

# Imagine the Possibilities: A Path to Employment Success

## Module 1: Employment as Part of a Good Life

Presenters: add information such as presenter's names, location, date or event.



Please scan the QR Code and answer a few questions before we begin!



# A Note About this Training Series



**Funding for this training has been provided by the Nebraska Council on Developmental Disabilities (NCDD), who provided a grant to Aligned Consulting Collaborative and TransCen.**

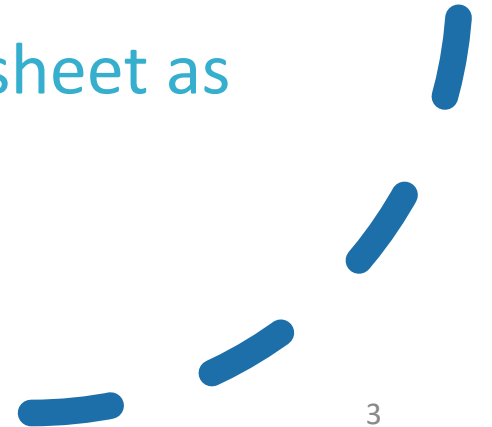
**For more information on council funded projects, please visit:**

**<https://dhhs.ne.gov/pages/DD-Planning-Council.aspx>**

# Part 1 Agenda

- Employment core concepts
- Why is work important?
- Examining expectations
- Taking a strengths-based approach
- Building a vision
- Questions and connections

Remember to use your worksheet as  
we move along



# WORKSHEET QUESTION 1

What do you hope adult life will look like for your family member?



**IMAGINE THE POSSIBILITIES:  
A PATH TO EMPLOYMENT**  
A WORKSHOP FOR FAMILIES  
SESSION WORKSHEET



What do you hope adult life will look like for your son or daughter?

What is your son or daughter's greatest skill or attribute?

What do you need to feel hopeful and energized about your son or daughter's employment future?

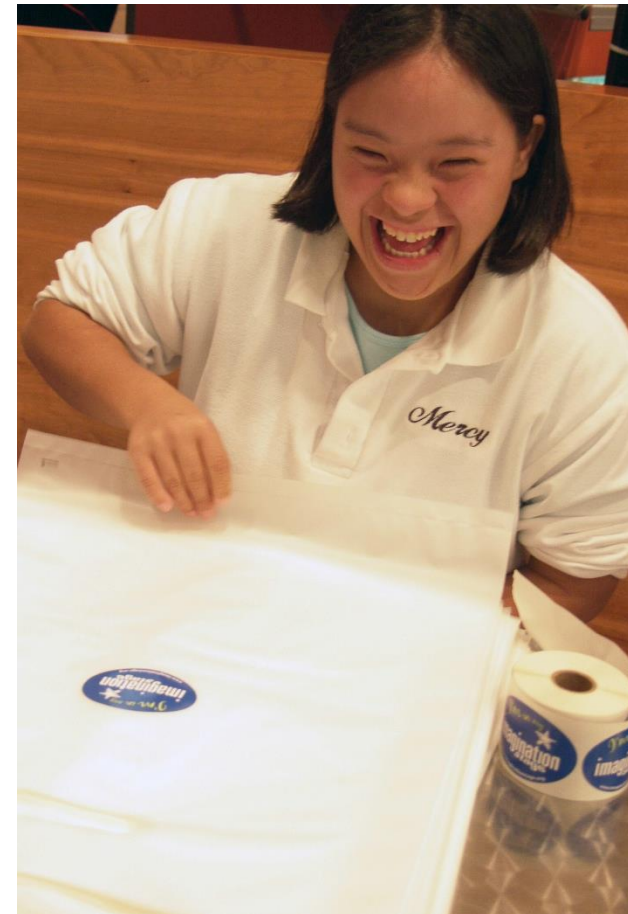
What is your greatest concern when thinking about employment for your son or daughter?

Based on the information in this workshop, what are 3 action steps you will take to help start your son or daughter on the path to employment success?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

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# Today, People with Disabilities...



# But There is Still Work to be Done...

**There is still a long way to go before people with disability experience equality of opportunity in the US.**

Employment rates

Poverty

Housing options

Social, recreational, relationships

A respected voice

Determine own futures



# Employment: So Much Is Possible



# Employment: Core Concepts

1

Everyone can work!

2

Employment looks differently for everybody

3

Employment should be rooted in what your family member wants to do

# What is “Employment”?

## Chosen

- Job is based on what a person wants to do.

## Integrated

- Alongside those without disabilities, with opportunities to interact

## Employment

- In the general workforce, on the payroll of a business or self-employed

## Minimum Wage

- At or above minimum wage or at industry standard wage

# Getting Support on the Job

People with disabilities may require additional support on the job to learn tasks and become part of the work culture.

People who receive work supports are still doing real work!



# Employment Looks Differently for Everyone

Jude has been learning many new tasks while working at Ray's Hardware. He stocks inventory and attends to the recycling. Jude currently works 8 hours a week and is assisted by a job coach while at the store. Jude says he feels appreciated for the work he does.

Trina is a valuable part of the manufacturing team at TriCo Industries. She cuts rails for cabinets and makes sure the product is packaged correctly. She works 30 hours a week and is assisted by a job coach who checks in with her twice a week.

# Why Should Your Family Member Work?

“The growth in his personal development, confidence and maturity became apparent very soon after he started working. Everyone in his family took notice and was delighted with the happy adult my son had become.”

– *Parent* –

It is what is expected of adults

Purpose

Socialization

Money

Self-worth (dignity)

Promotes mental health

**Because they can!**

# A Valued Social Role



Employment is part of the fabric of our society. Having a job or a connection to employment gives a person a valued social role. It allows us to be connected to our communities in a unique way.

# Seeing Your Family Member in a New Way



# How do We Define Expectations?

## “Expectations”

are a belief that someone will or should achieve something; that something will happen or is likely to happen in the future.

## “High Expectations”

are the belief that a person with a disability (or other barrier) can achieve the same life and have the same life choices as everyone else.

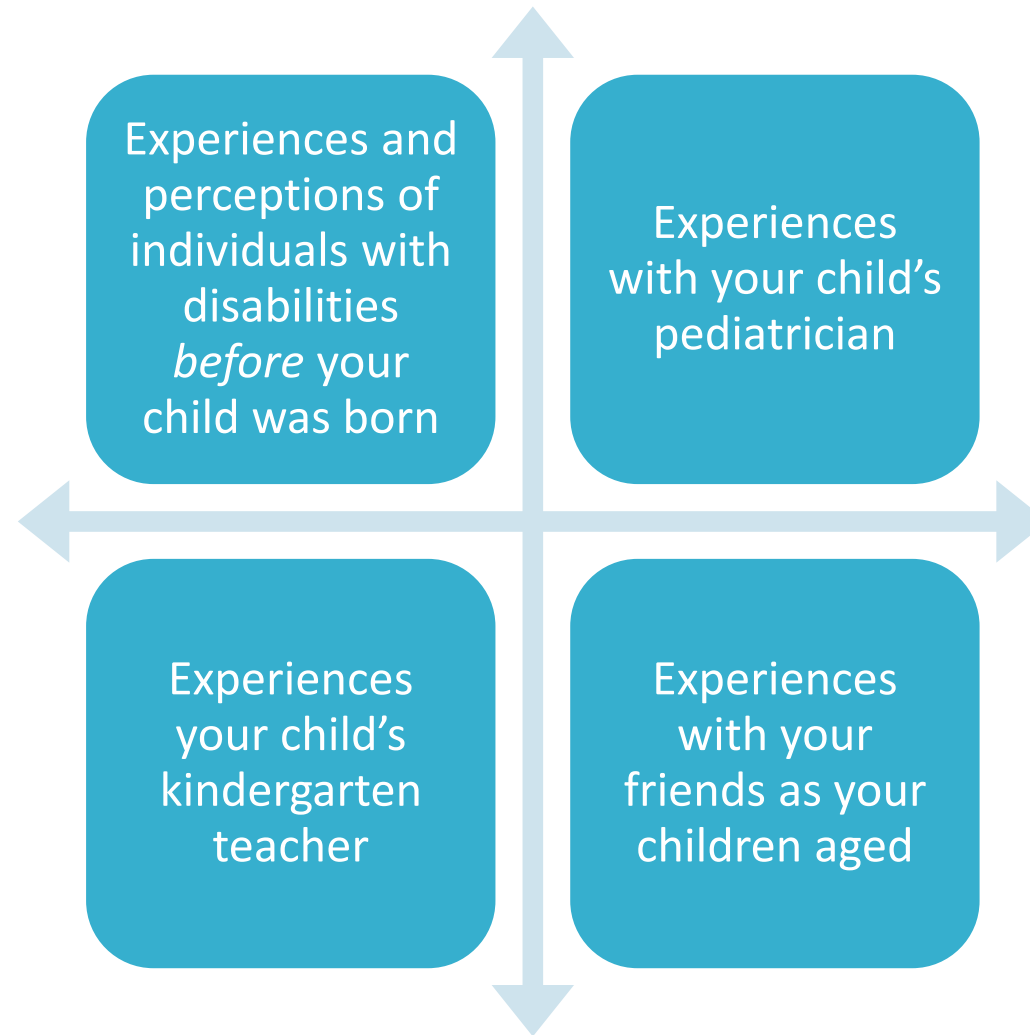


# Where Do Low Expectations Come From?

- Society's perceptions about the impact of disability
- Feelings about having a family member with a disability
- What we are told by others

**The secret is seeing that people with disabilities can do great things,  
and not letting other people's ideas impact your family member's  
ability to make lives for themselves.**

# Think back...



# Examining the Roots of Our Expectations



Name 2 individuals or situations that helped you have high expectations for your student's education future.



Name 2 situations/messages that negatively impacted your expectations for your student's education future.

# The Importance of Having High Expectations

**Families set the bar for how the rest of the world sees their family member with a disability.**

- Avoiding restrictive programs or placements
- Lives lived connected to the community
- Lives based on the dreams your family member has for themselves
- Seeing that it's crucial to have new experiences and that failure can be constructive



A person is shown from the waist down, balancing on a dark wooden beam. They are wearing grey patterned pants and light blue sneakers with black Nike swooshes. Their hands are outstretched to the sides for balance. The background is a lush green forest with a rocky mountain peak in the distance under a cloudy sky.

# The Balancing Act





# Patience is Key



# What is Success?

Think of a couple things that you would not be successful at on your first try.

**Success in employment is an ongoing process and will look different for everyone.**

- Hours worked
- Tasks
- Tolerance
- Recognize and celebrate progress!!




## HELPFUL TOOL

# Positive Personal Profile

Helps take inventory of all the things a person brings to employment. Focus on strengths and interests, not deficits.

**TransCen, Inc.**  
Positive Personal Profile



Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Details	
<b>Dreams and Goals:</b>	<b>Interests:</b>
<b>Talents, Skills and Knowledge:</b>	<b>Learning Styles:</b>
<b>Values:</b>	<b>Positive Personality Traits:</b>
<b>Environmental Preferences:</b>	<b>Dislikes:</b>
<b>Work Experiences:</b>	<b>Support System:</b>
<b>Specific Challenges:</b>	<b>Solutions and Accommodations:</b>
<b>Career Ideas, Community Connections and Possibilities to Explore:</b>	

For more information contact us at [inquiries@transcen.org](mailto:inquiries@transcen.org) or [TransCen.org](http://TransCen.org)



# Building a Vision Statement

<https://hdi.uky.edu/employment-checklists>

(Scroll down to “Vision Statement Template”)



**Andy Meredith, High School Senior**

## **Strengths**

*Social  
Determined  
Shows initiative  
Hard working  
Independent  
Musical  
Creative*

## **Areas I need help:**

*Reading  
Math  
Counting money  
Managing time  
Keeping track of a  
schedule*

**Vision Statement:** I get my own studio. My job is taking pictures. I get a small house. I get married to Maggie. I also work at Publix. It is really fun. I keep my money in the bank. I want to go to college and live in a new house by myself. My friends will come to my new house.

## **Accomplishments:**

- Worked at Publix since April 2017
- Earned Eagle Scout Award 2018
- Worked on Yearbook staff and lettered in Woodstock High School Mountain Bike Team
- Photography exhibited at Anna's Angels benefit auction and Russian Medical Colleges

## **What works for me:**

*Peer modeling and support  
Age-appropriate awards: breaks, money, music,  
Specific explanations*

## **What doesn't work for me:**

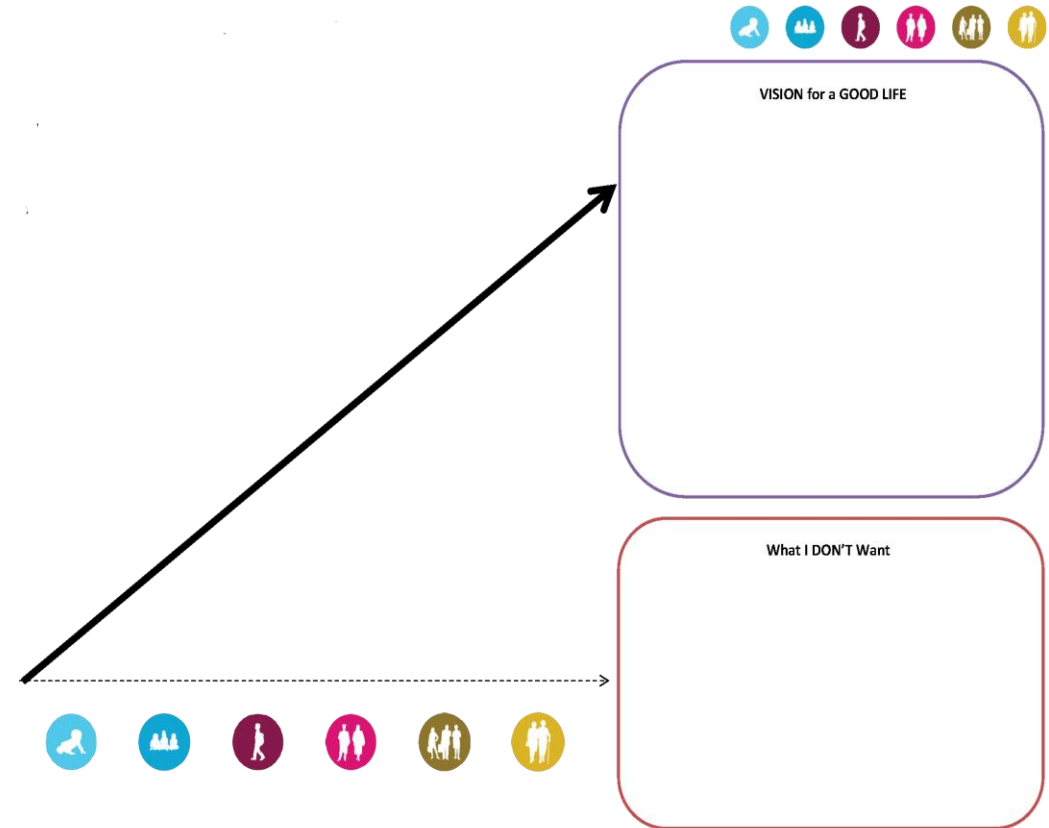
*Babying  
Removing me from friends*

# Charting the Life Course

## Life Trajectory Worksheet: Families

Everyone wants a good life. The bubbles on the right will help you think about what a good life means for you or your family member, and identifying what you know you don't want. You can use the space around the arrows to think about current or needed life experiences that help point you in the direction of your good life.

Developed by the UMKC Institute for Human Development, UCEDD. More materials at [lifecoursetools.com](http://lifecoursetools.com)



The diagram illustrates a life trajectory worksheet. It features a large, solid black arrow pointing diagonally upwards and to the right. A horizontal dashed line extends from the tail of this arrow to the right, ending in an arrowhead. To the right of the dashed line are two vertically stacked rectangular boxes with rounded corners. The top box is purple and labeled "VISION for a GOOD LIFE". The bottom box is red and labeled "What I DON'T Want". Above the top box and below the bottom box are rows of six circular icons each. The icons represent different family structures: a single person, a couple, a family with a child, a family with two children, a family with three children, and a family with four children. The icons are colored in a gradient from light blue to yellow.

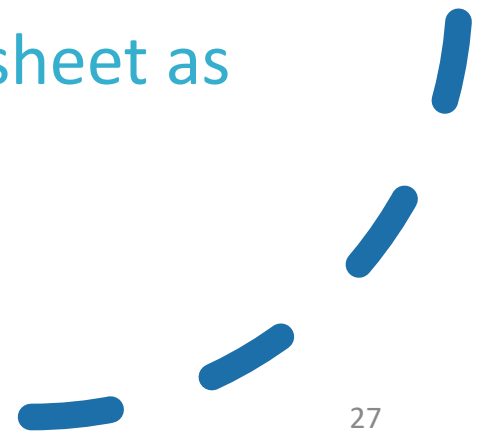
# More Takeaways

1. Everyone can work
2. There are many benefits to employment
3. Family expectations are influential
4. Take a strengths-based approach to employment

## Part 2 Agenda

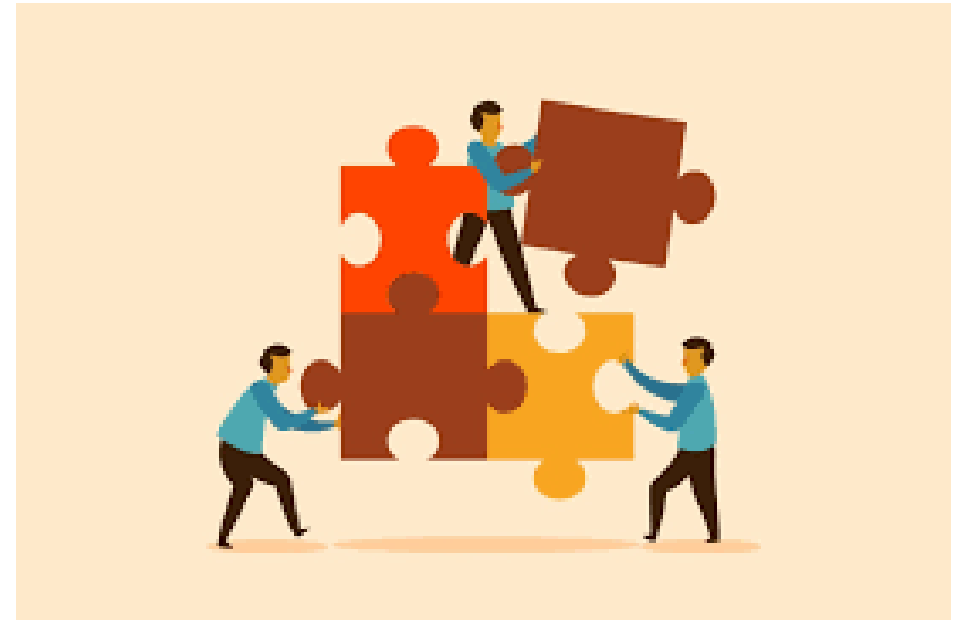
- The importance of a good job match
- Work experiences are key
- A brief look at Social Security benefits and employment
- Exploring employment supports
- Questions and connections

Remember to use your worksheet as  
we move along



# Beware of These Bad Habits

- Picking jobs “nobody else wants”
- Picking convenient options
- Offering same work experiences year after year (applicable to transition age students)
- Excluding certain populations from employment opportunities (those with more significant support needs)



# What Does a Good Job Match Look Like?

Job search begins with a thoughtful examination of a person's strengths – this is known as a “strengths-based approach”

Individual has final say in where they work

Person's skills are matched with employer's needs – maximize strengths and minimize challenges

Person has access supports needed to learn tasks and grow within their job



# Everyone Needs Skills

**“Teach real things.”**

John Elder Robison



## WORKSHEET QUESTION 2

What is your family member's greatest skill or attribute?



What do you hope adult life will look like for your son or daughter?

What is your son or daughter's greatest skill or attribute?

What do you need to feel hopeful and energized about your son or daughter's employment future?

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# The Power of Work Experiences

One of the best predictors of employment success for people with disabilities is having meaningful work experiences while in high school.

- Informational interview
- Job Shadowing
- Volunteering
- Internships
- Paid entry-level job

# Using Your Networks

Use the people you know to help find work experience opportunities.

- Friends
- Family
- Places you do business
- Neighbors
- People you are in clubs with, worship with, or serve with



# Building Responsibility

Finding ways for young people to have responsibilities helps them be good employees.

- Chores
- School work
- Soft Skills
- It's OK for young people to take risks and to experience failure. The goal is to have them give a good effort.

# Getting Involved



# School and Employment

**The high school and transition years are the perfect time to focus school programs on preparing for employment.**

- Are skills needed for work included as goals in the IEP?
- Career exploration
- Functional skills and soft skills
- Work experiences

*Quick Tip: Parent advocates can help coach you on asking for employment-focused activities in the IEP.*

# Employment in Rural Areas

## Self-Employment

- This option is flexible, focuses on a person's skills and resources, and allows for family to help.

## Remote Work

- Work options that allow a person to work from home.

## Map Your Community

- Even small towns have some businesses. Get to know what is available and work your network!

# Myths about Employment

**Misinformation and misunderstanding can hold us back from considering employment.**

- People with disabilities don't work fast enough (MYTH)
- Employees with disabilities won't be accepted by co-workers (MYTH)
- Sheltered work is safer than community jobs (MYTH)
- People who leave workshops lose their friends (MYTH)
- People with significant disabilities don't need to work (MYTH)

*Don Lavin – Strengths at Work*

# Social Security Benefits: MYTHS

Getting students on SSI will take care of everything


People who choose work will lose disability and healthcare benefits

People can live independently in the community on what SSI provides



# Social Security Benefits: Resources

Parents are encouraged to speak to a trained benefits counselor before making decisions about employment.



**Nebraska VR** offers benefits counseling to eligible clients. This includes benefits orientation, benefits assessment, benefits planning, and PASS Plan development.



Use this link to find your local Nebraska VR office:  
<http://www.vr.nebraska.gov/offices/>

# Employment Supports

## Vocational Rehabilitation (Nebraska VR)

Acts as the gatekeeper for employment supports. Begins with Pre-Employment Transition Services in high school.

## DD Waiver Services

Ideal for individuals who require long-term supports to maintain employment. Employment services usually delivered by community-based partners.

**Keep in mind: Individuals with disabilities do not need formal services to be employed.**

# Maximizing Services

- Be the keeper of the vision
- Your loved one should be the driver of the vision
- Services may “work for the client” but families have to “work with the services” to make it a success
- Know your rights and tell your story

**Families have always been the driver of change!!**

## WORKSHEET QUESTION 3

What do you need to feel hopeful and energized about your family member's employment future?



**IMAGINE THE POSSIBILITIES:  
A PATH TO EMPLOYMENT**  
A WORKSHOP FOR FAMILIES  
SESSION WORKSHEET



What do you hope adult life will look like for your son or daughter?

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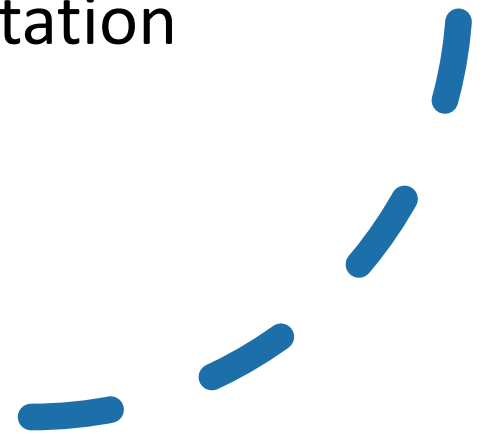
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# Takeaways So Far

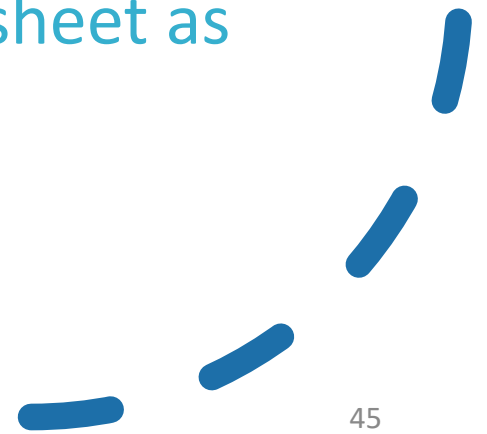
1. Work experiences can lead to a good job match
2. Use chores and school/community activities to build work skills
3. Benefits counseling is available
4. Explore employment supports through your state's vocational rehabilitation program



# Part 3 Agenda

- The importance of self-determination
- The elements of self-determination
- Addressing your questions and concerns
- Setting your action steps
- Questions and connections

Remember to use your worksheet as  
we move along





All people have the  
right to live, love, work,  
play and pursue their  
life aspirations in their  
community.

CHARTING THE LIFECOURSE FRAMEWORK | CORE BELIEF

# Self-Determination and Self-Advocacy

## Self Determination

Self-determination is generally understood to be the ability for an individual to be the primary decision maker in regards to the path of their life.

## Self-Advocacy

Self-advocacy is the ability to assert or communicate one's preferences, desires, and needs effectively.



# Why is Self-Determination Important?

One aspect of living a “good life” is having the ability to make decisions for yourself.

- Enhances quality of life
- Increases life satisfaction
- Increases self-confidence
- Linked to improved employment outcomes

# Elements of Self-Determination

<b>CHOICE MAKING</b> The skill of selecting a path forward between two known options <b>Cm</b>	<b>DECISION MAKING</b> The skill of selecting a path forward based on various solutions that have each been thoughtfully considered <b>Dm</b>	<b>PROBLEM SOLVING</b> The skill of finding solutions to difficult or complex issues <b>Ps</b>
<b>GOAL SETTING &amp; ATTAINMENT</b> The ability to develop a goal, plan for implementation, and measure success <b>Gs</b>	<b>SELF-REGULATION</b> The ability to monitor and control one's own behaviors, actions, and skills in various situations <b>Re</b>	<b>SELF-ADVOCACY</b> The skills necessary to speak up and/or defend a cause or a person <b>Ad</b>
<b>INTERNAL LOCUS OF CONTROL</b> The belief that one has control over outcomes that are important to his or her own life <b>Lc</b>	<b>SELF-EFFICACY</b> Belief in one's own ability to succeed in specific situations or accomplish specific tasks <b>Ef</b>	<b>SELF-AWARENESS</b> Basic understanding of one's own strengths, needs, and abilities <b>Aw</b>



Think back to your transition years (12-22). How did you develop skills around these “elements of self-determination”?

# Strategies to Address the Elements of Self-Determination

## Choice Making

- The skill of selecting a path forward between two known options
- “Would you like to go out to eat or have chicken on the grill?”

## Decision Making

- The skill of selecting a path forward based on various solutions that have each been thoughtfully considered.
- “Your room needs to be cleaned by Sunday at 6:00. It’s up to you to decide how to get it done between now and then.”

## Problem Solving

- The skill of finding solutions to difficult or complex issues.
- Get your student involved in home-based problem solving such as coordinating a complex schedule or developing a menu on budget.”

# Strategies to Address the Elements of Self-Determination

## Goal Setting and Attainment

- The ability to set a goal, plan for implementation, and measure success.
- Use the **I'm Determined Goal Plan** to help the student set small goals for school achievement or physical activity.

## Self-Regulation

- The ability to monitor and control one's own behaviors, actions, and skills in various situations
- Develop strategies, such as a keyword, that helps the student recognize when they are exhibiting certain behaviors. Seek opportunities to increase things that trigger positive behaviors.

## Self-Advocacy

- The ability to speak up and to defend a cause or a person.
- Help the student identify a cause they are passionate about and how to become involved in the community.

# Strategies to Address the Elements of Self-Determination

## Internal Locus of Control

- The belief that one has control over outcomes that are important to his or her life.
- Provide plenty of opportunities for the student to practice age-appropriate ways to lead their own lives. Help student see the connection between their decisions and the outcomes they wanted.

## Self-Efficacy

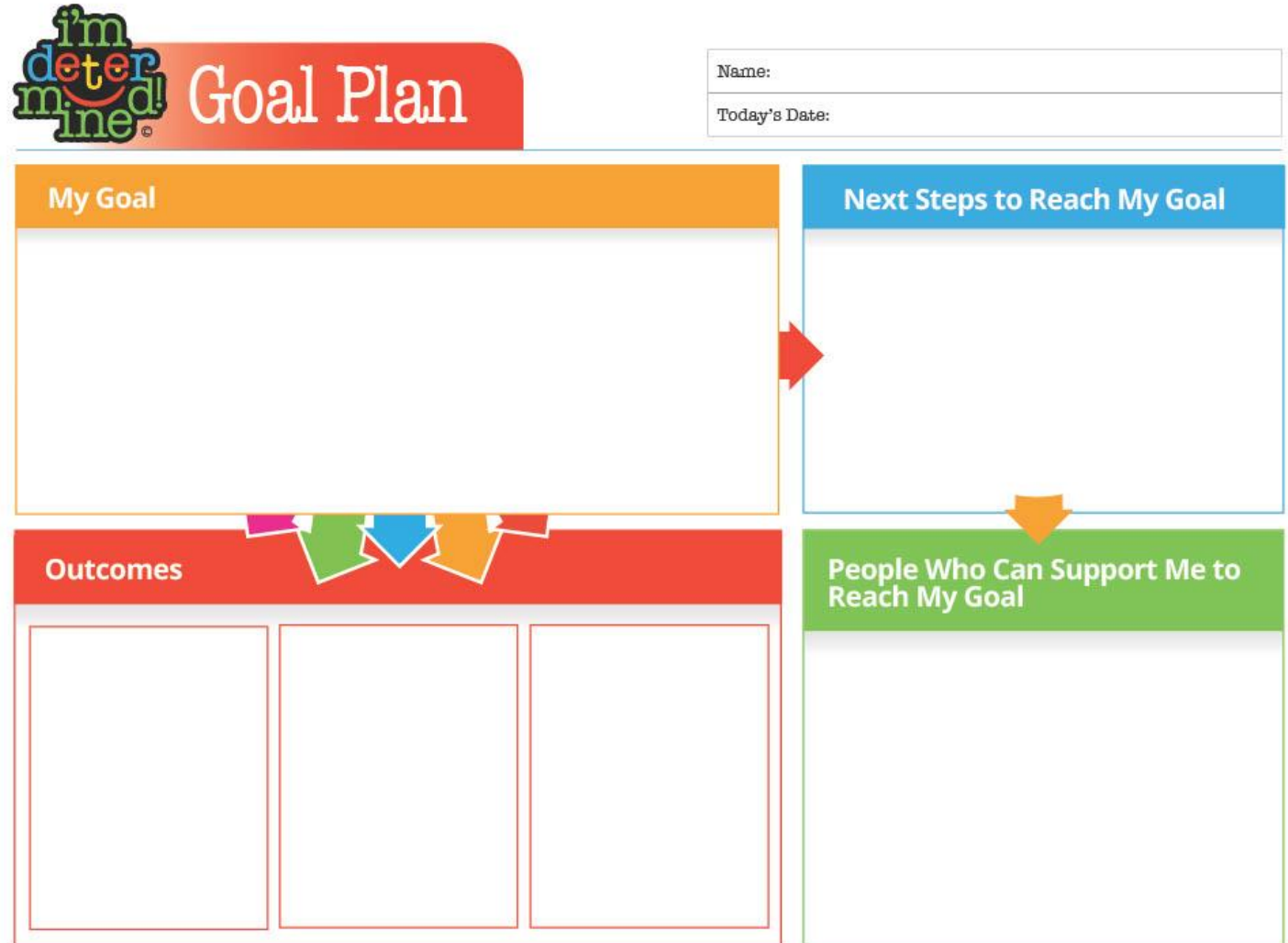
- Belief in one's own ability to succeed in specific situations or accomplish specific tasks.
- Celebrate when new tasks or skills are learned and treat unsuccessful attempts as natural steps in the process.

## Self-Awareness

- Basic understanding of one's own strengths, needs, and abilities.
- Help the student articulate what their disability is and how it impacts them in education, employment, and social situations.

# I'm Determined Goal Template

- <https://www.imdetermined.org/>



The template is titled "I'm Determined Goal Plan" and includes a header with the "i'm determined!" logo. Below the header, there are two input fields: "Name:" and "Today's Date:". The main body is divided into four colored sections: "My Goal" (orange), "Next Steps to Reach My Goal" (blue), "Outcomes" (red), and "People Who Can Support Me to Reach My Goal" (green). Arrows indicate a flow from "My Goal" to "Next Steps", and from "Next Steps" to "People Who Can Support Me". The "Outcomes" section is connected to the "Next Steps" section by a series of five colored arrows (pink, green, blue, yellow, red) pointing towards it. The "My Goal" section is a large empty box. The "Next Steps" section is a large empty box. The "Outcomes" section contains three empty boxes. The "People Who Can Support Me" section is a large empty box.

**i'm determined! Goal Plan**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Today's Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**My Goal**

**Next Steps to Reach My Goal**

**Outcomes**

**People Who Can Support Me to Reach My Goal**

Resource provided by I'm Determined, a state-directed project funded by the Virginia Department of Education. © 2006–2018 I'm Determined. All rights reserved. Last updated 01/2018





**What I need to do to get there:**

- 1. Write my homework and tests down in my agenda every day.**
- 2. Do all of my homework every night.**
- 3. Study for all of my tests and quizzes.**
- 4. Ask for help when I need it.**



# Having Questions or Concerns is Normal

When thinking about a real job in the community for your family member, is there anything that makes you worried or concerned?

- Vulnerability
- Safety
- Can they do the job?
- Who will hire them?
- Will they lose benefits?

## WORKSHEET QUESTION 4

What is your greatest concern when thinking about employment for your family member?



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# Action Steps: Getting Started

# Possible Next Steps

Set the expectation that employment will be part of the future

Help your student explore interests

Make sure employment-related goals are in the IEP

Community-based work experiences last 2 years of HS

# More Next Steps

Talk about  
disability  
disclosure with  
your student

Learn about skills  
needed to do jobs  
they are interested  
in

Increase  
responsibility at  
home

Ask about  
vocational  
rehabilitation  
services

## WORKSHEET QUESTION 5

Based on the information in this workshop, what are 3 action steps you will take to help start your family member on the path to employment success?



IMAGINE THE POSSIBILITIES:  
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# More Takeaways

1. Self-determination includes skills that allow individuals with disabilities to take control of their employment future
2. Having questions and concerns about employment is normal
3. Plan your action steps. Great things are ahead!



# Imagine the Possibilities Modules

**Module 1:** Setting a vision for a “good life” and examining expectations.

**Module 2:** Preparing youth and young adults for employment success.

**Module 3:** Empowering youth and young adults while addressing family concerns.



Please scan the QR Code and answer a few questions before we continue!



# Questions



# Contact Information



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