

## Moving Lives Forward: What is a Life Plan?

You may have heard us use the term “Life Plan,” a tool that is playing an increasingly important role in our work with clients through several social services programs.

To help you better understand what a Life Plan is, here are some highlights from a recent conversation with Marc Cousineau, director of Parish & Community Services:



### How would you describe a Life Plan?

A Life Plan is a combination of a comprehensive assessment and an actionable goal – or series of goals – designed to guide individuals in crisis on a more successful path forward.

A Life Plan is a foundation for building meaningful and engaging relationships with clients. It is carefully developed to **meet clients where they are at**, addressing and helping remove current obstacles, while also shifting the fundamental dynamics of some aspect of their life to generate a more sustainable change.

### What does a Life Plan involve?

The Life Plan process starts when we sit down with a client and have a conversation, carefully listening to the problems they are facing and asking questions. We take a more in-depth look into their lives, with a formal assessment across a wide range of life situations, including their access to food, housing, clothing and transportation; income and employment status; education levels; physical and mental health; personal relationships; and financial behaviors and habits.

We will then work together with clients to develop what we call smart goals. These are defined goals that are specific to the individual and targeted to improve a particular aspect of their life tied to a more significant challenge or chronic problem.

We sometimes find through the Life Plan process that the solution goes beyond what meets the eye. Life Plans enable us to identify – and then come up with an action plan to address – significant issues under the surface that aren't necessarily related to money, but can have adverse effects on other parts of their lives. These foundational challenges might be related to mental health, substance use or employment status. In those cases, the smart goals start with those broader situations or needs. At their best, Life Plans are meant to be sustainable and life-changing.

### What types of clients are enrolled in a Life Plan?

Life Plans are best suited for clients who are facing life-limiting challenges **and** want something better for themselves or their families. It takes a strong commitment of energy, motivation and patience for anyone to change lifelong patterns or habits.

### What are some examples of a Life Plan goal?

Goals may be more long-term, such as pursuing educational degrees, while others are short-term, like “understanding where my money goes.” Some recently completed Life Plan goals include developing a household budget, finding a full-time job or fixing a car so one could have transportation. Others might be securing affordable housing, receiving counseling for personal problems, obtaining medical insurance or graduating from an auto mechanics program.

### How do Life Plans enable clients to move their lives forward?

The Life Plan is the roadmap for accompanying people on their paths forward. We do it through casework, mentoring and encouragement, literally helping to advance their lives so they aren't stuck amid the same struggles.

We measure impact, too. Recent Life Plan clients noted an average 11.5% improvement between their initial and follow-up Life Plan assessments. That's significant and a testament to the real potential they hold.

Our tagline at Catholic Charities New Hampshire is “Moving Lives Forward.” A Life Plan embodies what we mean by that – and is a big reason that clients can finally overcome obstacles and move beyond recurring problems.

To read more of our conversation with Marc, including some examples of a Life Plan, visit [cc-nh.org/lifeplan](http://cc-nh.org/lifeplan).

## Your Legacy

Make a lasting impact by naming Catholic Charities NH in your will or estate plans. For more information, contact Karen Moynihan at **603-669-3030**.

## Ways You Impact Lives Across New Hampshire

It's because of you that:

- Hundreds of individuals and families are creating pathways out of poverty and achieving life goals they never thought possible through **Parish & Community Services**. Without you, they wouldn't have access to Life Plans that enable them onto a better journey and improve their overall life situations by an **average of 11.5%**.
- Young mothers and families are receiving pregnancy and parenting support and education to build loving and secure homes for their children. Because of you, the **Our Place** program is a success – **100%** of our inspiring clients exhibit substantial improvements in pregnancy education and birth preparation.
- Many of your neighbors are finding healing and new meaning amid grief, addiction and major life obstacles. Your impact is significant – more than **80%** of our **Counseling Services** clients report positive behavior change and symptom reduction.

## Ready, Set, Run for Charity!

Are you a runner, jogger or walker? There are two great events coming up, both supporting Catholic Charities New Hampshire and its programs!

### Christmas in July 5K

Thursday, July 18, 2019

Auburn, NH

[runsignup.com/christmasinJuly5k](http://runsignup.com/christmasinJuly5k)

### 23rd Annual St. Charles 5K:

Monday, September 2, 2019 (Labor Day)

Portsmouth, NH

[runningnuns.com/labor-day-race/](http://runningnuns.com/labor-day-race/)

## Grant Recognition

Thank you to the following for awarding grants to support Catholic Charities New Hampshire's programs and services.

|  |          |                             |
|--|----------|-----------------------------|
| Bank of America Charitable Foundation, Inc. .... | \$12,500 | Casework Services           |
| Blanche M. Walsh Charity Trust .....             | \$2,000  | Counseling Services         |
| Oleonda Jameson Trust .....                      | \$10,000 | Immigration Legal Services  |
| People's United Community Foundation .....       | \$7,500  | Parish & Community Services |