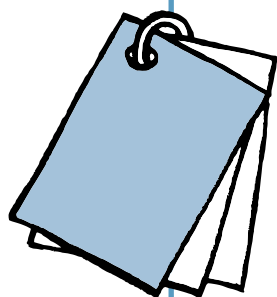Technique

Using the 'matching staff tool' in recruitment

An important aspect of a person-centred approach and self-direction is supporting individuals to have positive control over their lives, the services they receive, and as part of this, the people who provide that support. In order to achieve a good match between staff, individuals and their support needs it is necessary to look beyond basic skills and experience.
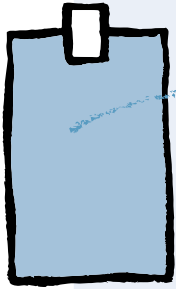
The **matching staff tool** provides a framework that assists an individual to clarify the supports they want, the skills and experience needed and the values, personality characteristics and interests required to ensure a good match and a positive outcome.

Information gathered through this process can also contribute to the development of a **donut** or a **position description**.

Where there is a good match between staff and individuals it is more likely that:

* Individuals will have more of what's '**important to**' them as the staff supporting them will possess characteristics in line with their requirements.

* Staff will have the opportunity to 'do what they are good at' and to have greater job satisfaction, resulting in reduced staff turnover, increased employee engagement and customer satisfaction.

* Organisations will have an effective way of supporting informed decision-making when individuals are choosing their own staff.

Tips

Look at the skills, experience and strengths of staff currently supporting the individual. How does this link to what is 'important to' them? What are the gaps?

Using the matching staff tool does not mean that you are looking for a team of people that are exactly the same. The individual may be looking for different staff depending on how and when they will be providing support.

Refer to the individual's plan. What type of staff are needed to support the person with the implementation of their plan?

Assist the individual in thinking through what they want their support to look like; help them balance '**important to and for**' when determining the supports they both want and need.
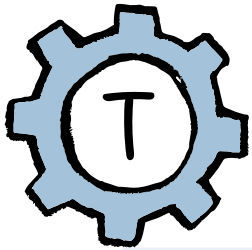
When you are recruiting for more than one person think about common skills, experience, interests and personality characteristics. Consider what you need to look for and/or avoid.

The matching staff tool can be used to recruit from within the organisation as well as externally.

Ask the individual requiring support the following questions:

1. What are the personality characteristics of staff or other people who you get along well with? What does that tell us about who we are looking for?
2. What are the personality characteristics to avoid?
3. What do you want the staff member to be able to support you with? What are the skills and experience needed for this?
4. Is there anything that you don't get to do often now because you don't have the right staff to provide support?

Tool

The **matching staff tool** is broken into four main headings to assist individuals in determining the supports wanted and needed, as well as the types of staff best suited to provide this support. This tool can either be used to capture support needed as a whole or to support people drill down into particular areas within an individual's day or week.

1. Support wanted and needed

What will be required of the staff member on a day-today basis?

Be specific to the individual being supported and avoid using generic statements.

Instead of writing 'supporting someone with high support needs and complex communication to implement their plan and with daily living tasks', think about the person as an individual and list what staff will be doing.

For example the employee will be required to:

* Drive to and actively support a person with disability to participate in swimming, horse riding and other activities identified by the individual.
* Fully assist with all personal care needs.

2. Skills and experience needed

In order to provide the right support, specific to the needs of the individual, what are the skills and experience that staff will need?

Often this will be supports directly related to the individual's disability, in addition, determine which skills are 'important to' the individual.

This section can also help to define which skills you are willing to provide training in and which skills the staff member would already need to possess.

3. Personality characteristics (including values and attitudes)

What are the personality characteristics of people who work well with the individual being supported?

Which existing staff would be a good match now or would have been in the past? What characteristics do they have in common?

Do the characteristic requirements change with different support requirements?

4. Shared common interests

What are the shared interests that would be desirable?

While these interests may not directly relate to the supports provided, by asking this question when you are matching individuals and staff, they will have topics of interest to discuss as they work together.

Because it is not always possible to find the perfect person with all the qualities, you may want to assist the individual in prioritising some of the information in order to narrow it down to the non-negotiable (essential) and the added extras (desirable) elements that you are looking for within the recruitment process.
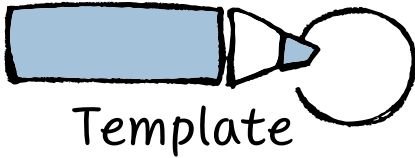
Essential

In order to have a good balance of 'important to and for' – what is absolutely needed?

These are often the elements that you can't train someone in and/or without them being present it is unlikely to be a successful match.

Desirable

These are the areas that would be 'nice to have' but are negotiable – a candidate who has all the essential elements and not these could still be a good match.

Template

This example was developed with input from James - the individual, his support staff and service coordinator.

Using the matching staff tool enabled everyone involved to reflect on the type of person required to provide the support James wanted and needed.

It also made prioritising easier, as everyone involved was able to look at the gaps in service based on the skills and interests of James' current staff and provide specific information to the person responsible for creating the recruitment advertisement.

Looking at the current staff potentially suitable and available, James' Service Coordinator, James and his family identified that in order to fill the gaps they would need to find someone who was interested in and knew how to use, power tools, had the right personality characteristics and had demonstrated capability in breaking tasks down into simple prompts.

Collectively they all decided that the only other 'must have' was a drivers license.

The organisation agreed that they would support any new staff member to learn about and understand Autism and would mentor them in how it related to James.

Support wanted and needed

Someone to support James to:

* Work in the garden at home
* Do his own grocery shopping
* Complete tasks around the house like cooking and cleaning
* Learn to catch public transport
* Build things out of timber using power tools
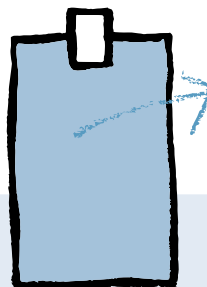* Put together a plan for each day

Skills and experience needed

* Gardening knowledge and practical application
* A driver's license
* The ability to use power tools safely and teach others how to do the same
* The ability to prompt with instructions without telling James what to do
* Knowledge of Autism (this would be ideal but not a must)
* The ability to break tasks down into steps to increase understanding

Personality characteristics (including values and attitudes)

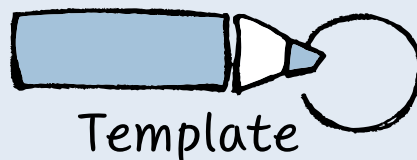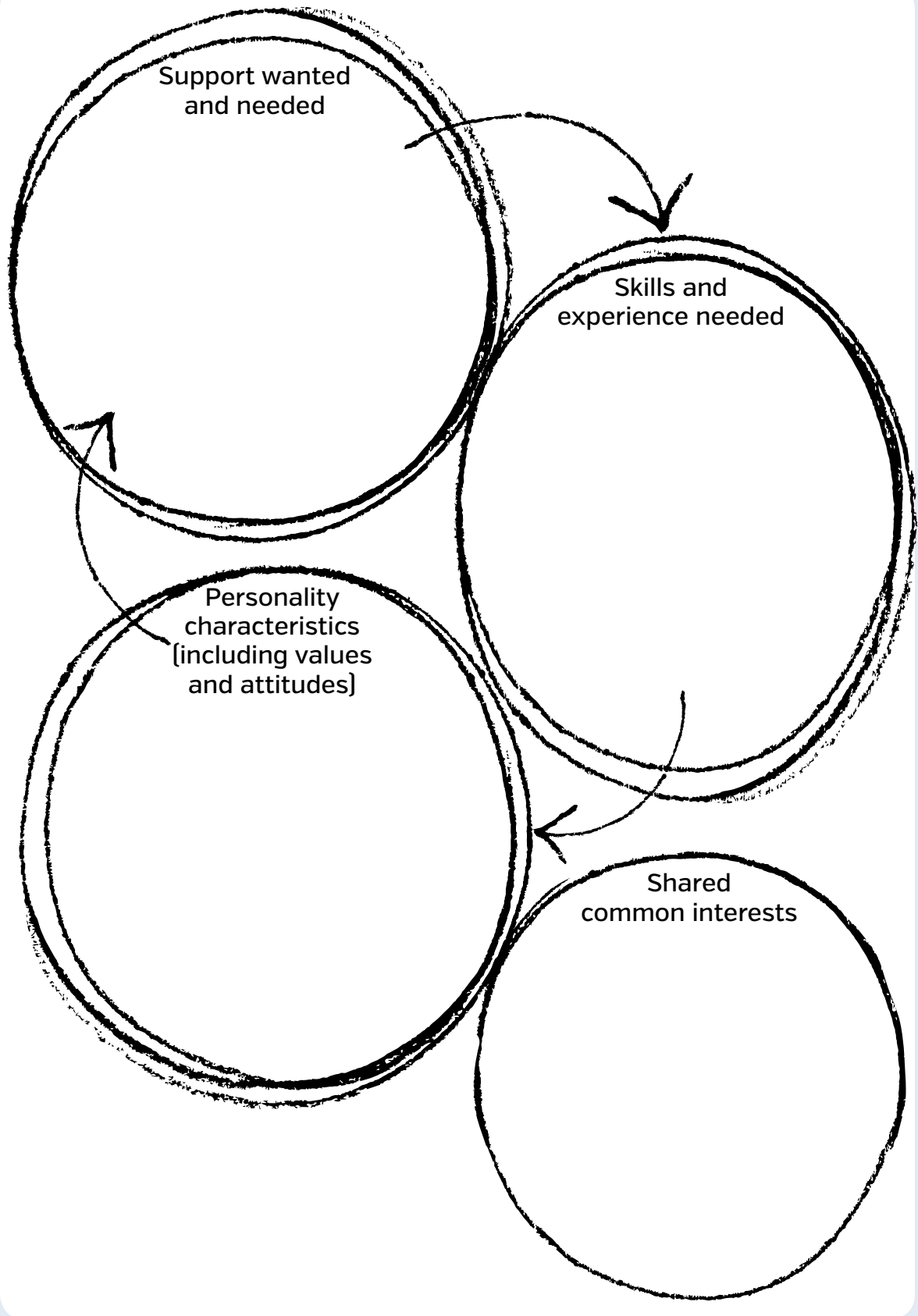* Calm under pressure
* Patient
* Easygoing
* Creative
* Adaptable

Shared common interests
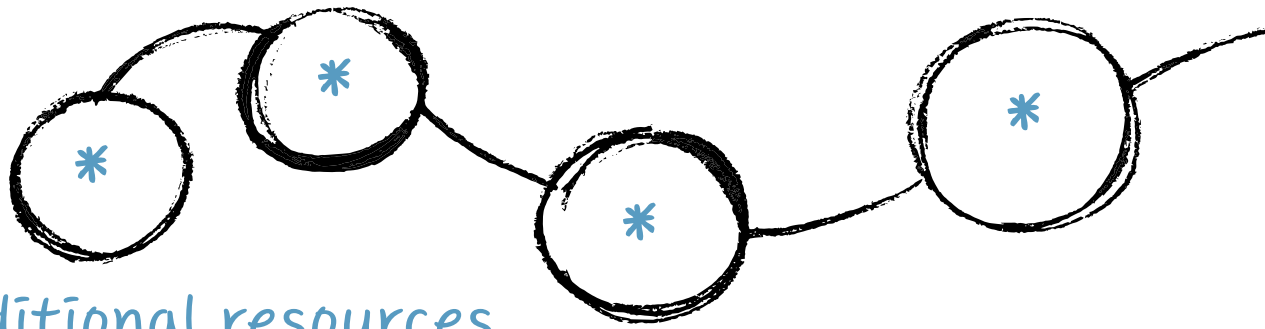
* Art and crafts - particularly drawing
* Gardening

Tips

Matching staff tool

Support wanted
and needed

Skills and
experience needed

Personality
characteristics
(including values
and attitudes)

Shared
common interests

Template

Additional resources

* The Workforce Capability Framework.

* The disability career planner and capability framework implementation guide.

* Tool, tips and template – using the 'donut' to clarify roles and responsibilities

* Technique, tips and template – using 'important to and for' in job design and recruitment

* Technique, Tips and Template – writing position descriptions

* Technique, tips and tool – using 'decision-making agreements' within recruitment

* Tips – selecting a preferred candidate

Definitions

The term **individual(s)** refers to an individual with a disability and their family and/or circle of support.

The terms **staff/employee(s)** refer to paid or unpaid members of the workforce regardless of their employment relationship with their employer i.e. permanent, casual, full-time, volunteer, etc.