



Module 4: Picture My Future - a guide

This is the fourth in a series of five online training modules designed to guide you through Picture My Future. This module will guide you through the Picture My Future process and give you an understanding of how it works in practice.

Module 4 Learning outcomes:

At the end of this module, you should have an understanding of the following:

1. How Picture My Future works in practice
2. The key processes that underpin Picture My Future
3. How to adapt Picture My Future to the needs of people
4. The options and resources available to deal with challenges encountered during the Picture My Future process
5. How to present themes that can assist with individualised planning

Introduction

The Picture My Future approach consists of the following four steps:

- Preparation: Identifying the people to be involved
- Meeting 1: Explaining how Picture my Future works
- Meeting 2: Describing and grouping the pictures
- Meeting 3: Deciding how to present the pictures & confirming the content of the resource

These four steps provide a rough guide only. It is likely that the Picture My Future process will need to be adapted to a person's individual circumstances.

The steps outlined in this module make the task look as if the process is a linear one, and that following a sequential logic will yield the desired results. However, this is often not the case. Goal exploration often builds knowledge about a person's preferences in a circular fashion. Topics are revisited, and only after revisiting them several times, the meaning of a statement might become obvious. Only after knowing more about a person, their context, and circumstances is it possible to identify goals with certainty.

The Picture My Future process takes time. People must be given the required time to think, order, and represent their thoughts. This is the key strength of Picture My Future. It assists people to think about their goals in a systematic fashion and enables them to arrive at a planning meeting prepared. They are able to present a document that clearly represents their choices. This will greatly facilitate the planning process.

Step 1: Preparation

Picture My Future is a process that should be initiated as part of preparing for the development of an individualised plan. The process relies on the assistance and mentoring of one or several Support Persons. The Support Person(s) can be a family member, friend, or support worker.

Preparation steps

1. Identify and involve the **Support Person**
 - Identify an appropriate person who can act as a key facilitator for the Picture My Future process with the person with disability. This person will be known as the Support Person. Ideally, the Support Person is someone who knows the person well, so the person should be involved in identifying him or her. Make sure the person is happy with the nomination.
 - See Appendix 1: Factors to consider when nominating the Support Person.
2. The Support Person requires a clear outline of how Picture My Future works.
 - Because the Support Person will guide the person through the Picture My Future process, he or she needs to know how to best support the person and how to facilitate the process. Provide the Support Person with a link to this website (or a hard copy) as well as the Picture My Future Guides. The Support Person should be encouraged to become acquainted with the content of this website to gain a good understanding of the process.
 - Check whether the Support Person requires technical training.
3. Has the person got access to a camera?
 - Ascertain whether the person has a camera and has experience taking photos.
 - Check whether there are barriers to the process (e.g. is the person allowed to take photos?) and can they be removed or managed?
4. Ask the Support Person to schedule the first meeting with the person.
 - Set up a feedback loop (e.g. weekly telephone contact with Support Person).
 - Make sure to ask the person who else, if anyone, they want to attend the first meeting (i.e. family members, friends and carers). These other people can be valuable supports to the person in the Picture My Future process. However, it is important to consider the factors outlined in Appendix 1: Factors to consider when nominating the Support Person.

Meeting 1: Explaining how Picture my Future works

At the first meeting, the Support Person will meet with the person to explain the Picture My Future process:

1. Getting to know the person.
 - If the Support Person is not that familiar with the person, it may be necessary to spend some time becoming acquainted.
2. The Support Person explains to the person about the aims of Picture My Future and how the process works.
 - Give the person a copy of the *Easy English What is Picture My Future?* handout.
3. Talking about likes/dislikes, important things, hopes & dreams
 - Before explaining the process of taking or collecting pictures, it is important to introduce the person to thinking about her or his future. Refer to the *Guide to asking questions when exploring goals* to view examples of questions that might help to get the conversation going.
 - Give the person the *Picture Me* booklet, which is a useful tool to help people focus on these things.
 - The answers to these questions will be helpful when explaining the picture collection part of the process.
4. Introduce Picture My Future
 - Many people with intellectual disability will find it easier to understand instructions and language that is concrete rather than abstract or conceptual (see Module 2). When giving instructions, it may help to:
 - Use the *Easy English What is Picture My Future?* handout. You can point to the relevant picture and instructions on this sheet to help the person understand the instruction.
 - Use tangible, self-explanatory examples, such as a finished *Picture My Future Resource*.
 - Show the person and read aloud some or all of the topics or life areas they might like to think about (e.g. your job, your hobbies, your home, friendships, etc.). The *Picture Me* booklet offers some structure around this process.
5. Ask whether the person wants to take photos or collect pictures or objects.
 - Refer to the *Guide to Collecting Pictures* for more information.
 - Give the person a copy of the *Easy English How to Collect Pictures* handout.

- Make sure the person understands that they can also collect and present pictures that they treasure out of family albums, newspapers, magazines or from the internet. They can also provide drawings or paintings.
 - If the person indicates that they would like to take photos themselves, refer to Appendix 2: Technical Guide: If the person chooses to take photos.
 - Explain the kind of things the person should consider collecting pictures of. The *Picture Me* booklet may help them to think about the things they wish to collect pictures of. Ask the person to take photos of:
 - The things they like
 - The things that are going well/not going well
 - The things that make them happy
 - Explain the task around goals for the future, collecting picture of who they are and what they want their future to look like. Use examples the person provided you with during the initial discussion. For example: You mentioned you would like to have a dog. How would you take a picture of that?
 - Discuss with the person some ways they might be able to represent or capture pictures of things they can't take photos of that week. For example, they might use pictures/photos taken previously (for example of a holiday or absent friend). Or they might search for other pictures related to the item (e.g. printing an picture from the internet, magazine etc, drawing the picture).
 - Tell the person that they need to ask permission when they want to take a person's photo, especially in group situations.
 - Explain that deciding what to pictures to take may be challenging at first. People who are new to photography might want to experiment with the camera before returning to the task at hand. Be patient and provide practical reminders of what could be in a photo. Ask the person what they would like to take photos of and then ask them to take a couple of trial shots while you are present. You may have to provide some guidance and mentoring during the initial stages. It might take a week or two before the person takes photos that can be used for goal exploration.
 - Check whether process was understood. The photos themselves can be used to check the comprehension a person has of the task.
 - If in doubt, seek professional advice from a Speech Pathologist or Psychologist about how best to communicate with the person, and what is a reasonable expectation to have of their comprehension and communication.
6. Contact the person every 4 or 5 days to see how things are going.
- Most people will need to be reminded by phone or email of the tasks associated with Picture My Future. The Support Person needs to check

how things are going, repeat instructions if required and address issues as they arise (make sure the battery is ok, the person remembers how to use camera, what to collect pictures of, etc.).

- For some people (even if they appear very capable), taking photos may be a difficult task. It might conjure up feelings of not succeeding/failing associated with previous experiences. Make sure that the person knows that there is no wrong photo. Also, the person should be at liberty to say that they don't want to take photos.

Meeting 2: Describing and Grouping the Pictures

At the second meeting the Support Person works with the person to explore the themes and ideas through a discussion of the pictures they have collected. The process for the second meeting is as follows:

1. The person brings the camera and/or the pictures they have collected.
 - Ask the person whether they want another person present to assist with communication.
2. Look at the collection of pictures. These may be printed out, or viewed on the camera, phone or iPad.
 - Don't limit the number of pictures at this point. Having large number of pictures (120-150 is not uncommon) might be helpful as it points towards issues and helps to finetune the person's needs and wants.
 - Make sure that the person understands that the pictures are theirs and that they can keep them. Be clear when you explain how the pictures are to be used during the planning process.
3. Identify the most important pictures for the person.
 - Work with the person to select the most important pictures to them. This is particularly useful when the person brought lots of pictures along.
 - Sort out the photos the person does not want to discuss and set them aside.
4. Number the pictures and ask the person to describe the pictures.
 - Note down on a separate piece of paper what the person says about each picture. For questions that might help during this process, see the *Guide to asking questions when exploring goals*.
 - You might encounter a range of emotional responses from the person. It is important to establish the meaning of these responses - does laughter mean happiness or discomfit, do tears mean sadness or joy? You may be able to ask the person, observe, or ask a person who knows them well.
 - You might have to deal with difficult conversations and disclosures that might arise when discussing pictures. Be sure you are ready for such conversations.
 - Some people might present photos to document their lives over the past week. Try to use these as a springboard to discuss what activities or things they like most and why, and which they like least or would like to stop or change. This may lead to identification of both what is important to maintain about life now, as well as what may be important in the future.

5. Work with the person to group the pictures.

- Allow sufficient time for the organising of photos and pictures into groups or themes, discussing their meaning and prioritising their importance. This might require several sessions.

The process of organising and grouping pictures can help the person to organise and firm up their thinking about what is important to them, so this process should not be rushed.

- Make sure you have a suitable venue with enough space to lay out and group photos/pictures.
- Work out with person whether there are themes in the grouped photos. Most people will have a very firm idea why certain pictures will go together. This will give you valuable clues regarding the underlying issue.

There may be areas of the person's life that they don't wish to discuss with the family or others and there needs to be opportunity to capture that information away from the family e.g. future living arrangements, relationships. You might need to allocate extra time or resources for this to happen.

6. Collate the pictures.

- The pictures should be collated in their groups e.g. attach them to a one-sided A4 or A3 sheet.
- Write in the person's own words what each group is about e.g. Mary likes dogs but does not want one herself.

7. Make a time for the third meeting.

While pictures can provide a unique insight into the things that are important to a person, some things are difficult to photograph or collect pictures of. It is therefore important to record information supplied during the Picture My Future process even where no picture has been supplied.

The second meeting in the Picture My Future process may produce a number of different scenarios as the person works through it. Read Appendix 3: Trouble shooting guide for tips to help with some of these scenarios.

Meeting 3: Finalising the Picture My Future Resource

During the third meeting, the Support Person will work with the person to finalise their Picture My Future Resource and make sure that they are happy with it.

Work out with the person where and how the pictures are to be displayed.

- Many people will prefer a photo album. However, some people may want to turn their pictures into a digital slideshow, make a poster or to upload their pictures onto Facebook.
- There are many ways people can display their pictures. However, it is important that the pictures can be accessed and used in conversation with those involved in supporting the person to develop their plan.
- No matter how the person stores the pictures, it is important to also record the 'conversation' and the 'story' that goes with the pictures. This is especially important where the person needs a high level of support to 'tell their story', and where the meaning of the pictures for the person is not clear from the pictures alone.
- Remember that the pictures collected belong to the person and are private. It is up to the person to decide who should see them. With this in mind, consider where and how the pictures should be displayed and who can have access to them. Make sure that the person agrees to show all the pictures to other people. If not, the person might like to produce a 'private book' to be kept by the person for private use and a 'planning book' that can be viewed by others.
- Check that the person is happy with their picture record and the things that it shows about them and their future!

Things to remember

Here are some important things to remember about Picture My Future:

1. The person with disability should be directly involved in the process.
2. Don't rule people out on the basis that **you** think they can't do it. Most people with intellectual disability or communication issues can use Picture My Future. People with greater support needs will need more support to complete the process.
3. Don't just focus on the pictures that the person has collected. Some abstract things are difficult to photograph, and the fact that a person took a photo of something does not necessarily mean that this is more important than something not photographed.
4. Picture My Future does not depend on being able to take photos. Any pictures provided will be helpful in enhancing the communication process, and the Picture My Future library is an excellent resource where no pictures have been selected.
5. Pictures don't mean the same to everyone. It's the way a person describes or shows the importance or meaning of the picture that is important.

Appendix 1: Factors to consider when nominating a Support Person

Support staff: A carer's knowledge of a person's communication style, support needs, and general preferences may be extremely helpful when interpreting responses during the Picture My Future process. However some carers may have a limited understanding of person-centred processes and may be too dominant in meetings about the process. They may make strong suggestions about the life areas that 'are important' to the person. Carers need to be given clear instructions as to what kind of support is likely to be helpful to the person and what might hinder their exercise of choice and self-determination. You may need to discuss the role of the Support Person with them. This might include asking them to withhold their comments until the person has had a chance to respond.

Family members: While family members may have valuable insights regarding how to communicate with the person, it is important to consider that their presence may cause the person to censor the information he or she provides. For example, the person may be less inclined to talk about preferred living arrangement or sexual needs with a family member present.

Family members and support staff are potentially important people in the process and can assist the person to collect pictures or take photos, and to explain what is important to them. However, not all families and support staff may be available or choose to participate in this process. It is important to check the extent to which families or support staff want to or can play a role in the process. Ultimately, the preferences of the person should be of greatest importance. Raise these issues with the person.

Appendix 2: Technical Guide: If the person chooses to take photos

- Taking photos may be a new experience for some people. It is important to gauge people's prior experience with taking photos, as well as what training and support they will need to do so. This might also affect the choice of device (e.g. camera, tablet device, smart phone).
- Consider the technical proficiency of the person with a camera/smart phone/tablet device.
 - Do they have prior experience and expertise?
 - Can they show you photos they took previously?
 - How long ago did they take them?
 - Does the person still have the same mobility/dexterity?
- Check which camera is most appropriate: select the device that the person prefers and considers easy to use. Some cameras are difficult to use for people with limited fine motor skills. Ideally the camera should be easy to use with large buttons and a screen that allows for easy viewing of the photos. Tablet devices (e.g. iPad) or smart phones have been used with great success.
- Explain camera functions: explain how the camera works and show how the camera stores the picture and how it can be retrieved and viewed. Make sure the person can replicate these steps.
- Transfer and Printing: Consider how easy it will be to save/store and transfer pictures. (For example, via Bluetooth, printing, Facebook, online gallery, USB, etc).

Appendix 3: Troubleshooting guide: What do I do if...

The person struggles to understand the Picture My Future process?

- Check whether they have existing pictures that express their goals.
- Check whether there are other items aside from photos that express the person's goals (e.g. Footy scarf, etc.).
- Introduce a more structured approach – ask participants to take photos of one area e.g. This week, take photos of things you really like doing or of things inside your home. Several meetings may be required until the person covers all relevant topics.

The person brings 150 pictures of the same thing?

- Grouping the pictures will most likely produce 6 or 7 piles that can be discussed more easily. People with high and more complex communication support needs might want to use a larger number of photos to tell a story.

The person does not bring any pictures?

- Look for the reason why the person did not bring any pictures. If they simply did not want to, accept this and show them the Picture My Future library instead. If other issues are at stake, try to resolve these.

The person brings one or two pictures only?

- Try to find out if the person would have liked to collect pictures of things, but were unable to do so for some reason. If yes, note them down and add them to the picture sheet. Refer to the Picture My Future library to elicit further themes.

The person decides s/he does not want to take photos?

- Accept this. Some people don't want to collect pictures. Most however, feel comfortable with the Picture My Future library. A person might prefer to write his or her responses instead of collecting pictures.

The person did not understand and was unable to complete the task

- Provide more structure and narrow the process down, one step at a time. Use the Picture Me booklet and focus on each page in turn. Some people prefer to segment the task by spaces (first the kitchen, then the living room, then the garden, etc.).

The person continues to forget the camera

Check whether they still have the camera and whether there is another reason why they don't bring the camera to the meetings.