

Imagine the Possibilities: Creating pathways to employment

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TransCen, Inc.



What Makes Life Meaningful?

- Engagement in community, with family & friends
- A happy home, a sanctuary
- Health & Well being
- Choices/options
- Freedom & Independence
- Being productive, playing a valued-role

Employment



*Alan, Patient Transporter
Kaiser Permanente*



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*Karla, Produce Assistant
Bi-Rite Market*



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Ivan, Housekeeper and Score Keeper
Marquette University/Sports Complex



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Julio, Office Assistant
IDEO.org



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What Motivates Us to Work?

- Money/status
- Make friends
- Learn something new
- To be helpful or productive
- “I like doing this- I’m good at this”

OR

- Get out of the house--“I’m bored”
- “Mom and Dad said I have to work”

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Yet, Employment Rates for People with Disabilities Remain Low

- The government spending more and more, but people with disabilities remain impoverished and isolated
- In US, money is being spent on “non-work” services is increasing and the level of Community Integrated Employment are very flat
- According to MAP AZ dashboard (2016)
 - 34.1% people with disabilities vs. 72.6% of the people without disabilities are employed.
 - 59.3% of people with disabilities are not in the “workforce” vs. 21.7% of people without disabilities.
- Arizona was ranked 32nd out of 50 states in regards to Employment Rates in 2016



Community Integrated Employment

What are your concerns?



Community Employment:
“It is too difficult to manage and feels like a house of cards for my child and my family”



Many Questions and Concerns

- “The System is confusing and cumbersome. I don’t know where to start.”
- “A job will be too difficult for me to manage”
- *My son/daughter can’t work a 40-hour week- or even 20. What will s/he do the rest of the week?”*
- *“Will s/he be respected and safe?”*
- *“My son/daughter will miss seeing their friends.”*
- *“What about SSI benefits and Medicaid?”*
- No single source of funds or resources can address all needs- braiding services



Arizona’s Service System is Here to Help



- Department of Economic Security
 - Division of Developmental Disabilities
 - Rehabilitation Services Administration
- Community Support Providers
- Transition Services
- Project SEARCH programs



Community Integrated Employment

Where do we start?

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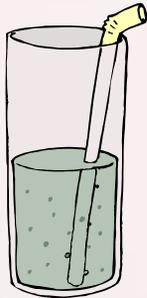
Help Wanted

Company looking for individual with developmental disabilities, autism and history of aggressive behaviors. Extensive history of hospitalization preferred. Drug problems, poor social skills and delusional behaviors OK. Supportive co-workers. Call for an application.

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Starts with “re-framing” how we see the job seeker and how we look for jobs.



Focus on Skills vs. Deficits
 Look at the Glass as *Half Full*
We need to see Disability as “Human Variance”



Discovering Stephen

What his file said:

- Cornelia de Lange syndrome
- Poor communication skills, Stutters
- Emotionally immature
- Gastric Esophageal reflux disorder
- Resistant/belligerent
- Perseverates
- Chronically late – calls in sick
- Limited academics, 3rd grade math, 1st grade reading comprehension

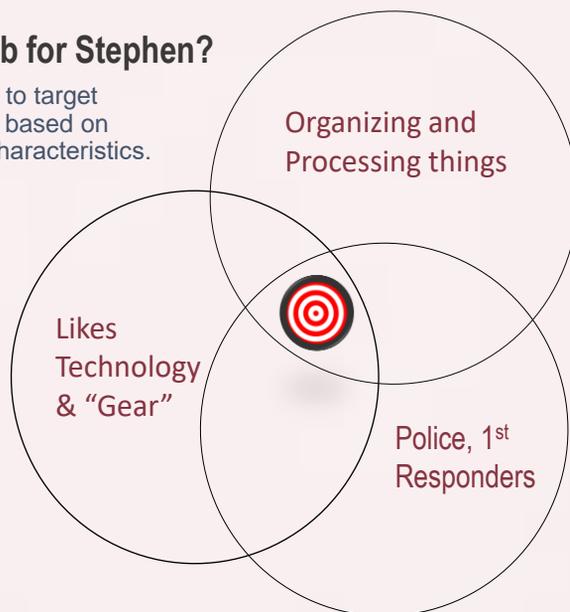
What we discovered:

- Adventuresome, likes maps, finding places using GPS
- Follows the rules
- Collects patches
- Rides a bike
- Hard worker when motivated
- Never late for things he likes
- Emails friends, looks things up on the internet
- Loves “disasters”, monitors a police scanner



What's a good job for Stephen?

Use VENN diagrams to target employment settings based on candidate's unique characteristics.



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Stephen,
Merchandise Processor



Why was Stephen Successful?

- Job matched not only Stephen's skills but also his interest & personality
- Job developer found an employment setting and a position that utilized Stephen's skills and also minimized his disabilities – a customized job.
- Stephen has skills (and attributes) that solved an employer's problems. He was motivated to do the job and passionate about the Business.



A Skills NOT Deficits Approach

- *You gotta believe!*
- Reframe your perception
- Focus on what you can do, not what you can't
- See yourself as a “worker”
- Look for jobs that are right for you– not just a job. Where you will fit in and make friends

Where You will **SPARKLE** ?



Pathways to Employment

Start with a Discovery Process

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Discovery

The question is not if a person
can work, but WHERE.



Use Discovery to Create a “Positive Personal Profile”

- No prerequisites, Look at current skills
- Focus on what the person can do, not what is broken
- Explore ideas based on interests (hobbies), personality, and skills
- Target ideal job tasks and work environments

Positive Personal Profile	
Name: Enrique	
Dreams and Goals Get a job in professional sales and move into my own apartment. Meet a girlfriend. Travel to Hawaii	Interests Music/Culture: Video Games (PS) Reading on learning to speak Spanish
Talents, Skills and Knowledge Likes working on computers. Speaks 3 languages. Strong practical skills (Being job-hopping familiar with lot of office equipment computers for example). Likes working with "customers" and tools. Likes socially good interests	Learning Styles Verbal/lectures should be slow and concise. Modeling new skills is preferred. Can follow written directions if he is familiar with tools. May need occasional 1:1 assistance to begin differently.
Values Being respected and liked by others. Being smart. Having friends. Family is important. Being caring (theater)	Personality Traits Friendly. Honest. Careful. Smart. Detail-oriented. A man of great resolve. Strong will/ambition. Good sense of humor. Likes a good joke.
Environmental Preferences Clean, well organized. Casual. No stress. But not laid-back. Nothing too professional or boring. Cool but friendly. Likes hospital and medical/healthcare environment	Dislikes Bulies and mean people. Chaotic loud places. Being told what to do. Being patronized, condescending, people making too many questions or interrupting.
Work Experiences PSPSP Internship 1: EHS. 2: Material Management. 3: HR. 4) Dental Receptionist School job: Salesman, bagging groceries, collecting carts (did not like customer service for that experience)	Support System Family (mom, grandma and sister—all very supportive)
Specific Challenges Needs a structured position with consistent—but complex tasks. Needs someone to help/mentor. Help with social issues. Indifferent to a career.	Solutions and Accommodations Structured tasks, consistent routine. Concrete, concise instructions. Direct feedback.
Career Issues and Possibilities to Explore: Retail, Hospital administration, Dental office, Insurance firm, High Tech?	

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What makes up a PPP?

- Dreams and goals
- Talents
- Skills and knowledge
- Learning styles
- Interests
- Personality traits (Remember: quirks can be assets)
- Temperament
- Environmental preferences
- Dislikes
- Work experiences
- Support system
- Challenges
- Solutions (accommodations)
- Values

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Profile Yourself

Using the Positive Personal Profile – identify YOUR key characteristics: interests, values, skills, deal breakers, preferred environments,...

Look at your career path. Why did you leave jobs? Why did you take others? Is the job you are in now a good fit?

Unfortunately, people with I/DD rarely get an opportunity to make choices or direct their career path.

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***Exposure Proceeds Interest.
Interest Proceeds Motivation.***

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Repurposing Day Services

It is about Skill Building,
Not outings, activities or field trips



- Discovery and Exploration
- Building Confidence in Community settings
- Teachings hard and soft skills
- Strengthening Employability Skills
- Building social and professional networks

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Building Skills and Giving back

Volunteering



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Identify Interests and Values

Family & friends
Animals
Independence
Culture/heritage
Financial security
Music/art
Sports
Spirituality
Patriotism

- Identify passions
- What comes up again and again?
- Broad statements (themes) vs. specific instances
- Remember “*Exposure Proceeds Interest*”

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Explore Ideas, Verify Interest & Skill Levels



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It is Not about “Bagging Rice”



- Manners
- Communicating
- Independence/initiative
- Endurance/stamina
- Teamwork
- Organization & time management
- Work ethic and motivation (attitude)
- Problem-solving skills

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Community Safety: *Let's Get Lost*



- Problem-solving
- Navigation
- Safety: Street crossing & *stranger danger*
- Reaching out for assistance
 - Using cell phones
 - Identifying people who can help
 - Asking for help
- Disaster training

The dignity of risk:

A ship in the harbor is safe- but that's not why ships are made.

- William Shedd

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What to Look for in a Community Service Program

- Do not settle for an “available slot”
- Community-based vs. site-based services
- Are goals and activities individualized (to some degree)
- Ask about Employment First and their success rates with *Community Integrated Employment*
- Discuss your son/daughter’s goals and ask them how they would support him/her to achieve these
- Do schedules and activities reflect meaningful goals and foster independence in community settings?
- Ask for referrals from other parents

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Simon, Administrative Assistant *Phillips, Spalls and Angstadt, LLP*



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Simon's Pathway to Employment



- Started in volunteer jobs learning hard & soft skills
- Polished skills in Project SEARCH KP
- Now employed as a clerk at PSA, 20 hrs a week, \$16/hr.
- Day Services continue 10 hours/wk: Koret House (laundry & cleaning), *Let's Get Lost* (problem solving), POH (initiation & communication)
- Hangs out on Saturday with his friend (gym, hike, movie)



Employment Success Starts with YOU!

- Exposure
- Age-appropriate interests
- Set high expectations
- Assign daily chores and responsibilities
- Give choices, builds self-advocacy, initiative & decision-making skills
- Teach manners & conversation skills
- Let your child fail
- Use technology
- Teach your son/daughter to manage their disability– not ignore it



The Impact of Employment on Benefits

Understanding your situation



SSI in a Nutshell

- Social security is a safety net
- Different Programs: SSI, SSDI and CDB (SSA)
- In general, a person can earn more by working but if in doubt get an expert to look at your situation
- Work Incentives
 - Programs/deductions that decrease your “earned income” and the amount SSA reduces your payments
 - Offer easy or automatic reinstatements



Meet with a Benefits Analyst

- Some services are free of charge
- Private benefits counseling – fee for service
- Know what benefits you have (SSI/SSDI/CDB?)
- Request a SSA Benefit Planning Query (BPQY) for the Counselor to review
- Be prepared to share all relevant financial information on the individual



Social Security Programs

Very Different Programs – Know What You Using

**Supplemental
Security Income
(SSI)**

Title II Benefits:

1. Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI)
2. Child's Benefits
3. Childhood Disability Benefit (CDB)

A Person Could Receive Both Types



Concern #1: Loss of Cash Benefits if I Work

In general....

- SSI - Income (after certain deductions/expenses- work incentives) reduces the amount of a benefits check. For every \$2 gross dollars earned, SSA will reduce benefit payments by \$1.

Conclusion: **You earn more \$ working than not.**

- SSDI or Childhood Benefits – Situations can be more complicated. Payments are based on what is put into the system. Substantial Gainful Activity (SGA)



Concern #2: Loss of Healthcare Coverage

In general....

- SSI – Free Medi-Cal coverage until earnings reaching an annual threshold amount even if cash payments stop.

Under Section 1619 (b)

- **\$36,819 (non-blind, 2019)**
 - With very high medical costs or funded attendants (i.e. IHSS) can earn even more. Can work with SSI on an “Individualized Threshold”.
- SSDI – Medicare continues for at least 93 months after the *9-Month Trial Work Period* ends



Concern #3: What if the job doesn't work out and benefits have been stopped?

In general,

Expedited Restatement

- SSI - Within the first year, you do not have to file a new application to reinstate your SSI cash payments or MediCal coverage.
- SSDI – After a *trial work period*, eligibility continues for 3 years.



Concern #4: What if I need a personal attendant at work?

In general,

- States allow the transfer of previously authorized IHSS hours to use in the workplace.
- No new hours are authorized.
- Services must be “relevant and necessary in supporting and maintaining employment.”



Ways to Reduce Income or Assets and the Impact on Cash Benefits

SSI Work Incentives:

- Student Earned Income Exclusion
- Impairment Related Work Expenses
- Blind Work Expenses
- Plan for Achieving Self Support (PASS)
 - Buy car or tools
 - Fund training or education
- AZ ABLE accounts



Report All Earnings Monthly

- Lots of ways to report, on-line, phone, in-person
- Send in copies of Pay Stubs for the month,
- Ask for a receipt
- Ask for envelopes
- Ask for a direct phone number and contact person
- Keep a diary of all visits and meetings with SSI
- Make a file for all paystubs and letters

NEVER SPEND OVERPAYMENTS!

Once system catches up, SSA will ask for them back.



Lots of Great Resources

- DB101 Arizona
<https://az.db101.org/>
- Disability Benefits Center
<https://www.disabilitybenefitscenter.org/>
- Arizona Bridge to Independent Living (ABIL),
Ability 360
Work and Benefits Planning Program
<https://ability360.org/b2w/>



Lessons Learned

- For employment, the focus needs to be on skills, not deficits
- Communication is key
- You are part of your son/daughter's team and your ideas and input really matter
- It takes a village
- DES/DDD and RSA are here to help
- Service system is in a transformational phase. We need your help to develop the services people need to become active, productive citizens



“The greatest danger may not be that our aim is too high and we miss it, but rather that it is too low and we reach it.”

- Michelangelo



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