

Support plan case

Maria, 35 years old

Maria likes good food, walking in nature and traveling. Her hobbies also include photography, which she has been doing for ten years. She is very skilled with computers. She uses her own computer to e.g. edit the photos she has taken, to play different games, and to find information on tourist attractions in Finland and abroad. She also has an amazing memory: if you need to know whose name day is on the 17th of March, for example, you should ask her.

**Support needs:** Maria exhibits characteristics of neuropsychiatric spectrum disorder and has been diagnosed with Asperger syndrome, which makes her everyday life challenging. Building and maintaining social relationships and taking other people's feelings into account is very difficult for her, which is why Maria does not have many friends. Loud sounds make her anxious. If someone comes too close to her, she becomes anxious and nervous

**Current situation:** Maria lives in a supported housing unit run by the city together with nine other residents. She has attended the city's employment-supporting activities that focus on crafts for seven years, although she does not really like crafts. Three years ago, Maria tried out music-focused activities. This experiment failed, however, leaving Maria with bad memories of the situation. Music-focused daytime activities are an extremely poor fit for someone who is sensitive to sound, but it was the only alternative the city could offer her.

Maria has dreamt of a real job for many years now. She has told her parents about her desire to turn photography into a job. Maria has previously photographed her relatives' events and parties, and she has received very positive feedback also from people outside her family.

According to her instructor, Maria needs to do something that she really likes in order to improve her well-being. Maria's photography skills have been utilized in employment-supporting activities in different ways, such as by having her take photos of the handicrafts on sale for the website. Employees working with Maria think that she clearly has potential to work as a photographer and get paid for it, but no one knows how to make this happen in practice.

A social worker for the city tells Maria and her parents about the possibility of self-directed support that they could use to solve this problem. The social worker explains how much Maria's daytime activities currently cost for the city and that she could use roughly the same amount of money to fulfill her dreams.

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**Assignment:** Imagine yourself in Maria's place. How would you like things to change? Create a support plan for Maria based on your thoughts. The support plan should meet her desire to find a real job related to photography.