Eval Tool – Instructions for use

Overview of the Eval Tool

The Eval Tool is an app designed to support data collection for evaluating a project for young people (ages 10-25) with developmental disabilities. It is available from the Apple App store.

This visual tool is designed to support an adaptive interviewing approach (Bains & Turnbull, 2022; McFarland et al., 2024) that facilitates the participation of people with intellectual disabilities in qualitative research and evaluation. Support workers can also use it to facilitate focused conversations with individuals with intellectual disabilities to assist a person-centred approach to service delivery.

The Eval Tool can be used to support qualitative data interviewing on the well-being-related topics of:

- Social connections and social support

- Connections to places

- Goals and hopes for the future.

The tool consists of two main parts, each consisting of a set of interactive visual pages:

Part 1: Social connections and support – People and places

Part 2: Future goals, expectations and hope – Family, friends, school/employment, health and safety.

The Eval Tool has been developed based on research literature and existing instruments, most specifically:

- The Connectedness Map for Part 1 (Children's Bureau, 2024)

- The Hopeful Future Expectations scale (HFE) (National Mentoring Resource Centre) and the Brief Multi-dimensional Students' Life Satisfaction Scale (BMSLSS) (Seligson et al., 2003) for Part 2.

The tool comprises eight pages in total and includes:

- Choice of version – either cartoon or icon style – Introductory Page 1

- Connections to people and places – Pages 2-3

- Goals and hopes for the future – Pages 4-8

- Save and restart page – Page 9.

Using the Eval Tool – Overall guidelines

The steps for using the Eval are provided below.

Step 1: Review the tool on the Apple App Store and the suggested instructions below to determine whether the Eval Tool is appropriate for:
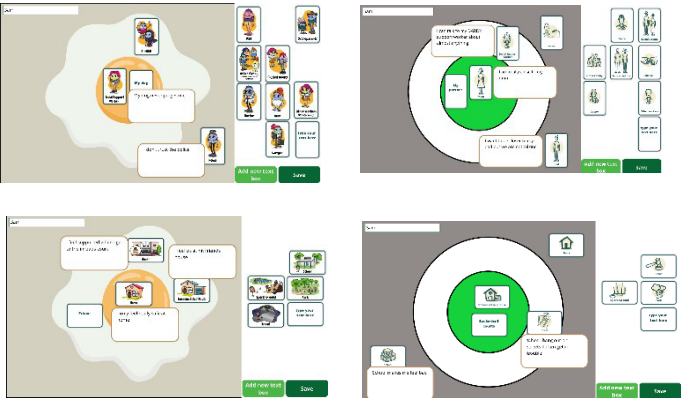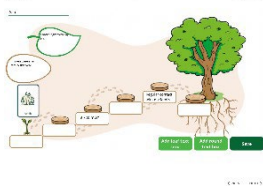
1. Your data collection situation

2. The specific client you are interviewing.

Step 2: Identify which version of the tool will best fit your situation and client/participant.

Step 3: Identify the topics you will cover in the qualitative interview (see the table below for some examples of topics that align with the pages of the tool)

Step 4: Draft some questions appropriate to data collection to go along with the tool (See Page * for some examples)

Note: The Eval Tool can also be used for quantitative data collection via downloads of the completed tool. This can be particularly useful for measuring change over time (E.g. s, change in number of social connections or social supports in the middle sections of the visual tool (Pages 2-3) or progress along the steppingstones on the goals and hopes for the future pages (Pages 4-8).

Sample topic areas	Visual tool reference
• Positive social connections • Increased access to other services • Relationship with and support from the project team	Page 2 and 3
• Goals and plans • Hope for the future	Pages 4-8 – sub-topics of Family, friends, employment/education, health, safety

Preparing for an interview using the Eval Tool

Identify the interview topics most relevant to your project and client, and draft some questions. You can use the sample questions provided as a starting point. Note that every client will be different, and interviews can be flexible and adaptive (i.e., more like a structured but natural conversation than a formal interview).

Ensure you have ethical processes in place, including consent and secure data storage procedures, such as for storing downloads of the completed tool.

Get familiar with each part of the tool, including:

- moving the picture cards (Pages 2-8),

- adding text boxes (Pages 2-8),

- typing in the text boxes (Pages 2-8)

- typing in the sections under the stepping stones (Pages 4-8)

- downloading and saving the completed tool.

Using the Eval Tool to assist with a qualitative interview

At the beginning of the interview (and as part of consent), inform the client/participant that you will use the visual tool.

Place the tool between the client and yourself.

Use your identified topics and sample questions alongside each page of the tool to guide the interview conversation.

Conduct and record the qualitative interview.

Sample questions

The following sections provide options for 'abstract' questions – for instance, where a client is asked to reflect on their situation and perhaps the influence of the program or service – as well as more 'concrete' questions that focus on specific behaviours. As the interviewer, you can use your judgement to decide which type of questions works best, depending on the client and the stage of the interview.

Note: Sometimes it is good to start with the abstract question, followed by more concrete questions.

Change in relationships

People

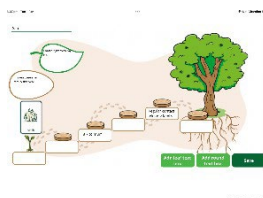| Abstract questions	Concrete questions...	...with follow up question
- What changes have you experienced in your life with your family and friends since [the program]? - Have you made any new friends since you started with [the program]? - Is there anyone you don't hang out with anymore?	- Who do you message or call on the phone? - Who do you spend the most time with? - Who helps you? - Who do you like? - Who do you care about most? - Who influences you?	- Is this different to when you first started with [the program]? - In what ways?

Places

Abstract questions	Concrete questions...	...with follow up question
- Has anything changed about the places you go to since you started with [the program]? - Are there any places where you want to spend more time? - Any places you want to spend less time?	- Where is somewhere you feel safe or comfortable? - Where do you go to feel you can be yourself?	- Are the places you like to hang out different now to when you first started with [the program]? - In what ways?

Increased access to support services

Abstract questions	Concrete questions...	...with follow up question
- When you are feeling down who do you go to? - What about social workers, support workers or doctors? Is there anyone like that that you rely on? *Prompts* – mentors, case managers, case workers?	- Can you tell me about any support services [the program] has helped you find? - Are there any other services or community organisations you go to? - What do you think has helped you the most? - What did they do? - What do you think you might need more help with?	- What does this person do that you really appreciate? - In what ways do they help you the most? - Do you do anything fun with them? (if applicable)

Goals

The five pages – friends, family, employment/education, health, safety

Abstract questions	Concrete questions...	...with follow up question
- What's been happening since you started with [the program]? - Do you feel better about yourself since you started with [the program]? - In what ways?	- Do you have any new goals? - Are you more engaged at school? - What are you doing in your spare time that is different to before? - Are you feeling more confident than before?	- How is this different to before [the program]? - Why do you think this has changed? - Can you tell me more about that?

References

Bains, K.K., & Turnbull, T. (2022). Conducting theory-based qualitative interviews with adults with intellectual disabilities and their carers: Adaptations to facilitate participation. Journal of Applied Research in Intellectual Disabilities, 35(2), 556–568. https://doi.org/10.1111/jar.12966

Children's Bureau (2024), The Connectedness Map, Child Welfare Information Gateway, United States Government, Accessed 22.05.2025 https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/cwportal/permanency/pc/pdf/ffe-connectmap.pdf

McFarland, B., Bryant, L., Wark, S., Morales-Boyce, T.M. (2024). Adaptive interviewing for the inclusion of people with intellectual disability in qualitative research, Journal of Applied Research in Intellectual Disabilities, 37(1):e13182. doi: 10.1111/jar.13182. Epub 2023 Dec 3.

National Mentoring Resource Centre, Hopeful Future Expectations (HFE) scale. https://nationalmentoringresourcecenter.org/resource/measurement-guidance-toolkit/ Accessed 20.05.2025.

Seligson, J.L., Huebner, S., and Valois, R.F. (2003) Preliminary validation of the brief multidimensional students' life satisfaction scale (BMSLSS). Social Indicators Research, 61: 121-145.