiérrez, O. (2012) *Múltiples aplicaciones de la Terapia de Aceptación y Compromiso (ACT)*. Madrid: Pirámide.

<sup>13</sup> Wilson, K., & Luciano Soriano, M. (2002) *Terapia de Aceptación y Compromiso (ACT) Un tratamiento conductual orientado a los valores*. Madrid: Pirámide.

The aim is to emphasise the approach of building rather than destroying or eliminating. It is a matter of pointing out from the outset that one's history is cumulative, not subtractive. We cannot eliminate history, but we can choose what to do today to build a life with meaning, that is, in the direction of what is important.

**EXPERIENTIAL EXERCISE**  
**"THE FINGER"**

We actively position ourselves in front of an object or painting or simply the wall. We put our index finger in front of our eyes and look at the finger, observe its shape, its texture, the shadows that produce the light, etc.

We spend some time looking at the finger and then we look at the object in the background and observe the object, its shape, its colour, its texture and the shadows produced by the light that enters or is in the room.

When we want to move through life in a certain meaningful direction, barriers can and do arise, and we may think that this is the problem. It is only a problem because it is there and we blend in with it. But if we focus on what is beyond, on where we want to focus on where we want to go (on our values), the barrier will still be there, but we will see more clearly and we will make contact with what matters to us.

**METAPHOR**  
**"KNOWLEDGE VERSUS PRACTICE"**

*(Taken from K. Wilson workshop)*

Imagine that I have very little elasticity, I can barely bend over and I want to learn how to do yoga. For three years, I read Yoga books until I am a person who knows the principles of Yoga and knows a lot of exercises.

After those three years I will know a lot about Yoga, and I can talk a lot about Yoga. But if I measure my elasticity, it will still be as poor or worse than it was three years ago. To increase my degree of elasticity I have to practice Yoga, not just know it.

In this way we exemplify that the important thing is to maintain a level of practice or activity.

**METAPHOR**  
**"TRAVELLING WEST"**

*(Taken from Harris, "Cuestión de confianza. Del miedo a la libertad" - "A question of trust. From fear to freedom", 2013)<sup>14</sup>*

Living according to values is like travelling west. No matter how far you travel west, you can always go a little further. You never reach a place called "the west". On the other hand, goals are like the places you want to visit as you travel west: this bridge, that river, the mountain, that city, etc. Each of these places you pass through can be crossed out as you go along.

The aim of such a metaphor is to realise that values are directions and can never be achieved, unlike goals and objectives.

---

<sup>14</sup> Harris, R. (2012) *Cuestión de confianza. Del miedo a la libertad*. Madrid: Sal Terrae.

**METAPHOR**  
**“THE KNIT SOCKS”**

*(Adapted from Wilson and Luciano, 2002; Hayes, 1999)<sup>15</sup>*

Tell me if you have deep feelings, very relevant to you, about knit socks. Also tell me if you care or if it is central to your life that people wear knit socks... (Let the person answer).

Now try to get some very deep and important feelings about knitted socks to emerge... (Wait for them to indicate the impossibility of such feelings emerging).

Now imagine that even though you do not feel anything special about such socks, you are going to act in such a way as to make the socks very important. Imagine that you have to make me see that knitted socks are very important to you, or that you work in a shop and want to make customers see that you value knit socks very much, in order to increase the sales of those socks. What do you think you would do to make knit socks very important? (Let the participant answer and give several answers in the form of actions of what he/she would do in the same room or, if necessary, in a shop to show that he/she values knit socks or that they are important to him/her).

Tell me, how could you be remembered by me or by the co-workers or by the customers of that store after getting involved in all these actions, over months or years, to generate importance for knit socks... (the client answers).

So, even though you have no special feelings towards knit socks, by behaving in that way the truth is that nobody could say that you don't have strong feelings and motives towards knit socks. What really matters is what you have done, those are the footprints that remain. What has produced these changes are your actions, and these are really the ones under your active control.

The aim of this metaphor is to introduce the importance of considering values as actions and not feelings, of seeing values as an active feeling.

**METAPHOR**  
**“THE FLOWER GARDEN”**

*(Adapted from Wilson and Luciano, 2002)*

Imagine that you like flowers very much and you want to have a garden full of beautiful flowers in your backyard. You plant the kind of flowers you want to have and start watering them so that they grow and, in the future, you can enjoy the garden and the beauty of the flowers you want to have. You know that you have to take care of your flowers, whether it is hot or cold, whether you are tired or not, you know that you have to water them and take care of them to keep them green and just the way you like them. Every day you work hard to go to your garden and water and take care of the flowers.

One day you realise that the first plants are starting to come out in your garden, but you also notice that some small weeds are appearing. You quickly cut the weeds, as they somehow spoil the kind of garden you would like to have. You clean it up and that calms you down.

---

<sup>15</sup> Hayes, S. C., Strosahl, K. D., & Wilson, K. G. (1999) *Acceptance and commitment Therapy. An experiential approach to behavior change*. New York: The Guilford Press.

The next day you notice that other weeds appear again, which you try to cut as soon as possible. So, every day, you go to the garden, with the clear intention of paying attention to any sign of weeds that may come out to cut them. But it seems that the more you cut the weeds, the more they come out, and little by little you realise that you have to increase your attention to the weeds so that they do not spoil your garden, but this also increases your tiredness because the more you cut the weeds, the faster they come out and grow.

After a while, your experience is that you can hardly keep the garden clean from weeds, but you are not watering your flowers anymore. That the flowers you want to have are not growing as green and healthy as you want.

You manage to keep the garden free of weeds for a short time (which reassures you), but little by little you are no longer taking care of your flowers, the ones you want to have.

Could you go into your garden, look at the weeds for a moment and direct your attention to whether there are still flowers in your garden to be cared for?

The aim of this metaphor is to specify the way in which we are going to focus attention on what the person cares about (the garden they want to have) and on the concrete and useful actions that they can take at that specific moment so that in the future they come closer to having the kind of garden they want.

*\*\* (This metaphor can also be found in the appendix dedicated to metaphors and exercises for clarification).*

## Annex 1.4: Practical notebook

### INTRODUCTION

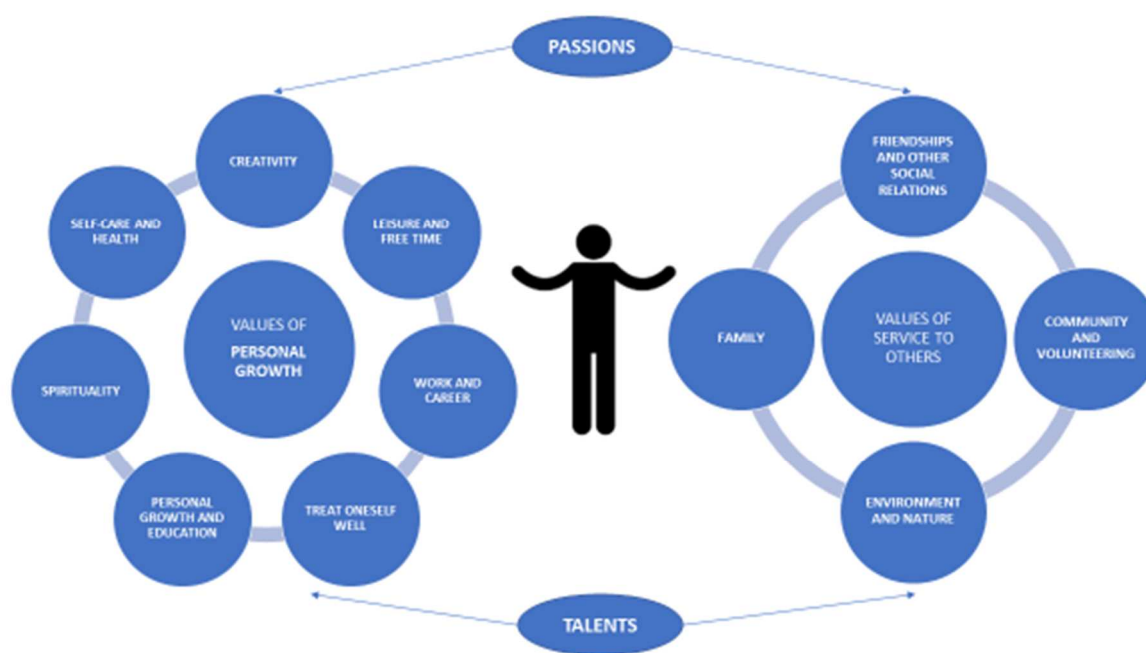
This practical notebook consists of a compilation and proposal of a scheme that serves to collect relevant and useful information for the activation of the life project. In it you will find some initial suggestions on how to approach the first contact with the person and those elements related to what is important, which will help the professional of reference to specify the work of activation of the life project.

This is not a rigid scheme, please use it as an example and a script. Feel free to modify what you consider appropriate based on a pragmatic and useful application for the person and his/her adaptation to the early care environment.

*“Kind, open stance. Put aside your defences, as if anything is possible and even if your personal advisor boycotts you, be aware that these are thoughts that come to your mind, it is your advisor doing his job, let them flow and focus again on considering the best possibilities in each of the areas.*

*This is about you and small things, not big challenges and big changes.”*

## AREAS OF VALUES, PASSIONS AND TALENTS



The person is the centre of attention, the source from which the passions, talents and values underlying these as well as the situations of pain arise.

In order to optimise the experience of values, it is important to start from the narrative, from a close knowledge of the Personal History. In the following point, we propose an interview on interests as a first step, which aims to get to know the person in greater depth from a positive perspective.

## CONTEXTUALISATION

Let me support you and help you live a meaningful life.

I would like to tell you what this support will consist of and some characteristics of what I can do to help you.

First, I would like to tell you that I'm going to focus on you, on what matters most to you, and on the kind of life you value. You are going to be the centre. My role will not be to tell you what to do or what should be important to you. I will respect your interests, dreams, desires and help you to know much more about what matters to you, what your values are, because it has been proven that the more we know about it, the more we can get closer to a meaningful life with vitality.

Life is like a journey that you have already started and in which you are immersed. You are sailing on the sea and sometimes you will notice that you are sailing in the direction you want, and other times you may notice that for different circumstances you have strayed from the direction. My role is to get in the boat with you and help you to row. But to do that I need you to tell me what the direction is, what course you want us to take. You're the boss. It is possible that now it may come to your mind: I don't know in which direction. Don't worry, this is fine, it is my job to help you discover and learn more about the direction that matters to you and where you want to sail.

It is not, therefore, a matter of achieving certain objectives or reaching ports, this can be achieved or not, and very certainly, by rowing you can achieve it, but it is not something that will definitely happen because there are many circumstances that can occur.

The work we are going to do is more about knowing, choosing and maintaining a direction that is valued and with which you feel that your journey is worthwhile.

You will learn more about what motivates you and what you are passionate about, what you are good at, areas, people and activities that are important to you, and it will make it easier for you to cultivate and water all of this so that your life will be as you want it to be.

**WHAT ARE YOU PASSIONATE ABOUT?**

PASSION	UNDERLYING VALUES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li></ul>

**WHAT ARE YOU GOOD AT?**

TALENTS	UNDERLYING VALUES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li></ul>

**YOUR FAVOURITE ROUTINES**

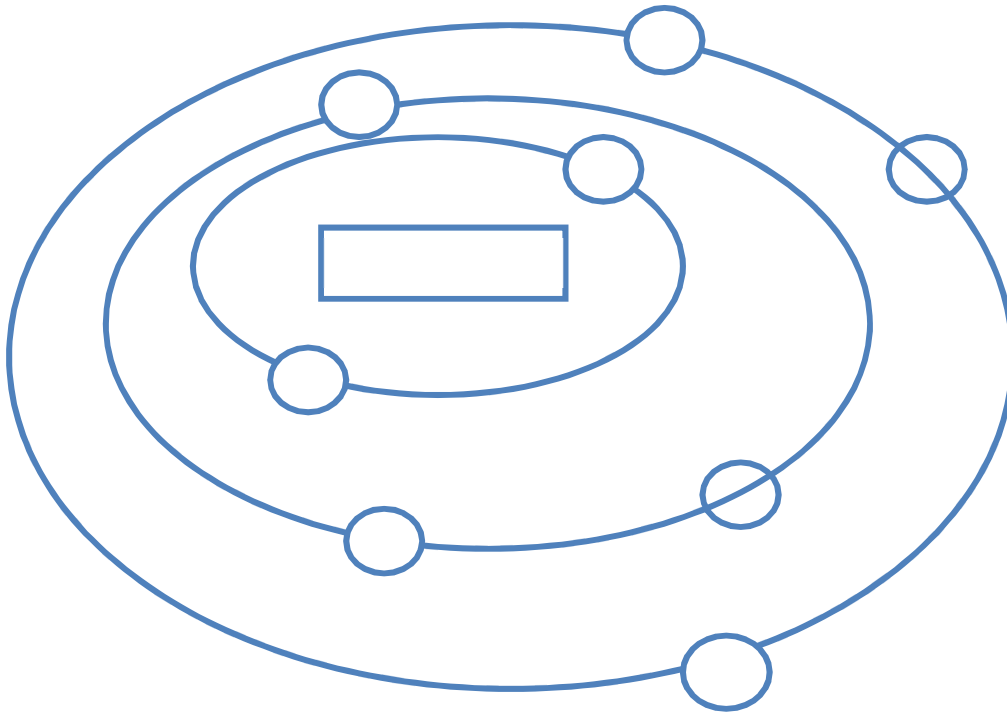
ROUTINES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li></ul>



## SUPPORT NETWORK

My name: \_\_\_\_\_

I live in: \_\_\_\_\_



Nº	NAME	PLACE OF LIVING	TELEPHONE
1			
2			

## VALUES OF PERSONAL GROWTH

In navigating through life, as we have already pointed out, it is going to be important to know the direction in which to row, to follow what the compass of our values says. For a good navigation, it is essential to have the boat in the best conditions. That is why we are going to start with the values of personal growth, with what keeps you in the best conditions to be able to live a meaningful life. First, we will focus on these values of personal growth and then, we will do it with the values of service to others. Remember, it is important to focus on yourself and on keeping yourself in the best conditions, so that you can focus on others.

### Self-care and health

The reasons why people perform self-care actions are very diverse: some do it for fun, others to succeed or, on other occasions, because they see in pursuing a healthy style the consequence of living more and being more with the people they love. The why, therefore, can be very broad.

This is a very specific area that is usually important for all persons.

- Example of questions:

How important is physical health to you? What role does health and healthy eating play in your life? Why do you want to take care of your body and your health and what does it mean for you to do so through diet, exercise, or other activities? What small actions do you intentionally perform to take care of your health? What motivates you to stay healthy?

### Spirituality

- Example of questions:

Are there things beyond or greater than your own life that you care about or inspire you? Describe the role that spirituality plays in your life and how it manifests itself. If you have this in your life, what qualities does it give you?

### Creativity

- Example of questions:

What in your life makes you feel like an artist? What are you creative in? Not only in traditional artistic media, but in many other ways of exercising creativity (e.g. cooking, writing, make-up, fixing things, etc.).  
What is the place of creative activities in your life? Are they important to you?  
Do you enjoy seeing your effort grows into something new?

## Leisure and free time

How people live, care for and enjoy their leisure time can have a significant impact on their quality of life. With leisure, one can feel absolutely involved and absorbed in the activity or it can also be a way to express dreams, desires, emotions, moods, etc.

- Example of questions:

In this domain, look for the value you place on expressing this playful spirit. What is behind your leisure time? Do you appreciate having time to relax, have fun? Do you allow yourself to challenge yourself or develop new interests? How would you describe that part of your life if it were exactly as you would like it to be? What kind of interests, activities or hobbies would you love to cultivate or explore if you could? What kind of activity have you always wanted to do, learn or develop and so far haven't? What qualities would you like your leisure time to have?

## Work and career

This dimension may include paid, voluntary or unpaid work or involvement in one's own household economy. Motivations can range from gaining financial security, prestige, appreciation, independence, intellectual challenge or interacting and helping others.

- Example of questions:

Have you given up a career or volunteer work because of emotional or cognitive barriers? Such as the fear of failure, feelings of stress or discomfort, pressure or anything else. Imagine the job you want (e.g. your professional life). How would you like to use your skills or talents in a productive way? What does that give you? What would you do if you could do anything? Describe a job or effort that would be perfect for you.

## Personal growth and education

Personal growth is nourished by everything that makes you develop as a human being, intellectually, physically, socially or emotionally. It refers, therefore, to generating a deeper knowledge about oneself, the world or others. It is often associated with learning, and in fact includes everything related to formal education, although it is not necessary since it can take place in any area or place. Therefore, many of the areas raised above may have to do with personal growth, for example, a person who plays a sport may experience that they are taking care of their health, or that allows him/her to feel attached to a social group, but also, it can allow him/her to generate a sense of growing in his/her ability, to be more and more competent in that sport.

- Example of questions:

Are you attracted by knowledge, by seeing and knowing new things? Do you like to learn new skills or develop some that you already have? Perhaps you have noticed that in certain areas it is pleasant to learn just for the sake of knowing more? Do you like to share what you know? In what areas do you like to grow?

### **Treat oneself well**

Sometimes, when we make mistakes, when we become aware that we have vulnerabilities or simply when we are faced with things that do not go our way, we tend to be very hard on ourselves. We blame ourselves and are very hard as a motivating strategy.

Learning and cultivating a kind of relationship with yourself based on good treatment, caring, forgiveness and kindness can help you stop criticising and fighting with yourself and focus on experiencing and living according to what matters to you.

*“Treat yourself as you would treat a person you love”.*

- Example of questions:

How important is it for you to learn to be kind to yourself? How would it change your life if you treated yourself more kindly at certain times and in the face of complicated thoughts and memories? Do you think it is important to move in this direction?

What would a kind treatment be like for you in complicated situations? How would you characterise a person who is a model of kindness and forgiveness in the face of your vulnerability or your most difficult moments? How would he/she be like for you?

### **VALUES OF SERVICE TO OTHERS**

The values of service to others are social values, but they are also nourished by the values of personal growth. For example, a person may value growing in the knowledge of something they are good at such as makeup. It is worth motivating that person to contribute to making other people look good and be happier.

Contributing to others has to do with giving what one has inside without expecting anything in return. It is about finding meaning by bringing in, contributing, learning to develop the talents to reach out to others, and making contact. So, if you like to teach, sharing knowledge with others will bring meaning. If you like to help, giving a smile, a friendly word or a supporting hand will bring meaning and help you feel satisfied.

*“It is about the small things”.* Many of the most meaningful things a person can do to contribute to another person are small things like a conversation, a hug, a show of appreciation, joining an NGO, helping the person closest to you with any need, all of which bring connection, strength and purpose.

It is important to take into consideration the passions and talents in each area.

## Family

It refers to the importance of the family in its entirety, from the life of the couple, to the children, siblings, parents, etc. Take this area as a process, it is possible that a person at this time does not have children or a partner, but it can still be a relevant and important area for that person.

- Example of questions:

Are family ties important? What kind of couple's relationship would you like to have? What qualities would you like to enhance as a parent? What qualities would you highlight from an ideal relationship for you? What do your passions and talents bring to this area? What things are you good at in this area? Is there anything you lack in this area? Ask about different roles: as a parent, partner, child, cousin...

## Friendships and other social relations

There is a lot of variability in what people value, with respect to the area of friendship and social relations. Some people value meeting a lot of people, while others place a lot of importance on certain qualities of the relationship such as closeness and trust. There are also people who prefer to be alone.

*"Taking care of your social network has beneficial effects"*

- Example of questions:

Are social relationships important to you? What kind of social relationships would you like to have? What qualities would you like to enhance as a friend? What would your interactions with your friends be like if they were ideal for you? What are you good at in the area of friendships and social relationships? How would you like to contribute to your social relationships, in what way? What would that area be lacking at this time?

## Community and volunteering

We all belong to a community and the feeling of belonging is usually important for a large number of people. This area refers to large communities such as a nation or its city, but also to smaller ones such as social groups, the workplace, the neighbourhood or an NGO.

- Example of questions:

Is being part of a community or belonging to something bigger important to you? Do you care about making a difference in your community? What kind of person or what qualities would you like to strengthen in this area? How would you like to share your passions and what you are good at in your community or group of membership? What motivates you most in this area? What imprint would you like to leave on others, how would you like to be remembered in the community? Is there anything missing in this area for you?

## **The environment and nature**

Taking care of nature and being in touch with it is usually very important for many people. It can contribute to a feeling of transcendence, of being part of something bigger.

There are many ways to enhance this area, from recycling, energy conservation, gardening, contact through healthy physical activities such as hiking, planting a tree, caring for a garden, walking, cycling, enjoying a day in the country, going to the sea, fishing or simply enjoying the view, all of which can have an important meaning for the person in this area.

- Example of questions:

Is taking care of nature and the planet important to you? Do you like doing it? Is being in touch with the natural world important to you? Would you like to leave your mark on the conservation of the planet? How would you like to contribute to your environment? What kind of environments would you like to spend more time in? What kind of personal qualities would you like to enhance in this area? How can your talents and passions help influence the environment? What would be missing in this area for you?

**MODEL DATA COLLECTION SHEETS**

VALUE AREA \_\_\_\_\_

Important

Satisfaction



Valuable purpose (Qualities to be promoted)

Motivations

Related passions (What am I passionate about and what do I like to do?)

Related talents (What am I good at?)

What values of help to others is it related to?

- CREATION OF COMMITTED ACTIONS

GOAL 1: What do I want to achieve in this area?

OBJECTIVES: What will I do to achieve it?

1  
2  
3

COMMITTED ACTIONS: When, where and how I am going to do it?

1  
2  
3

GOAL 2: What do I want to achieve in this area?

OBJECTIVES: What will I do to achieve it?

1

2

3

COMMITTED ACTIONS: When, where and how am I going to do it?

1

2

3

- PROPOSALS

Based on the knowledge of certain aspects that are important to all people, the proposals for support, activities or resources aligned with what is important are:

1

2

3

4

- OTHER ACTIONS



## **Annex 2.1: Metaphors and exercises to clarify what is important**

### **Introduction**

There are many exercises, activities and metaphors that allow a close conversation about values or what the person (family) cares about. Not all of them are useful for all people, but they will have to be adapted and used according to the criteria of the professional using those that are best adapted to each person, their capacities, qualities and characteristics.

It is important, therefore, to highlight the importance of the flexibility of the professional when applying each of these proposals in a useful way, adjusting to the context and the person.

**METAPHOR**  
**“THE FLOWER GARDEN”**

*(Adapted from Wilson and Luciano, 2002)*

Imagine that you like flowers very much and you want to have a garden full of beautiful flowers in your backyard. You plant the kind of flowers you want to have and start watering them so that they grow and, in the future, you can enjoy the garden and the beauty of the flowers you want to have. You know that you have to take care of your flowers, whether it is hot or cold, whether you are tired or not, you know that you have to water them and take care of them to keep them green and just the way you like them. Every day you work hard to go to your garden and water and take care of the flowers.

One day you realise that the first plants are starting to come out in your garden, but you also notice that some small weeds are appearing. You quickly cut the weeds, as they somehow spoil the kind of garden you would like to have. You clean it up and that calms you down.

The next day you notice that other weeds appear again, which you try to cut as soon as possible. So, every day, you go to the garden, with the clear intention of paying attention to any sign of weeds that may come out to cut them. But it seems that the more you cut the weeds, the more they come out, and little by little you realise that you have to increase your attention to the weeds so that they do not spoil your garden, but this also increases your tiredness because the more you cut the weeds, the faster they come out and grow.

After a while, your experience is that you can hardly keep the garden clean from weeds, but you are not watering your flowers anymore. That the flowers you want to have are not growing as green and healthy as you want.

You manage to keep the garden free of weeds for a short time (which reassures you), but little by little you are no longer taking care of your flowers, the ones you want to have.

Could you go into your garden, look at the weeds for a moment and direct your attention to whether there are still flowers in your garden to be cared for?

The aim of this metaphor is to specify the way in which we are going to focus attention on what the person cares about (the garden they want to have) and on the concrete and useful actions that they can take at that specific moment so that in the future they come closer to having the kind of garden they want.

**EXERCISE**  
**“THE HEROES**

*(from Rob Archer, 2013, taken from Stoodard J.A. & Afari, N., 2014)<sup>16</sup>*

This is an exercise to help people identify personal qualities that are important to them and to initiate value-based interactions.

Let your imagination run wild and think about your heroes. Consider the people who have played a direct role in your life: family members, friends, teachers, or anyone else. Now think about people who have inspired you indirectly: actors, artists, celebrities, writers, or even fictional characters. Choose a person you really admire (Give time to think about it). Now think about the qualities you really admire in that person - not the circumstances, but the personal qualities - and write them down. Once you have done this, I invite you to look at it and think about how this might translate into your own personal values.

---

<sup>16</sup>Stoodard, J. A., & Afari, N. (2014) *The Big Book of ACT Metaphors*. Oakland CA: New Harbinger.

Discuss specific “qualities” that arise.

Questions:

- What qualities of that person do you especially value?
- How would you like to act to be more like that person?
- Help the person identify the domains of life (friendships, families, training, etc.) in which he or she might be willing to work on building these qualities.
- If necessary, this can lead to discussing and identifying barriers or obstacles to progress in line with these qualities (what matters to the person).

Worksheet:

*Think about who your heroes are and choose some people you admire. These can be people you know, celebrities or even fictional characters. On the next page, write in the columns:*

1. *Your hero’s name.*
2. *The values you admire about this person.*
3. *Actions you can take to start moving in the direction of becoming more like this person.*
4. *Obstacles you anticipate (e.g., thoughts, feelings, impulses, memories) that might stand in the way of your committed actions.*
5. *Skills and/or exercises that you can use to manage obstacles so that you can keep your feet on the ground in the direction of becoming more like your hero.*

My Heroes	What do I admire? Qualities/ Values	Steps to cultivate these qualities in my committed actions	Obstacles I anticipate	What can I do to keep on going forward in any case? (How would he/she do it)

**PERSONAL JOURNAL BASED ON  
AWARENESS-RAISING EXERCISES**

Another way to discover your purpose in life is to keep a journal based on awareness-raising exercises. This is about intentionally paying attention to how your life is developing at certain times of the day and recording those things you observe in a journal. Over the next two weeks, observe your life and be on the lookout for any experiences that give you feelings of well-being, of admiration, of acting rightly or meaningfully, and write them down in your journal. We will be digging deeper into that list later on to help you get a better idea of what kind of experiences you are looking for:

- Experiences that generate a sense of well-being or self-fulfilment.
- Experiences with actions that you feel are somehow aligned with what is important to you.
- Experiences that stimulate a feeling that something is significant, a feeling that it is important to you.
- Experiences that lead you to feel admiration for others.

The number of experiences that may end up appearing in your journal may be very diverse and all of them would give information about what is important: conversations, scenes from movies or TV shows, things you have read in a newspaper or a book, something you have seen on the Internet, things that have happened in other people's lives, something you have witnessed, something that has touched you deeply because of its beauty, an activity or task, or a mere thought.

The easy part is to record it in the journal. The challenge is in the process of becoming aware, of paying attention to the feeling of well-being, of doing the right thing, that this is meaningful or admirable as it appears in your life, and deepening the experiences that generate those feelings. These experiences are the key to your passions and a window into your purpose in life. So be honest with yourself and don't censor anything that comes up. Your passions are something you need to be looking at all the time.

You don't have to write in the journal just at the moment you have the experience. Completing the log once at the end of the day is enough. But for the exercise to work you have to be aware of those feelings for much of the day. You also need to notice what situations or experiences trigger those feelings. Once you have spent two weeks working on the journal, review what you have recorded to see if it all points to a problem or issue that is pulling you towards a solution.

**EXERCISE  
"86,400 EUROS"**

*(Adapted from Claire Milligan, taken from page ACBS)*

Imagine that you have won the following prize in a contest: every morning, the bank deposits 86,400 euros in a private account of yours for your use. However, this prize has rules.

The first set of rules means that at the end of the day, any money you have not spent during the day will be taken away from you. Every morning when you wake up, the bank will reopen your account with another 86,400 euros for that day. You cannot transfer money to another account. You can only spend it.

The second set of rules says that the bank can terminate the game at any time and without notice. At that time, the bank will close your account and you will not receive a new one.

What would you do personally? Let the person deal with what he/she would do.

You could buy anything and everything you want, right? Not just for you, but for all the people you love, right?

Even people you don't know, because you couldn't spend it all on yourself, could you?

At the end the person is told what he/she has spent his/her money on, and it is likely that the client has spent it on himself/herself, his/her family, the needy, friends who need it, etc.

Once this is done, we ask the person if he/she considers that this game has something to do with reality and we tell him/her:

Each one of us is in possession of a magic bank. We simply cannot see it.

The magic bank is time. Every morning we wake up and get 86,400 seconds as a gift of life, and when we go to sleep at night, the time that we haven't used on ourselves or on what we care about, that lost and unused time, simply doesn't come back.

That which we have not lived up to that day is simply lost forever.

Yesterday was gone forever.

Every morning, the account is refilled, but REMEMBER that the bank can dissolve your account at any time WITHOUT NOTICE.

So, what are you going to do with your 86,400 seconds?

Think about it, enjoy every second of your life, spend that time on what matters to you (you, family, friends, children, etc.). What you don't do today will not come back. Maybe tomorrow the bank will give you another similar amount, or not!

The goal is to bring out what is important to the person, to make contact with values and to pay attention to the present as the ideal moment to value and generate meaning right now.

### THE NOVEL OF YOUR LIFE

This can be done at the time of the interaction or the person can be asked to bring his or her life written down in the form of a novel divided into chapters.

Talk about life as a novel. Name the chapters (this also facilitates clarification of what is important). There will be chapters that are fascinating and others that are somewhat darker. Talking about each of the chapters, what qualities mark each of the stages, what they have to do with what matters to you, etc., will be important.

Then, focus can be put on the title that the person wants to give to his/her life and why. The idea that the story is cumulative and that, therefore, there are still chapters to be written is emphasised. The person is thus asked what titles he/she would like to give and how he/she would like them to be developed, what qualities the protagonist would have from that moment onwards, and assuming that whole story.

This is a very flexible activity that allows reflection on the life history, highlighting the cumulative nature of the experiences, contextualising that there is much to build (to write) and allowing the clarification of what is important to the person.

## THE LIFE YOU LIVE AND THE LIFE YOU WANT TO LIVE

*(Based on Stephen Sheets and Jill Stoddard, 2013; taken from Stoddard and Afari, 2014)*

This is a two-part closed-eye exercise:

1) Start by asking nicely that the person closes his/her eyes and focuses his/her attention on the breathing and then on the posture, to be more present and to facilitate the exercise.

Ask the person to imagine the following scenario:

You are going to be interviewed by \_\_\_\_\_ (name of a famous journalist or celebrity) who is going to carry out your biography to this day. The interviewer wishes to include all relevant people and events in your life. This will reflect the type of person you have been, the roles you have played and your purposes. Try to imagine yourself sitting in front of the interviewer, imagining how the interview will unfold. Look at yourself talking to him/her about what you have done, the life you have led and the choices you have made, the roles you have taken on. What kind of partner, parent, friend, child, sibling, worker, student or boss have you been? What have been the difficult times, times of stress, fear, anxiety, sadness, anger? What would you tell him/her about what is most important to you? Take a few minutes to imagine the highlights of your life and how you would recount them. When you are finished, open your eyes and I invite you now to share what you said, heard and saw.

Validate any type of experience and this can also be a good time to work/clarify contents of the areas of value.

2) Ask the person to close his/her eyes again. Imagine that many years have passed in the future and you are interviewed again by \_\_\_\_\_ to follow up on your life. This follow-up begins where the previous one ended and tries to reflect the way you have lived from this moment on in coherence with everything that matters to you. Again, imagine the interview and how you would relate this new stage. What would you tell or write \_\_\_\_\_ about what you value, the kind of person you are, the kind of life you led and the decisions you have made? What roles have you taken on? What qualities have you strengthened? How have you handled the difficult moments and discomfort? How have you approached the most important things? Use the following minutes to imagine all those moments in your future life.

## LIFE LESSONS

The purpose of life can be as much about learning as it is about doing things. This activity gives you the opportunity to explore your personal strengths and the qualities of your personality that you strive to develop. There are two steps in this process.

Start by writing down some personal strengths or qualities you are trying to develop. You may already have some of these qualities, but you would like to strengthen them, or they may be qualities that you have been wanting to learn about for a long time (for example, compassion, perseverance, acceptance, the ability to express or receive love, or the courage to face your fears). You decide which ones are important to you.

---

---

---

The next step is to select the most important qualities, perhaps one that could help you achieve your key goals.

---

---

---

Imagine that you already have this highly developed quality, and then write down what would be different in your life if this were so. What things would you do differently with your friends, family or colleagues?

---

---

---

## A SATISFACTORY LIFE MOMENT

*(Based on Wilson and Du Frene, 2009)<sup>17</sup>*

Tell the person that we would like to try to understand a moment in his/her life when he/she experienced sweetness, an experience where there was no struggle with thoughts and feelings, even if it was only for a few moments. Simply choose a moment, big or small, recent or distant, in which they felt truly present, engaged or alive.

When you have chosen one, have him/her take a minute to notice all the details that were present at that moment. What did he/she see? How did it happen? Who was there? What sounds, smells or tastes were present? How did it feel? Kindly ask the person to share all the details of that moment in a way that helps us to understand what was in that moment that made the person feel truly satisfied.

The exercise is best done with the eyes closed. You can start with an exercise of full attention to the environment around the person and then ask him/her to imagine that he/she has a file cabinet with photos of his/her life in his/her hands, that he/she can open that file cabinet and choose a photo.

“Direct your attention to that photo and look at your face in it, observe your gaze, your eyes and the rest of the details around you. I invite you to get into the picture and try to get into your own skin to notice what you were feeling at that moment. Allow yourself to be in that place and experience it. Notice the sensations you were feeling there (on the skin, the breeze, the heat, cold or whatever) and see if you were with someone. Take a moment to be in that experience, try to breathe in the situation and let the satisfaction slowly fill you up during that moment. That’s good. Now, I invite you to notice what is in that moment, in that situation that makes you feel full, what are the qualities of that occasion that make you feel alive and satisfied”.

End the activity with a couple of deep breaths, and highlight those aspects that may have emerged in the situation and that have to do with what is important for the person.

The objective of this practice is to foster the emergence and clarification of some of the aspects that the person cares about and that are present in those moments lived with fullness and meaning.

## MEANINGFUL OBJECTS

Sit down in your living room and find the meanings of the objects in the room. Sometimes they are related to your memories or important moments in your life.

*Example: the watch reminds me of the strong connection I have with my father, who gave it to me. That picture reminds me of my relationship with my friends and those wonderful holidays. My sneakers remind me how important sport is to me. The books remind me of my learning and self-development. Concert tickets remind me how important music is to me.*

---

<sup>17</sup> Wilson, K. G., & DuFrene, T. (2009) *Mindfulness for Two: An Acceptance and Commitment Therapy Approach to Mindfulness in Psychotherapy*. Oakland, CA: New Harbinger.



Repeat this exercise by sitting in every room in your house or in your bedroom. Or maybe you can bring some of those objects that are significant to you.

If you feel that there are no meaningful objects around you, or you find that the place you are in is impersonal and you feel melancholy, consider putting more meaningful things around you or take them with you.

The goal is to use those meaningful objects to talk about and further clarify what the person values and what is important to him/her.

**IMAGINE THAT YOU ARE 80 YEARS OLD**

*(Based on Harris, 2010)<sup>18</sup>*

Please take a few minutes to think or write your answer. If you are unable to do so, someone can help you to write it down.

“Imagine that you are 80 years old and your life is just as it is now. Get into your own skin when you are 80 and try to answer the following sentences:

- I spent too much time worrying about \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- I spent too little time doing things like \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- If I could go back in time I would \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

The aim of this simple exercise is to open our eyes and clarify those things that emerge as important and that we really value, although at the moment our actions are sometimes not consistent with this.

□ 18 Harris, R. (2010) *La Trampa de la Felicidad. Deja de Sufrir, comienza a vivir*. Madrid: Planeta.

## THE EPITAPH

(Based on Hayes and Smith, 2005)<sup>19</sup>

The aim is for the participant to write a short eulogy as an imaginary epitaph to help the emergence of that which characterises the mark or legacy that the person wants to leave and with which he/she would be satisfied. It is a way to generate transcendence and to highlight what is important in the future to become present and motivate present actions.

“When people die, what they leave behind is not what they had, but what they meant, what they did and the footprints they left behind. For example, have you heard of Mother Teresa of Calcutta?” Let them answer what they know about her.

We know all this because of what she meant, what she did and the trace of all her actions. In that sense, imagine that you can write your own epitaph and have it say what you represented in your life. What would you like that epitaph to say, how would you like this epitaph to be summarised? Think about it for a minute. Let the participant speak and express what he/she would like the epitaph to say. The following figure can be used as help:

Use this small activity to generate a deeper conversation about the qualities the person wants to enhance in his/her life and the imprint he/she wants to leave. Always under the perspective that people leave a mark on their passage through life, even if they don't want to leave it. What they did and what they meant really leaves a mark.

HERE LIES A  
PERSON WHO:

---

---

---

---

---

<sup>19</sup>Hayes, S.C. & Smith, S. (2005) *Get out of your mind & into your life*. Oakland CA: New Harbinger.

## JOB ADVERTISEMENT

We are used to looking for and responding to job ads. The trick is to try to match the job description as much as we can.

*What if companies were looking for someone like you? Imagine that you are on a job search platform, where you can add your profile as a professional. Imagine that you write your personal job ad, telling the world what kind of person you are and what you care about, but you don't specify a particular job or profession.*

Make sure your ad includes the following:

- Your name.
- Personal qualities, such as generous, impatient or introverted.
- Talents or skills, such as playing the trombone or designing spreadsheets.
- Values, such as wanting to make a difference.
- Ambitions, such as "I want to run my own business".
- Anything else you want in your ideal job, such as "I want a job where I am an expert" (to laugh a lot, to be able to use my Spanish, to be able to travel, etc.).
- Anything you don't need in your job, such as "I don't want a job that requires travel".
- One thing you can't commit to, like "I'm not going to take a job where I can't be outdoors".

It can be adapted for someone who is looking for a relationship, someone who is considering moving to a new city, who simply wants his/her family to get to know him/her or who wants to reflect and express his/her profile as an ideal parent, etc.

## THE LETTER

It is about experiencing meaning simply by being alive, and that feeling of being alive can be a source of motivation and inspiration. This sense of being alive can be particularly helpful when the search for other meanings in life is failing. To do so, participants need to write a letter to themselves at a time in their lives when they may feel bad or have no sense of meaning at all. We recommend that participants write this letter as if they were writing it to a friend they appreciate. This is the guide for the content of the letter:

- - Start the letter with "Dear me".
- - Admit that life can be hard and that feeling bad is inevitable and part of life.
- - Highlight the meaning of being alive.
- - Recall meanings you found in the past.
- - Give yourself some words of encouragement and hope. It is about believing in yourself: you can do it!
- - Give examples of things you have found meaning in during your life.
- - Suggest some specific steps to remind yourself of what is important in life (call Aunt Martha, eat well, etc.).

**THE GAME OF YOUR LIFE**

Adaptation from Carlos Salgado

This game is intended to help you further clarify the directions that are important to you, towards which you seek to walk throughout your life. Where your North is.

Here we go!

To play the game we need two elements, on the one hand, a die (in this case it is a die with 10 sides numbered from 1 to 10) and on the other hand, a board. The board is ahead of you, but please do not go to it yet, in a few moments you will be able to see it.

Now let us see how you do with chance. Choose 8 numbers from 1 to 10. These numbers can be repeated as it is like throwing the 10-sided dice, 8 times. Write down the numbers below. Don't think about them too much, but realise that this act represents randomness.

NUMBERS

\_\_\_\_\_

Now you can go to the board and see what chance has given you. As if it were a game of the goose, count as many squares as the chosen number marks and write down what the square says. Then, with the next number, add up from the previous square and write down again what you got, and so on with the rest of the 8 numbers. Then write down what you got.

WHAT CHANCE GIVES ME

- 1 -----
- 2 -----
- 3 -----
- 4 -----
- 5 -----
- 6 -----
- 7 -----
- 8 -----

START	1 Travel	2 Separating myself	3 Success	4 Deceivin g others	5 Honesty	6 Hard worker	7 Kind
8 Being honest	9 Large debts	10 Rich	11 Hating where I live	12 Changing the world	13 Going to prison	14 Creative	15 Angry
16 Sad old age	17 Active	18 Being rejected	19 Brave	20 Failure	21 Loving others	22 Being impulsive	23 Persistent
24 Happiness	25 Hating my job	26 Directing others	27 Playing	28 Large businesses	29 Criminal	30 Influential	31 Learning from others
32 Lazy	33 Fame	34 Being poor	35 Ambition	36 Stealing	37 Learning	38 Selfish	39 Helping others
40 Marriage	41 Embezzling money	42 Fighting for peace	43 Sad	44 Wisdom	45 Addict	46 Healthy	47 Expelled
48 Hermit	49 Beautiful experiences	50 Liar	51 Adventurer	52 Being fired	53 Happy old age	54 Stinking	55 Searching for the truth
56 University	57 Being bad	58 Entering politics	59 Good person	60 Love	61 Living alone	62 Fun	63 Failing others

Now that you can observe what you have been touched by, I would like to ask you, would you leave at random what you care about? Or would you rather be the one who chooses what is really important to you?

When it comes to talking about the kind of qualities and values you want to promote, what is important to you and the kind of person and professional you want to be, etc., let's talk about personal choices. When we talk about direction, we are talking about something chosen by you, which comes from your heart for being the most important thing for you in that area, and it does not refer to a direction that is determined by chance, or by other people. It is the direction that marks all your actions, above any present condition. It is about your North.

To practice all of this, I invite you to read the entire board carefully and choose 8 of those boxes that connect with what really matters to you in your role as a health care professional. These will have the property of being chosen by you and not by chance. Remember that this is a personal exercise and that you don't have to share it with anyone, so as far as you can, be honest with yourself.

CHOSEN BY ME

- 1 -----
- 2 -----
- 3 -----
- 4 -----
- 5 -----
- 6 -----
- 7 -----
- 8 -----

## Annex 2.2: Values and strengths

### Introduction

Various authors of very different orientations have highlighted the importance of personal values and the launch of actions with meaning for the person. The proposals made by these authors regarding lists of significant values or actions are also varied.

In this annex, several of these proposals are included. You will find an extensive list of values, one of pleasant activities and another of strengths. None of them is intended to be an exhaustive inventory of this type of elements, but they are a useful tool when it comes to clarifying what really matters to the person, when he or she has difficulties in making contact with his/her values or expresses that he/she does not know or does not care about anything.

Their presence in this appendix does not imply that all these elements have to be reviewed by the person. Take the lists flexibly, as an aid to conversations about what is important, in those cases where it is necessary, and they need more support for the concretion and clarification of the value areas.

## A QUICK LOOK AT YOUR VALUES

(Taken from Russ Harris, 2012)<sup>20</sup>

There is no such thing as right or wrong values, the list below is simply for you to think about what your own values are.

Point out each value as VI, QI, or NI, where VI = very important; QI = quite important; and NI = not so important.

1. Acceptance: to be open and accept myself, others, life, etc.
2. Friendship: to be a friend, a companion; to be nice to others.
3. Love: to act lovingly or affectionately towards myself and others.
4. Open-mindedness: thinking and seeing things from the point of view of others and weighing evidence fairly.
5. Support: to support, help, encourage and be available to myself and others.
6. Assertiveness: maintaining my rights with respect and asking for what I want.
7. Authenticity: to be genuine and real; to be honest with myself.
8. Self-awareness: being aware of my own thoughts, feelings and actions.
9. Self-care: taking care of my health and well-being and meeting my needs.
10. Self-control: to act according to my own ideals.
11. Self-development: to continue to grow, advance or improve in knowledge, skills, character or life experiences.
12. Adventure: to be adventurous; to actively seek, create or explore new or challenging experiences.
13. Beauty: to appreciate, create, nurture or cultivate beauty in myself, others, the environment, etc.
14. Kindness: to be kind, compassionate, considerate, caring and protective of myself and others.
15. Care: to take care of myself, others, the environment, etc.
16. Compassionate: to act compassionately and kindly towards those who are suffering.
17. Contribution: helping to make a positive contribution to myself and others.
18. Connection: to be fully involved in what I am doing and be fully present to others.
19. Trust: to be credible, loyal, faithful, sincere and reliable.
20. Conformity: to be respectful and obedient to rules and obligations.
21. Awareness: to be aware, open and curious about the experience of the here and now.
22. Cooperation: to cooperate and collaborate with others.
23. Creativity: to be creative and innovative.
24. Curiosity: to have an open mind and be interested in things; to explore and discover.
25. Challenge: to maintain the challenge of my own development, to learn and improve.
26. Fun: to seek, create and engage in fun activities.
27. Fairness: to treat others as myself, and vice versa.
28. Emotion: seeking, creating and engaging in exciting, stimulating or thrilling activities.
29. Spirituality: connecting with that which is greater than myself.
30. Encouragement: rewarding behaviour that I value in myself and others.
31. Flexibility: to adjust and adapt quickly to circumstances.
32. Generosity: sharing and giving, with myself and others.

---

<sup>20</sup> Harris, R. (2012) *Cuestión de confianza. Del miedo a la libertad*. Madrid: Sal Terrae.



33. Gratitude: to be grateful and to appreciate the positive aspects of myself, of others and of life.
34. Honesty: to be honest, truthful and sincere with myself and others.
35. Humour: seeing and appreciating the humorous side of life.
36. Humility: to be humble or modest; to let my accomplishments speak for themselves.
37. Impartiality: to be loyal to myself and others.
38. Independence: to support myself and choose my own way of doing things.
39. Intimacy: opening up, revealing and sharing what is mine - emotionally or physically - with the people closest to me.
40. Justice: supporting what is fair and reasonable.
41. Industriousness: to be industrious, hardworking and dedicated.
42. Freedom: to live freely; to choose how I live and act, or to help others do the same.
43. Mastery: to practice and improve my skills continually and to apply myself fully when I put them into practice.
44. Order: to be orderly and organised.
45. Patience: to wait calmly and tolerantly for what I want.
46. Forgiveness: to be lenient with myself and others.
47. Persistence: to continue with resolution, in spite of problems and difficulties.
48. Pleasure: to generate and give pleasure to myself and others.
49. Power: to strongly influence or exercise authority over others, to take charge, to lead and to organise.
50. Reciprocity: establishing relationships on a balanced basis of give and take.
51. Respect: to be respectful of myself and others; to be civil, considerate, and to maintain a positive regard.
52. Responsibility: to be accountable for my actions.
53. Romanticism: to be romantic, to show and express love or affection.
54. Health: to maintain or improve my physical condition, to take care of my physical and mental health and well-being.
55. Safety: to give security, to protect, ensure the safety of myself and others.
56. Sensuality: to create, explore and enjoy experiences that stimulate the senses.
57. Sexuality: to explore or express my sexuality.
58. Courage: to be brave, to resist fear, threats or difficulties.
59. Add a value of your own that is not listed here.
60. Add a value of your own that is not listed here.

Once you have marked each value with VI, QI, NI (very, little or not so important), go through all the values and point out the six that are most important to you. Rate each one a 6 to indicate that it is on your "Top 6" list.

What has this exercise revealed to you about the kind of person you want to be, how you want to treat others, and what you want your life to represent?

Now I invite you to do another quick exercise: take a piece of paper and write down those six most important core values. Over the next few months, carry them with you in your wallet, or in your trousers' pocket, and take them out often to reflect on them. The goal is to get you in touch with them as much as possible.

## LIST OF POTENTIALLY ENJOYABLE ACTIVITIES

(Pleasant Events Schedule, MacPhillamy y Lewinsohn, 1982, revised)

Instructions. Below is a list of a number of activities. Please note, in the FREQUENCY column, how often you do this activity (never=0, some=1, quite=2, very =3, extremely =4) and in the PLEASURE column, how much you like it (nothing=0, some=1, quite=2, very =3, extremely =4)

ACTIVITIES	FREQUENCY (0-3)	PLEASURE (0-3)
1. Going to the countryside.		
2. Making contributions to religious, charitable or other groups.		
3. Talking about sports.		
4. Meeting someone new.		
5. Going to a concert.		
6. Planning excursions or holidays.		
7. Buying things for myself.		
8. Going to the beach, to the pool.		
9. Making artistic works (painting, sculpture, drawing, filming, etc.).		
10. Climbing or mountaineering, rafting...		
11. Reading the Bible or other holy books.		
12. Playing football, basketball, tennis...		
13. Attending military events.		
14. Reordering or redecorating my room or house.		
15. Attending sporting events.		
16. Reading a book, magazine or DIY article.		
17. Going to the races (horse, car, regatta, etc.).		
18. Reading stories, novels, poems or plays.		
19. Going to a bar, tavern, club, etc.		
20. Attending conferences.		
21. Breathing clean air.		
22. Composing or arranging music.		
23. Speaking clearly, without any hindrance.		
24. Practicing navigation (canoeing, motoring, sailing, etc.).		
25. Pleasing my children, or other family members.		
26. Restoring antiques, retouching furniture, etc.		
27. Watching TV.		
28. Camping.		
29. Talking about politics.		
30. Working with machines (cars, bicycles, motorcycles, tractors, etc.).		
31. Planning for the future.		
32. Playing cards.		
33. Completing a difficult task.		
34. Laughing.		
35. Solving a problem, puzzle, crossword puzzle, etc.		
36. Attending weddings, baptisms, communions, etc.		
37. Criticising someone.		
38. Shaving.		
39. Having lunch with friends or partners.		
40. Playing tennis.		
41. Having a shower.		
42. Woodworking, carpentry.		

<p>43. Writing stories, novels, plays or poetry.</p> <p>44. Being with animals.</p> <p>45. Riding on a plane.</p> <p>46. Exploring, hiking, speleology.</p> <p>47. Talking frankly and openly.</p> <p>48. Group singing.</p> <p>49. Working on my usual job.</p> <p>50. Going to a party or a gathering.</p> <p>51. Take part in Ecclesiastical and social functions, charity raffles, etc.</p> <p>52. Speak a foreign language.</p> <p>53. Going to civic or social club meetings, tributes, etc.</p> <p>54. Going to a business meeting or congress.</p> <p>55. Riding in an expensive sports car.</p> <p>56. Playing a musical instrument.</p> <p>57. Preparing sandwiches, canapés, etc.</p> <p>58. Skiing.</p> <p>59. Getting help.</p> <p>60. Dressing informally.</p> <p>61. Combing or brushing my hair.</p> <p>62. Acting, playing a role.</p> <p>63. Taking a nap.</p> <p>64. Being with friends.</p> <p>65. Tinning, freezing, canning, etc.</p> <p>66. Driving quickly.</p> <p>67. Solving a personal problem.</p> <p>68. Taking a bath.</p> <p>69. Singing alone.</p> <p>70. Preparing food or doing crafts to sell or give away.</p> <p>71. Making bets.</p> <p>72. Being with my grandchildren.</p> <p>73. Playing chess or checkers.</p> <p>74. Carrying out handicraft work (pottery, jewellery, leather, pearls, loom, etc.).</p> <p>75. Scratching myself.</p> <p>76. Putting on makeup, fixing my hair.</p> <p>77. Designing or sketching.</p> <p>78. Visiting sick, hospitalised or troubled people.</p> <p>79. Toasting, cheering a party.</p> <p>80. Playing soccer.</p> <p>81. Being popular at a meeting.</p> <p>82. Watching wild animals.</p> <p>83. Having an original idea.</p> <p>84. Taking care of the garden, working and caring for the land.</p> <p>85. Reading essays or theoretical, academic or professional literature.</p> <p>86. Wearing new clothes.</p> <p>87. Dancing.</p> <p>88. Sunbathing.</p> <p>89. Riding a motorcycle.</p> <p>90. Sitting and thinking.</p> <p>91. Drinking in the company of others.</p>		
--	--	--

- |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
| <p>92. Seeing good things happen to my family or friends.</p> <p>93. Going to a fair, carnival, circus, zoo, amusement park.</p> <p>94. Talking about history, religion, politics.</p> <p>95. Playing money.</p> <p>96. Planning or organising something.</p> <p>97. Listening to the sounds of nature.</p> <p>98. Going on a date, courting someone, etc.</p> <p>99. Chatting in a lively way.</p> <p>100. Participating in a race of cars, motorcycles, boats...</p> <p>101. Listening to the radio.</p> <p>102. Inviting friends to the house.</p> <p>103. Participating in a sports competition.</p> <p>104. Introducing people who are likely to be sympathetic.</p> <p>105. Making gifts.</p> <p>106. Receiving massages, body sessions, etc.</p> <p>107. Receiving letters, postcards, notes.</p> <p>108. Watching the sky, the clouds, a storm.</p> <p>109. Buying something for my family.</p> <p>110. Taking photos.</p> <p>111. Giving a lecture or speech.</p> <p>112. Consulting maps.</p> <p>113. Collecting natural objects (wild foods or fruits, rocks, minerals...).</p> <p>114. Working on my finances, managing my money.</p> <p>115. Wearing clean clothes.</p> <p>116. Making a major purchase or investment (car, appliances, house, etc.).</p> <p>117. Helping someone.</p> <p>118. Going to the mountain.</p> <p>119. Being promoted or obtaining a distinction for what has been achieved.</p> <p>120. Hearing jokes.</p> <p>121. Winning a bet.</p> <p>122. Talking about my children or grandchildren.</p> <p>123. Meeting someone new of a different sex.</p> <p>124. Attending the exaltation of a past event, a demonstration.</p> <p>125. Speaking of misfortune.</p> <p>126. Contemplating a beautiful landscape.</p> <p>127. Eating a good meal.</p> <p>128. Improving my health (fixing my teeth, putting on new glasses, changing my diet).</p> <p>129. Going to the centre of the city.</p> <p>130. Playing in a band, singing in a choir.</p> <p>131. Walking.</p> <p>132. Visiting museums or exhibitions.</p> <p>133. Writing documents, essays, articles, reports, memoirs, etc.</p> <p>134. Doing a job well.</p> <p>135. Having free time.</p> <p>136. Fishing.</p> <p>137. Lending something.</p> <p>138. Being considered sexually attractive.</p> <p>139. Pleasing other important people.</p> <p>140. Advising someone.</p> <p>141. Going to a gym, a sports club.</p> <p>142. Being praised.</p> |  |  |
|--|--|--|

- |   |  |  |
|---|--|--|
| <p>143. Learning to do something new.</p> <p>144. Sitting on a terrace and watching people pass by.</p> <p>145. Complimenting or praising someone.</p> <p>146. Thinking about the people I like.</p> <p>147. Belonging to associations, groups, clubs, fraternities.</p> <p>148. Taking revenge.</p> <p>149. Being with my family.</p> <p>150. Horseback riding.</p> <p>151. Protesting social, political, environmental conditions, etc.</p> <p>152. Speaking on the phone.</p> <p>153. Having reveries, fantasies.</p> <p>154. Playing petanque or the frog, or similar games.</p> <p>155. Going to meetings where you meet people from the past.</p> <p>156. Seeing famous people.</p> <p>157. Going to the cinema.</p> <p>158. Kissing.</p> <p>159. Preparing a new or special meal.</p> <p>160. Watching the birds.</p> <p>161. Going shopping.</p> <p>162. Watching people.</p> <p>163. Lighting, watching the fire.</p> <p>164. Winning an argument.</p> <p>165. Selling or trading something.</p> <p>166. Finishing a project or task.</p> <p>167. Apologising.</p> <p>168. Repairing things.</p> <p>169. Working in a team.</p> <p>170. Riding a bicycle.</p> <p>171. Telling people what to do.</p> <p>172. Being with happy, cheerful people.</p> <p>173. Playing games in meetings, quarrels (clothes, bottle "match", etc.).</p> <p>174. Talking about politics or public affairs.</p> <p>175. Asking for help or advice.</p> <p>176. Talking about my hobbies, or my main interests.</p> <p>177. Looking at attractive women or men.</p> <p>178. Smiling at people.</p> <p>179. Playing in the sand, in the river, on the grass, etc.</p> <p>180. Being with my husband or wife.</p> <p>181. Having other people show interest in what I say.</p> <p>182. Expressing my love to someone.</p> <p>183. Taking care of houseplants.</p> <p>184. Have coffee, tea, a soft drink, etc. with friends.</p> <p>185. Collecting things.</p> <p>186. Defending a good cause.</p> <p>187. Remembering an absent friend or loved one.</p> <p>188. Working and playing with children.</p> <p>189. Receiving congratulations.</p> <p>190. Letting them tell me they love me.</p> <p>191. Going to bed late.</p> <p>192. Having family or friends I am proud of.</p> |  |  |
|---|--|--|

<p>193. Doing volunteer work, community service.</p> <p>194. Practicing water sports (e.g., diving).</p> <p>195. Receiving money.</p> <p>196. Defending or protecting the weak, stopping fraud.</p> <p>197. Reading comics, humorous books.</p> <p>198. Travelling.</p> <p>199. Attending a concert, opera, ballet or theatre.</p> <p>200. Looking at the stars, the planets or the moon.</p> <p>201. Learning things.</p> <p>202. Being alone.</p> <p>203. Planning my time.</p> <p>204. Cooking.</p> <p>205. Being smarter, smarter than others.</p> <p>206. Feeling the presence of God in my life.</p> <p>207. Doing a job my way.</p> <p>208. Doing odd jobs around the house.</p> <p>209. Crying.</p> <p>210. Being told that I am needed.</p> <p>211. Going to lunch or dinner at a restaurant.</p> <p>212. Seeing or smelling a flower or plant.</p> <p>213. Being invited to other people's homes.</p> <p>214. Receiving honours (civic, military, academic, etc.).</p> <p>215. Wearing cologne, perfume or lotion.</p> <p>216. Somebody agreeing with me.</p> <p>217. Remembering, talking about old times.</p> <p>218. Getting up early.</p> <p>219. Having peace and quiet.</p> <p>220. Doing experiments or other scientific work.</p> <p>221. Visiting friends.</p> <p>222. Writing in a diary.</p> <p>223. Being advised.</p> <p>224. Praying.</p> <p>225. Massaging.</p> <p>226. Meditating, doing yoga.</p> <p>227. Watching a fight.</p> <p>228. Doing favours to people.</p> <p>229. Being relaxed.</p> <p>230. Thinking about other people's problems.</p> <p>231. Playing board games (Monopoly, Parcheesi, etc.).</p> <p>232. Sleeping soundly at night.</p> <p>233. Doing hard work outdoors (cutting or pruning wood, clearing weeds, working in the field, etc.).</p> <p>234. Reading the newspaper.</p> <p>235. Doing some high-risk sport.</p> <p>236. Surprising someone with my clothes.</p> <p>237. Doing group therapy, development of body awareness, sensitivity, etc.</p> <p>238. Dreaming during the night.</p> <p>239. Washing my teeth.</p> <p>240. Swimming.</p> <p>241. Running, gymnastics, fitness, sports.</p> <p>242. Walking barefoot.</p> <p>243. Playing hide-and-seek.</p> <p>244. Doing housework or the laundry, cleaning things.</p>		
--	--	--

<p>245. Listening to music. 246. Debating. 247. Knitting, crochet, embroidery, sewing. 248. Caressing your partner. 249. Talking about sex. 250. Going to the hairdresser's or beauty salon. 251. Having guests in the house. 252. Being with someone I love. 253. Reading magazines. 254. Getting up late. 255. Starting a new project. 256. Being stubborn. 257. Going to the library.</p>		
--	--	--

## STRENGTHS

(Peterson and Seligman, 2004 "VIA Personal Strengths Questionnaire"  
adapted by Carmelo Vázquez Valverde)

The 24 personal strengths are grouped into 6 categories called virtues:

- **VIRTUE I. Wisdom and knowledge:** these are strengths that involve the acquisition and use of knowledge.
  - **Creativity:**  
Thinking of new products and different ways of doing things. Includes artistic creation but not exclusively.
  - **Curiosity (interest, liking novelty and being open to new experiences):**  
Having an interest in what is going on in the world, exploring and discovering things.
  - **Open-mindedness (critical thinking):**  
Thinking about things and examining all meanings and possibilities. It refers to the willingness to change one's ideas based on evidence.
  - **Desire to learn (love of knowledge):**  
Mastering new subjects and knowledge. It refers to the tendency to acquire new learning.
  - **Perspective (wisdom):**  
Advising others, finding ways not only to understand the world, but also to help others understand it.
  
- **VIRTUE II. Courage:** it refers to the emotional strengths involved in achieving goals in difficult situations.
  - **Courage:**  
Not letting oneself be intimidated by threat, difficulty or pain. Being able to defend a position that one believes to be correct in spite of the opposition of others. It also refers to the ability to maintain one's convictions, even if it means being criticised. It can also refer to physical strength, but not only.
  - **Persistence (perseverance):**  
Refers to the strength characterised by finishing what one starts, even if it means tackling obstacles. Obtaining satisfaction at the beginning and end of tasks.
  - **Integrity (authenticity, honesty):**  
Always going with the truth, taking responsibility for one's own feelings and actions. Showing oneself as one is.
  - **Vitality (passion, enthusiasm, energy):**  
Facing life with enthusiasm and energy. Doing things with conviction and giving everything of oneself. Living life as if it were an adventure, feeling alive and active.
  
- **VIRTUE III. Humanity:** it refers to the interpersonal strengths that involve caring, offering friendship, serving others and giving love.
  - **Love (capacity to love and be loved):**  
Maintaining valued relationships with others, especially where affection and care are mutual. Feeling attached and close to other people.
  - **Kindness (generosity, support, care, compassion, kindness):**  
Doing favours and good deeds to others, helping, caring for, and serving others.
  - **Social intelligence (emotional intelligence, interpersonal intelligence):**



Being aware of one's own and others' emotions and feelings. Knowing how to behave in different social situations, being aware of things that are important to other people, putting yourself in the other's shoes.

- **VIRTUE IV. Justice:** civic strengths associated with healthy community living.
  - **Citizenship (social responsibility, loyalty, teamwork):**  
Working with others, in collaboration, in a team. Being faithful to the group and feeling part of it.
  - **Justice (equity):**  
Treating all people as equals based on the concept of equality and equity. Not letting personal feelings influence decisions about others, giving everyone the same opportunities.
  - **Leadership:**  
Ability to encourage the group to do things and strengthen relationships among group members. Organising activities and carrying them through to completion.
  
- **VIRTUE V. Moderation:** these are strengths that protect us from excesses.
  - **Forgiveness and compassion (capacity to forgive and treat others well):**  
Ability to forgive people who have acted wrongly, not being spiteful and vindictive.
  - **Humility/Modesty:**  
Letting others talk about oneself, not seeking to be the centre of attention and not believing oneself to be more than others.
  - **Prudence (discretion, caution):**  
Being cautious in making decisions, taking no unnecessary risks.
  - **Self-regulation (self-control):**  
Ability to regulate one's own emotions and actions. That is, control and discipline in the face of impulses and emotions.
  
- **VIRTUE VI. Transcendence:** it is a group of strengths that forge a connection with the immensity of the universe, a sense of belonging to something bigger, and that provide meaning to life.
  - **Appreciation of beauty and excellence (admiration and fascination)**  
Knowing how to appreciate the beauty of things, of everyday life, or showing interest in nature, arts, science, etc.
  - **Gratitude:**  
Being aware of and grateful for the good things that happen to you. Knowing how to give thanks.
  - **Hope (optimism, orientation towards the future):**  
Expecting the best for the future and working towards it. Associating the good that can happen to something that is in our hands.
  - **Sense of humour (fun):**  
Taste for jokes, laughter, making others smile.
  - **Spirituality (religiosity, faith, purpose):**  
Thinking that there is universal meaning in things that happen in the world and in one's existence. Belief in something higher that determines our behaviour and protects us.

## **Annex 3.1: Metaphors and exercises to establish committed actions**

### **Introduction**

Once the areas important to the person have been clarified, it is important to facilitate the transition from words to actions. In other words, it is a matter of generating concrete actions that the person intends to carry out in the present and that allow him/her to achieve objectives and goals that are in the direction of what is really important to him/her.

It is important to be clear about the difference between the values or directions valued and the objectives, goals and concrete actions in this section. As can be read in the guide, the goals and objectives can be achieved or not, while values are directions, they are not achieved and can always be nurtured, encouraged, watered or promoted.

The metaphors and exercises presented in this annex are intended to help the person plan actions committed to objectives and goals that are in the value direction.

In this sense, for some people, a high level of concreteness will be important so that it motivates the person to move in the direction of their commitment (through small actions that the person can do here and now) and also facilitates the monitoring of those commitments.

In the second part of the annex, the practitioner will find a series of global exercises, which are so called because they can be used throughout the process. That is, they are useful both for identifying areas of value, and for clarifying and establishing committed actions.

A third part of the annex is dedicated to a list of errors that can be made when committing to and carrying out actions.

**EXERCISE**  
**LIST OF LIFE CHANGES**

*(Adapted from Harris, 2012)*

We have already mentioned on several occasions what you would do differently if you were moving in accordance with that which is most important to you, beyond the fact that doing so may or may not entail some kind of discomfort.

Answer the following questions. While you are filling them in, try to keep in mind what you really value (how you want to behave in relation to what you value) and your goals (what you want to achieve).

Make sure you think seriously about your answers (no problem if they are vague or incomplete) or if you are not very clear about the differences between values and goals. The important thing now is to establish a starting point.

- These are some of the ways in which I will act differently:
- These are some of the ways in which I will treat others differently:
- These are some of the ways in which I will treat myself differently:
- These are some of the personal qualities and character traits that I will develop and show to others:
- These are some of the ways in which I will act differently in my relationships with friends and family:
- These are some of the ways in which I will behave differently in the world of relationships that have to do with work, education, sport or leisure:
- These are some of the important things that I will support or defend:
- These are some of the activities that I will initiate or insist on:
- These are some of the goals that I will set for myself:
- These are some of the actions that I will take to improve my life:

The objective of this activity is to establish a starting point for the proposed changes in the value direction, and to put greater emphasis on those small actions that are under the control of the person.

**EXERCISE**  
**DIVIDING OBJECTIVES INTO SMALLER AND SMALLER PARTS**

*(Carlos Fco. Salgado)*

On a horizontal line ending in an arrow, the person is told that the line represents a value direction. We name this value. The patient fills in the different goals proposed in the value direction and places them on the line in order of achievement.

Next, the patient is asked to divide the first goal to be achieved into small objectives, also in chronological order. Then the patient is asked to divide the first objective into actions and then, again, the actions are divided into smaller ones.

For example, if someone sets a goal to stop smoking, this goal can be divided into steps such as reducing smoking little by little. If the person used to smoke 1 pack of cigarettes, he/she can set a goal of reducing to 15 cigarettes. This goal can be broken down into actions such as smoking 7 in the morning and 8 in the afternoon. In turn, he/she can divide the morning of the next day by saying that he/she will not smoke a cigarette until one hour after breakfast...and so on.

After this division, you can more easily seek a commitment from the patient regarding that small initial action that is the beginning of a path in the value direction.

The aim of this activity is to help the person to differentiate values, goals, objectives and actions and to specify small actions under the person's control in the value direction. It also allows the generation of commitments or purposes.

**EXERCISE**  
**"TEN STEPS TO WORK ON A VALUE DIRECTION"**

1. Choose a quality value you want to enhance. Choose value directions that you are willing to try for at least one week. This is not the time to try to change others or to seek to be more confident or to know what you have to do.
2. Observe the reactions. Notice anything that comes up about whether or not it is a good direction. Just notice that all the thoughts that come up are just that, thoughts. Remember that the job of your mind is to create thoughts. Let your mind do that and stay in the exercise.
3. Make a list. Take a moment to list a few behaviours that you might say are related to the value or direction selected.
4. Choose a behaviour. From this list, choose one behaviour or set of behaviours that you can commit to between now and the next session or sessions.
5. Observe the thoughts. Observe anything that comes up about whether or not this is a good behaviour, whether or not you like it, or whether you can actually do that which you are committing to. That is, be aware of any thoughts, feelings that come to you along the line of "I can't" or "I really don't value that".

6. Make a plan. Write down how you will go about promoting this value in the very near future (today, tomorrow, this coming weekend, etc.). Consider anything you will need to plan or put in order (e.g., calling someone else, collecting notes, underlining, registering, etc.). Choose when to do it, the sooner the better.
7. This is how you will behave. Even if that value involves other people, don't tell them what you are doing.
8. Keep a journal of your reactions. Things to keep in mind are other people's reactions to you, any feelings, thoughts or body sensations that occur before, during and after the behaviour, and how you feel about doing it a second time (or fifth or tenth or hundredth). Watch for evaluations that indicate whether this valued activity, value, or direction is "good" or "bad" or judgments about other people or yourself in relation to living in that direction. Gently thank your mind for those thoughts, and see if you can choose not to buy into the judgments or thoughts you make about the activity.
9. Commit yourself every day and take into account everything that is present in the form of thoughts, feelings, emotions, reactions of others, etc. as you do so.
10. Write everything down and please bring your journal with you to the next session.

**EXERCISE**  
**“HOW DO YOU WANT TO SPEND THE THIRTY THOUSAND DAYS YOU HAVE LEFT TO LIVE?”**

*(Taken from Blonna, 2013. Adaptation of Krech and Krech, 2003)<sup>21</sup>*

1. Calculate the exact number of days you have lived so far. Add the number of full years you have lived to this year and multiply by 365, then add to the figure obtained the number of days (including today's) you have lived in the last year.
2. Subtract that number from 30,000. The resulting figure will be the approximate number of days you still have left on Earth.
3. Make the following three lists: a) things I want to start doing; b) things I want to keep doing; and c) things I want to stop doing.
4. Describe how you want to spend your remaining time, using information from these three lists.
5. What are the stressful thoughts, out-of-date scripts, scenes of terror, and painful emotions that keep you from doing the above?
6. What are you willing to accept from the things listed in step 5 in order to carry out the things listed in step 4?
7. Make a plan. Write down how you will go about promoting this value in the very near future (today, tomorrow, this coming weekend, at the next meeting with your therapist). Consider anything you will need to plan or put in order (e.g., calling someone else, cleaning the house, making an appointment, etc.). Choose when to do it. The sooner, the better.
8. This is how you will behave. Even if this value involves other people, do not tell them what you are doing. See what you may notice if you just enact this value without telling them it is an "experiment".
9. Keep a journal of your reactions. Things to keep in mind are other people's reactions to you, any feelings, thoughts or bodily sensations that occur before, during and after the behaviour, and how you feel about doing it a second time (or fifth or tenth or hundredth). Watch for evaluations that indicate whether this valued activity, value, or direction is "good" or "bad" or judgments about others, or yourself in relation to living this value. Gently thank your mind for those thoughts, and see if you can choose not to buy into the judgments you make about the activity.
10. Make a commitment every day

---

<sup>21</sup> Blonna, R (2012) *Estrésese menos y viva más*. Bilbao: Desclee de Brouwer.

## SOME GLOBAL TOOLS

### EXERCISE "THE SUN"

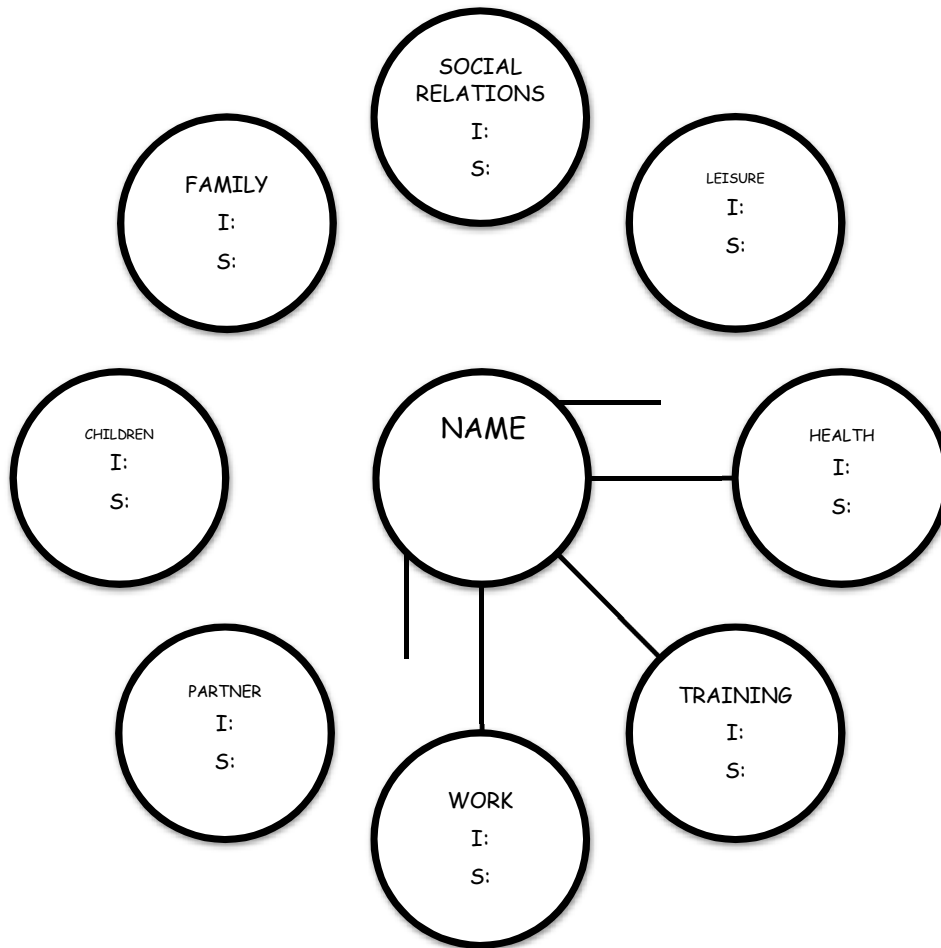
*(Adapted from Wilson and Luciano, 2002)*

The goal of this activity is to help you identify and clearly define your values in each of the life areas that are valuable to most people.

These areas are defined below (Wilson and Luciano, 2002):

- Marriage/partners/intimate relationships:  
It refers to the kind of person that you would like to be in an intimate relationship or to the kind of relationship that you would like to have.
- Family relationships:  
It refers to the type of sibling, child, parent you want to be, what qualities you would like those relationships to have, how you would behave if they were ideal relationships.
- Friendships/social relationships:  
It refers to what it means for you to be a good friend, how you would behave if you were a good friend.
- Employment/job:  
It refers to the kind of work you would like to do, what future career plans you would like to achieve.
- Education/training:  
It refers to your preferences about the education or training you would like to pursue.
- Leisure:  
It refers to the type of recreational life you would like to have, sports, leisure and entertainment activities, etc.
- Spirituality:  
It refers to what that term means to you. It can be as simple as communion with nature or as formal as participating in a religious group.
- Citizenship:  
It refers to participation in community affairs, volunteer work, lobbying authorities, participation as a member committed to nature, alcoholics anonymous, etc.
- Physical well-being/health:  
It refers to your values related to health issues, sleep, diet, exercise, smoking, etc.

Then, score from 0 to 10 the importance of each of these areas (0 indicates no importance at all and 10 indicates the highest level of importance), as well as the degree of satisfaction you currently have in each of the areas, this being understood as a measure of the coherence of your actions in the last month with respect to what matters to you.



Upon completion, the client is asked to choose one of the areas and is asked why he/she can do, or what is under his/her control to do, today, this afternoon, so that his/her level of satisfaction in that area increases only by half a point.

An attempt is made to generate a commitment to that action in the value direction and to express our imagination with regard to that situation.

The overall objective of this activity is to help the person in the work of clarification and contact with the values, as well as in the generation of committed actions.



## QUESTIONNAIRE ON VALUES

*(Taken from Wilson and Luciano, 2002)*

### IMPORTANCE

Below are several areas or domains of life that are important to some people. At this point, our concern is to know your quality of life in each of these areas. One of the aspects that refer to quality of life is the importance that one gives to the different areas of life. Mark the importance of each area on a scale of 1-10 (circled). 1 means that this area of your life is not important to you at all. 10 means that this area is extremely important. You should know that these areas are not important to everyone, and also that the value each person places on these areas is very personal. What is key now is that you value them according to the importance that each area has for you personally.

<u>AREAS</u>	<u>Not important at all</u>									<u>Extremely important</u>
Spouse, partner, intimate relationships	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Family relationships, childcare, care for others	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Friends / social life	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Work	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Education / training	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Leisure / fun	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Spirituality	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Citizenship / community life	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Physical care (diet, exercise, rest, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

### CONSISTENCY

Now we would like you to estimate the degree to which you have been consistent with each of your values. We are not asking you how you would ideally like to have behaved in each area. Nor are we asking you what others think of you. We are assuming that a person does better in some areas than in others. People also behave better at some times than others. What we want to know is what you have been doing for the past week. Mark each area using a scale of 1 to 10 (circled). 1 means that your actions have been completely inconsistent with your values. 10 means that your actions have been completely consistent with your values.

<b>AREAS</b>	<b>Not consistent</b>									<b>Extremely</b>
	<b>at all</b>									<b>consistent</b>
Spouse, partner, intimate relationships	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>
Family relationships, childcare, care for others	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>
Friends / social life	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>
Work	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>
Education / training	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>
Leisure / fun	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>
Spirituality	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>
Citizenship / community life	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>
Physical care (diet, exercise, rest, etc.)	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>

**VALUES QUESTIONNAIRE CORRECTION TEMPLATE**

<b><u>AREAS</u></b>	<b><u>Scores on importance</u></b>		<b><u>Scores on consistency</u></b>		<b><u>Scores on discrepancy</u></b>
Spouse, partner, intimate relationships		<b>minus</b>		=	
Family relationships, childcare, care for others		<b>minus</b>		=	
Friends / social life		<b>minus</b>		=	
Work		<b>minus</b>		=	
Education / training		<b>minus</b>		=	
Leisure / fun		<b>minus</b>		=	
Spirituality		<b>minus</b>		=	
Citizenship / community life		<b>minus</b>		=	
Physical care (diet, exercise, rest, etc.)		<b>minus</b>		=	
		<b>Total importance score = _____</b> <b>Total consistency score = _____</b> <b>Total discrepancy score = _____</b>			

See also below the value estimation form, narrative value form and objectives and barriers form (Hayes et al., 1999). These complete the above work.

## **NARRATIVE ON VALUES FORM**

(Hayes et al., 1999)

Produce a short narrative in each area that summarises its value or valued direction with respect to that area. If any of these life areas are not applicable, they will be left blank.

AREAS	NARRATIVE ON VALUED DIRECTION
Intimate/partner relationships	
Family relations	
Social relations	
Work	
Education and training	
Leisure	
Spirituality	
Citizenship	
Health/physical well-being	

## **VALUES ASSESSMENT FORM**

(Hayes et al., 1999)

*Read the stories above and then estimate how important each area is to you on a scale of 1 (not important) to 10 (extremely important). Also estimate the degree of satisfaction with which you have lived in each of the areas during the past month, on a scale of 1 (low satisfaction) to 10 (high satisfaction). Finally, put the valued directions in order according to their importance to you, indicating with a 1 the direction that is most important to you, that is, the first, then the second, and so on.*

AREAS	NARRATIVE ON VALUED DIRECTION	IMPORTANCE 01-oct	SATISFACTION 01-oct
Intimate/partner relationships			
Family relations			
Social relations			
Work			
Education and training			
Leisure			
Spirituality			
Citizenship			
Health/physical well-being			

**OBJECTIVES AND BARRIERS FORM**

(Adapted from Hayes et al., 1999)

AREAS	VALUED DIRECTION	OBJECTIVES	ACTIONS	BARRIERS
Intimate/partner relationships				
Family relations				
Social relations				
Work				
Education and training				
Leisure				
Spirituality				
Citizenship				
Health/physical well-being				

**EXERCISE**  
**“VALUES COMPASS”**

*(Taken from Dahl, Plumb, Stewart and Lundgren, 2009)<sup>22</sup>*

This is an exercise in which the value directions of the different dimensions are worked on. The focus is on quality rather than quantity, i.e. we try to differentiate directions from objectives and to focus on the reinforcing quality rather than the quantity of reinforcement. By focusing on the reinforcing quality, it will be present throughout life, even if the form of the behaviour changes (e.g. feeling useful, feeling needed, contributing in some way to being useful, etc.).

Let us look at the function of behaviour in such a way that when a client, commits him/herself to an activity, we ask: what is this activity at the service of?

Many of the activities to which we commit ourselves every day are given as habits and not so much as products of deliberate choices. For example, a person may sit in front of the TV every morning after work, rather than doing something different like going for a walk. What we will address is the question of whether or not that question is consistent or congruent with the value direction.

Other behaviours may initially have been deliberately chosen as a step in the value direction, but gradually become a routine that makes you lose contact with the value direction. For example, a sister who decides to help her physically challenged brother on a daily basis. In her mind, she is clearly taking steps consistent with her value direction (caring for a dependent loved one). In other words, the function of the behaviour may begin by being consistent with her values, but as time goes on, the same activity may become just another item on her to-do list. She may find herself helping her brother more as an obligation and a way of addressing her conscience, than as a step in the value direction. In this way the function of behaviour can eventually become the avoidance of unpleasant thoughts and feelings like “I’m not a good sister” rather than living up to the value of caring for her brother.

The exercise below helps the client clarify whether the functions of a particular pattern of behaviour are consistent with his or her values or not. This exercise may reveal the differences between what the client says they value and the behaviours they currently engage in.

We present the sheet showing the central figure representing the client. From this figure 10 arrows emerge representing 10 different domains of life. Each of these domains can offer a special and unique contribution to life. We call these qualities value directions.

The special significance of these qualities within each domain refers to the meaning they have for you and are likely to be present throughout your life, although the way in which these qualities are expressed or the form that behaviours take will likely change throughout your life. For example, in the area of friendships, the importance of being an active part of a group of friends may be a constant in your life, but the particular friends or the form of your interactions with them will change over time. In the area of caring for others, the constant quality might be the satisfaction of caring for someone or something regardless of whether it is a family member, or having children when you are a parent, or volunteering at a school when you retire.

Let us look at the 7 steps to complete the values compass.

---

<sup>22</sup> Dahl, J., Plumb, J., Stewart, I. & Lundgren T. (2009) *The Art & Science of Valuing*. Oakland CA: New Harbinger.

### 1. Identifying value directions.

First, you can reflect or describe your value direction in each of the 10 domains. Even if some of those domains seem to overlap, see if you can find a unique contribution from each domain in your life. Don't limit yourself by thinking about how you are living right now rather than what you think is possible right now. Describe the value direction you would choose if anything were possible. In other words, don't be realistic, but think about that special quality that you may have experienced at some point in your life when this domain was at its most favourable.

Describe this special quality in one or three words representing the essence of what you want in each of the 10 domains.

Write these descriptions in the corresponding boxes under the title "Intention". The following can be used as a guide to help you write these descriptions.

- The description should reflect a value direction, not so much a goal that you can achieve.
- It describes a quality rather than a quantity.
- The description is entirely general rather than containing specific details such as events, places, times, conversations.
- It represents a lifelong effort that goes beyond age and living conditions.
- It is only based on and takes into account your perspective, not what we think others expect or what we may think is right.
- It refers only to your behaviour, not that of others or to elements that are not under our control such as current thoughts, feelings or emotions, which might be modified.

### 2. Rating.

You will find three boxes labelled "importance", "behaviour" and "difference" below. In this section, we will put ratings in each of those three boxes.

The first rating refers to the degree of importance of that direction to you. The second asks how consistent with the value direction are the behaviours you performed. In the third box, we will indicate the difference or discrepancy between the importance and the behaviour rating.

Importance: rate from 0 to 10, with 0 indicating "not important at all" and 10 being "extremely important". Do not order the domains but score the domains as if they were independent. When considering importance, try to see each domain in terms of the significance of its overall quality to you in the past, in the present, and likely so in the future. In other words, do not try to use the present situation as a reference for the importance of value direction. Ask yourself: "In the best possible scenario, how important is it for me to have this quality in my life?"

Behaviour: Rate how consistent your behaviour has been over the past two weeks with respect to the direction being assessed. One way to think about this is to ask yourself how much you have invested in actions to create opportunities to experience in yourself the quality you have described in the intention.

Use the 0-10 scale again.

Discrepancy: Subtract the behaviour score from the importance score and enter the difference in the third box. This number represents the degree to which you are living consistently with your value direction.

### 3. Identifying obstacles in your path to the values

In this section, you will identify what is between you here and now and the steps to take to move in the direction of value you have stated is important to you. Consider each domain where you have a discrepancy between the importance of the value direction and your current behaviour during the past two weeks. For many of us, these may be several or even all domains.

In the box labelled as an obstacle, write a word or a short phrase that best represents that barrier between you and life consistent with the value direction. In other words, describe the reason you are not acting completely consistently with your stated value direction.

### 4. Rules about obstacles

In this section, you will identify your own rules about how you see and describe obstacles in the context of your value directions. For example, imagine a person who believes that if he/she could control his/her anxiety, he/she would be able to take steps toward a satisfying intimate relationship. Or “if I lost five kilos, I would dare to start a relationship”, or “if I can reduce my anxiety, I can take care of my family”.

As you can see, these rules are presented in the form of “if - then...”, and this is the form that you will use in the table below. There is only room for three obstacles in this table. Choose 3 of the central and common obstacles you experience and write them in the left-hand column. In the middle column, write the “if....” part, and in the right-hand column, the “then...” part (see table on obstacles).

### 5. How has this worked for you so far?

In this section, you can look at your compass exercise and choose three domains where you have discrepancies between your actions and your value directions.

These may be domains where you are clearly not acting consistently with your value directions. Similarly, there is only room to evaluate three obstacles. In the right-hand column of the table, indicate your value direction and indicate below it the obstacle to living more consistently with that direction. In the next column, briefly describe the strategies you have typically used to resolve or manage your obstacles. In the next column, evaluate the short-term effects of your strategies. In other words, ask yourself if you gain immediate control over the obstacle as a result of the strategies used. In the right-hand column, evaluate the long-term effects of your strategy. In the long run, when you use this strategy, are you coming closer or farther to living consistently with the particular value direction?

Example: Value direction: education; Obstacle: fatigue; Strategies used to manage the obstacle: prioritise current demands and postpone opportunities; Short-term effects: relief from demands and fatigue; Long-term effects: no education and little personal development (see table on short- and long-term effects).

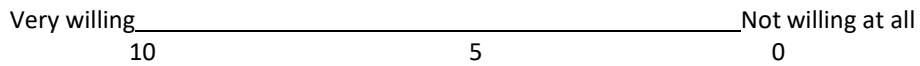
### 6. What does your experience tell you?

In this section, you will evaluate and describe what your experience tells you about the effectiveness of your strategies with respect to value directions and your overall quality of life. We look again at the table and in the left column, fill in the obstacle you are trying to manage or solve. In the middle column, circle whether you are “closer...” or “farther from...”. In the right column, fill in the value directions of those steps. For example: “trying to solve my pain problems”, “I am further away” from “being a loyal and conscientious worker” (see table “What does your experience tell you?”).



7. How willing you are to let go and move on?

In this section, you will be asked to evaluate your own willingness or disposition here and now to put aside the strategies you use to solve a problem or to overcome an obstacle before living in your value directions. Your degree of willingness to let go should be based on your own experience of how your strategies have worked for you. Trying something totally different means embarking on a new path, no longer using the same ineffective strategies. Here is the question: based on the conclusions drawn from your experience in the last step, how willing are you to abandon these strategies and to try something totally different? Mark your willingness on the following scale.



OBJECTIVE:

The purpose of the compass exercise is to enable the person to:

- Identify the general value or the value direction (identify what is important).
- Evaluate how consistent the person is being with what they value.
- Take steps in the value direction (start taking steps in that direction).
- Identify verbally constructed obstacles to taking steps in the value direction.
- Conduct an analysis of those avoidance strategies in terms of short- and long-term impact relative to what the person has stated as important.
- Practice the will to accept and embrace these obstacles and to stay on the value path.

TABLE: OBSTACLES

Obstacle 1	If I could get rid of	Then I could
Obstacle 1	If I could get rid of	Then I could
Obstacle 1	If I could get rid of	Then I could

TABLE: SHORT- AND LONG-TERM EFFECTS

Value Direction and Obstacle	Strategies used to manage the obstacle	Short-term effects	Long-term effects

Trying to solve	I am closer to/further away from	Taking steps in my value direction
Trying to solve	I am closer to/further away from	Taking steps in my value direction
Trying to solve	I am closer to/further away from	Taking steps in my value direction

Very willing  $\underline{\hspace{15em}}$  Not willing at all  
 10 5 0

## COMMON MISTAKES WHEN COMMITTING TO BEHAVIOURAL CHANGES

- *Relying on willpower for change in the long run.* Imagine that willpower doesn't exist. This is the first step to a better future.
- *Trying to take big steps instead of baby steps.* Look for small successes, one after another. E.g. instead of looking for a job, seeing how I incorporate myself into daily life or being clear about what I am going to do for the rest of my life, think about this weekend being better and more in line with how I would like it to be.
- *Ignoring how the environment shapes behaviour.* Change your context and it will change your life.
- *Trying to give up old behaviours (old habits) instead of doing new things.* Focus on action rather than avoidance. E.g.: I want to not get upset on the weekend, instead of: I want to eat with my mother, ask her about her work, play with my children, etc.
- *Blaming failures on a lack of motivation.* Solution: do things that are easier for you.
- *Believing that information leads to action.* Thinking that by just knowing something, this already produces changes in behaviour. Knowing why something happens to me does not produce changes in behaviour.
- *Focusing on abstract objectives rather than concrete behaviours.* Abstract: getting fit. Concrete: walking 15 minutes a day.
- *Trying to change a behaviour always, not for a short time.* Setting a fixed timeframe works better than 'forever'. I don't want to binge rather than I won't binge this afternoon and tomorrow we'll see what I come up with, and in that case I'll come up with it when this other thing happens. This is a way of changing the context.
- *Assuming that changing behaviour is difficult.* Changing behaviour is not so difficult when you have a clear process.

## Annex 4: The support group

The **support group**<sup>23</sup> consists of a small group of people committed to supporting and ensuring that all forms of support serve the child's independence and autonomy, as well as the interests and values of the family. The purpose is to develop and implement a support plan to activate the family's life project so that the family can live according to its values and preferences while facilitating the development of the child's independence and autonomy in natural environments.

The members of the support group are clear that they meet and collaborate with the purpose of improving the quality of life of the child and the family. That is why it must be made clear that it is not a space where the professionals decide what to do to compensate the child's disability or for the good of the family, but that based on what is important for the family members, a plan is drawn up and developed to improve their quality of life.

It is essential that the participants in the group share these objectives. This awareness will require prior preparation by the support coordinator, it cannot be improvised.

### **Who are the members?**

The family can count on the support of their reference professional/support coordinator and in specific cases a very significant person can be included.

In addition to the family and the professional of reference, a family member or friend may participate as well as other significant people (other professionals, volunteers, etc.).

There may also be sporadic (not fixed) participation of other persons or professionals, depending on the objective of the meeting or reunion.

However, it is important that the group is not too numerous, to allow a warm, close and operative space. We have to avoid the classic format of interdisciplinary meetings where many professionals exchange their technical appreciations. This is something else.

### **What commitments do support group members make?**

In line with the above, members of a support group make certain commitments:

- To collaborate in the design and implementation of a plan that helps to achieve goals desired by the family or desirable to improve their quality of life and their day-to-day life.
- To put the development of the child's independence and autonomy as the essential focus.
- To help the family realise their potential and empower them in their decisions.
- To search and mobilise the necessary support in each case and moment.
- To attend the meetings that are convened.
- To maintain confidentiality on the topics discussed.
- To respect and contribute to the fulfilment of the agreements reached by the group.
- To respect the family's decisions and maintain a supportive relationship.

---

<sup>23</sup> Taken from Martinez (2019).

### **What contributes to its good functioning?**

The teams and services that have been using this methodology offer us some recommendations:

- Offer it as a voluntary option chosen by the family, not a strategy to be applied on all occasions.
- That the members of the group know the child and his/her family well and appreciate it.
- That a clear, non-technical language is used.
- That the group is not too large and is operational.
- That, in each session, according to the objectives and topics to be discussed, other members/professionals have a place whenever necessary.
- That members commit to attending future meetings.

### **Sequencing to develop the support plan**

The following phases or moments can be helpful to guide the process of action with the aim of developing and supporting the life project of the person/family. It can be done in a single session or in several meetings.

#### *a) Start by sharing the life history*

In a first meeting, it is convenient to start by sharing the life history of the person/family. To this end, it is often useful to use a summary prepared between the person (or family) and the reference professional/support coordinator.

Some professionals say that this is a “magical moment” because it allows us to become aware of the privilege of knowing and sharing the family’s life history. This transforms our view and leads to the initiation of a relational dynamic based on dialogue, trust and cooperation between each of the family members and the professionals.

#### *b) Continue to share what we admire about the person/family*

Once the life history of the person/family has been shared, it is time for the members of the support group or those who participate to take a moment to value the person, sharing what makes them unique and valuable.

Exposing in an honest and close way, what we admire about that person/family, allows focusing on the value, showing that the person already has **value in him/herself**, and so we let them know, for being who they are.

There may be room for personal achievements, capacities, talents, what makes them unique (what marks their difference) or what they contribute or can contribute to the group or community.

#### *c) Listen to what is now important to the person/family*

Once we know the life history and have highlighted its value, it is time to listen to or capture what is now important to the person/family.

The previous approach to the life history will have helped the family members to recognise and clarify the issues that are now important to them, i.e. to identify which values guide a meaningful life, both for them individually, for their child and for the family as a whole.

It is also important to recognise which aspects of everyday life need special care in order to make everyday life meaningful.

d) *Planning goals and supports for better and more meaningful living*

Finally, the family members like the rest of the people in the group will guide the proposal of goals and actions to activate a better life. The proposals, interventions or professional support (stimulating programmes, support activities, etc.) should be connected to what people consider important and framed in the natural environment. The group will work to specify objectives, goals and small significant actions, as well as the necessary support for this.

Some objectives and goals will be linked to personal expectations or purposes, others can be discovered by the person after listening to professional recommendations to improve their quality of life. They may be goals that people already had and had postponed or abandoned, and it is also possible to set new goals to live better. The case is to identify them, make them explicit, discover them together. The important thing is that they are consistent with the values that the person/family has previously identified as relevant and that describe what really matters and feeds the meaning of life.

The person/family chooses, therefore, the important areas to be addressed and also the objectives and actions to be carried out. The professional or support group ensures that they motivate and facilitate the actions, suggesting ideas and offering the appropriate support. They should also prevent proposals that put the probability of success at risk, directing them towards viable actions.

## Annex 5: Recommendations for life transitions

### INTRODUCTION

*“Between stimulus and response there is a space. In that space is our power to choose our response. In our response lies our growth and our freedom”. (Viktor Frankl) <sup>24</sup>*

Since we are born, we are in a process of continuous change and, as we live, we have to go through multiple transitions. Some of these transitions are associated with development (example: adolescence, aging...), others are chosen by the person (having a child, schooling, joining another person, changes in relationships, housing, work...) and others occur where the person has not been able to participate actively (accidents, layoffs, separations, hospital and residential admissions, etc).

Some have a slight emotional charge that goes unnoticed, while others can be emotionally destabilising. In the latter case, it is important to know the environment and the context in which this life transition or change takes place. Again, knowing the person and their context will be vital in understanding the global situation.

***Life transitions are phases that we go through during our life to integrate the changes that occur into our experience.***

The changes associated with these transitions are accompanied by pain (physical and/or emotional) and in some cases by emotional destabilisation and states of boredom, depression, disorientation, discouragement, demotivation, lack of acceptance and even rebellion.

Going through these transitions in an optimal way may require emotional support to cope with a change or to learn new roles, activities, expectations and experiences.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

In other words, support for life transitions aims to develop a personal foundation on which to build a meaningful life that incorporates the changing or traumatic situation in the person’s history.

The following are a series of recommendations, which are not intended to be exhaustive, but rather to give a general idea of effective support actions.

The aim is not to solve problems or to take control of any situation, but to be able to help people learn, discover and investigate how to live a meaningful life over and above special life situations they may be going through.

- **Knowing the person and their context.** Without this, we can merely have a partial view of what the person is going through and the external actions that we can perceive.

---

<sup>24</sup> O’Connell M. (2018) *Una vida valiosa*: Ediciones B.

- Generating the conception of **personal history as something cumulative**. That is, history as something where we can add more experience, but where there is no possibility of subtracting or eliminating experience.
- **Giving value to the person** above the situations. Maintaining an awareness of the person as having value beyond the experiences and what he/she thinks and feels.
- Maintaining as much **continuity** as possible. Learning to adapt the new situation to daily life. Helping the person learn to live in a new role, with new expectations and with emotions that may not be pleasant initially.
- **Showing optimal ways of relating to what the person thinks and feels**, so that his/her way of doing things does not block the development and empowerment of a meaningful life.
- To this end, it is important to **validate** what the person thinks and feels in those moments through expressions such as *“I understand that it must be hard for you”, “would you like to talk to me about what you are feeling right now? I would be happy to listen”, “all this must be hard for you”, or “I can’t imagine what you are going through”*. The person should feel that what they are experiencing is normal and that it is understood from the emotions. Avoid expressions like *“it’s okay”, or “don’t be sad”*.
- Use regular questions and verbalisations that **focus attention on what is important to the person** and not so much on reducing or controlling the discomfort or suffering. Instead of *“how are you feeling?”* ask *“what are you going to do today that is important to you?”*. Avoid verbalisations aimed at controlling discomfort, as it often has a paradoxical effect, such as *“don’t worry”*.
- Take into consideration the common sources of importance when proposing or carrying out activities: **belonging** (feeling a member) **transcendence** (connected to something bigger) **contribution** (feeling that one makes a contribution) **personal growth** (personal development). Everything that, in some way, contributes to the development of these sources of importance in the person, maximises the probability of success.
- **Being patient**. The processes of change and the adaptation to any change or life transition requires constancy and patience, allowing a gradual acclimatisation to the new situation. It is a **process**, not an outcome. Therefore, do not **pressure** to obtain short-term results, each person has his/her own pace of adaptation.
- **Help/support** the person to take **small steps in the development of a meaningful life**. Teach the person to value small things: family relationships, leisure, self-care, etc. Highlight the importance of not rushing and that small things count.
- If possible, investigate the possibility of **helping to incorporate significance into the traumatic event or change**. Many people report finding meaning in their own change or trauma, for example, by helping people in similar situations.



## Annex 6: Value dimensions

### VALUE DIMENSIONS (OR VALUED DIMENSIONS)

What do the following actions have in common?

- Reducing the amount of sugar in coffee by half a spoonful.
- Performing Yoga.
- Walking every day for 20 minutes.
- Running Monday, Wednesday, Friday and Sunday for 1 hour.
- Introducing a piece of fruit at breakfast.
- Sleeping 8 hours.

All of them are healthy and self-care actions that indicate that the person who performs them values his/her health and gives him/herself the best care.

As can be seen, although the variability of the behaviour of valuing something is infinite, they can be grouped into different areas or dimensions of value.

Most people indicate the following areas or dimensions as being important to them to different degrees.

- A. SELF-CARE AND HEALTH
- B. CREATIVITY
- C. LEISURE AND FREE TIME
- D. WORK AND CAREER
- E. TREATING ONESELF WELL
- F. PERSONAL GROWTH AND EDUCATION
- G. SPIRITUALITY
- H. FRIENDSHIPS AND SOCIAL RELATIONS
- I. COMMUNITY AND VOLUNTEERING
- J. ENVIRONMENT AND NATURE
- K. FAMILY

Therefore, we can define the dimensions as each of the areas that are important and appreciated by most people to different degrees and in which value actions can be included (and can therefore be valued).

Values, on their part, are the most profound principles regarding how to live<sup>25</sup> in each of these dimensions. A direction that marks the most important thing in our lives from the bottom of our hearts. Values do not exist separately from human action, and therefore, they are a continuous quality of what we do.

They are particular beliefs about how you want to live life and what you want and are willing to fight for.

---

<sup>25</sup> Strosahl, K. D. & Robinson, P. J. (2018) *Manual práctico de mindfulness y aceptación contra la depresión*. Bilbao: Desclee de Brouwer.

Let us look at each of them. From A to G they are grouped in what are called self-growth areas, and areas from H to K are called areas of service to others.<sup>26</sup>

#### **A. MY HEALTH**

It means pursuing a healthy lifestyle, what my health is important for, which has to do with living more and being more with the people you love or living according to a lifestyle.

#### **B. CREATIVITY**

It means generating new things, empowering the most artistic part, different ways of expressing what you have inside. It does not only refer to traditional artistic means such as painting, poetry, but also to others such as cooking, crafts, etc.

#### **C. LEISURE AND FREE TIME**

It refers to the way of living, caring for and enjoying leisure and free time. Feeling involved, absorbed in what you do, if it involves art, nature, friendships, places where others go, etc. The qualities you want to enhance and the impact it has on your quality of life. It is about feeling involved and part of a group.

#### **D. WORK AND CAREER**

This includes both paid and voluntary work or the involvement in the domestic economy. The motivations, the type of professional and partner I would like to strengthen. It may concern financial security to cover other areas, gaining prestige, personal appreciation, challenges or helping others.

#### **E. TREATING ONESELF WELL**

It refers to how you want to treat yourself in the face of personal mistakes or vulnerabilities. What qualities to develop with yourself in order to take the best care of yourself. It has to do with cultivating a type of relationship with yourself based on good treatment, affection and kindness. It may have to do with other areas such as health and self-care.

#### **F. PERSONAL GROWTH AND EDUCATION**

It refers to everything that makes you develop and grow as a human being, physically, socially and intellectually. It has to do not only with results but also with the pleasure of learning, increasing knowledge, setting yourself challenges, developing a skill, etc. It can also be associated with several aforementioned areas such as health, creativity...

#### **G. SPIRITUALITY**

It has to do with what it means for the person to develop spirituality, what role it plays and how this area manifests itself in his/her life. It can range from contact with nature to a religious confession.

---

<sup>26</sup> McKay, M., Forsyth, J.P. and Eifert, G.H. (2010) *Your life on purpose: how to find what matters & create the life you want*. Oakland: New Harbinger.

## H. FRIENDSHIPS AND SOCIAL RELATIONS

It means pursuing personal qualities as a friend, partner, and the kind of relationships you want. There is a lot of variability, from people who value meeting a lot of people, to others who place a lot of importance on qualities such as closeness or trust. It can also be about broader aspects such as feeling part of a group or supporting and helping others.

## I. COMMUNITY AND VOLUNTEERING

It refers to the sense of belonging, being part of communities (large as a nation, or small as a social group or NGO). It is also about participating, contributing, sharing and helping others. Making a difference and an imprint in terms of contributing to others.

## J. ENVIRONMENT AND NATURE

It means making contact with nature, feeling part of something bigger, taking care of the environment, making that contribution transcend the present moment. The way to cultivate and promote this area is very varied, from gardening, healthy physical activities such as hiking, planting trees, caring for the garden or simply contemplating everything that has to do with the environment and nature.

## K. FAMILY

It has to do with the kind of relationships you want to cultivate. It refers to the importance of family ties in all their breadth, from the life as a couple, children, siblings, parents, etc., taken as a process, so that it is possible that, at present, a person may not have children or a partner, but it may still be important. Qualities that a person wants to enhance as a father, mother, sibling...

Achieving goals that one sets in life generates significant **satisfaction** and when we achieve one, we can set the next one and so on. But values are more than the sum of those goals, the value (what matters to us) is what binds them together. Knowing what matters to us is a good way to live a meaningful life.

## SPECIFIC BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Hayes, S. C., Strosahl, K., & Wilson, K. G. (1999) *Acceptance and Commitment Therapy: An experiential approach to behavior change*. New York: Guilford Press.
- McKay, M., Forsyth, J.P. & Eifert, G.H. (2010) *Your life on purpose: how to find what matters & create the life you want*. Oakland: New Harbinger.
- Strosahl, K. D. & Robinson, P. J. (2018) *Manual práctico de mindfulness y aceptación contra la depresión*. Bilbao: Desclee de Brouwer.
- Páez-Blarrina, M., Gutiérrez-Martínez, O., Valdivia-Salas, S., Luciano Soriano C. (2006) Terapia de aceptación y compromiso (ACT) y la importancia de los valores personales en el contexto de la terapia psicológica. *International Journal of Psychology and Psychological Therapy*. 6 (1) 1-20.
- Wilson K y Luciano MC (2002). *Terapia de aceptación y compromiso (ACT). Un tratamiento conductual orientado a los valores*. Madrid: Pirámide.

## Annex 7. Application to a real case

**User:** H. G. S.                      Date of Birth: 26/06/2017

**Interview:** Mother of the child, L. S. G.                      Age: 37

**People present:** Mother of the child, professional pilot coordinator, reference professional (support coordinator)

### Life history:

L. is from El Real Sitio de San Ildefonso (La Granja), where she lived and grew up until she was 19 years old.

L. is the third of 4 brothers and remembers her childhood at La Granja playing mainly with them. She describes her childhood as “normal”, with no notable memories. Her memories of that time are mainly of her sister A., a year younger than her. She was born prematurely and with some complications, which resulted in a disability with great support needs.

Her face shows a big smile when she talks about this sister and her relationship with her, they shared a room and their achievements were celebrated and shared.

She remembers a time in high school when a neighbour would make fun of her during the day at school but treated her normally in the neighbourhood. She never understood it and identified it as the neighbour’s problem.

She does not have any relationship with the friends of that time, each one has made his or her own life and if they see each other they greet each other, but it doesn't go any further. She has a couple of friends who continue to invite her to important events such as weddings, baptisms... She has a nice memory of when they went out to the countryside with her father, they walked through the mountains of Valsaín, where he was from, and even though the walks were long and she was very small, she did not ask to be taken in her father’s arms at any time.

At the age of 19, due to the circumstances of her sister A., they moved to Segovia to facilitate transfers to educational centres and other services.

At that time, L. carried out professional training in the hotel and catering sector, because in Segovia it was the one with the most job opportunities, although she would have liked to do hairdressing.

She has always been a hard-working, responsible person, and above all has given priority to service and support to her family.

It has been a long time since she did this, but she enjoyed making cross-stitch paintings. When asked what she connects with when making them, she says that it is exciting to discover the beauty that appears there, as thread by thread the result is shown, it is the value of discovering. During the crisis, her brother lost his job. He had a mortgage on a house he had recently bought and the whole family turned to helping him meet his expenses, a significant part of L.’s salary has gone to help her brother.

L. loses her job, at which point she thinks of her paintings as a possible source of income.

She has also always liked puzzles; she has not done any since H. was born, although it could be an opportunity to start introducing him to them now.

She always liked to go out with friends for a drink on Saturdays, since she met H. A., her partner and H.’s father, they have been going out less and less, he doesn’t like to go out. Sometimes they leave H. with his grandmother and maternal uncle and go to the cinema as a couple.

When L. was about 26 years old, her parents got separated, it was a friendly and cordial separation, the father still collaborates at home with his sister Alicia every day, every afternoon he visits them and enters the house with his own key.

The father went to live again in La Granja, four years ago he fell ill, and three years ago he died. Soon after, L. and H. A. decided to have a child, H. They had been delaying it by always putting family and work situations first, and at that moment, L. decided that although her father's death was recent, they needed to take the step given her age.

She would like to have another child, but she does not think it will be possible at the moment.

L. and H.A., H.'s parents, are not married. At the moment, they are preparing H.'s baptism, and in about a year they want to celebrate their wedding. For her it is important, and her partner agrees.

Her responsibility at work is such that, although she has already communicated the date of the baptism, she does not know if she will be given a free day and weighs the possibility of having to work that day in the morning and not being able to prepare for it.

H.A. is not at home during the week, he works on the roads and is presently away in Soria, he returns at weekends. On Saturdays when L. works, he takes care of the child, he likes computer games on the internet, he usually plays with a friend from Segovia, with whom he meets up some Saturdays afternoon, and they go for a walk and chat together with the child. L. also likes to play some games, but less, her leisure is resting, she disconnects a while by playing. On Sundays, they visit her sister Alicia, who has been in a centre for some years now. They are worried that nowadays, when L.'s sister gets irritated and upset, the child gets scared and cries, for her it is very important to spend time with her sister, to be able to continue taking her mother to visit her.

Being pregnant, she had the impression in the 34th week that she had urine leaks every time she moved. After observing what was happening, and seeing that it did not stop, they went to the emergency room. The birth and delivery of H. was rushed in circumstances similar to those of her sister Alicia, the doctor who attended her in the emergency room told her "why didn't you come sooner?". She remembers that her mother was blamed in the same way.

H.'s father and grandmother have lived this situation with a lot of fear. L. is more wholehearted in the face of the fear of what might happen to him, but the feeling of guilt is still latent.

She observes her son very well, but at present her gaze is conditioned by the objective evidence: he plays throwing things around, it seems that he does not pay attention, he does not fit the pieces...

She spent a while trying to teach him to say "mom", she insisted a lot, little by little she stopped and one day as she was changing his diaper in the morning, he looked at her and said "mom". She is so happy, now she wants him to call dad too.

She and H.A. are doing well as a couple, she calls him every day by video call on WhatsApp. She thinks that if they ever split up, she would do it just like her parents did, keeping a good relationship, especially for the boy.

At present, the nuclear family has a house in the Granja, where she grew up. As soon as they are there, H.'s father spends the whole week away for work, and for L. it is better to live in Segovia in her mother's house. Here L.'s mother, L.'s brother and the boy live together, and the boy's father returns on Fridays. They organise themselves together to take care of the child, they do not take him to the nursery school. In the summer, they spend more time at L.'s brother's house, it is a villa with a garden, where they set up a swimming pool for the child, the rest of the year they do not stay in it.

Her older sister also plays a major role in her life, they make daily video calls to see the child and talk to her.

They organise the holidays by renting a house together in Asturias for a month, where this sister lives and L. takes her younger sister, her mother and the child to be all together. For this year, she has doubts about how they are going to do it.

She feels very much supported by her partner, H.A., in all this, he collaborates with the care of her younger sister when they take her home for some holiday, she tells how he helps her to

undress and put her in the bathtub, there is a lot of care for the sister that L.'s mother cannot do anymore, and they take care of it.

She now has a friend, they have met through the children, this friend has health difficulties, she has recently separated, and L. is a support for her, she listens to her and gives her positive messages about how she sees the situation.

L. describes herself as a kind, respectful, good person, a hard worker, a good companion. She considers herself shy, and does not make the first move in relationships, but always shows kindness when she is approached. It is important for her to be a good mother as well as a good daughter.

If she were to describe her child in 15/20 years' time, she would want him to be an autonomous, independent person who earns a living, her own job aspiration is to "earn a living". She has a dream... TO TAKE HER CHILD TO DISNEY, she wants to meet him too.

## Basic form for the activation of the life project in early care

### 1 Life project areas

\* Compulsory \*\* Compulsory if it applies to the case

AREAS	WISHES
<b>Everyday life</b> * YES	** What makes a person's daily life meaningful in terms of their values and life purposes?  <i>That my child is independent and autonomous</i>
<b>Life purposes</b> * NO	** What purpose(s) does the person feel involved with?
<b>Deep life transition</b> * YES	** What is the substantial change the person wants for his/her future life?  <i>Guilt, fear. Do not let the guilt mediate the interaction with my child.</i>

### 2 Members of support group

\* Compulsory

SUPPORT GROUP	
* PERSON	* RELATION
<i>Monica</i>	<i>Reference Professional/Support Coordinator</i>
<i>L.</i>	<i>Mother</i>

\* Compulsory

Other people with whom I wish to share my life project and supports	
* PERSON	* RELATION
<i>Grandmother</i>	<i>Maternal grandmother</i>
<i>Uncle</i>	<i>Maternal uncle</i>

### 3 Values of the person

\* Compulsory

* VALUES	* DIMENSIONS										
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K
BEING A GOOD MOTHER, BEING PRESENT AND CONTRIBUTING TO MY CHILD'S INDEPENDENCE AND AUTONOMY											X
CONTACT WITH NATURE (DEVELOP THE QUALITY OF BEING)										X	
BEING HARD-WORKING, ACTIVE				X	X						
GROWING THROUGH LEARNING/DISCOVERING					X						
BEING A GOOD, KIND PERSON							X	X			
BEING A WILLING PERSON FOR MY FAMILY											X
BEING PRESENT AS A DAUGHTER, TAKING CARE OF THE MOTHER											X

#### DIMENSIONS

- A. SELF-CARE AND HEALTH
- B. CREATIVITY
- C. LEISURE AND FREE TIME
- D. WORK AND CAREER
- E. TREATING ONESELF WELL
- F. PERSONAL GROWTH AND EDUCATION
- G. SPIRITUALITY
- H. FRIENDSHIPS AND SOCIAL RELATIONS
- I. COMMUNITY AND VOLUNTEERING
- J. ENVIRONMENT AND NATURE
- K. FAMILY



## 4 Life project and support with activities

\*Compulsory

LIFE PROJECT		SUPPORTS			
DIMENSION Examples	OBJECTIVES / ACTIVITIES* What I want / What I do not want (including timeframe)	WHAT Supports I need	WHO Who will give me this support	WHEN If it is an activity of daily life	OBSERVATIONS Schedule ...
FAMILY	<p><b>Objective</b> <i>I want to be present for my son and contribute to his independence</i></p> <hr/> <p><b>Action</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I will sit and play with my son in the afternoons (I will do puzzles)</li> <li>• I will be involved in the training sessions to:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Encourage his attention.</li> <li>○ Introduce meaningful play.</li> <li>○ Generate eating habits:                   <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Use a spoon</li> <li>▪ Avoid the Tablet</li> <li>▪ Encourage chewing</li> <li>▪ Drink without an adapter</li> </ul> </li> <li>○ Enhancing a functional language:                   <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Indicate when he is hungry and thirsty</li> <li>▪ Say no with meaning</li> </ul> </li> <li>○ Encourage the ability to wait</li> <li>○ Enhance self-knowledge</li> <li>○ Develop progressive autonomy in hand washing and undressing</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advice and training to generate appropriate eating habits, to develop and enhance the autonomy and independence of the child in different areas</li> <li>• Advice and training in dealing with guilt and nervousness</li> <li>• Information on choking and tools to introduce mastication</li> </ul>	Reference professional Speech therapist Psychologist	Weekly	
FAMILY	<p><b>Objective</b> <i>I want to be a family-friendly person and develop contact with my sister with visits characterised by calm.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advice and training for</li> </ul>	Reference professional Psychologist	Weekly	

	<p><b>Action</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I will attend the sessions to learn not to get carried away by guilt or my fears (he will cry when we visit my sister). Learn how to make my feelings have less impact on what is important.</li> </ul>	<p>feelings of fear, guilt, and other anticipatory thoughts (he will cry, he will choke, he will fall...) to not mediate the relationship with my child.</p>			
ENVIRONMENT AND NATURE	<p><b>Objective</b> Develop the quality of being in contact with nature</p> <p><b>Action</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I will encourage trips to the countryside and to la Granja. In this way, I help my child's development on a global level (motor skills, play, relationships, etc.)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Share the activity with my partner or my family</li> </ul>	Partner Mother	Eventually	
WORK, PERSONAL GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT	<p><b>Objective</b> I want to be an active and hard-working person</p> <p><b>Action</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I will balance my work with supporting my child through play and communication.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Advice and training so that feelings of fear, guilt, and other thoughts do not mediate my meaningful life and relationship with my child</li> </ul>	Reference professional Psychologist	Weekly	
PERSONAL GROWTH	<p><b>Objective</b> I want to use what I like to do to support my child. I like to learn and to go step by step in the process of discovering, as in a puzzle</p> <p><b>Action</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I will do puzzles with my child to build his communication, language development and as a way to know how to wait.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Advice and training if things do not go my way. Learning how to handle moments of frustration (e.g. if I see my child not paying attention or throwing away the pieces)</li> </ul>	Reference professional Psychologist	Weekly	
SPIRITUALITY, FRIENDSHIPS AND SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS	<p><b>Objective</b> I want to be a good person, kind and willing</p>		My mother		

<p><i>Action</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><i>I will keep in touch with my friends and develop a willingness to be nice and eager with them.</i></li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>That someone helps me take care of my son if I stay with my friend.</li></ul>		<i>Occasionally</i>	
--	---	--	---------------------	--

## Annex 8. Bibliography

- Awashi, P., Chauhan, R., Verma, S. (2014) Meaningfulness in Life Span Perspectives: An Overview. *SMS*. Vol (7) 2. (98-113)
- Álvarez, C., André, Ch., Gueguen, C., Kotsou, I., Lenoir, F., Lesire, C., López, F., Ridard, M. (2017) *Transmitir. Lo que nos aportamos unos a otros*. Barcelona: Editorial Kairós.
- Baumeister, R. F. (1991) *Meanings of life*. New York, NY: Guilford Press.
- Barranco, M. G., J. H., & M. M. (2012) Intervención en valores con familias de riesgo social desde la Terapia de Aceptación y Compromiso. *Análisis y Modificación de Conducta*, 39-58.
- Bennett-Levy, J., Thwaites, R., Haarhoff, B. & Perry, H. (2014) *Experiencing CBT from the inside out: A self-practice/self-reflection workbook for therapists*. New York: Guilford.
- Blarrina, M. P., Martínez, O. G., Salas, S. V., & Soriano, C. L. (2006) Terapia de Aceptación y Compromiso (ACT) y la importancia de los valores personales en el contexto de la terapia psicológica. *International Journal of Psychology and Psychological Therapy*, 1-20.
- Berryjill, M. B., Lechtenberg, M. M. (2015) Acceptance and Commitment Therapy with Adolescents: Identifying and Clarifying Values. *Journal of Family Psychotherapy*, 26, 25-30.
- Ciarrochi, J., Bailey, A. y Harris, R (2013). *The Weight Escape*. Boston. Shambala.
- Cañadas, M., Escorcia, C.T., Martínez, G. (2016) Atención temprana y practicas centradas en la familia: a propósito de un caso. *Logopedia, Foniatría y Audiología*, 36, 185-194.
- Cotton, K. B. (2014) *Purpose in Life. A critical component optimal youth development*. London: Springer.
- Crumbaugh, J. C., & Maholick, L. T. (1964) An experimental study on existentialism: The psychometric approach to Frankl's concept of noogenic neurosis. *Journal of Clinical Psychology*, 20, 200-201.
- Crumbaugh, J. C., & Maholick, L. T. (1969) *Manual of instructions for the Purpose in Life Test*. Munster, IN: Psychometric Affiliates.
- Csikszentmihalyi, M. (1990) *Flow: The psychology of optimal experience*. New York, NY: Harper Perennial.
- Dahl, J. C., Plumb, J.C, Stewart, I., Lundgren, T. (2009) *The Art and Science of Valuing in Psychotherapy*. Oakland: New Harbinger.
- Eagleton, T. (2007) *The meaning of life*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Esfahani, E. (2017) *El arte de cultivar una vida con sentido*. Barcelona: Urano.
- Frankl, V. E. (1985) *Man's search for meaning*. New York, NY: Pocket Books (Originally published 1963).
- Gómez, I., Hodar, J.C., Garcia Barranco, M.R., Martínez, M.M. (2012) *Análisis y Modificación de Conducta*. Vol. 38, Nº 157-158, 39-58.
- Harris, R. (2010) *La Trampa de la Felicidad. Deja de Sufrir, comienza a vivir*. Madrid. Planeta
- Harris, R. (2018) *ACT question & Answers*. Oakland. New Harbinger.
- Hayes, S. C., Strosahl, K., & Wilson, K. G. (1999) *Acceptance and Commitment Therapy: An experiential approach to behavior change*. New York: Guilford Press.
- Hill, P. L., Burrow, A. L., & R. S. (2013) Addressing Important Questions in the field of adolescent purpose. *Child Development Perspectives*, 232-236.
- Keilty, B. (2016) *The Early Intervention. Guidebook for Families and Professionals*. New York. Teachers College Press.
- Klein, N. (2017) Prosocial behavior increases perceptions of meaning in life. *Journal Positive Psychology*, 12.
- King, L.A., Hicks, J.A. (2009) Detecting and constructing meaning in life events. *The Journal of Positive Psychology*, 4, 5, 317-330.
- Kohlenberg, R. J., & Tsai, M. (2001) Hablo, luego existo: una aproximación conductual para entender los problemas del Yo. *Escritos de Psicología* (5), 58-62.
- Leontiev, D. (2013) Personal meaning: A challenge for psychology. *The Journal of Positive Psychology*, 8:6, 459-470.

- Leontiev, D. (2005b) Three facets of meaning. *Journal of Russian and East European Psychology*, 43, 45–72.
- Martínez, T (2012) *Entrenar la Memoria e Intervenir en Reminiscencias: Dos guías desde dos miradas*. Ed Panamericana.
- McKay, M., Forsyth, J. P. and Eifert, G.H. (2010) *Your Life on purpose*. Oakland. New Harbinger
- O'Connell M. (2018) *Una vida valiosa*. Ediciones B
- Pattakos, A. (2008) *Prisoners of our thoughts*. California. Berrett-Koehler Publishers, Inc.
- Reker, G. T., & Wong, P. T. P. (2012). *Personal meaning in life and psychosocial adaptation in the later years*. In P. T. P. Wong (Ed). *The human quest for meaning* (2nd ed.). ( pp. 433–456). Routledge.
- Russo-Netzer, Pninit, Schulenberg, Stefan E. & Batthyany, Alexander (Eds.) (2016) *Clinical Perspectives on Meaning Positive and Existential Psychotherapy*. Switzerland. Springer International.
- Ryff , C. D. (1989) Scales of psychological well-being. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 57, 1069–1081.
- Ryff , C. D., & Singer, B. (1998) The role of purpose in life and personal growth in positive human health. In P. T. P. Wong & P. S. Fry (Eds.), *The human quest for meaning: A handbook of psychological research and clinical applications* (pp. 237–259). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Sahagún, L., Salgado, C. F. (2013) Aplicación de la Terapia de Aceptación y Compromiso con hombres que cumplen condena por maltrato. Un estudio piloto. *International Journal of Psychology and Psychological Therapy*, 13 (3), 289-305.
- Salgado, C. F. (2015) Comparación de dos protocolos de intervención basados en la Terapia de Aceptación y Compromiso y el entrenamiento en Mindfulness en personas con Trastorno Mental Crónico. *Análisis y Modificación de Conducta* , 41, 75-98.
- Seligman, M. E. P. (2002) *Authentic Happiness*. New York, NY: The Free Press.
- Steger, M.F., & Frazier, P. (2005) Meaning in life: One link in the chain from religion to wellbeing. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 52, 574–582.
- Steger, M. F., Frazier, P., Oishi, S., & Kaler, M. (2006) The Meaning in Life Questionnaire: Assessing the presence of and search for meaning in life. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 53, 30–93.
- Steger, M.F., Kashdan, T.B., Sullivan, B.A., & Lorentz, D. (2008). Understanding the search for meaning in life: Personality, cognitive style, and the dynamic between seeking and experiencing meaning. *Journal of Personality*, 76, 199–228.
- Steger, M.F., Oishi S. & Kashdan, T. D. (2009) Meaning in life across the life span: Levels and correlates of meaning in life from emerging adulthood to older adulthood, *The Journal of Positive Psychology*, 4:1, 43-52.
- Strosahl, K.D., Robinson, P. J. (2018) *Mindfulness y aceptación contra la depresión*. Bilbao. Desclée de Brower.
- Tamarit, J. (2018) La psicología frente a la calidad de vida y la inclusión social de las personas con discapacidad intelectual o del desarrollo. *Papeles del Psicólogo*. Vol. 39(2), pp. 113-119
- Törneke, N. (2010) Learning RFT: An introduction to relational Frame Theory and Its Clinical Application. New Harbinger Publications, Inc.
- Vos, J. (2018) *Meaning in Life. An evidence-based handbook for practitioners*. London. Palgrave
- Walsh, F. (1998) *Resiliencia Familiar*. Madrid. Amorrortu Ediciones.
- Wilson, K. G., y Luciano, M. C. (2002). *Terapia de Aceptación y Compromiso. Un tratamiento conductual orientado a los valores*. Madrid: Pirámide.
- Wong, P. T. P. (1989) Personal meaning and successful aging. *Canadian Psychology*, 30(3), 516–525.
- Yalom, I. D. (1980) *Existential psychotherapy*. New York, NY: Basic Books.

## Participants in the elaboration of the document

### Authors:

- **Tamarit Cuadrado, Javier:** Psychologist. Quality in services for people with disabilities.
- **Salgado Pascual, Carlos:** Expert Psychologist in Acceptance and Commitment Therapy based on personal values.

### Technical team:

- **Pérez Rico, Reyes:** Head of the Service of Personal Autonomy and Care of People with Disabilities of the Social Services Management.
- **López Sacristán, Ana Abel:** Specialist of the Service of Personal Autonomy and Care of People with Disabilities of the Management of Social Services.
- **Pérez Sánchez, Isabel:** Pedagogue of the Unit of Evaluation and Care of People with Disabilities of Salamanca.

### Team collaborating in the piloting of the methodological tools:

- **Merino Iglesias, Luis Javier.** Specialist of the Early Care Service, Assessment and Care Unit for People with Disabilities of Palencia.
- **Villar Martín, Mónica:** Specialist of the Early Care Service, Assessment and Care Unit for People with Disabilities of Segovia.

**We would like to thank the following people for their participation in the training day on the guide to support the activation of the life project in Early Care held on 26 February 2019 in Valladolid:**

- Heads of the Social Action Area of the respective Regional Social Services Managements.
- Directors and deputy directors of the assessment and care units for people with disabilities of the Regional Managements.
- Early care specialists of the Social Services Management and the travelling teams of collaborating organisations.

### Coordinator of the elaboration of the guides to activate the life project

- **Sanchez Redondo, Jose Miguel:** Head of Information Systems and Process Integration Service of the Social Services Management.

### Guide to support the activation of the life project in early care

**Edited by:** © Junta de Castilla y León

Family and Equal Opportunities Department  
Social Services Management  
2019



### Recognition - Non-Commercial (by-nc)

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International Licence.

This license allows the generation of derivative works as long as no commercial use is made of them. Nor can the original work be used for commercial purposes.