



This tips sheet provides an overview of how and why to use the Integrated Supports Star.

## Overview of the Integrated Support Star Principle:

All of us access a variety of supports to achieve our envisioned good life. Historically, planning for a person's and/or family's supports focused mainly on the government or specialized services available and often left out the many assets and resources that could be leveraged to meet a person's needs.

The Integrated Supports Star encourages accessing five main areas of supports:

- **Public or privately funded based on eligibility**
- **Community places and services that are available to anyone**
- **Relationships**
- **Day-to-day and adaptive technology**
- **The assets and strengths of the individual and family**

This principle serves as a reminder that everyone accesses a variety of supports to meet their day-to-day needs, support the achievement of long-term or short-term goals, solve problems, or enhance their quality of life.

### Who Should Use it and Why?

The Integrated Support Star can be used by anyone (individuals, families, or professionals) for mapping current services and supports, problem-solving for a specific need or planning next steps. It can be used to explore current needs, identify gaps, or plan how to access supports for the future. The tool can be used to guide a conversation over the phone or facilitate an in-person planning meeting with one person or a group of people. The Integrated Supports Star can be used by anyone to guide their thinking.

## Important Things to Remember about the Integrated Supports Star:

- The Integrated Supports Star helps organize and generate ideas. This can be done using the actual tool or just remembering the five points of the star during your planning and problem-solving.
- Use the Star for making day-to-day decisions or use it for planning for the future. It can also help when having conversations with other support team members about new ideas or hard to talk about topics.
- There is no wrong way to get started or place to put your ideas. It is designed to expand your ideas and to help you see how to leverage and connect the different types of support.
- Completing the star for the sake of completing the form should never be the goal. The tool is designed to help you have interactive conversations and visually organize your thoughts.
- Be mindful that any conversation about someone's life or future is very personal. It is important to recognize and be responsive to the diversity of experiences, situations and reactions when planning.





## Suggested Steps for How to Use the Integrated Supports Star:

### Decide the Purpose:

The Integrated Supports Star can be used to explore many different situations. Decide if you are mapping supports or using it to work on a specific goal or situation and then use the center part of the Star to write that purpose. If you are problem-solving put the specific problem or goal. If you are mapping current or future supports, write the name of the focus person.

### Explore Each Part of the Star:

Use each part of the Star to begin thinking about what types of things are currently being used or that might be available to help achieve the goal or solve the problem. Use the Star on the front of the Tip Sheet to guide you through each section. Start with the section that seems the easiest to list specific supports and then work your way around the other sections. You will jump around the different sections of the Star and you will go back into each section to add more information as you learn more.

### On-going Use of the Star:

The Star tool is designed to be used over and over again. You can create a different Star for each situation or keep building on your current Star, adding and changing things as you go. The completed Star can help you communicate what you want when you are talking to other people. You can take the Star to a meeting to help explain or advocate for the types of supports you need. It is designed to help you stay organized and explore new possibilities as you continue on your journey to achieving your goals and your day-to-day vision.

## Conner’s Integrated Supports Star

Conner’s support team wrote Conner’s name in the center of the Star because they were exploring the supports that would help him right now in his life. After actively listening to Conner and his family discuss their concerns, the facilitator recognized that the Star would help to visually show the supports available that would help the planning process.

Conner’s team explored each area of the Star and would go back in fill in other areas as they learned more. It helped to highlight Conner’s interests and the number of people that he has in his life. It also pointed out that he really wants to keep active in the community. The team realizes how important technology is and are identifying ways to use it now and in the future. They identified new services or funding that would pay for staff or assistive technology to help during the day.

The family continues to use Conner’s Integrated Support Star when they have meetings with their case manager. Conner used the Star during his Individual Education Plan meeting to help set goals for the year. He also took it with him to his medical appointment when planning for his next surgery.



*This Tip Sheet was supported, in part, by a grant from the U.S. Administration for Community Living, Department of Health and Human Services, Washington, D.C. 20201. Grantees undertaking projects under government sponsorship are encouraged to express freely their findings and conclusions. Points of view or opinions do not, therefore, necessarily represent official Administration for Community Living policy.*

