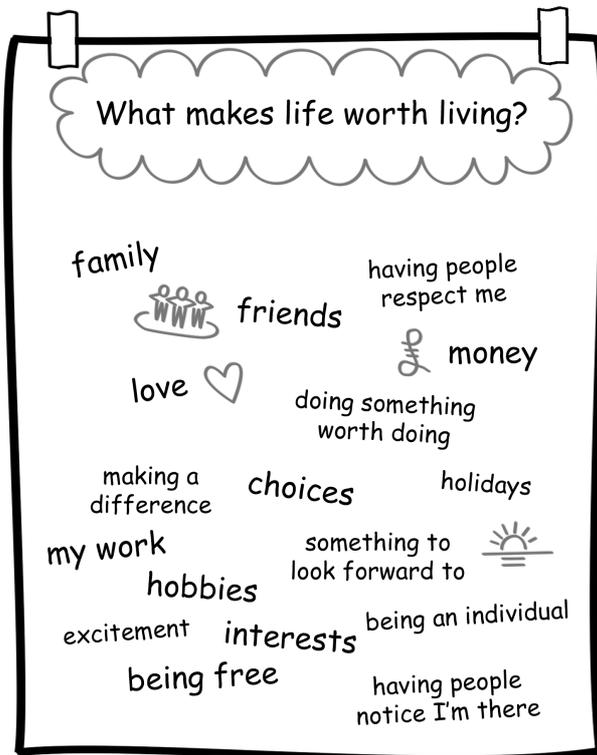


Five dimensions of inclusion

Ask any group of people what makes life worth living and what makes for a good life and they tend to say the same things.

John O'Brien outlined the 'five service accomplishments' or the 'five dimensions of inclusion'. These attempt to capture what makes a good life under five headings:



Contributing

We all have gifts and capacities. But as John McKnight says "gifts aren't gifts until they are given." Giving our gifts, and using our capacities, are important parts of living a full life.

Being someone

We all want to be noticed, to be valued by others. We want people to notice if we're missing, to want to know our opinions, to see us as equals. We want people to care what we think of them.

Belonging

We all want to belong. To have friends, to be loved, to have people want to have us around. Belonging is about who we want to be around, and who wants us around. It isn't what happens when we learn to cope with having been put with others (because they are seen to be like us). And belonging is about personal, not professional relationships.

Sharing ordinary places

None of us like to be put away, kept apart from the real world. It is in ordinary places that belonging and contributing matter to us. We want to be free, not locked away, or put aside.

Choice and control

We all want to be allowed to strive for our own unique identity and future. We want to have as much power over our destiny as other people, not to have others taking decisions for us – and when we need help we want to be in control of what happens not to be carried along in the current. Our individuality, our personhood, is not made up of just big things but also of our many tiny and seemingly insignificant decisions and preferences.

Of course these 5 dimensions of inclusion are all tightly interrelated. We get to be 'someone' because we're giving our gifts or bringing something individual to an ordinary place. By doing this we get to belong there, or we meet people who become friends or more. It's our individual dreams or ambitions that drive us to want to be known, or to belong somewhere. And our dreams and interests are influenced by our gifts and capacities.

John O'Brien's ideas about the five dimensions of inclusion are closely linked with work on:

- capacity thinking and community connecting
- gifts and giftedness
- Social Role Valorisation (SRV)
- person-centred planning
- circles of support

For more reading see www.isja.org.uk. For more on the five dimensions of inclusion refer to John O'Brien's work at <http://thechp.syr.edu/rsa.htm> or speak to Robert Weetman at www.capacitythinking.org.uk.