

## **Project Title**

The S.P.E.C.I.A.L. Plan – A Clinical Framework for Long Term Care Planning with Families of Persons with Intellectual Disabilities

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## **Organisation(s) Involved**

Minds

## **Healthcare Family Group(s) Involved in this Project**

Social Worker

## **Applicable Specialty or Discipline**

Person with intellectual disabilities (PWIDs)

## **Aim(s)**

The process of engaging various parties, including client, family, professionals and agencies, in planning for services and resources to meet an individual's health and personal care needs over his/her lifetime.

## **Background**

See poster appended/ below

## **Methods**

See poster appended/ below

## **Results**

See poster appended/ below

## **Conclusion**

See poster appended/ below

## **Project Category**

Organisational Leadership

Change Management, System Change

## **Keywords**

Person with Intellectual Disabilities (PWIDS), Clinical Framework, Long Term Care  
Planning

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## The S.P.E.C.I.A.L. Plan – A Clinical Framework for Long Term Care Planning with Families of Persons with Intellectual Disabilities



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### INTRODUCTION

Long Term Care Planning (LTCP) is the process of engaging various parties, including client, family, professionals and agencies, in planning for services and resources to meet an individual's health and personal care needs over his/her lifetime. Within the social service sector and current practices for persons with intellectual disabilities (PWIDs), there is no formalised guide in conducting LTCP in a structured manner. Prevailing trends such as the increase in children diagnosed with developmental disabilities, increasing life expectancy, ageing population, and increasing complexity of health conditions underscore the need for the development of a systematic approach and holistic framework towards LTCP for PWIDs.

### METHODOLOGIES

A literature review was first undertaken to understand the construct of LTCP and associated themes. Subsequently, a needs assessment was conducted with professionals and caregivers, to gather insights on their perspectives, existing experiences, current areas of priorities and perceived gaps in LTCP. This groundwork helped inform the proposed framework, in hopes that it can serve as a clinical guide for social workers and other professionals in discussing LTCP for PWIDs.

### EVALUATION

To ascertain the utility of the clinical framework, the S.P.E.C.I.A.L. Plan was trialed by MINDS social workers, who serve across a continuum of services including special education schools, adult disability services, residential services and community-based services. Based on the feedback gathered, the following themes were identified:

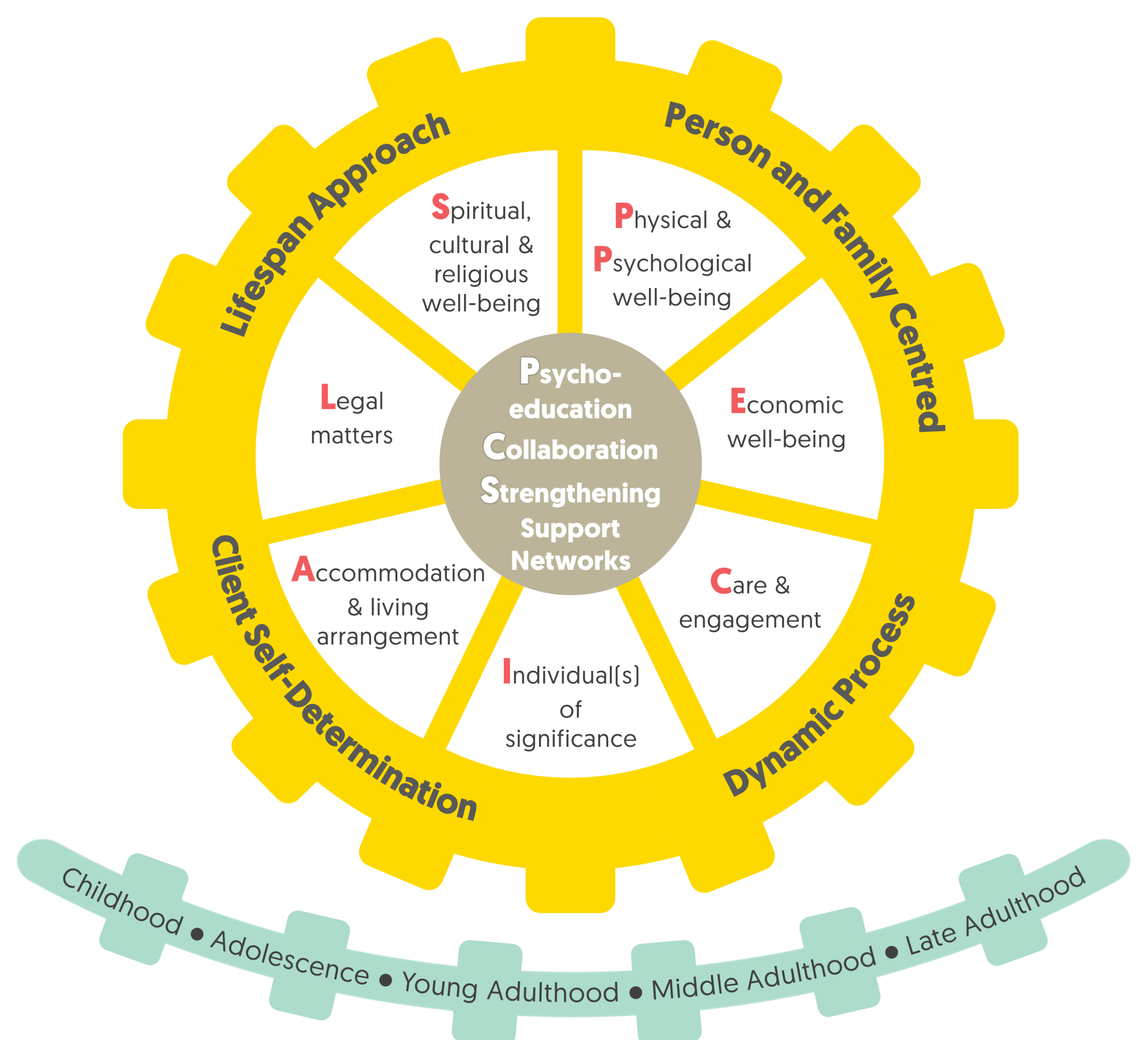
**Structured** – The framework provided social workers with a structured process and an organised way of facilitating discussions on LTCP.

**Holistic and Balanced** – The framework guided a comprehensive and well-rounded approach, with the inclusion of important domains that are relevant for LTCP and overall well-being of PWIDs.

**Pacing and Continuity** – Given the wide scope of possible care plans and discussions, and the varying levels of readiness of each family, social workers have highlighted the need to pace the LTCP process with families, while ensuring continuity of discussions over time, across different sessions and at PWIDs' different life stages.

**Readiness and Preparedness** – To enable meaningful discussions, social workers have to be sufficiently prepared to facilitate such conversations and respond to families accordingly. Social workers would require adequate understanding of families' circumstances and the available resources for LTCP. More developmental work and psychoeducation have to be done to promote the readiness and preparedness of families to undergo discussions on LTCP.

### RESULTS



S.P.E.C.I.A.L. Plan – Clinical Framework for Long Term Care Planning



The proposed clinical framework encapsulates 7 key domains of LTCP with the acronym **SPECIAL**: (1) **S**piritual, cultural and/or religious well-being, (2) **P**hysical and **P**sychological well-being, (3) **E**conomic well-being, (4) **C**are and engagement, (5) **I**ndividuals of significance, (6) **A**ccommodation and living arrangement, and (7) **L**egal matters.

Adopting a lifespan approach, being person and family centred, respecting client self-determination and recognising the dynamic process have been identified as the 4 core principles underpinning the 3 LTCP core tasks, determined as psychoeducation, collaboration and strengthening support networks.

### CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the S.P.E.C.I.A.L. Plan provides for an evidence-based, clinical framework to LTCP for PWIDs. The framework can be further improved with continued trials and evaluation. The development of a training curriculum is also in the works to guide the application and implementation of the framework for social workers and other professionals. Further studies may be undertaken to examine the reliability and validity of the theoretical constructs underpinning the framework, and to measure its effectiveness.