



TransCen

MEANINGFUL WORK + COMMUNITY INCLUSION

Everyone Can Work

**Establishing Competitive Employment as the
Preferred Transition Outcome**

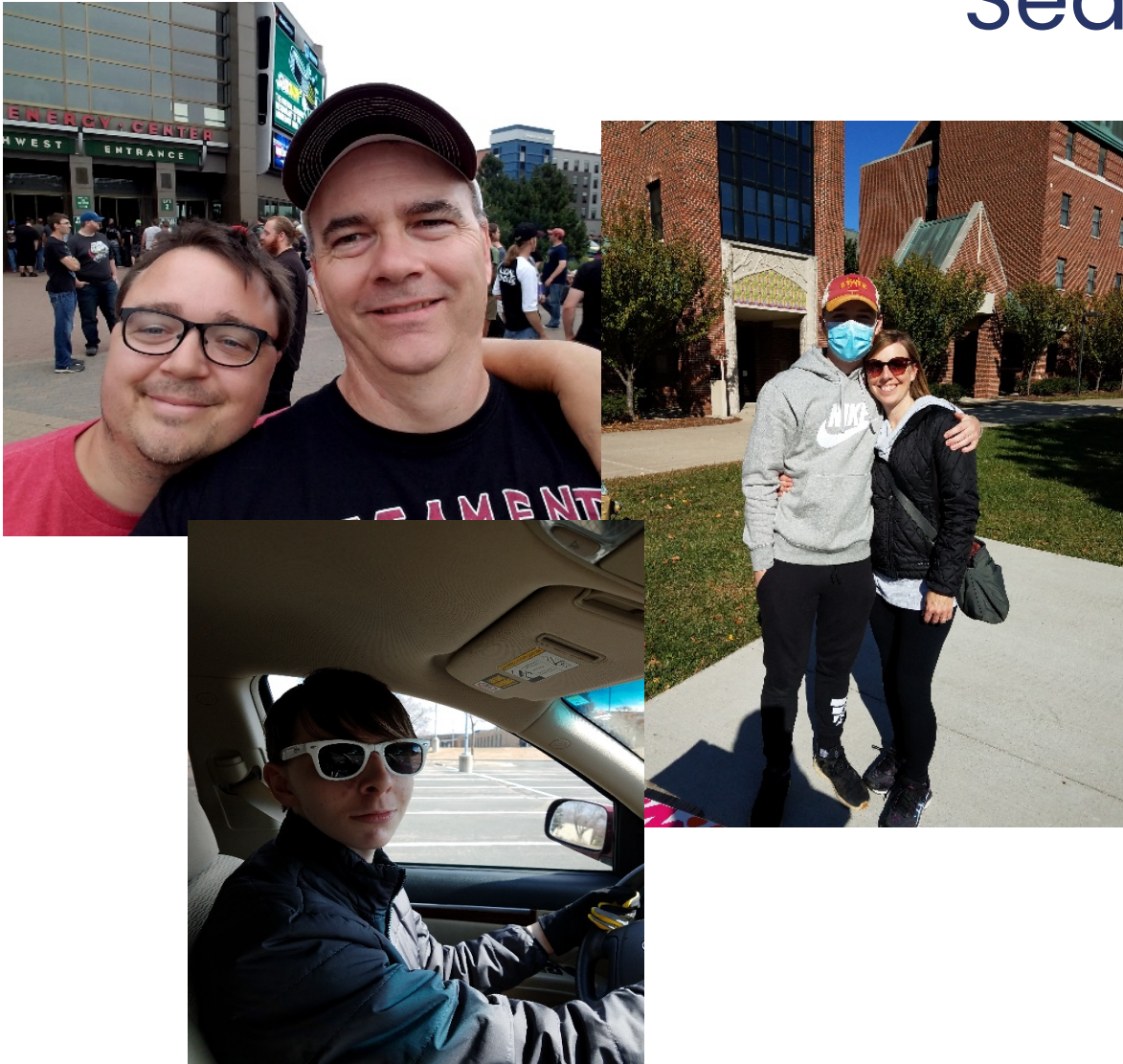
**Sean Roy
TransCen, Inc.**

Today's Session

- Why is employment important
- The role of expectations
- Seamless Transition
- Engaging Families
- Engaging Employers
- Establishing Partnerships

We will be taking a 15-minute break half-way through.

Sean Roy



- Sibling
- Currently serving as the Chief Training and Innovation Officer for TransCen Inc.
- Background in family advocacy
- Strong interest in employment, staff development, family engagement, and expectations

Sobering Stats

- 19.1% vs. 63.7% (Employment rate PWD vs. no disability)
- 8 out of 10 PWD are not in the labor force
- PWD are more likely to work part time
- Employment rates decrease with severity of mental illness
- 39% of those with SMI have incomes below \$10,000

In Alabama?

- AL DOE does not report disaggregated Indicator 14 data regarding students with I/DD
- 2.7% of those on SSI are working
- VR closures for those with ID into a work setting are low
- 97% of those served by the Division of Developmental Disabilities are in “facility non-work settings”

From StateData.info

What Do These Data Suggest?

1. Students with high support needs have limited opportunities for individualized work experiences in high school
2. Interagency partners not fully engaged around the goal of facilitating competitive employment
3. SSI = low probability of competitive employment

Why?

Each step in the right direction
allows you to see further in that
direction.



The Fundamental Shift



Expectations Influence

- Family expressed preference for work was more predictive of future employment than high school work experiences (Simonsen & Neubert, 2012).
- Family expectations contribute to positive post-secondary outcomes:
 - Attending postsecondary education
 - Living in integrated settings
 - Attaining competitive employment



Quote from a Colleague

“Teaching is the most powerful profession in the world. One of the most influential tools teachers can employ to facilitate a high quality of life among individuals with disabilities is maintaining and expressing high expectations. Not doing so can negatively impact parent perception and student opportunities.” - *Dr. Grace Francis*



Expectations Influence

Professionals' expectations:

- Influence family and student expectations
- Influence the resources and information shared with students and families
- Influenced by pre-service training and compliance requirements
- Influenced by program and service requirements (severity of disability to qualify)

“Employment First”

Employment in the general workforce is the first and preferred outcome in the provision of publicly funded services for all working age citizens with disabilities, regardless of level of disability.

APSE Statement on Employment First

- **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

Employment: Core Concepts

1

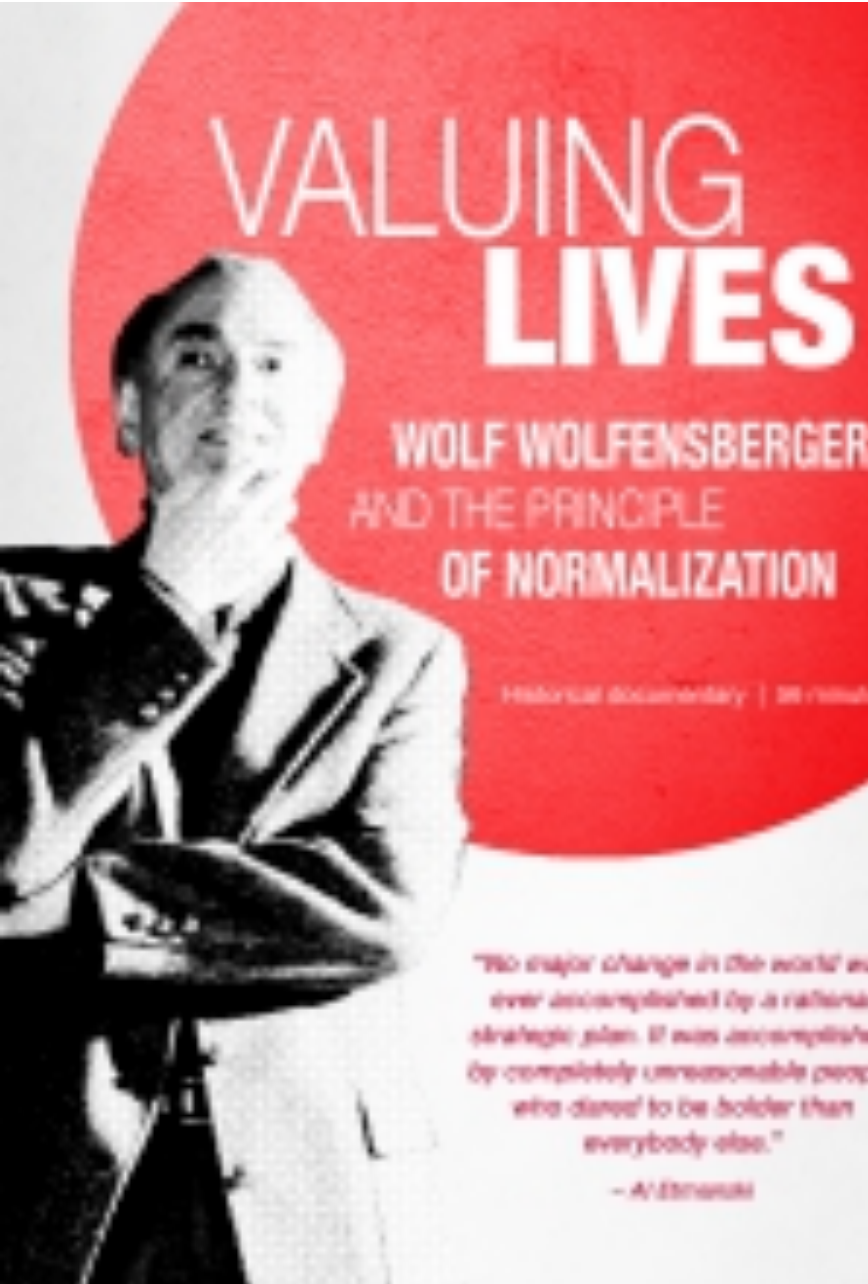
Everyone can work!

2

Work looks differently for everybody

3

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



Why Should a Person Work?

- It is what is expected of adults
- Socialization
- Self-worth (dignity)
- Purpose
- Money
- Promotes mental health
- **Because they can!**

Key Question

Can everyone work?

Seamless Transition!

The culmination of special education services for all youth with disabilities should be paid employment or being on a clear path to a career.

Or...

We want the first day of a student's adult life to look like the last day of their school program.

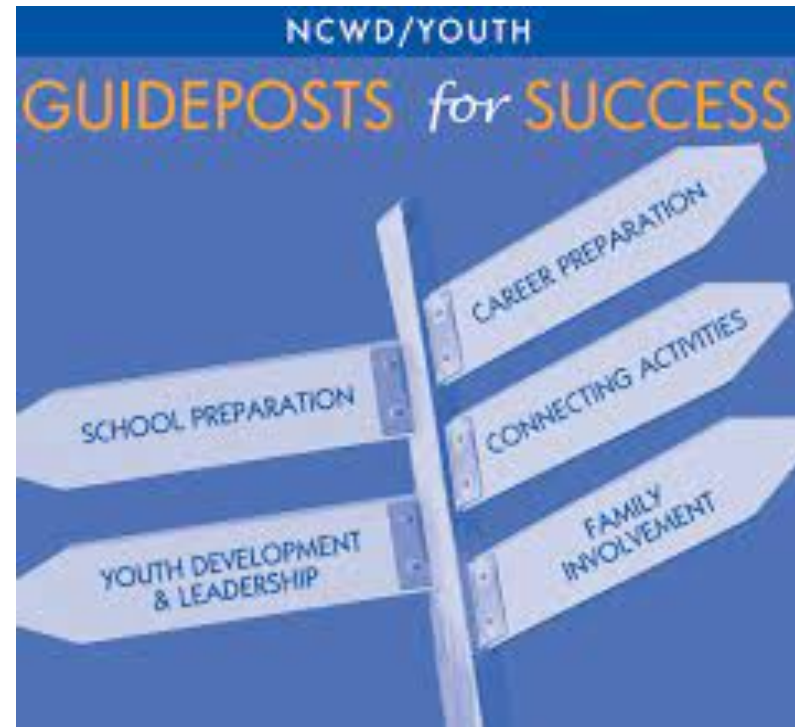
The Vision



By combining interagency collaboration with customized employment strategies we can provide individualized work experiences to students with high support needs.

Rooted in the Guideposts

1. School-Based Prep Experiences
2. Youth Involvement & Leadership
3. Career Preparation
4. Family Involvement
5. Connecting Activities



Seamless Success: Related Components

- Support of Administration
- Staff Capacity
- Partnerships
- Engaged Families
- Employer Partners
- Empowered Students

At School Exit...

1. Active VRS case
2. Connection to Community Rehabilitation Program (community-based service provider) as necessary
3. Individualized paid employment or enrolled in postsecondary education

Talking About Students Who...

1. Are eligible for VRS services
2. Currently receive special education or 504 services
3. **Are expected to need supports to “seamlessly” transition**

10th Grade or 3 Years Prior to Exit

1. Discovery process informs transition planning
2. Family engaged
3. Pre-ETS utilized.

1. VRS Counselor assigned
2. Work experiences initiated
3. Application for supports (if not already done)

1. Paid employment
2. Linkages to CRP or MH
3. or, linkages to PSE, including disability student supports

Key Question

What does a good work experience for a student look like?

The Goal: A Good Job Match

How often do we:

- Pick jobs “nobody else wants”
- Pick convenient options
- Offer same job year after year
- Exclude certain populations



Observation



Some districts are going at it alone, lacking the interagency partnerships that help support individualized work experiences.

Key Question

Why is it important to establish collaborations with other agencies?

Putting Together Your “Team”

- School transition staff
- Relevant general ed staff
- TWC
- Community Rehab Providers
- Advocates
- Families
- Student

Interagency Roles and Responsibilities

Who does the Job Development?

- Capacity to contact employers, conduct informational interviews, assess employer's labor needs and propose work experiences and jobs
- Have they been trained on job development?
- Is it part of their job description?
- Are they willing and able to maintain on-going working relationships with local employers?

Clarifying the Role of Pre-ETS

Notice of Interpretation

<https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2020-02-28/pdf/2020-03208.pdf>

“Pre-employment transition services represent the **earliest set** of services available for students with disabilities under the VR program, are **short-term** in nature, and are designed to help students identify career interests.”

Clarifying Pre-ETS (Con't)

Pre-ETS was not designed to pay for an individualized job development process.

“Students with disabilities do not need to apply and be determined eligible for the VR program to receive pre-employment transition services. However, these students may not receive any VR services other than pre-employment transition services until they apply, and are determined eligible, for VR services, and have an approved IPE (81 FR 55629 at 55691).”

Observation



Families and students do not always receive positive messaging about employment.

He publishes his own books

“He’ll never be a productive member of society.”





Andy Meredith, High School Senior

Strengths

*Social
Determined
Shows initiative
Hard working
Independent
Musical
Creative*

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*

Areas I need help:

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

Vision Statement

- Great tool to help youth express their goals
- Can double as a resume

<https://hdi.uky.edu/employment-checklists>
(scroll down to "Vision Statement Template")

Jeanine Rowe



Vision Statement

I will continue my education at North Pointe Center, get my GED, and go to Southwestern Michigan College. I want a career that will allow me to help make our society more handicap accessible for special needs kids and adults. Hopefully, I can make more people aware of what individuals like myself go through on a day-to-day basis. I want to advocate for people in wheelchairs and with other physical disabilities to become more independent; be able to be active in their communities and not have to worry about going out by themselves.



Goal Plan

Name:

Today's Date:

My Goal

Next Steps to Reach My Goal

Outcomes

--	--	--

People Who Can Support Me to Reach My Goal

I will be proud of myself!



My Dad will take me out to lunch!

I will get money to buy something special!

I will learn more in school!

My Goal: I would like to get onto the Honor Roll at least one nine weeks this year.

I will be able to get a good job one day!

Mom and Dad will be proud of me!



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.

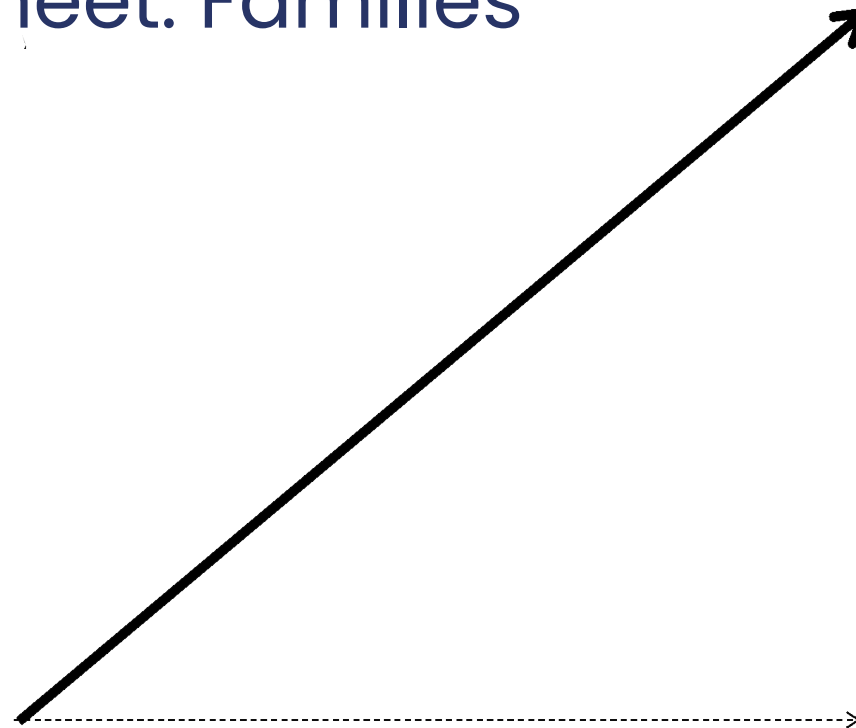


Charting the Life Course

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



VISION for a GOOD LIFE

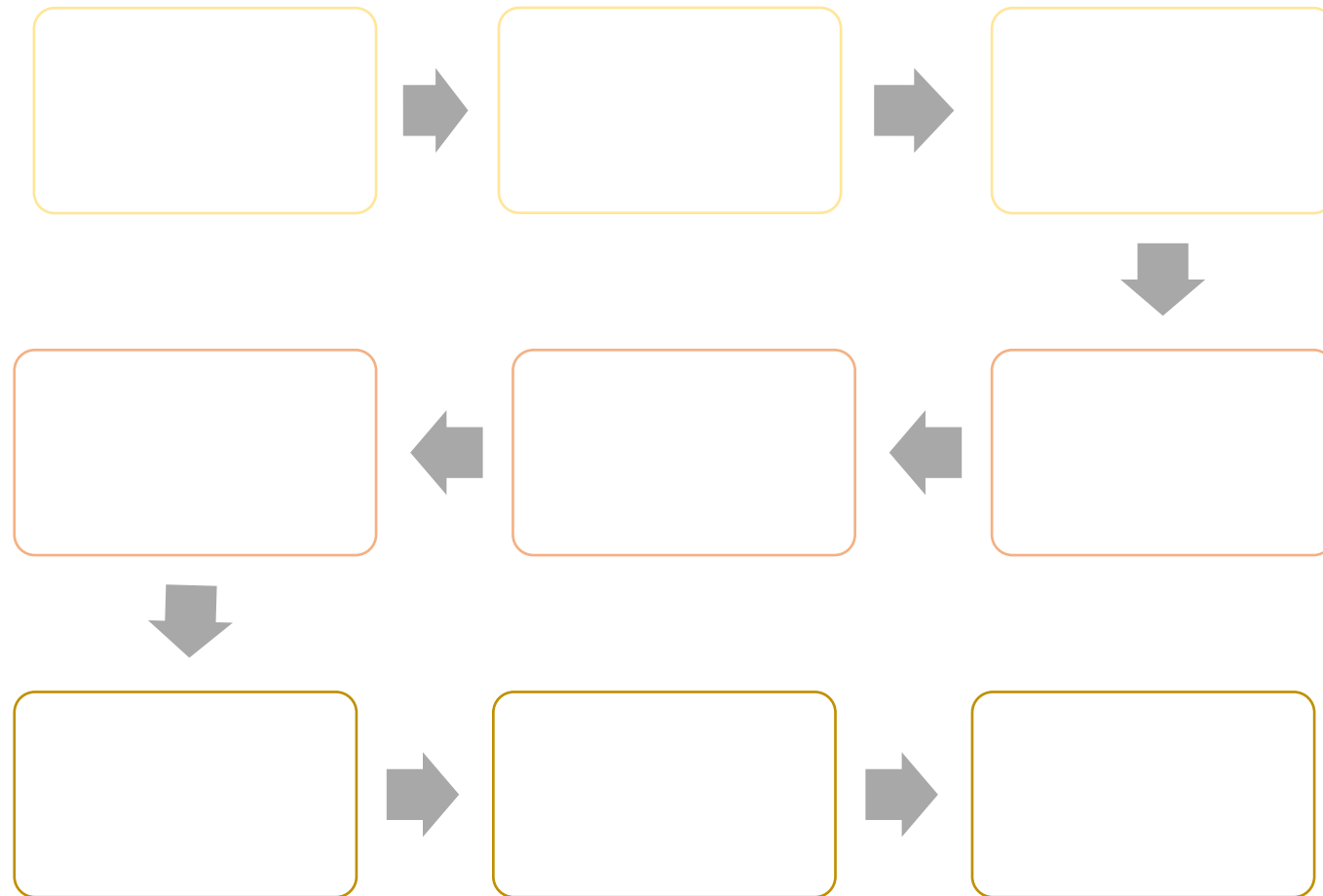
What I DON'T Want

Why?

What does a “good life” look like for the individuals you serve and what is the role of employment in achieving it.



Customized Employment Process



Discovery Process

The question is not **whether** a person can work, but **where**.

"DISCOVERY PROCESS" MEANS A PROCESS TO DISCOVER ALREADY-EXISTING INFORMATION ABOUT A JOB SEEKER THAT IS BASED ON INFORMATION OBTAINED FROM A PERSON'S ENTIRE LIFE AND NOT FROM SHORT INSTANCES OF JOB PERFORMANCE. THE INFORMATION IS GATHERED FROM THE JOB SEEKER AND OTHERS TO DETERMINE THE JOB SEEKER'S INTERESTS, SKILLS, AND PREFERENCES RELATED TO POTENTIAL EMPLOYMENT THAT GUIDE THE DEVELOPMENT OF A CUSTOMIZED JOB. *CO Senate Bill 16-077*

Discovery is a Different Approach

- An individualized, qualitative process that results in a narrative description, a *Jobseeker Profile*
- It is not comparative – or evaluative. It is not a test
- Looks at the job seeker's skills and passions and what business would value these attributes
- It does not happen at a desk in a conference room. It is an active, engaging process

Discovery Options

- One on one interview
- Observe in group
- File review
- Observe on a job or doing tasks
- Interview relevant professionals
- Interview with family and friends
- Observe at home or in the community
- Standardized tests
- Work simulations
- Community Based Assessments

Positive Personal Profile



Positive Personal Profile

Name:

<p>Dreams and Goals: What do you really want to do? What is your dream job? What would be fun to do?</p>	<p>Interests: What activities are you enthusiastic about? Do you have hobbies?</p>
<p>Talents, Skills and Knowledge: What are you good at? What are your natural gifts?</p>	<p>Learning Styles: How do you learn best? Tell me about a thing you had learnt successfully</p>
<p>Values: What is important to you? What things guide your life?</p>	<p>Positive Personality Traits: What have you done successfully? Why do you think you had succeed in it?</p>
<p>Environmental Preferences: Do you prefer to work alone? With people? Outdoor or indoor? In a silent place or noisy?</p>	<p>Dislikes: What type of jobs would you not like to do.</p>
<p>Work Experiences: Tell me about your previous work places what have you learnt there?</p>	<p>Support System: Who helps you when you face difficulty? Who might give you an advice?</p>
<p>Specific Challenges: Do you have specific difficulties that might impact your process?</p>	<p>Solutions and Accommodations: Have you tried to deal or overcome these difficulties?</p>
<p>Career Ideas and Possibilities to Explore:</p>	

Personal Positive Profile

How can we use it?

Planning meetings
Career portfolio
Resume development
Interview preparation
Personal essay

What Do You Do With Information?

- Transfer info to combined PPP. Remember to color code.
- Brainstorm potential employment situations, settings, job tasks that match preferences and skills- What “work” could the job seeker do? Where would this happen? Is self-employment, micro-business a desired path?
- Venn diagrams are a great tool to get the group “out of the box” and keep them focused on the job seeker

Use Venn Diagrams to Generate Ideas

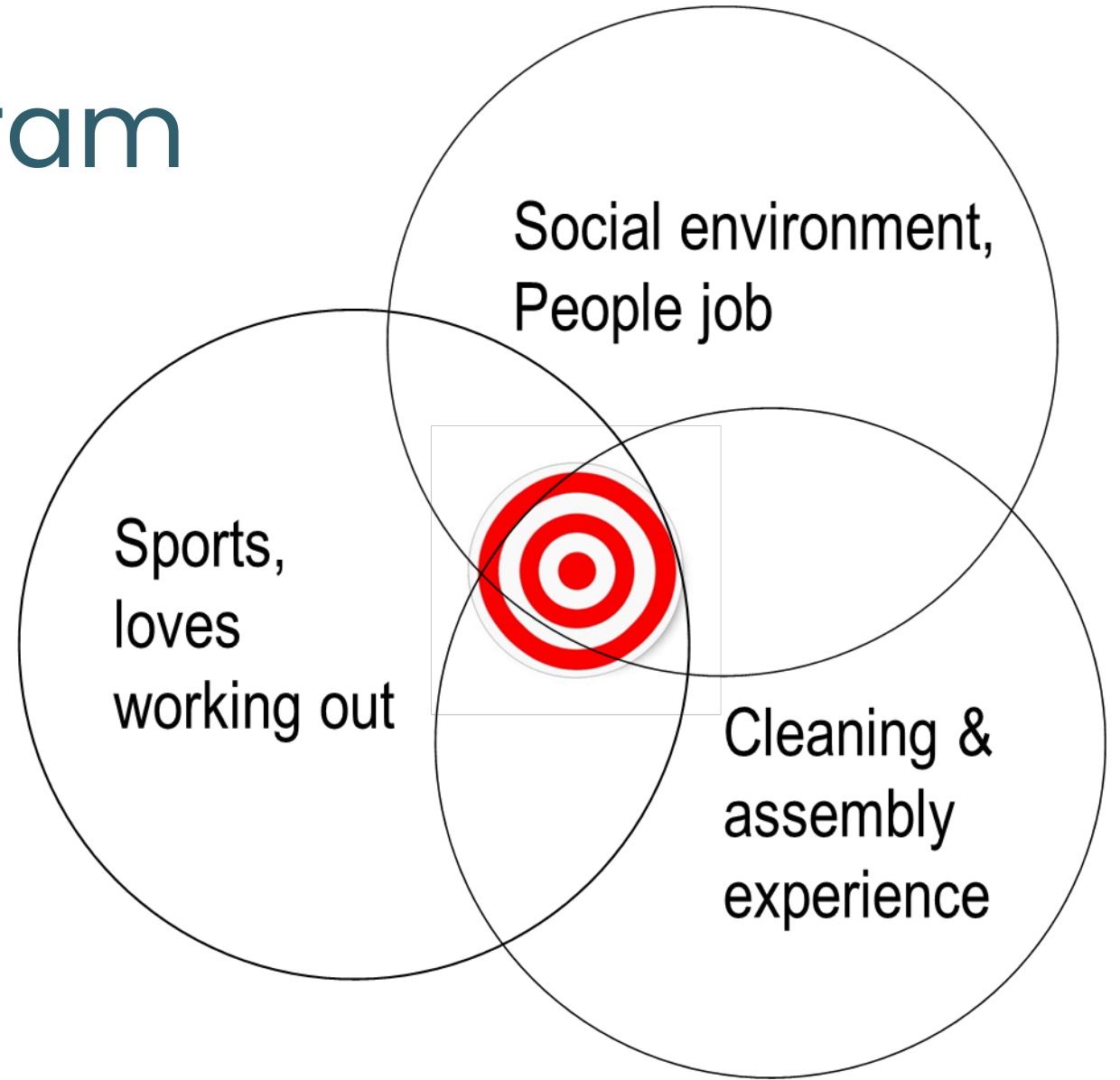
- Drop in a characteristic, a passion, a preferred environment, a skill, a previous experience, a job requirement such as close to home or no interaction with customers, etc.
- Only one thing in each bubble
- Center of the bulls eye = perfect place, perfect job
- Do multiple Venn Diagrams, each one different
- Open questions: What does this bring to mind for you?

Jeff's Profile

- Very outgoing, great sense of humor
- Loves to help others- people jobs
- Loves “Sports” – weight lifter (Special Olympics), Health conscious, loves working out, has belonged to a gym for 15 yrs.
- Loves musical theater- being on stage, dancing, singing
- Experience stocking supplies, cleaning, sterilizing, assembling medical kits, folding towels
- Can write/read simple phrases, good number matching skills
- Doesn't like computers- except to watch YouTube
- Does chores at home- laundry, used to walk the dog, vacuums
- “Half Jewish”- strong interest in the culture

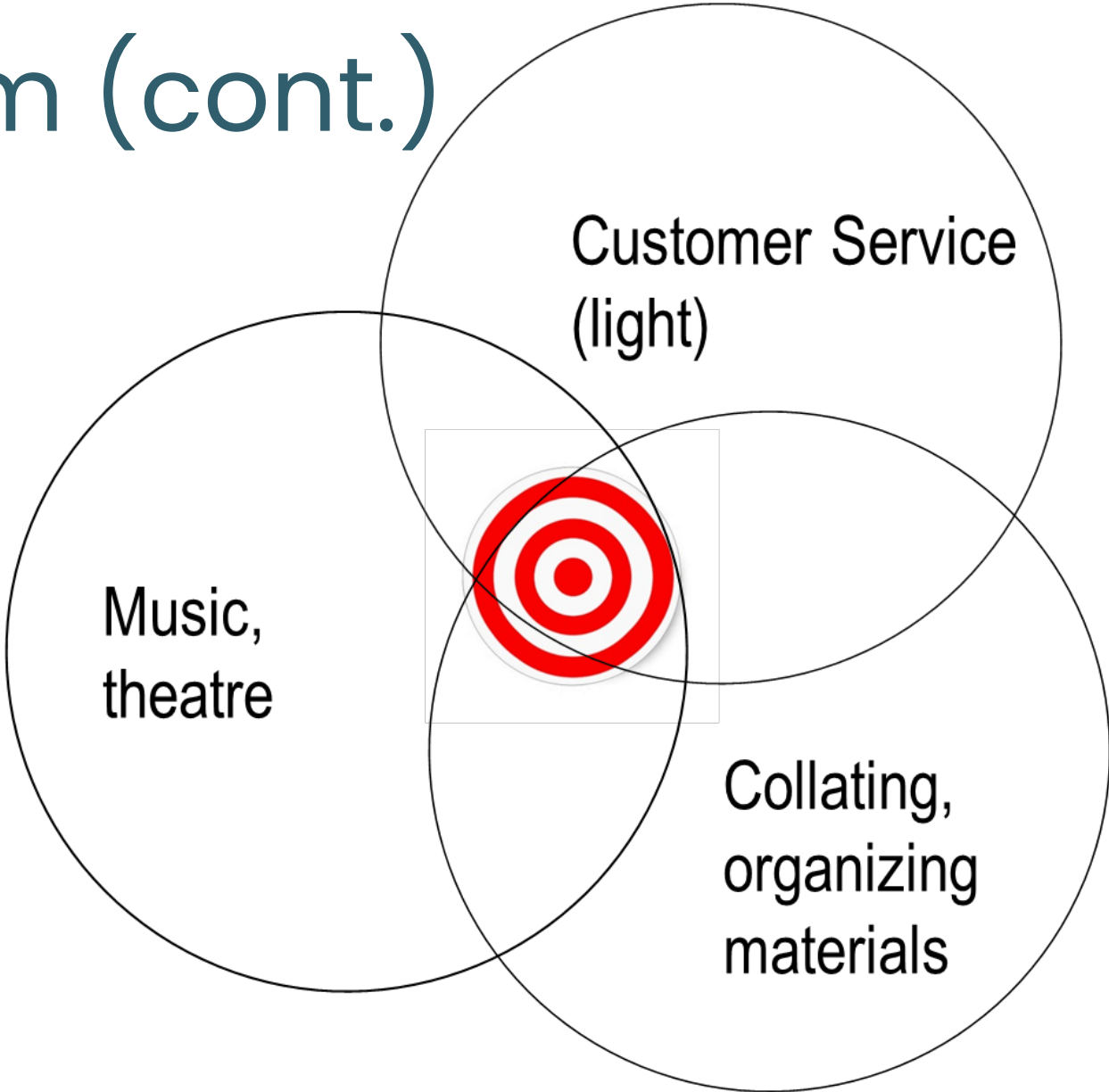
Jeff's Venn Diagram

What is a good job for Jeff?

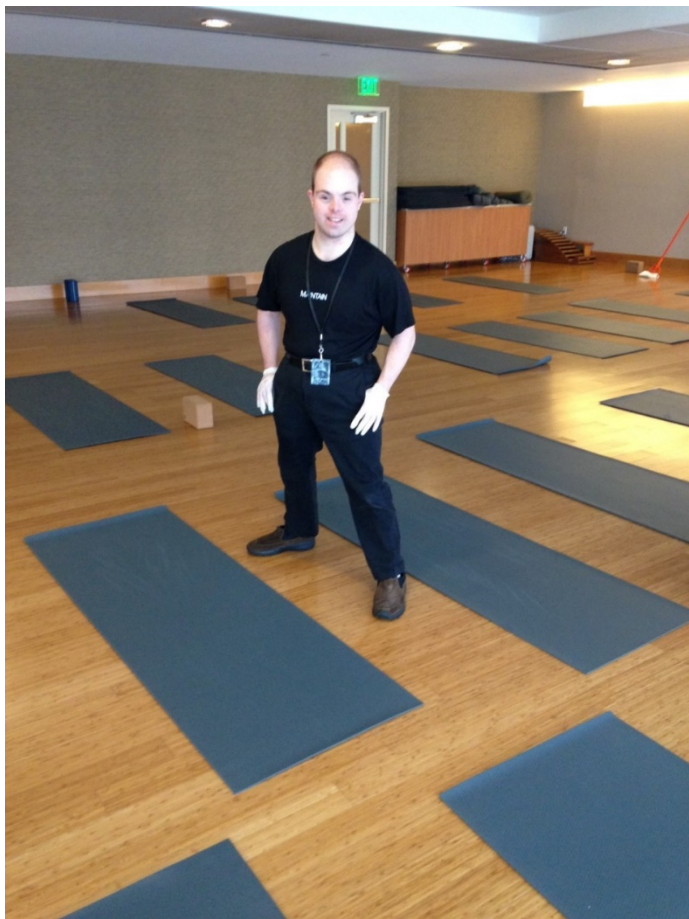


Jeff's Venn Diagram (cont.)

Where does it take us?



Jeff at Equinox



Supports Maintenance team after the morning rush

- Collects and restocks towels through club
- Sanitizes yoga mats used for morning classes
- Straightens “prop wall”
- Cleans/stocks small studios
- Restocks “tea station”

Assessment: Is this going to work?



- Is career goal a good match?
- Does job seeker have marketable skills and experience?
- Can they learn needed skills?

You can move to job development when you have enough “features” to sell to an employer.

No Heroes or Villains

- Families want the best for their child
- Professionals want the best for the individuals they work with

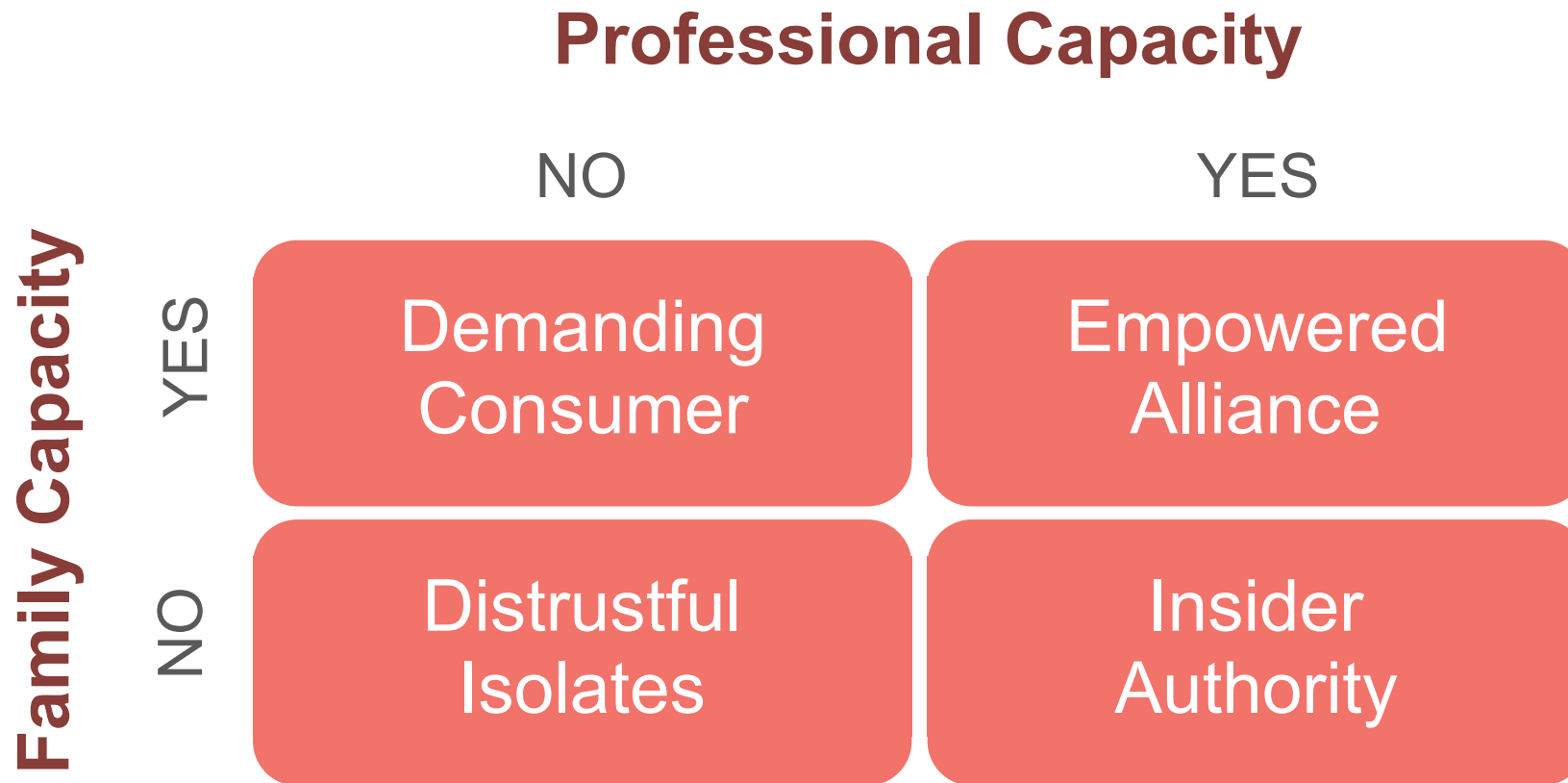
**Effective family engagement
is rooted in understanding,
relationships, communication
and focus**



Possible Family Engagement Outcomes

- Increased attendance and participation at key meetings
- Expand information sharing that increases work experience opportunities for students
- Improved understanding of the impact of benefits
- Increased use of supported decision making

Dual Capacity Framework



© Amy Pleet-Odle, Inclusion Focused Coaching, 2017 (revised 12.07.17)

Role of Families and Caregivers

Families can be a valuable partner in the job search process.

- Setting or reinforcing the expectation
- Contributing to assessments
- Tapping into networks
- Practicing soft skills
- Teaching real things



Reasons for Apprehension

- Fear of disruption of routine and services
- Fears over vulnerability
- Questions about ability to work
- Fear of losing benefits



**DON'T JUDGE
MY CHOICES
WITHOUT
UNDERSTANDING
MY REASONS.**

The Family Interview

A well executed, respectful family interview can accomplish many things:

1. Solidify family/professional relationship
2. Set the expectation of employment as the goal
3. Energize family around employment possibilities
4. Identify key roles and needed supports
5. Identify specific businesses or career areas to explore

Setting Up the Interview

Invite key contributors and create a safe environment.

- No more than an hour
- During a time that works best for family
- Not a huge group, just those who will help facilitate and support work experience
- At least one staff family is comfortable with



Compliance vs. Connection

Typical School Meeting

- Compliance
- Jargon
- Time crunch
- Professionals in the lead
- Confusing
- Intimidating

Family Interview

- Possibilities
- Intuitive questions
- Relaxed
- Families voice paramount
- Common goal
- Inspiring

Asking the Right Questions

- What does a good life look like?
- Greatest skill or attribute?
- Greatest concern?
- On Social Security benefits?
- What type of job do you think they would be successful at?
- Do you have any contacts at local businesses we could speak to?

Observation



School staff and their partners aren't always effective engaging employers in the community.

Informational Interview's Goal

**“I’d like to learn
more about your
company”**

*“Do you have
any jobs?”*

Make The Request Easy To Say “Yes” To!

“I work with job seekers interested in your industry. Would it be possible for me to come see what you do and talk to you about the skill sets needed to work in this field so I can better prepare them to be successful? Do you have 25 minutes to meet with me next week?”



Informational Interview

- Gives you access to the business
- Low pressure
- Start of working relationship
- Learn about their culture and work environment
- Uncover possible opportunities
- Chance to make a great first impression

Informational Interview

- Do you have productivity problems?
- How many employees? What are the types of jobs available? What jobs have the highest turnover?
- What are the most important qualities you look for in hiring a new worker?
- What is your hiring process and who makes the hiring decision?
- Are there unmet labor needs? Are there times when it is hard to handle the workload?

Create a Formal Proposal

Thanks!

Observations

Solution
(introduce
job seeker)

Supports to
Employer

Set Time to
Meet

Summary

- Make employment the focus of transition
- High expectations are key
- Create a 3-year plan for Seamless Transition
- Establish partnerships
- Send positive messages
- **Take action – you can do this!**



Closing Question

What is one thing that you or your district/program can do to strengthen a focus on competitive employment for students with disabilities?

1. Policy
2. Partnerships
3. Staff capacity

Questions and Resources



TransCen Employment Process Resources

<https://www.transcen.org/training-ta/resources/>

Please complete session evaluation

Survey Link

https://www.research.net/r/Roy_Apr2023_Post



About TransCen

- TransCen, Inc. is a national organization offering web-based and in-person training for state agencies, school districts, provider organizations, and others interested in meaningful work and community inclusion for individuals with disabilities.
- Learn more about our work: www.transcen.org
- Contact us at inquiries@transcen.org for more information!

Thank You!

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