

PATH participants guide

PATH is a creative planning tool that uses both process and graphic facilitation to create a shared vision of a positive future for individuals, families, teams and whole organisations.

PATH draws on people's ability to visualise different futures and to plan backwards from a future vision or dream and tell stories about how that vision can come into being.

The PATH session will be led by two trained facilitators – **a process facilitator** who guides people through the stages and ensures that the person is at the centre throughout, and **a graphic facilitator** who creates a large graphic record of each of the steps in the PATH.

The key outcomes of a PATH are as follows:

- A shared vision within the group of a positive future for the pathfinder
- A commitment to invest in moving towards this future
- A sense of how to do this

There are 6 steps in the PATH process and it is rather like the facilitators are placing six different sorts of 'containers' in front of the group and asking them to fill them one by one.

A typical PATH usually involves a group of 5-10 individuals made up of the pathfinder (or focus person) and their family, friends and other professionals and support workers who know the focus person well.

A PATH lasts for **90 minutes to 2 hours** (possibly longer with larger groups).

Each of the 6 steps in the PATH process has its own particular questions and conversations associated with it.



PATH participants guide *continued*

Here are some guiding thoughts about when we could make use of the PATH process

- When all involved are feeling little optimism or hope about the future
- There is no clear sense of direction for the young person, family or for the professionals
- Where team building amongst all involved feels like a priority
- Where there is little energy for change
- Where the young person has severe and complex needs arising from an impairment, disabling attitudes or social circumstances and because of this, it has become hard to imagine a positive future



When not to use a PATH

- When needs are not complex and there already is reasonable clarity about where to go next
- When the usual planning processes seem to be working effectively for all involved
- Where the declared aim of the team is assessment or diagnosis
- Where the facilitators have little confidence or have not practiced their skills in facilitating the PATH process
- When planning and problem solving are not priority activities
- When there has been no preparation for participants