Making Dreams Happen: How to Facilitate the MAPS Process

A MANUAL

Using A Personal Futures Planning Model to Develop IEP/Transition Plans

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MAKING DREAMS HAPPEN:
HOW TO FACILITATE THE MAPS PROCESS

INTRODUCTION

Purpose

This manual is intended for use by persons interested in coordinating and/or facilitating the MAPS (Making Action Plans) process in order to help students and their families plan for the future. As the acronym suggests, MAPS is a planning tool which results in an outline of where a student wants to go, and how he/she will get there. The process uses a personal futures planning approach, in which plans for an individual’s future are built on the dreams and hopes of that person, rather than on the ideas of professionals about what seems "best" for him or her.

The MAPS process was originally developed by Marsha Forest, John O’Brien, Judith Snow, and others (O’Brien, J., Forest, M., Snow, J., and Hasbury, D., 1989). They saw MAPS as a way to identify the dreams of an individual with a disability, and involve a team of people in developing and supporting a plan leading toward the achievement of those dreams. Forest and her colleagues suggested a variety of ways in which to use completed MAPS, including: helping to develop friendships among students with and without disabilities, identifying strategies to use to include students with disabilities in classrooms and communities, and generating IEP goals and activities based on the student’s dreams, strengths, and needs.

The manual and the accompanying videotape illustrate the use of an adapted version of the MAPS process in IEP/transition planning. Both are drawn from the personal futures planning literature, as well as our own experiences in using MAPS with students and families throughout Vermont. Although the authors agree with Forest and her colleagues that MAPS can and should be used by people of all ages, both with and without disabilities, the materials are geared for use by planning teams for secondary level students who are involved in the development and implementation of IEP/transition plans.
This application of MAPS allows teams to look ahead to what the student wants and needs before, during, and after the transition from high school to adult life. It is hoped that the combined use of the manual and videotape will allow readers to feel prepared to facilitate and/or participate in a MAP.

Content

The manual contains background information on MAPS, a rationale for conducting the process, descriptions and guidelines for each of the MAPS steps, a copy of the MAP completed in the video, a process for using information from the MAP to develop a formal IEP/transition plan, notes on conducting follow-up MAPS, and some general suggestions for ways to allow the process to flow smoothly.

The videotape contains interviews with people who have participated in MAPS, and their thoughts on the purposes and benefits of the process. A 30-minute, condensed version of an actual MAP allows viewers to gain a further understanding of the process and the roles of the facilitator, recorder, and other participants. Finally, wrap-up interviews with former MAPS participants describe a range of students for whom MAPS might be beneficial.

To make the best use of these materials, it is suggested that you familiarize yourself with the manual and then watch the videotape. You may then want to re-read appropriate sections of the manual to reinforce and clarify what you learned from the video. Before trying out a MAP with a student and family, you may want to conduct MAPS with friends or family members. As you read about, watch, and practice with MAPS, keep a list of your questions and concerns about the process. If these are not answered by the materials or your own experience, please feel free to contact a technical assistant from the Vermont Transition Systems Change project, or one of the authors of the materials. A list of contact persons and their phone numbers is provided at the end of the guide.

Considerations

It is important to note that the authors of these materials do not intend to suggest that there is only one way to complete a MAP, or that it is the only way to begin IEP/transition planning. We believe in the values associated with
the process and in the great potential it has to help students, families, and other team members articulate their dreams and create workable plans for the future. At the same time, we encourage you to adapt the process to meet the needs of individual students, teams and planning contexts. For example, you may choose to conduct one-on-one MAPS with individual students, or to extend, shorten, or add steps to the process. You may use MAPS with young children, middle school students, incoming high school students, or adults. Planning teams throughout Vermont have suggested that the process be used by all high school students, not just those with disabilities. Many possibilities exist for the use of MAPS, and teams should be open to new applications and adaptations. The most important consideration in the expansion or shaping of the MAPS process is to be sure that the spirit and intent of MAPS remains intact. The MAP is a powerful tool, but much of its strength comes from the team’s underlying belief in a student and the importance of working together to support the student in a journey towards the community.

WHAT’S A MAP?

The process

The MAPS process consists of a series of five steps, during which participants are asked to reflect on and answer questions about an individual’s history, dreams, fears, characteristics, and current and future needs. The student and a team of people who are important to him/her come together for about one hour give their input on each of the five steps. The information gained through the process leads to a vision of what the student hopes and dreams for, as well as ideas for ways to realize those dreams. Responses given during each of the five steps are recorded on large sheets of paper and displayed on the wall, providing an illustration of the team’s brainstorming efforts. After completing the MAP, the team follows additional steps to ensure that the MAP guides the development of the IEP/transition plan.
Underlying values and beliefs

The MAP is more than just a process, however. MAPS are grounded in a set of underlying values and beliefs around the idea that all of us, including people with disabilities, need to be an integral part of schools and communities. In order to become a member of a community, people need to be able to make choices about the kinds of experiences they would like to have in education, employment, living situations, friendships and recreational activities. The dreams that are identified in these areas need to be one's own and not someone else's, and they must capitalize on one's strengths and gifts. In the MAPS process, teams move away from traditional, professionally-driven planning models to a student and family-centered approach. There are no "experts" on a MAPS team, because each team member is seen to offer a valuable and unique point of view. In all of these ways, MAPS are seen as re-affirming the values of inclusion and self-determination within a caring community.

WHY DO A MAP?

Benefits to students and family members

There are many reasons to do a MAP. Perhaps the most important of these are related to the potential benefits to students and family members. To begin with, the student, followed by family members, is always invited to react first to each of the five steps. In this way, the MAP and resulting IEP/transition plan are directed by the student and family and built upon their ideas for what is most important in the student's life. Students and parents have commented that a MAP gives them the freedom to dream, to say what is on their minds, and to direct the planning process. The practice of asking students to give input first helps to increase their self-advocacy skills and levels of confidence and participation. A number of parents and teachers have noted that students who rarely participated in previous team meetings have become engaged in their MAPS and subsequent planning meetings.

Similarly, parents who have previously felt hesitant to speak up during planning team meetings find the MAPS process to increase their levels of comfort and participation in meetings. They are involved at the outset by being given the responsibility of selecting team member for the MAP. During the
MAP, their contributions are valued and recorded publicly, establishing them as full partners in the planning process. In general, divisions between professionals and families are lessened through MAPS. MAPS use no jargon or mysterious test scores; instead, all team members are involved in creating a broad picture of the student and his/her life.

**Benefits to the planning team**

The benefits of the MAPS approach to planning extend to the planning team as a whole. The MAPS process is generally positive and open, promoting many of the characteristics associated with effective, collaborative teams. Team members tend to build strong relationships and high levels of trust and understanding for one another. The vision that is developed through a MAP gives the team a sense of purpose and shared responsibility for carrying out the plan that is developed. MAPS offer teams opportunities to solve problems creatively, as well as to celebrate their successes.

Certain characteristics of MAPS enhance the planning process in a way that results in a more detailed and effective plan of action than do more traditional planning methods. The use of public recording and colorful graphics is appealing to students and other team members, and makes it fairly easy to make accommodations for students with a range of communication and/or reading skills. The specific information generated in each of the five steps may spark new ideas and creative ways to overcome barriers that have previously stood in the way of reaching the student’s dreams for the future. The MAP’s solutions to challenges and proposed activities are based in the community, and draw on both traditional and non-traditional resources. Overall, the MAPS experience is a positive one, which is empowering, productive, and enjoyable for both individuals and teams.

**Benefits to the IEP/transition planning process**

IEP/transition teams will find a strong rationale for using MAPS in this planning context. To begin with, IDEA, the federal legislation which includes the mandate for transition planning as part of the IEP process, includes regulations for the development of IEP/transition plans. One of these states that
activities developed as part of the transition plan must be "based on the individual student's needs, taking into account the student's preferences and interests." The activities must include "1) instruction, 2) community experiences and 3) the development of employment and other post-school living objectives," and may include the "acquisition of daily living skills and functional vocational evaluation." Finally, IDEA requires that students attend and participate in the planning process (Section 300.344).

The MAPS process provides an effective way for teams to meet the requirements of IDEA. As described earlier, student participation in planning is at the heart of MAPS, and an IEP/transition plan based on a MAP will therefore be guided by a student's needs, preferences and interests. IDEA's requirement that a range of activities be included in the IEP/transition plan is easily addressed through a MAP, since the approach is a holistic one that considers all aspects of a student's current life and future goals.

Another benefit of MAPS in IEP/transition planning is that the process gives structure and specific attention to the often difficult task of beginning long-term planning. Too often, planning team members have noted that they are easily weighed down by short-term concerns, and that it has been difficult to give adequate time and energy to planning ahead to the time of transition from school to adult life. The MAPS process helps focus the team on IEP/transition planning by setting aside a specific time to address long-range goals and activities, and providing a structured format for doing so.

MAPS may also be thought of as a new way to think about assessment for IEP/transition planning. As opposed to some of the more traditional assessment measures which focus on specific skill areas and student's deficits in those areas, MAPS provide a broad view of a student's life. The variety of perspectives offered by team members allow the opportunity to understand the student in the context of home, school and community environments. The visual representation of ideas on the MAP helps to connect all aspects of his/her life. Statements made by team members tend to focus on the student's strengths, and needs are framed in relation to the student's current life and future goals.

Finally, IEP/transition teams have recognized the value of completing follow-up MAPS during the student's annual IEP review, as a way to obtain
feedback on the relative success of IEP/transition plans developed from an initial MAP. Follow-up MAPS allow an opportunity to celebrate the student’s accomplishments over the previous year, as well as clarify and revise the IEP/transition plan for the coming year.

PREPARING TO COMPLETE A MAP

For the purposes of the following description of steps involved in preparing for a MAP, it will be assumed that one person has the major responsibility of coordinating a meeting during which the MAP will be conducted, and that the purpose of the MAP is to initiate the IEP/transition planning process. Often, the person with this responsibility is the student’s special educator, although a MAP might also be initiated by an adult service provider, classroom teacher, parent, or other interested person. In the paragraphs that follow, this person will be referred to as the MAPS coordinator (or more simply, the coordinator). Although there is no one "right" set of steps to follow in preparing for a MAP, the following may serve as a guideline for the MAPS coordinator:

1. **Identify one or more students who might be the focus of MAPS**

   The coordinator’s first task is to identify one or more students who might benefit from a MAP. The total number of students with whom one might conduct MAPS will vary, based on factors such as the coordinator’s experience with and interest in the process, the amount of planning time available, and the needs of students involved in IEP/transition planning. Ideally, all students who are about to begin IEP/transition planning would be given the option of completing an initial MAP, and follow-up MAPS would be completed at all annual reviews. One school in Vermont decided to conduct MAPS with all incoming 9th grade students, as a way to get to know students and their families, and begin IEP/transition planning. Given time constraints, however,
the coordinator might determine a list of students for whom MAPS might be most beneficial. For example, priorities might be given to students who need to develop their self-advocacy skills, students who have little idea of what to do following graduation, or teams that need to develop their collaboration skills.

2. Gain acceptance of the MAPS process

Next, the coordinator needs to approach selected students and family members to obtain their consent to participate in a MAP. The process and its potential benefits should be described, and background materials may be provided. Appendices A and B contain activities for students and parents called Your MAP: Getting Started. The purpose of these handouts is to introduce students and parents to the process and allow them an opportunity to reflect on the five steps before the MAPS meeting. Other strategies which might be implemented to gain support for the MAPS process include: introducing students and family members to others who have participated in MAPS, showing all or portions of the video to them, or providing further reading materials on MAPS (please see the Reference List for suggested articles and readings).

The coordinator should make every effort to involve both students and their parents in the MAPS process; however, there have been examples of MAPS completed with students but not family members, and vice versa. These should be the exception rather than the rule, as the perspectives lacking as a result of non-attendance by either students or parents usually detracts from the quality of the MAP and the likelihood of follow-through on plans made as a result of it.

3. Put together a team of people

Once the student and family have agreed to participate in a MAP, the coordinator helps them identify other potential MAPS team members. Typically, teams consist of the core members of the student’s IEP team, including at least one special educator and one classroom teacher. Siblings, peers, grandparents, neighbors or other friends of the family may also be invited. These individuals may provide unique perspectives on the student, as
well as links to employment, living situations, and/or recreational opportunities which are not known to others. If the family is in agreement, it may also be helpful to invite adult service providers who have knowledge of resources available to the student beyond high school.

It is critical that the coordinator emphasize that the selection of team members is up to students and parents. The characterization of MAPS as a student and family-centered process is demonstrated through the process of having the student and family determine the composition of the team. The MAPS process involves a certain level of risk in sharing personal information; thus, students and family members need to feel comfortable with each participant and the size of the team. The coordinator may need to help students and parents find the balance between a large team comprised of all of the stakeholders in a student’s life, and a smaller team made up of only those whom the student and family know and trust. Larger teams may offer the advantage of a wider variety of perspectives and knowledge of resources; however, these may be offset if the family feels uncomfortable speaking in such a large group. An alternative to a team that feels unwieldy in size is to conduct the MAP with a small group of people, and bring the completed product to more formal IEP/transition meetings in the future.

4. Choose a comfortable time and place

The coordinator, along with the student and his/her parents, should determine the best place and time in which to conduct the MAP. Many MAPS participants have elected to hold the MAPS meeting in the student’s home, as this gives the student and family members further sense of their central role in the process. On the other hand, some teachers and adult service providers may be unable to travel to students’ homes and may prefer to meet in a conference room at school, adult service agency office, or other public setting. Teams should set aside 1 - 1 1/2 hours to complete the MAP. The longer time period is ideal, since it allows ample opportunity to introduce team members, complete the MAP, take a break, and plan for follow-up meetings and activities. Still, if an hour or less is all that is available, teams should not be discouraged from
trying a MAP. An informative MAP can be completed in as little as 45 minutes.

The time of day in which to schedule the MAP also needs to be discussed. Evening MAPS are often preferred by family members and friends; however, this time may not be convenient for teachers or adult service providers. The coordinator, student, and family members should try to choose a time that is acceptable to the greatest number of MAPS participants.

5. Identify roles for completion of the MAP

At least three roles need to be designated for completion of the MAP. The first is that of the facilitator, who is responsible for guiding the participants through the MAPS process. This person needs to have a good understanding of the MAPS process, be able to describe each of the steps, and feel comfortable in helping groups to solve problems and build consensus. Facilitators generally find that their role changes somewhat with each MAP, as they respond to the needs of the individual student, family, and team as a whole. It may be helpful for the facilitator to gather some information beforehand on the communication styles of team members; the degree to which the student, family members, and others feel comfortable in sharing ideas; and the team’s experience in working together. Perhaps the most important role of the facilitator is to convey to the team his/her belief in the potential of the MAPS process to clarify the student’s dreams and guide the team’s planning efforts.

A recorder is needed to write down team members’ ideas for each of the five steps. The role is not always an easy one, as this person is responsible for listening to team member’s ideas (many of which come quickly!) and recording them as accurately as possible on large pieces of paper. Although the recorder does not need to be artistic, the MAPS process is enhanced when she/he is able to use simple illustrations and/or graphics to emphasize key points.

The third role is that of the timekeeper, who keeps track of the time spent on each of the five steps and informs the group when they are about to reach the allotted time limits. There are no hard and fast rules about time limits; however the group should discuss them at the start of the MAP. One
way to establish timelines is to divide the team's total time allowance by five, making adjustments for any break or wrap-up time that the team feels is appropriate. During the MAP, the group might choose to extend or reduce the amount of time to spent on a particular step, based on the depth of discussion that is occurring.

Some teams may also choose to identify a summarizer. This optional role is given to a person who agrees to summarize the first four steps of the MAP for the team at the conclusion of the "Who is..." step. The purpose of this is to focus the group on the MAP's overall direction before specific needs are determined. Finally, the team may wish to appoint one or more food providers. Food at break time or at the conclusion of the MAP often serves to lighten the atmosphere and bring the group together. It also serves to celebrate the completion of this first step in IEP/transition planning.

A number of factors need to be considered in identifying roles for team members. The primary criteria for selection are that the person designated for a role is willing to fulfill that role and likely to do a good job at it. The roles of facilitator and recorder should be assigned ahead of time to individuals who are acquainted with the MAPS process. If necessary, these roles may be combined so that the facilitator records while guiding the team through the MAP. The facilitator may also carry out the summarizing role described above. It is left to the team to decide whether or not the roles of facilitator and recorder should be filled by persons who know the student well. While some knowledge of the student may be helpful, an outside facilitator (e.g., a university technical assistant, teacher from a neighboring school, or other interested person) may help to neutralize a challenging situation. Participation in the roles of facilitator and recorder generally precludes the opportunity to give input during the brainstorming phases of the MAP; thus, it would be unusual to have a student, family member, or other person with a great deal to contribute serving in these roles.

The roles of timekeeper and summarizer, on the other hand, may be well-suited to students and parents, and may increase their feeling of being central to the MAPS process. These roles may be assigned prior to or on the day of the MAP.
6. Bring materials

MAPS materials are simple and few in number. The coordinator or another designated person needs to be sure to bring at least five pieces of flip chart paper or poster board, an easel, tape, markers and, of course, the food. Ideally, the room in which the MAP is conducted will have wall space on which to display pages from the MAP as they are completed.

CONDUCTING THE MAP

Make Introductions— to MAPS and one another

On the appointed day and time, team members will convene to complete the MAP. The facilitator takes responsibility for the introductory phases of the MAP. He/she should first ask team members to introduce themselves to one another, stating their relationship to the student. Next, the facilitator needs to briefly describe the purpose and five steps of the MAPS process, the roles of each team member, and a general timeline for completing the MAP. If necessary, the roles of timekeeper and summarizer should be established at this time.

Review the ground rules

Although the MAPS process should remain simple, it is helpful for the facilitator to review a few brief ground rules at the start of the process. These are:

- At each step, the facilitator will ask the student to respond first, followed by parents and other family members. At that point, other team members are free to respond in random order. The purpose of this ground rule is to ensure that the student’s and parent’s ideas are heard.
• All team members' ideas will be recorded, using the contributor's actual wording to the greatest extent possible. Team members should feel comfortable in reminding the recorder to add or change ideas which they do not feel were recorded appropriately, or delete information which they do not wish to have recorded publicly.

• Team members have the right to "pass" on a specific question or stop if they feel the information being discussed is sensitive or something they do not wish to share. In this situation, a team member would reserve the right to ask the recorder to erase the information from the MAP.

• Team members are encouraged to express their ideas in a positive way. While there is room for negative information to be conveyed, the facilitator reserves the right to ask participants to re-state their ideas in a more positive way or to look for an alternative way of viewing negative information. The purpose of the MAP is to begin building a plan of action; thus, it is important to remain focused on positive elements such as the student's strengths, interests, and potential supports, rather than on his/her deficits.

• Team members will wait until the final step of the MAP to begin to evaluate the merit of specific ideas. The first four steps are meant to encourage creativity, free-thinking, and a variety of ideas. It is completely acceptable to record ideas on the MAP that appear to be in conflict with one another. On the other hand, discussions which center on the degree to which others' ideas are realistic, do-able, etc., will rob the MAP of its forward momentum and student focus.

Guide the team through the 5 steps

The heart of the MAP is the five steps that follow. Individual pages from the MAP developed in the video accompany descriptions of each of the steps, as a way to illustrate the nature and content of responses given by team members.
STEP 1: HISTORY

In this step, the facilitator asks the student and his/her parents to briefly describe the student's personal history. The purpose of this step is to help all team members develop a more complete picture of the student's past, particularly the people and events that have shaped his/her life. It is not meant to be a complete or chronological account but, rather, a series of highlights that begin to give a sense of the student in school, at home, and in the community. History may also be thought of as a "warm-up step" in that it allows students and parents to discuss information about the past, in the ways that they choose to share it.

If students have a difficult time beginning this step, the facilitator may ask a few direct questions of the student, such as "When and where were you born? Do you have any brothers or sisters? Can you tell me about your first experiences in school? Who were your best friends when you were younger? Can you tell me about any special places you've visited or things you've done?" Students with limited verbal skills may be asked to bring in photographs or favorite objects that help illustrate their past.

Following the responses from students and parents, other team members are invited to contribute to History. In many cases, their knowledge may be
less than that of family members, making this a briefer step than the remaining four. When it appears that the student’s history is complete, the facilitator may wish to ask the team whether or not they learned anything new about his/her life. Most often, people have!

STEP 2: DREAMS

Step two of the MAP encourages the student, his/her parents, and other team members to dream about the future. As Joe Jackson, a popular British songwriter, phrased it, "You can’t get what you want, ’til you know what you want." The purpose this step is to discuss possibilities for the student’s short- and long-term future. The dreams that are identified will be used later to develop goal statements for the student’s IEP/transition plan. As with each of the other steps, the student is asked first to contribute ideas, followed by his/her parents and family members. The facilitator should encourage team members to think about dreams in the four outcome areas associated with IEP/transition planning: employment and/or vocational training, post-secondary education, independent living, and community participation. At the same time, the Dreams step should be kept open-ended, allowing students, parents, and other team members to consider many possibilities.
This step is a powerful one for many MAPS participants. One parent said about Dreams:

_The dreams page is my favorite ... in other assessment activities I’ve done with the school, I always felt like they already had an answer for my son’s future, and I was just supposed to confirm it. When I looked at the Dreams page, it was just a blank piece of paper, and I could say whatever I really wanted._

Facilitators will sometimes find team members as anxious to talk about dreams as this parent. Others may need some help to get started, as well as reassurance that dreams are difficult to talk about at first, but gain clarity over time. When prompting questions are needed, try some of the following:

To the student:

"If you could have any job as an adult, what would it be?"

"Where do you see yourself living one year from now? five years from now? ten years from now? Who (if anyone) would be living with you?"

"Have you ever thought about going to college?"

"What are some of your wildest and craziest dreams?"

"What is the one thing that would make school much better?"

"If you could have anything -- if money was no object -- what would you wish for?"

To parents:

"What is your dream for your son/daughter?"

"What are some of the things you’ve always wanted for your son/daughter?"

"What would you see as the 'dream job' for your son/daughter?"
"What do you hope your son or daughter learns in school this year? What do you hope she/he learns on the job? in the community?"

Some teams are worried that the dreams expressed by students may be "unrealistic." The facilitator may need to remind teams that dreams are not to be judged at this time. Perhaps not all dreams can be realized in the form in which they are expressed, but pieces of them can be acted on. Dreams give a direction, a hope, and a possible route on the MAP for further exploration.

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**STEP 3: FEARS**

The student, family and other team members are asked to talk about their fears for the student, especially those that may be barriers to realizing dreams. As Marsha Forest puts it, "This discussion defines the kind of future the MAPS group can help the person avoid" (Forest et al., 1989). One parent described the step as having the power to "lessen fears -- I thought some of my fears would sound silly, but once they were written down, they didn't seem as scary."

Facilitators will find that some people have an easier time talking about fears that others, and should remember to observe the ground rule regarding an individual's right to "pass" if the information being discussed does not seem appropriate for the MAP. Team members may
describe a range of fears. For example, students often express fears that are fairly concrete and specific, such as "getting burned by the kitchen stove," or "failing tests." Other fears may be more general, such as those involving failing school or being misunderstood. Family members may talk about fears that include themselves. Some parents have described fears about their own health and energy levels in connection to caring for a child with significant needs. The Fears step is sometimes uncomfortable, sometimes revealing. It is also a learning experience for team members, who often recognize the universality of fears people have for themselves and their children.

If the team has built a break into the meeting’s agenda, it may be good idea to take it at the end of the Fears step. This portion of the MAP is sometimes emotionally charged, and a break allows the team a change to lighten its mood.

STEP 4: WHO IS ...?

In step four, the student and other team members are asked to describe him/her in as many ways as possible. Beginning with the student, the facilitator encourages team members to talk about his/her strengths, skills, likes and dislikes, personal qualities, favorite activities, friends and so on. This information helps team members to learn more about the student and, later in the process, to identify activities and resources that may be incorporated in the IEP/transition plan. Step four also invites the student and team to celebrate his/her accomplishments and gifts -- an opportunity that is frequently lacking in the lives of students with disabilities. As one parent described it:

Too often we get lost in our daughter’s day-to-day life and problems. This part of the MAP reminded us of her many good qualities. It was also nice to see how much her teachers and peers liked and appreciated her, and how much better she often behaved at school than at home!

Typically, this step of the MAP is a lively one, inviting the participation of all team members. The student’s friends and siblings often contribute valuable information that allows the adults on the team to see the student in another way. One student, who was described before the MAP by his parents as being "rebellious" and "difficult" brought a peer to his meeting. The latter
commented that his friends was "really cool. Other kids always respect what Dave says and does." Another student, who had limited verbal skills, was described by his friend in this way:

He is totally nonjudgmental ... Kids in high school can be really difficult because they classify everybody and think of them as belonging to groups, like jocks or nerds. I really appreciate Anthony because he accepts everybody for who they are and doesn't judge them.

As these comments suggest, the tone of a MAP is generally upbeat, and helps to create a positive image of the student. While it may be appropriate to share some of the student's more negative characteristics, they tend to be stated in a respectful, objective way. If the opposite occurs, however, the facilitator needs to re-state the relevant ground rules and help the team place their primary focus on the positive side of the person's characteristics. A MAP is a good place to learn that one's strengths and weaknesses are remarkably similar.
STEP 5: NEEDS

In the final step of the MAP, team members begin the process of reviewing and prioritizing information for the IEP/transition plan by brainstorming a list of needs for the student. The summarizer or facilitator sets the stage for the discussion by reviewing key ideas from each of the previous four steps. This should help the team to focus on the MAP's overall direction and vision, as well as important details. The student and other team members are then asked to consider the student's hopes, strengths, and interests as they begin to list activities, opportunities, and supports that the student will need now and in the future. At the start of this step, team members should be reminded that their task is to brainstorm a list of potential needs, some of which may change as the plan is clarified. Examples of Needs statements that might be made include: courses that the student needs to take to fulfill graduation requirements, adaptive equipment, community activities, skill development in the area of self-advocacy, visits to potential colleges, help in finding a job, the addition of a Vocational Rehabilitation counselor to the team, and so forth.

Following the brainstorming of an initial list of needs, the facilitator begins to bring closure to the MAP. He/she mentions that the next task is to begin prioritizing the information to develop goals and activities for the student's IEP/transition plan. The team will need to decide whether or not this
task will occur at the MAPS meeting or at the next IEP/transition planning meeting. Future meeting dates should be established, as well as the identify of additional team members who will need to be invited to subsequent meetings.

Several additional strategies may help team members to begin to move their thinking from the MAP to a more focused plan. One is to end the MAPS meeting by asking each team member to look at the list of the student's needs and identify the one that they believe is most critical for the student. Another is to have each team member choose one activity from the Needs page that they are willing to do before the next meeting. A third strategy is to have the words from each step of the MAP transcribed on regular-sized paper and sent to each team member prior to the next meeting. In this way, MAPS participants will be reminded of their discussions and have an opportunity to think about the next steps.

As a final note to the meeting, the facilitator spends one or two minutes asking participants how they felt about the process and what they learned from it. Completing a MAP takes a certain amount of energy and concentration, and team members deserve praise for finishing!
FROM MAPS TO IEP/TRANSITION PLANS

As described above, a completed MAP needs to be followed-up with the development of the written IEP/transition plan. In order to move from a MAP to the IEP/transition document, teams need to organize and prioritize information from the MAP and other sources of information to clarify goals and activities that will comprise the written plan. Next, the plan is implemented and evaluated on a regular basis. An abbreviated version of the MAP may be conducted on an annual basis as a way of obtaining feedback on the previous year's plan and setting goals for the coming year.

Moving from the MAP to the IEP/transition plan is not always easy, and planning teams using MAPS have searched for ways to streamline the process while retaining the overall vision and benefits of the MAP. A description follows of one planning process that has proven helpful to a number of planning teams. As with MAPS, teams are encouraged to adapt this process for their particular set of circumstances, timelines, and goals.

1. Plan a specific time to follow-up on the MAP

The team needs to set aside a specific time to use a completed MAP to develop the IEP/transition plan. As described earlier, the planning team may choose to implement the following steps at the conclusion of the initial MAPS meeting, or at a follow-up meeting soon afterwards. Some teams prefer to get the job done at one meeting, while others prefer to take some "think time" following completion of the MAP. A separate meeting may be also be warranted if the MAPS team decides that additional team members (e.g., a mental health worker) need to be invited to complete the IEP/transition plan. Once again, the team will need to designate the roles of facilitator, recorder, timekeeper, and summarizer.

2. Summarize information from the MAP and other sources

Display the MAP on the wall so that team members can see each page: History, Dreams, Fears, Who is?, and Needs. Ask a team member (preferably the student or parent) to summarize the MAP so that all present will be familiar.
with the information that it contains. Other assessment measures or sources of information related to transition planning (e.g., vocational evaluations, career inventories, observations and interviews, and special education comprehensive evaluations) may also be summarized for the team at this time.

3. **Introduce team members to the "Quadrant"**

Next the facilitator introduces team members to a new chart, "the Quadrant," which will be used to cluster information from the MAP in four outcomes areas that are important to consider in transition planning. These are:

- employment
- independent living
- community participation
- post-secondary education and vocational training.

A full-page version of the quadrant is contained in Appendix C.

4. **Organize information from the MAP into each of the four quadrants**

The facilitator leads the team in filling in the chart one quadrant at a time, by referring back to the MAP to look for any information that might be
related to that outcome area. For example, if the team decides to begin with
the area of employment, look back at the MAP for any ideas or graphics related
to career exploration, job experiences, specific job skills, or ideas for future
jobs. If available, add information from other sources which may relate to the
outcome areas (e.g., in the area of employment, record relevant information
obtained through a vocational assessment or career preference inventory).

For each quadrant, organize the information from the MAP into goals
and activities. If the team is considering the area of independent living, for
example, begin by developing a goal statement based on long-term dreams
about where the student wants to live. Next, review ideas from the MAP to see
which ones constitute activities that should be included in the IEP/transition
plan to help the student reach his/her goals. As required by IDEA, some
activities need to provide instruction, while other activities need to involve
community experiences that will benefit the student. Examples of activities in
the area of independent living include: instruction in cooking, shopping, and
banking; visits to apartments and homes of former graduates who now live in
the community; completion of a functional assessment of the student's
independent living skills; and an invitation to a representative of a local housing
authority to provide the team with information on funding options for housing.

- Please note: there may be situations where discussion of a student’s
  MAP and other sources of information do not indicate the need to
  identify activities for all four quadrants. For example, some
  students may not wish to participate in post-secondary education
  and training. Teams need to be aware, however, that IDEA
  requires activities to include the development of employment and
  other post-school living objectives. If the team feels these activities
  are not appropriate, a justification of this decision must be included
  in the IEP/transition plan.

5. Obtain consensus on goals and activities

Once the four quadrants of the chart have been discussed, go back and
take a closer look at each one. Now is the time for discussion, clarification,
and revisions. The facilitator guides the team in trying to obtain consensus on
activities that may be in question. Planning team members need to remember
that like the MAP, the quadrant and IEP/transition plan need to reflect the students' interests, preferences, and needs. One planning team member told the story of a situation in which the adults on the team spent a great deal of time discussing ideas for full-time employment which might be available to a young woman after graduation from high school. At the end of their discussion, the student quietly reminded them that her dream was really to attend a community college program in human services. The team listened to the student, and redirected their attention to developing employment goals that were consistent with her plans for post-secondary education.

6. Iron out the details!

Next, the team reviews goals and activities identified in each of the four areas to determine which will be addressed during the coming school year and which will be addressed in future years. It may be helpful to develop a code for activity timelines. For example, the recorder might write a "1" next to activities that will be accomplished during the coming school year, a "2" next to activities scheduled to take place during the following year, and so on. The recorder may also write in the names of team members who have agreed to take responsibility for certain activities.

Determine which of the activities listed in each quadrant will require special education services (e.g., specialized instruction, accommodations, related services). Place a star next to these activities, since those that are scheduled to occur during the upcoming school year will need to be included in the IEP/transition plan.
EMPLOYMENT
GOAL: Paid work, during and after high school

ACTIVITIES:

- 1 or 2 more work experiences before graduation, in interest areas:
  - animals
  - helping professions
  - store
- Invite VR counselor to '93-'94 transition meetings
- Identify & set up transportation to work
- Identify job to follow graduation, with supports & transportation

INDEPENDENT LIVING
GOAL: Live independently in the community, with supports as necessary

ACTIVITIES:

- Assess independent living skills
- Include instruction in independent living in school & community '93-'94
- Enroll Angie in "On Your Own"
- Explore community living options - visit apartments, etc. Bring a friend from "On Your Own" to at least 1 visit
- Invite MH counselor & VCIL representatives to '93-'94 transition meetings

POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION & TRAINING
GOAL: Continue part-time education in vocational area(s) of choice

ACTIVITIES:

- Visit Voc-Tech center:
  - What options are available for post-secondary education?
  - What financing is available?
  - What classes, programs are of interest to Angie?
- Check out on-the-job training opportunities
- Fill out applications & financial aid forms for '94-'95

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION
GOAL: Expand opportunities for participation in community life

ACTIVITIES:

- Identify at least 2 peers who will go to activities at least once a month with Angie
- Identify an adult in the community who will provide transportation to at least 1 activity/month (e.g., movies, horseback riding, shopping, etc.) - check with people at work place?
- Identify club/organization in the community that Angie could join - look for someone to share transportation
7. Check to see that IDEA’s requirements have been met

As a final step in the completion of the chart, the team should ask itself the following questions to ensure that the chart and IEP/transition plan to follow will meet IDEA’s requirements for IEP/transition planning:

Did the student participate in the development of the MAP and IEP/transition plan? While it is assumed that the MAP will have included the student, the team needs to be sure to ask itself this question. If for any reason the student has not been involved in the development of the IEP/transition plan, the team needs to take other steps to ensure that the student’s preferences and interests are considered, and include documentation of these steps.

Are the goals and activities that we have developed based on the student’s needs?

Have we taken into account the student’s preferences and interests?

Did we invite representatives of other agencies that might be providing or paying for transition services to the IEP/transition meeting? Representatives of other agencies may or may not be included in the completion of the MAP; however, the team must consider whether or not representatives need to be invited to the meeting in which the IEP/transition will be developed. If invited agencies do not send representatives to the meeting, the team must document other steps taken to obtain their participation in the development of the IEP/transition plan.

Do the activities included in the IEP/transition plan include:

* instruction
* community experiences, and
* the development of employment and other post-school living objectives
If the team decides that services are not needed in one or more of these areas, the IEP/transition plan must contain a statement to that effect, as well as an explanation which shows the basis upon which the determination was made.

**If appropriate, have we included activities related to the acquisition of daily living skills and/or functional vocational evaluation?**

Appendix D contains an IEP/transition plan checklist which may be used to answer these questions.

8. **Transfer information from the quadrant to the IEP document**

Information from the completed chart is now ready to be incorporated into the IEP/transition document. Although there is some variation in the forms used by individual states and local districts, a few general statements may be made about this process. First, goal statements from the quadrant may be incorporated as part of the annual goal statements of the IEP/transition plan, although their time frame will need to be re-worded to reflect the one year scope of the IEP/transition plan. For example, a goal statement in the area of employment might be written in the quadrant as "full-time employment for the student following graduation." In a traditional IEP, this goal would be altered to reflect the student’s employment goal for the coming year.

Similarly, activities in each of the four outcome areas which 1) involve some type of special education and 2) are planned to occur during the upcoming school year, need to be included in the short-term objectives of the IEP/transition plan. For example, activities requiring instruction in how to find a job, which require support from a special educator and are planned to occur during the upcoming year, would be written as short-term objectives. On the other hand, the activity of inviting a vocational rehabilitation counselor to subsequent meetings would not be included in the student’s IEP/transition plan, since it is not one which includes the provision of special education services to the student.

The team will need to consider which sections of the IEP/transition plan are the best place to incorporate transition related goals. For example, the team
may elect to designate one section of the IEP/transition plan as "Employment." Annual goals and short-term objectives would be included in this section to address employment-related instruction and experiences. In other cases, the team may decide that a more traditional academic skill area (e.g., reading, math, language) is an appropriate place to incorporate transition goals and activities. A portion of Angie's IEP/transition plan is shown in page 31 and 32, illustrating how goals and objectives related to Angie's ability to advocate for herself in transition planning might be included in the basic skills area of expressive language. Remaining sections of her IEP/transition plan would need to address additional specific skills in employment, independent living, community participation and post-secondary education.

Some IEP/transition plans may include special sections for transition-related information and tasks, in which the team may list goals and activities that fall outside of the framework of the annual IEP/transition plan. If not, the team will want to develop an alternative system for keeping track of and revising long-term goals and/or additional tasks that need to be completed. A simple way of doing this is to keep a list of the long-range goals developed in the areas of employment, independent living, community participation, and post-secondary education and/or vocational training. This list may be reviewed and revised at annual IEP meetings. A separate list of transition-related tasks and activities may also be developed and reviewed on a more frequent basis. This list should include a description of the activity that needs to be completed, the name of the person or agency who is responsible for it, timelines for initiating and completing the activity, and a space to note progress on the activity. It is important to promote a sense of shared responsibility in identifying who will take charge of specific tasks, as well as the idea that the transition process is a time to begin shifting some responsibilities away from the school to students, family members, and other agencies. Finally, the team will need to discuss indicators of success and a process for evaluating the plan.
Levels of Performance and Annual Goals

Skill Area(s): Expressive Language

Present Level(s) of Education Performance: Test scores alone are not sufficient. Include a description of the area(s) of education affected by the student’s handicapping condition which shall include both strengths and needs.

At school in classes and planning meetings (e.g., MAPS/IEP & Transition), and in the community, Angie demonstrates a variety of strengths in oral communication. She has acquired the vocabulary she needs to complete her job, responds appropriately to basic requests from teachers, job supervisors and coworkers, and is eager to carry on friendly conversations with others. Angie needs to further develop her expressive language skills so that she is able to clearly state her needs in a variety of areas, including supports needed at school, supports needed on the job, and future plans for living, learning, working and participating in the community.

Annual Goal(s): Please number each goal. There must be a direct relationship between the annual goal(s) and present level(s) of performance.

1. By June, 1994, Angie will demonstrate the ability to initiate questions, state her likes and dislikes, and advocate for her choices about her future employment, living situation, education and plans for recreation.
### Short-Term Objectives

**Short-Term Objectives:** There must be more than one objective for each annual goal. Objectives are intermediate steps between the student’s present levels of performance and the annual goals. They must include objective criteria, evaluation procedures, and the expected dates for accomplishment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill Area</th>
<th>Goal #</th>
<th>Short-Term Objectives</th>
<th>Progress Review Dates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>(Partial list of objectives)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Given instruction &amp; support for the living arts class “On Your Own,” Angie will demonstrate the ability to ask at least 3 informational questions about opportunities &amp; available supports in employment, housing, post-secondary education &amp; training, &amp; community recreation activities.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Given instruction &amp; support in &quot;On Your Own,&quot; Angie will state what she likes &amp; dislikes about employment, housing, post-secondary education &amp; training, &amp; community recreation activities.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Given instruction &amp; support in &quot;On Your Own,&quot; Angie will identify &amp; state her personal choices for her future employment, living situation, post-secondary education &amp; training, &amp; community activities to her living arts teacher &amp; IEP team, by June, 1994.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Progress Code:**
- M: mastered
- A: addressed, no progress
- P: making progress
- NA: no addressed at this time
PLANNING FOR FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES

Following the development of the IEP/transition plan, the team should discuss how transition-related activities will be monitored and revised, including a decision as to how often the team needs to meet, and dates and times for subsequent meetings. The team will want to maintain a record of the student’s MAP and quadrant, so that goals and activities planned for future years can be referred to at a later date. Generally speaking, the student and his/her family will want to keep the original MAP and quadrant themselves; thus, the facilitator or another team member should volunteer to copy over the information for the student’s file.

Create a Follow-up MAP

Teams desiring to conduct a follow-up MAP at the annual IEP/transition plan review meeting should make plans as necessary to do so. During the follow-up MAPS meeting, the team reviews the initial MAP and then proceeds through the five MAPS steps to create an updated version. Some abbreviations and adaptations may be made during the second MAP. The History step, for example, may be used to summarize the previous school year, rather than the student’s entire life. In Dreams, the student and team may want to focus on dreams which have been realized, as well as remaining or new dreams. Similarly, the Fears step focuses on fears which have been addressed, fears which are still present, and new fears that may have surfaced in the interim. The new "Who Is..." page may be a shortened one, listing describing words or interests that have been added since the team met last. Finally, the Needs page may take note of needs which have been met, along with continuing and future needs.

As with the original MAP, the follow-up MAP should serve as the basis for the revised IEP/transition plan. Teams will find it helpful to complete a second quadrant as a way of clarifying goals and activities in each of the outcome areas.

Planning teams that have conducted follow-up MAPS have reported that their annual review meeting was characterized by a feeling of celebration of the student’s accomplishments, and a renewed sense of direction for the upcoming
year. Follow-up MAPS highlight the expansion and re-focusing that typically occur over time in IEP/transition planning. One father who was involved in a year’s cycle of planning — including the development and implementation of an initial MAP and IEP/transition plan, as well as a follow-up MAP — described it this way:

We have discovered through the MAPS process that our son is capable of more than we might have expected, especially in the areas of employment and social needs, and the independent living we were worried about. We feel that these are all goals he will definitely accomplish. Through this process we were clearly informed that this was possible.

COMMONLY-ASKED QUESTIONS

The process of learning about and conducting MAPS raises many thought-provoking questions. Although this guide will not be able to answer all of those questions, the following is a list of some of the most commonly-asked questions about MAPS, and responses to each:

Can anyone facilitate a MAP?

Being a MAPS facilitator does require a certain set of skills, including a good knowledge of the process, good communication skills, an ability to help groups of people resolve conflicts and build consensus. You do not, however, have to be an "expert" in MAPS or receive any special training. Perhaps the most important characteristic of a good facilitator is his/her belief in the student and in the power of MAPS to bring the student and team to a clearer vision and a better working relationship. To begin with, you may need to take a "leap of faith" in the process -- try it, and see what happens.

Are MAPS beneficial to students with a variety of disabilities and/or communication skills?

Yes. Each MAP is different because each student is different. A MAP for a student who has good communication skills and is not afraid to take charge of the process will look different from a MAP for a student
with limited verbal communication skills, but each one tells an important story about the student. We have done MAPS with students who participated by bringing in their favorite objects and pictures, or who exuded energy and smiles during the Dreams page, and a quiet affect during Fears. Some students who are noisy in the classroom retreat during the first few minutes of a MAP, perhaps because they are not used to so much positive attention. Others divulge personal information for the first time or surprise teachers and parents with their clarity and depth of understanding. The facilitator and other team members can help by respecting the student's level of participation no matter what it is, and encouraging the development of greater or different kinds of participation.

An example of the possibilities for student participation occurred during a MAP with a five-year old boy who was labelled autistic. During the Who is... page, he took it upon himself to come to the front of the room and draw pictures of what he wanted his first grade classroom to look like. He then turned to his mother and said: "What do you like about school, Sarah?" One of his teachers later reported that they had never seen him talk as much in school as he had during the MAP.

**Do MAPS create unrealistic expectations for students?**

Some students may express dreams and hopes that seem out of reach or unrealistic. These may make some team members uncomfortable, but they should not be seen as a problem in a MAP. Students who have not previously been involved in planning for their own futures may express broad, unfocused, or "unrealistic" dreams because they have not previously had the opportunity to express their dreams before. One task of the team is to help students find at least some parts of these dreams that may be able to be acted on. For example, a facilitator might point out that the student is describing a long-term dream, and ask him/her to think of steps that could be taken now to move towards that dream. She/he could also ask a student who has expressed a particular career goal to talk about the aspects of that career that appeal to him/her (e.g., "What is it about being a doctor that is interesting to you?"). Using this specific information, the team may be able to help the student consider related career goals that are in greater alignment with the student's strengths and skills.
Another task of the team is to ask itself the question of whether or not previous expectations have been in fact too low. Some dreams that sound unreal at first may prove to be completely within the realm of possibility. Finally, as adults it seems important to remember that most of us have had or do have some dreams that might seem unrealistic to others. It isn't wrong to have these dreams, but it may be necessary to learn that dreams play themselves out in different ways. The MAP may be a time to help students understand the relationships between choices and consequences, and to consider alternative ways of achieving goals.

Do things ever go badly in a MAP?

Sometimes, but not very often. Even teams that are considered not to be functioning very well seem to pull together in a MAP. One set of problems that may arise in MAPS come about when the team loses its sense of purpose for doing the MAP. For example, teachers and parents may begin to re-hash an unpleasant incident, or the adult members of a team may begin to make statements such as "Yes, but..." or "Well, we tried that once and..." At these times, the facilitator needs to pull the team back to a focus on the student, and re-state questions about the student's history, dreams, fears, or needs. The facilitator may also need to refer back to one or more of the MAPS ground rules. A proactive measure that has worked successfully with some teams is to reinforce the initial verbal description of ground rules with a poster-sized version. The display of rules serves as a visual reminder to team members, and may be referred to later as necessary.

What's the difference between MAPS and counseling?

At times, the questions posed in a MAP evoke some very personal responses, as well as emotions such as sadness or anger. Again, it is important for the facilitator to support the person expressing these feelings, while reminding the group of its purpose. Feelings and issues need to be acknowledged and respected, but the overall purpose of the MAP is to move forward and develop a plan. One part of this plan may include a provision for future counseling or therapy. A MAP provides a process and a direction for change, but it will not immediately solve or address every issue.
Don't MAPS take an awful lot of time?

*It depends. They do take a certain amount of time to organize and conduct, and it may not be feasible to do a complete MAP on every student with a disability who is beginning IEP/transition planning. On the other hand, the time it takes to organize and conduct a MAP generally proves to be a worthwhile investment. IEP/transition plans which are carefully built on a MAP or similar approach have a high likelihood of being successful plans, because they are based on what a student really wants and needs. The initial MAP and IEP/transition plan may take awhile to develop, but as students become more confident in their self-advocacy skills, and as other team members become clearer on the direction of the plan, things tend to get easier. Success breeds success.*

**FINAL NOTES**

The experiences of many planning teams in Vermont and elsewhere suggest that the MAPS approach and follow-up planning steps offer a great deal to the IEP/transition planning process. The approach is a good illustration of the saying that "less is more." The process is a fairly simple one, lean in materials and cost, and straightforward in its language and structure. But the outcomes are rich in information, creative solutions to old issues, and the possibilities for strengthening ties among team members. MAPS require some energy, time, and hard work to get through the "sticky points," but in the end they may result in a meaningful IEP/transition plan, based on the visions and voices of young adults with disabilities.

**For further assistance...**

The authors of this manual and video hope that these materials have provided you with enough knowledge and confidence to try a MAP with someone, whether it be for IEP/transition planning or some other purpose. As mentioned earlier, you may want to begin with a MAP on yourself or a friend. Planning teams should feel comfortable to adapt MAPS for their own situations and needs, keeping in mind the underlying values which drive the approach.
Individuals or teams who would like further information or training, or who have additional suggestions for ways to use MAPS to develop IEP/transition teams should contact the Vermont Transition Systems Change project at the following address. Vermonters may also contact one of the regional technical assistants connected to the project. We look forward to hearing about your experiences in using MAPS to promote quality IEP/transition planning.

Vermont’s Transition Systems Change Project
Center for Transition Policy and Development
405A Waterman Building
University of Vermont
Burlington, Vermont 05405-0160
REFERENCES


YOUR MAP:
Getting Started

Student Activity Sheet

Materials prepared by:

Katie Shepherd Furney, Nancy Carlson, Mary Ann Pepin & Joanne Fuller
Enabling Futures Project
Department of Special Education
405A Waterman Building
University of Vermont
Burlington, VT 05405-0160

Reference:

APPENDIX A:

Your MAP: Getting Started
Student Activity
You're going to do a MAP!

This activity is designed to give you a better idea of what MAPS are about, as well as a chance to think about how you might answer some of the questions you will be asked when you do your MAP.

To get started, you should know that:

✓ "MAPS" stands for the McGill Action Planning System or Making Action Plans

✓ This MAP is for you and your family!

     ~ Your ideas are the most important!

     ~ You will have the first chance to answer questions and a chance to "pass" if you feel uncomfortable at any time.

     ~ You should decide who will be on your MAPS team. You may want to invite friends who know you.

✓ MAPS are used to help you think about your future and plan ways for your dreams to come true.

✓ MAPS have been used by people of all ages.

✓ The MAPS process is meant to be informative, creative and fun!
For your MAP, your team will need to choose:

1. A comfortable time and place (most MAPS take 1 1/2 - 2 hours to complete).

2. Roles: a **facilitator**, who will guide the team through the steps a **recorder**, who will write down the team members' ideas a **timekeeper**, who will keep track of the time for each step **snack provider(s)**, who will bring food!

You and your family may or may not choose to have one of these roles. The most important task of all team members is to contribute ideas for the MAP.

The 5 steps of the MAP are:

1. **HISTORY:** a short description of your background, including important memories from your family and school.

2. **DREAMS:** a list of things you would like to see happening in your future.

3. **FEARS:** a list of your worries or concerns. Some of these may be things that might stand in the way of the dreams you and your family discussed in Step 2.

4. **WHO IS:** a description of yourself, including your strengths, skills, likes, favorite activities and friends, etc.

5. **NEEDS:** a list of the things that need to happen to help make your dreams for the future come true. This page may later be used to develop an IEP, transition plan or other written plan.

The following pages are for you to jot down some of your ideas for each of the 5 steps of the MAP. Each step includes a few questions to get you started in your thinking.
1. **HISTORY** Things to think about:

- How would you describe your life up to now?
- What people have been important?
- What has happened to you so far that is important to you?
2. **DREAMS** Things to think about:

- What are your hopes and dreams for the future?
- What would you like to do this year?
- What would you like to do after high school?
3. **FEARS**  
Things to think about:

- What do you **not** want to have happen in your life?
- What worries you most about your future?
- What do you think will stand in the way of what you want?
4. **WHO IS ... ?** (fill in your name here) Think of as many ways as you can to describe yourself:

- Who are you?
- What are your strengths, gifts, talents, likes, dislikes, and skills?
- What do you like to do?
- Who are your friends?
5. **NEEDS**  Things to think about:

- Take a look at the dreams you have listed, and think about who you are. What is needed to make your dreams come true?
- What would make your life better?
- Who could help you with your plans for the future?
- What can other people do to help you meet your needs?
FINAL NOTES:

- Think about who you'd like to have on your MAPS team. Your team should include you and your parent(s) and/or other family members, and at least one teacher. You might also invite a friend, and other people who are important to you.

- At the start of your MAP, the team will discuss "groundrules" for the meeting. The rules are:
  
  -- You and your family will have the first chance to give ideas for each step of the MAP.
  
  -- All team members' ideas are important and will be written down.
  
  -- You can "pass" if you feel uncomfortable answering any questions.
  
  -- If you or other team members want to say anything negative, you should say it in the most positive way that you can.
  
  -- Team members should wait until the last step of the MAP to decide which ideas and plans are the best or most important.

- You may wish to bring this packet to your MAPS meeting to help you get started at each step, and remember your most important ideas. Good luck and have a good MAP!
APPENDIX B:

Your MAP: Getting Started
Parent Activity
YOUR MAP:
Getting Started

Parent Activity Sheet

Materials prepared by:

Katie Shepherd Furney, Nancy Carlson,
Mary Ann Pepin & Joanne Fuller
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Department of Special Education
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University of Vermont
Burlington, VT 05405-0160

Reference:

You're going to do a MAP!
This activity is designed to give you a better idea of what MAPS are about, as well as a chance to think about how you might answer some of the questions you will be asked when you do your MAP.

To get started, you should know that:

- "MAPS" stands for the McGill Action Planning System or Making Action Plans. MAPS were originally developed by Marsha Forest and others from Toronto, Canada.

- This MAP is for you and your son or daughter!
  - Your ideas are the most important!
  - You and your son or daughter will have the first chance to answer questions and a chance to "pass" if you feel uncomfortable at any time.
  - You should decide who will be on your MAPS team. You may want to invite friends who know you and your son or daughter.

- MAPS are used to create a vision for the future and plan ways for that vision to happen.

- MAPS have been used by people of all ages.

- MAPS have been used in many different situations, including:
  - planning ways for students to succeed in a classroom
  - developing IEPs and transition plans
  - coming up with solutions in difficult times
  - general life planning

- The MAPS process is meant to be informative, creative and fun!
For your MAP, your team will need to choose:

1. A comfortable time and place (most MAPS take 1 1/2 - 2 hours to complete).

2. Roles: a **facilitator**, who will guide the team through the steps a **recorder**, who will write down the team members' ideas a **timekeeper**, who will keep track of the time for each step **snack provider(s)**, who will bring food!

You may or may not choose to have one of these roles. The most important task of all team members is to contribute ideas for the MAP.

The 5 steps of the MAP are:

1. **HISTORY:** a short description of your son's or daughter's background, including family and school histories, important people and events, etc.

2. **DREAMS:** a list of things you would like to see happening in your son's or daughter's future.

3. **FEARS:** a list of the worries or concerns you have for your son or daughter. Some of these may be things that seem to stand in the way of the dreams you discussed in Step 2.

4. **WHO IS:** a description of your son or daughter, including his or her strengths, skills, likes, favorite activities and friends, etc.

5. **NEEDS:** a list of the things that need to happen to help make your vision for the future come true. This page may later be used to develop an IEP, transition plan or other written plan.

The following pages are for you to jot down some of your ideas for each of the 5 steps of the MAP. Each step includes a few questions to get you
started in your thinking.

1. **HISTORY** Things to think about:

- How would you describe your son’s or daughter’s life up to now? You may want to include school and family highlights, important people and events, etc.
2. **DREAMS** Things to think about:

- What dreams do you have for your son’s or daughter’s future?
- What are your son’s or daughter’s hopes and dreams for the future?
- What would you like see your son or daughter accomplish in the coming year? after high school?
3. FEARS  Things to think about:

- What do you not want to have happen in your son's or daughter's life?
- What concerns you most about your son's or daughter's future?
- What barriers do you face in trying to help your son or daughter?
4. WHO IS ... ? (fill in your son's or daughter's name here) Describe your son or daughter in as many ways as possible:

- Who is your son or daughter?
- What are his or her strengths, gifts, talents, likes, dislikes, skills, personal qualities, favorite activities and friends?
5. **NEEDS**  Things to think about:

- Take a look at the dreams you have identified for your son or daughter, and think about who he or she is. What is needed to make these dreams come true?
- What would improve your son’s or daughter’s life?
- What steps can you take to meet your son’s or daughter’s needs?
- What can others do to support you in meeting your son’s or daughter’s needs?
FINAL NOTES:

- Think about who you'd like to have on your MAPS team. Your team should include you and your son or daughter, and at least one teacher. You may also want to invite other family members, a friend of yours, a friend of your son's or daughter's, an advocate, adult service providers, or other people from your community. It may help to think about the size of the team — try not to let it get larger or smaller than you'd like!

- At the start of your MAP, the team will discuss "groundrules" for the meeting. The rules are:

  - You and your son or daughter will have the first chance to give ideas for each step of the MAP.
  - All team members' ideas are important and will be written down.
  - You can "pass" if you or your son or daughter feel uncomfortable answering any questions.
  - If you, your son or daughter or other team members want to say anything negative, it should be said in the most positive way possible.
  - Team members should wait until the last step of the MAP to decide which ideas and plans are the best or most important.

- You may wish to bring this packet to your MAPS meeting to help you get started at each step, and remember your most important ideas. Good luck and have a good MAP!
APPENDIX C:

Quadrant
APPENDIX D:

IEP/Transition Plan Checklist
IEP/TRANSITION PLAN CHECKLIST

Following completion of a MAP and IEP/transition plan, use the checklist below to see whether or not IDEA’s requirements for planning have been met?

__ Did the student participate in the development of the MAP and IEP/transition plan? While it is assumed that the MAP will have included the student, the team needs to be sure to ask itself this question. If for any reason the student has not been involved in the development of the IEP/transition plan, the team needs to take other steps to ensure that the student’s preferences and interests are considered, and include documentation of these steps.

__ Are the goals and activities that we have developed based on the student’s needs?

__ Have we taken into account the student’s preferences and interests?

__ Did we invite representatives of other agencies that might be providing or paying for transition services to the IEP/transition meeting? Representatives of other agencies may or may not be included in the completion of the MAP; however, the team must consider whether or not representatives need to be invited to the meeting in which the IEP/transition will be developed. If invited agencies do not send representatives to the meeting, the team must document other steps taken to obtain their participation in the development of the IEP/transition plan.

__ Do the activities included in the IEP/transition plan include:
  • instruction?
  • community experiences?
  • the development of employment and other post-school living objectives?

If the team decides that services are not needed in one or more of these areas, the IEP/transition plan must contain a statement to that effect, as well as an explanation which shows the basis upon which the determination was made.

__ If appropriate, have we included activities related to the acquisition of daily living skills and/or functional vocational evaluation?