

# **Family experiences navigating services: personas & journey maps**

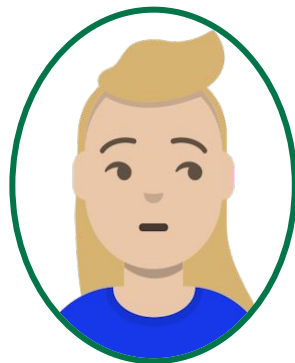
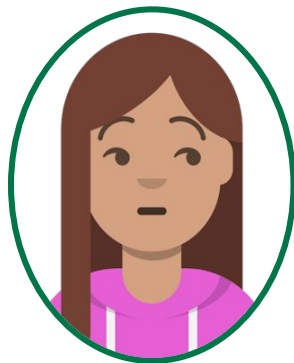
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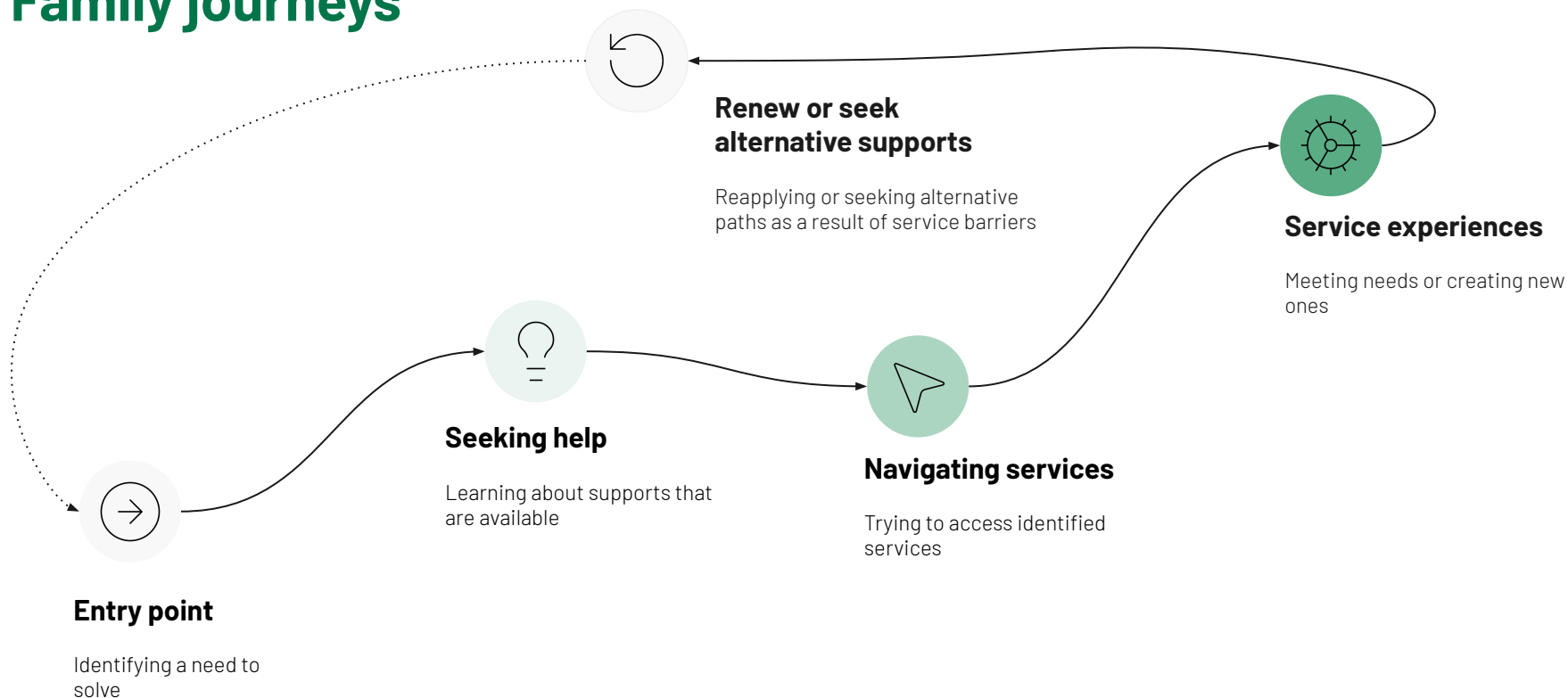
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# What is a persona?

- A composite, not a real person
- Helps us understand needs, goals, and barriers
- Personas are helpful to clarify diverse experiences and design for different needs



# Family journeys





## Selena

### *Struggling to rebuild*

#### About:

- 40's
- Separated
- Lives in shelter
- 2 teen children
- Has a disability
- Immigrant with limited English

**"When you suffer domestic violence, you don't just suffer physical and emotional violence, you suffer economic violence too."**

**Goal:** Provide a safe and stable space for her children, so they can heal, study to better themselves, and get ahead in life.

#### Navigation style:

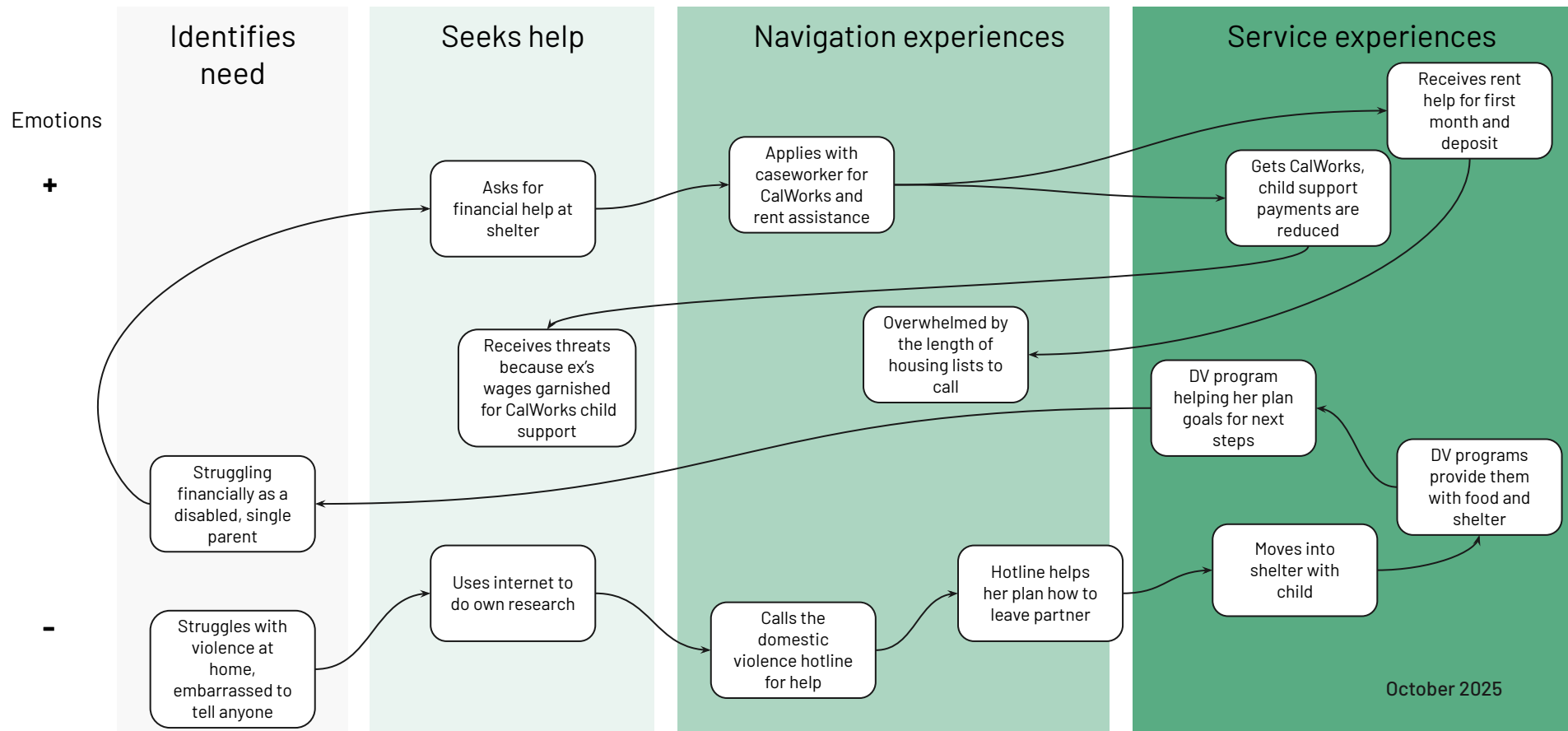
- Called a domestic violence hotline to get immediate help, felt embarrassed
- Uses internet to do own research
- Leans on shelter and domestic violence programs to learn about food and financial assistance for her family

#### Barriers:

- Limited support from family and friends
- Fears and safety concerns about ex-partner
- Experienced challenges to leave shelter and secure long-term housing



# Selena: Struggling to rebuild





## Valentina

*Supporting her children to thrive*

### About:

- 40's
- Married
- Stably housed
- 2 children under 6
- 3 year old has autism and ADHD
- Immigrant
- Monolingual Spanish speaker

**"I only knew about speech therapy. Lots of kids get speech therapy. But the occupational part was eye opening, what they do what they teach. Like you see them playing but its way deeper than that."**

**Goal:** Ensure child has uninterrupted therapy so they are equitably supported to thrive.

### Navigation style:

- Takes children to routine medical appointments, but not always for herself.
- Doctor diagnosed youngest with autism/ADHD and referred them to a community organization offering developmental services.
- Developmental services provided information on financial aid.
- Asks at church to learn about additional financial help.

### Barriers:

- Limited public transit and struggles to pay for cost of ride sharing apps to her children's appointments.
- 3 year old is aging out of services, waiting on referral to new program.
- Caseworker turnover and challenges navigating English language phone menus to reach the right person.



# Valentina: *Supporting her children to thrive*

Emotions

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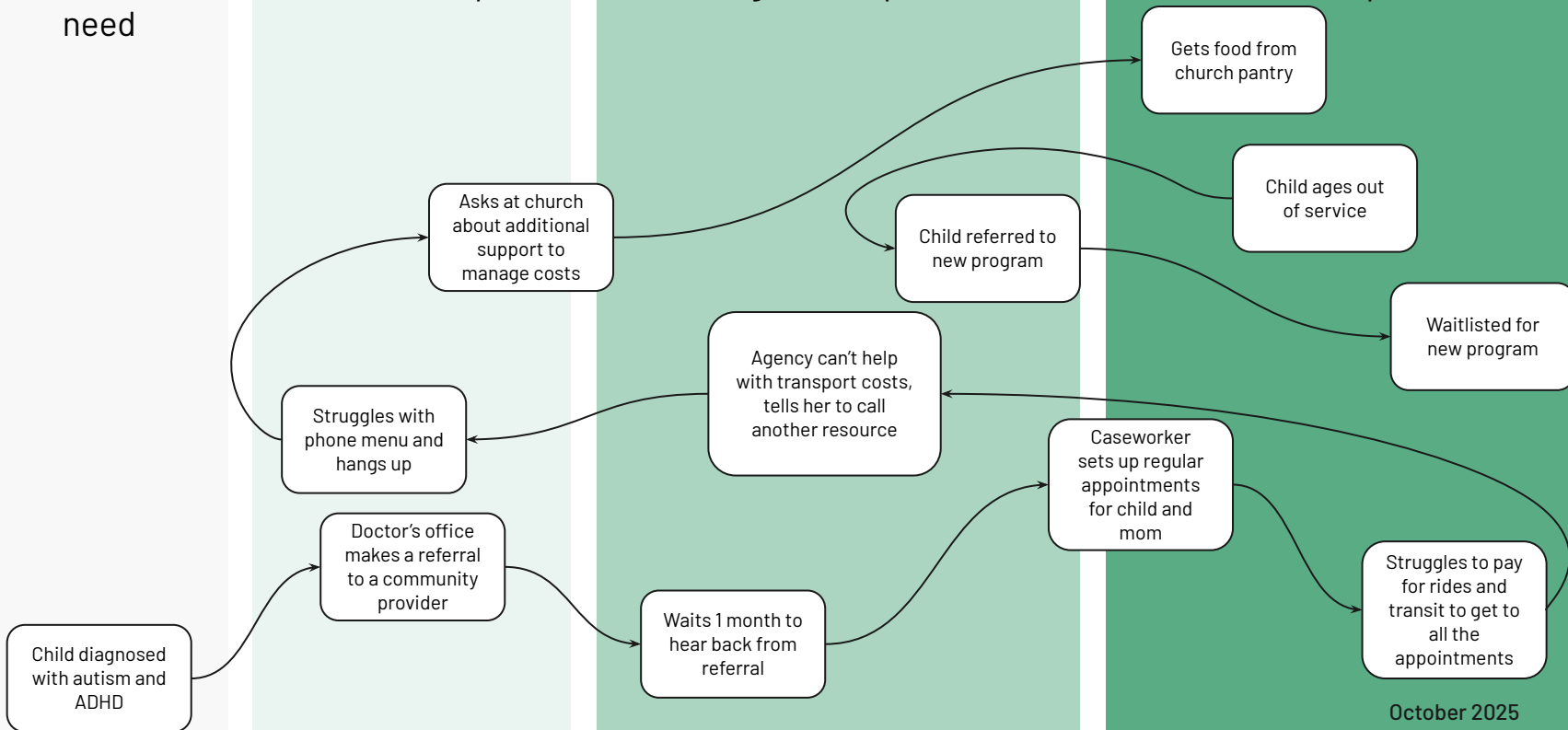
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## Identifies need

## Seeks help

## Navigation experiences

## Service experiences





## Cheyenne

*Helping professional  
needing support*

### About:

- 30's
- Single
- Lives with parents
- Has 1 child
- Support specialist at a community organization
- Has a disability

**"One day after work was thinking about that, and struggling with [the] same thing. I am helping a lot of people to apply for programs, what if I apply?"**

**Goal:** Wants to have their own needs met as they help meet other people's needs.

### Navigation style:

- Always researching services and programs in her role.
- Receives emails from other agencies about resources.
- Spoke to someone who encouraged her to apply for a affordable housing; felt more empowered to apply after conversation.

### Barriers:

- Section 8 funding cuts and waitlist freezes are hurting clients.
- Enhanced care manager hasn't follow-up on her medical care navigation.
- Believes it might be a conflict of interest for her to look for help because of her role.
- Got approved for rental assistance, but still can't find housing.



# Cheyenne: *Helping professional needing support*

Emotions

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## Identifies need

Child has emerging mental health challenge

At work, sees a program available for rental help

## Seeks help

Asks counsellors at work if they can see child

Going into debt while waiting, to keep making rent payments

Feels unsure about applying as a case manager

## Navigation experiences

Workplace says it's a conflict of interest

Looks online for local food banks

Reads about it online

Reaches out to program to find out more information

Finds another service provider and makes intake appointment

## Service experiences

Spends all day at child's appointment, misses work

Gets leftover food from food pantry at work

Finds out she is eligible, program manager emails application info

Applies, waits 3 months to hear back

Gets evening appointments to maintain work schedule

Gets rental assistance and pays off debt

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# Chelsea

## *Reuniting with children*

### **About:**

- 30's
- Single
- Formerly incarcerated
- Has 2 children in foster care; reunifying
- In transitional housing
- LGBTQ2SIA+
- Has a disability

**“Now that I have to call them [211] to find out [info] because I have to leave here [soon] and my car doesn’t have license plates - [that’s] where we are going to sleep.”**

**Goal:** Move forward from CPS involvement and incarceration to create a new, stable life for herself and children.

### **Navigation style:**

- Self-educated navigator, strong advocate for herself and others.
- Leans on parents with similar experiences of child welfare system involvement.

### **Barriers:**

- Reintegrating back into society after incarceration and reuniting with children.
- Rude interactions with social service professionals.
- Seeking employment and housing with a criminal record and low credit score.
- Rejected for SSI.
- Finding outdated housing lists online.



# Chelsea: Reuniting with child

Emotions

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## Identifies need

Planned  
probational  
release from  
incarceration

## Seeks help

Starts reading  
resources on  
reuniting with  
child

## Navigation experiences

Gets connected  
to transitional  
housing  
program

Asks CPS  
worker about  
parent partner  
program

CPS worker isn't  
sure about  
program, gets  
back to her

## Service experiences

Moves into  
transitional  
housing

Connects with  
parent partner

Transitional  
housing  
contract is  
ending

Needs to move  
out of housing  
in 2 weeks

Asks parent  
partner for help  
with housing

Divides up tasks  
of calling  
housing lists

Worried about  
having housing  
in time, to  
reunify

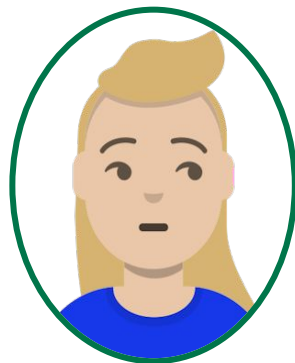
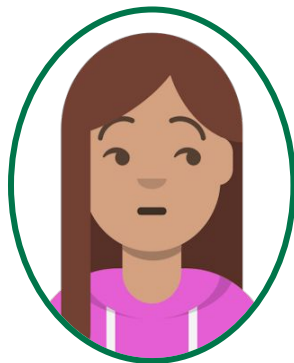
Calls 211 to get  
license plates  
updated to live  
in her truck

Landlords don't  
accept her  
because of  
record

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## Personas are not exhaustive

- Personas only reflect the families we spoke with
- Some families aren't represented because they only reflect a singular experience in our research
- There are potential clusters that we didn't reach in our research



## Parent personas

We would like to acknowledge participant types that didn't turn into a persona since they appeared once in our research

- Single father with disabilities who is working to provide for his children
- Mother who didn't look for help until offered them at hospital, and later with CPS

