



**Finding Our Way**

This is a booklet for people who will soon be going through an open door into their future. Lots of different feelings usually go with this time: excitement about what's to come; sadness at leaving good things behind; worry about whether we will keep what matters to us and find what we need in new places; a good feeling about having successfully come this far. This is an important time to reach out and let people know what matters to you. Talking with people who know you and care about you will help you figure out how to find good things on the other side of the door.

The questions in this booklet can help you think about where you are now and what you want to find on the other side of the door. Some people find it works best for them to think (and write) about the questions on their own and then talk them over. Most people like to talk about the questions with other people they trust and write down the important things as they go.

There are no wrong answers to these questions, What counts is thinking and talking about how things are for you at this time. Many people find that they learn even more when they show some of the pages in this booklet to even more people and talk about what they have figured out so far.

Today's Date:

My name:

People who are thinking with me today:

The main feelings I have right now about this time of change:



# What I've Learned About Myself On This Side of the Door

Here are some of the most important things I have learned about myself in the place I am moving from.



# My People

These are the people who can help me find my way. They might be people who will be good company for me, help me think of new possibilities, make contacts for me, and help me solve problems.

Put people's names in the closest, white circle if they are your **allies**. People who know you and will work with you to make your life better.

Put people's names in the next, light grey circle if they could **become allies**. People who could play a good part in your future if you strengthened your relationships with them.

Draw a heart next to the names of the people you care most about.

Draw a star next to the names of the people who know an important part of your life story.

Put a circle around the names of people who know lots of people in the community.

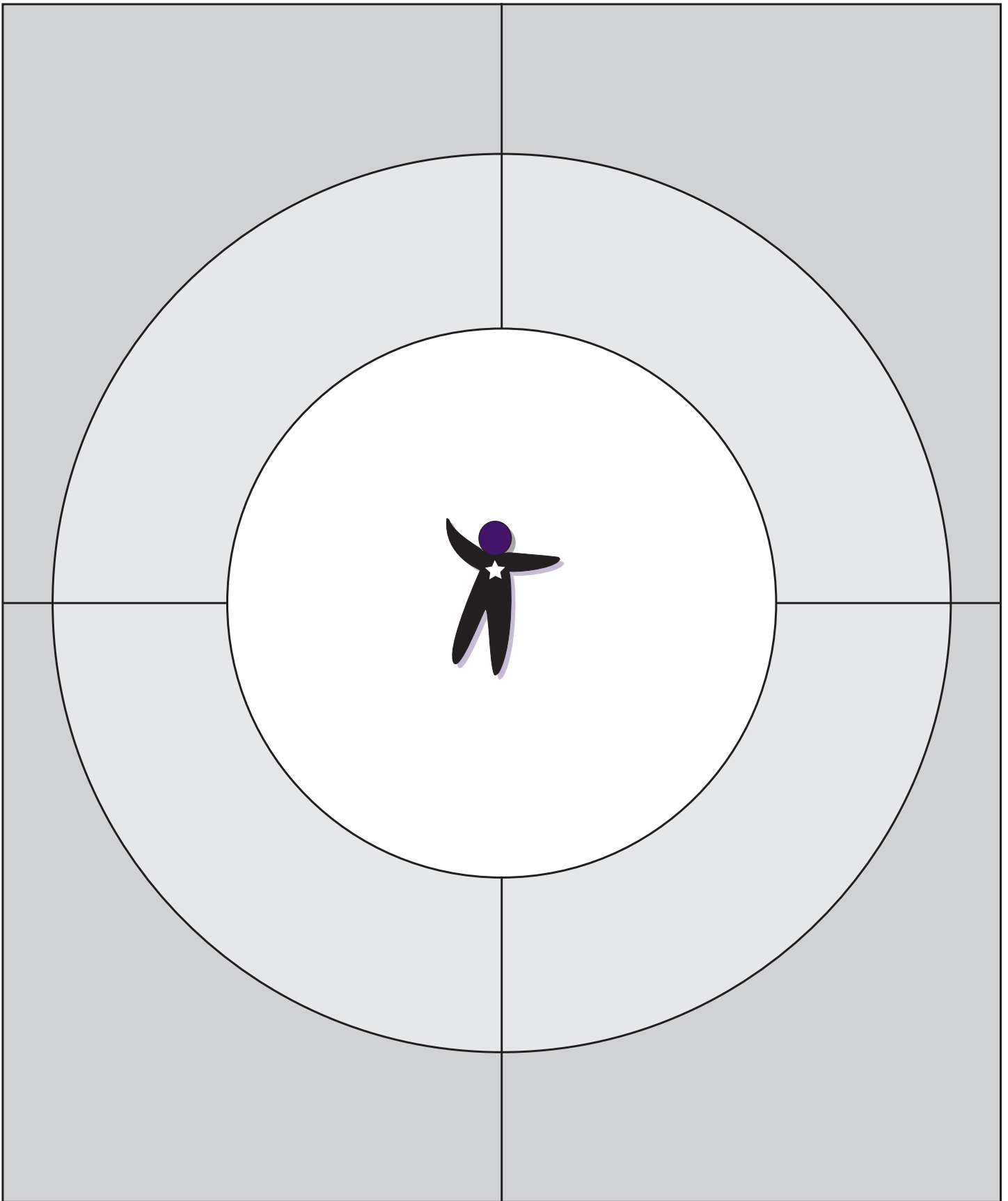
Put a check mark next to the names of people you want to ask for help in taking your next steps.

**Things I can do to make these relationships even stronger**



**Service Providers**

**Community Members**



**Friends**

**Family**



# My Style

Each person is different. One way to let people know what matters to me is to say what works for me and what doesn't work for me. Use the worksheet on the next page to list as many things as you.

After you have filled in the worksheet, use the space below to summarize what's most important for people to know about what works and doesn't work for you.

I am looking for places where I can...

I am looking for places where I don't have to...



**What works for me?**

What keeps me interested, energizes me, makes me feel alive?

**What does not work for me?**

What makes me mad or upset, puts me off, shuts me down, bores me?



# My Gifts

Each of us have things to give others. Our own personal ways of making a difference in the world. There are...

**Gifts of the hand** (and feet and voice) –abilities and skills that I can give (for example: recognizing people and remembering names, dancing, fixing things, singing, typing, drawing, arranging shapes and colors, using a computer, decorating, acting, composing music, figuring out the best way to do a job, sewing, working hard using physical strength, decorating, ability to sign, ability to speak or understand another language)

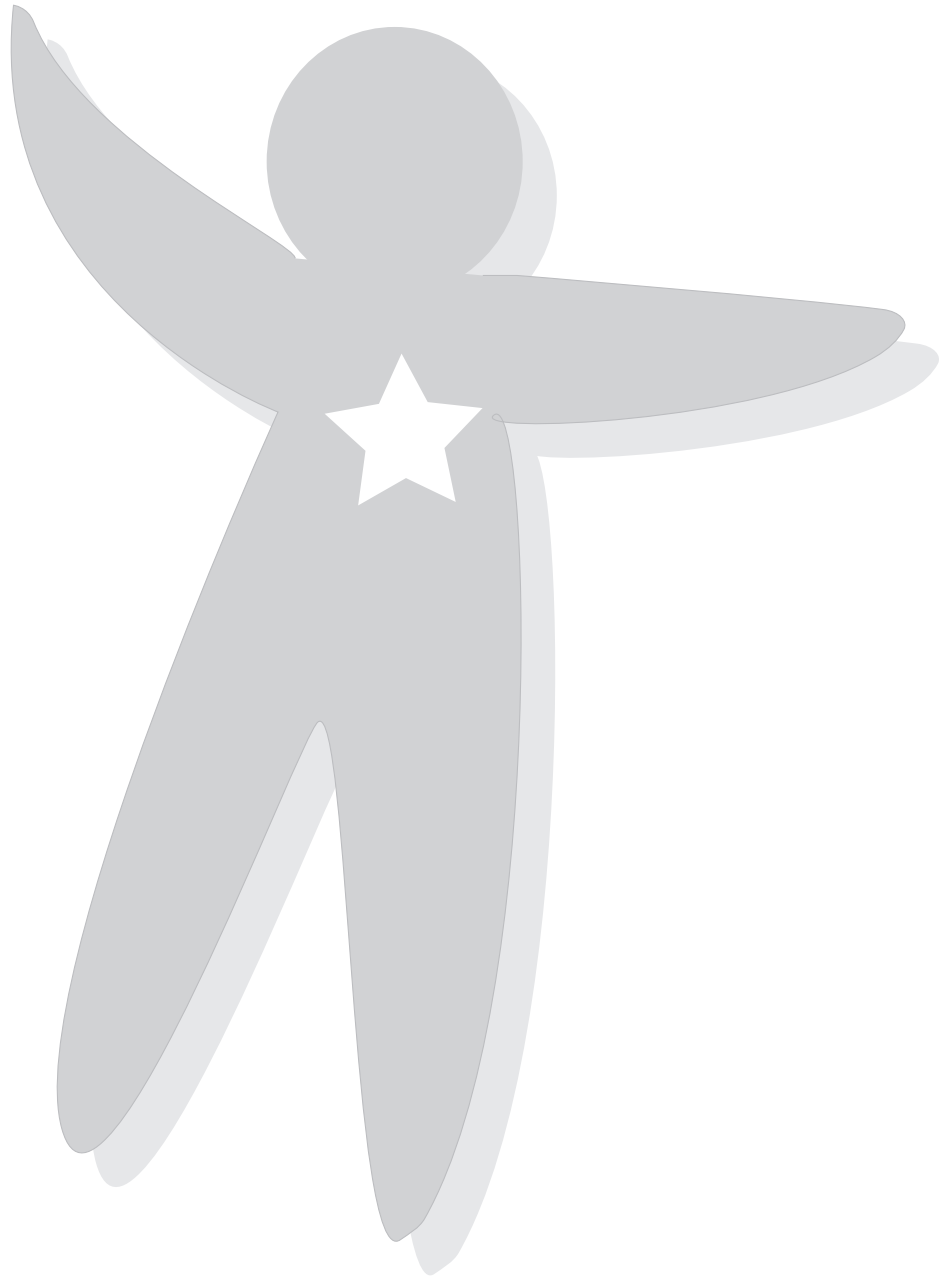
**Gifts of the head** –knowledge, questions, experience, and information that I can contribute (for example, figuring people out, organizing and classifying things, travel routes, sports news, fan information, gossip, local history, ability to spot a bargain, ability to debate, sales ability, creative thinking, math, solving puzzles, interest in politics, desire to think and talk about big questions)

**Gifts of the heart** –interests, enthusiasms, personal passions, and the rewards of relationship that I can bring to others (for example, welcoming people, patience, courage, impatience to move from talk into action, sensitivity to others, high energy, desire for order, ability to listen, passion for justice, love of nature, ability to draw others out, spiritual gifts)

**Gifts of my history and who I am** – experiences, knowledge, duties, responsibilities concerns, types of belonging that come with membership in my particular family, religion, national or ethnic group, citizenship

Use the next page to claim your gifts by putting them on the page. It sometimes helps to think about what other people who know you say your gifts are.





# Wheel Power

The wheel on the next page shows eight parts of community life that call people to give their gifts.

Think about each part of the wheel...

Put a star next to the parts of the wheel that are most important to you. These are the areas of life that call out to you strongly, the parts of life that interest and involve you the most.

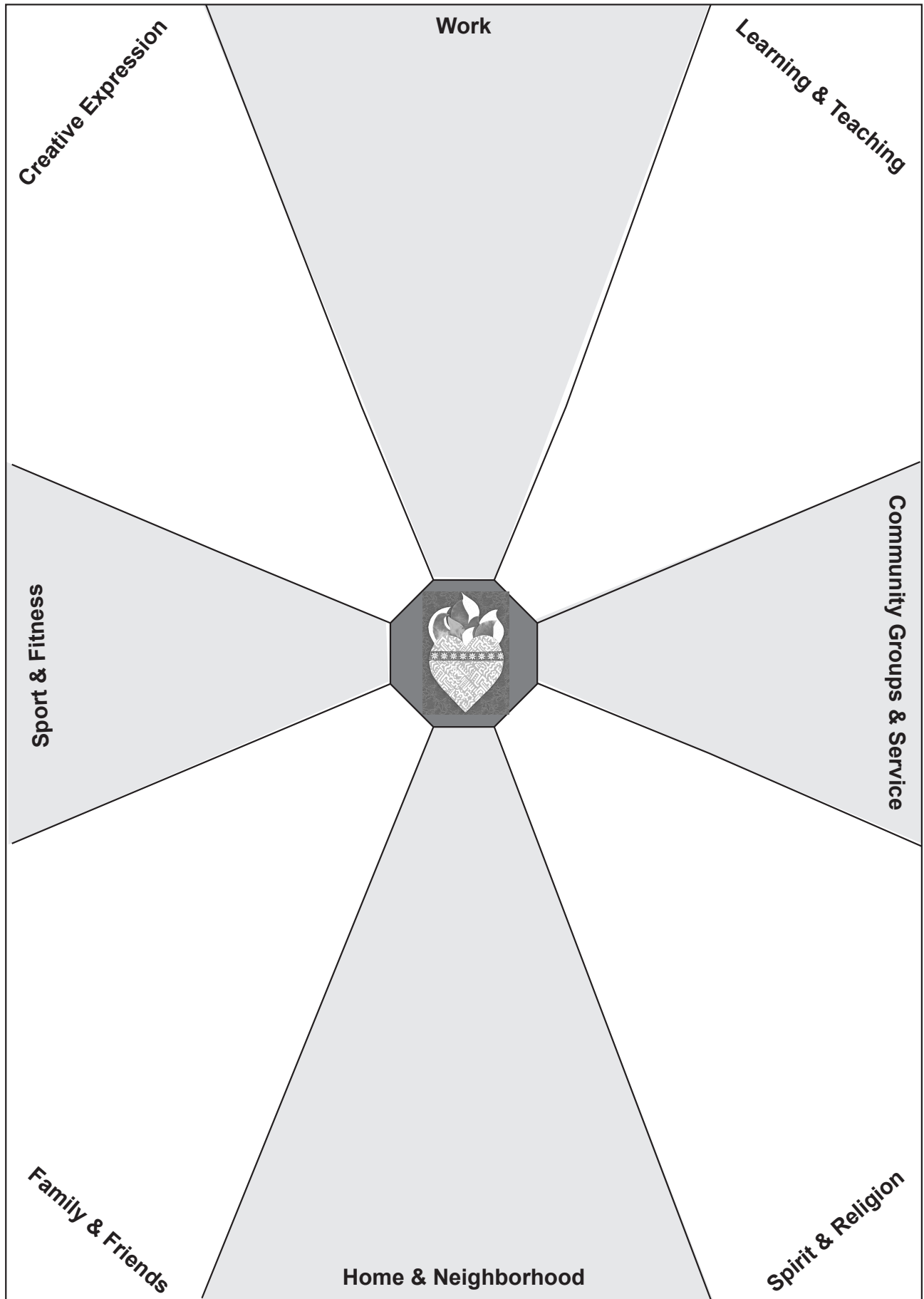
Starting with the part of the wheel that matters most to you...

... say what you are doing now that you want to keep doing

... say what more you would like to do in this part of the wheel (don't worry if you don't know how this can happen, the first step in finding out how is to decide you want to)

**Make a collage** out of pictures and words that show what life will be like when you are active the way you want to be, in the parts of life's wheel that are most important to you.





# Keeping On

Finding our way into places and ways of contributing that are new for people with disabilities takes courage. Everyone needs ways to remember how to stay strong.

A song that gives me courage and lifts me up when things are hard:

A saying that keeps me going:

Use the space below to express your personal symbol of courage:



# And Now...

Good questions I need to find answers for...

I need to talk to...	about...

My very next steps are:





Thanks to The Self Advocates of New York City: Janice Bartley, Tim Elliott, Tony Phillips, Joseph Perez, Harvey Pacht, and Nelcy Ramirez, who are creating a workshop based on Wheel Power.



Thanks to the students completing the Certificate in Contemporary Living course in Trinity College, Dublin for trying out the first version of this booklet

*Finding Our Way* is a workbook for people who want to think about where they want to go next in their lives. It is part of a workshop developed by John O'Brien, Connie Lyle O'Brien and Beth Mount.

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