

PERSONAL PROFILE

Person-Centered Career Planning

Anyone conducting a job search should do some type of planning, to ensure that the objectives and goals for the job search are clear, that the steps in the process have the best chance of resulting in a successful job search, and to avoid wasting time, going off in arbitrary directions. Job seekers vary significantly in the amount of planning that needs to be done, before undertaking an active job search. Some job seekers have a fairly clear idea of what type of job they are looking for, based on the individual's past experience, education, skills and personal preferences. Others need to spend substantial amount of time doing some upfront planning, determining what direction makes the most sense, and possibly doing some significant soul searching, before moving ahead in the job search process. Job seekers with disabilities are no different.

Like other individuals, some people with disabilities (but not all) need to undertake a substantial and deliberate planning process, before actively seeking a job. The reality for many people with disabilities, is that they have had limited work and life experience on which to base job search decisions, and also have limited expectations for themselves. Some people with disabilities have also had limited experience in making decisions for themselves, and are used to deferring to others. Some job seekers therefore may not be sure of what type of job to pursue, may have abstract ideas about the type of job they may enjoy based on limited information, or may only be interested in a field of work because others have told them that's what they would be good at.

A good planning process for people with disabilities (and anyone else) must be empowering to the individual, and promote self-reflection, personal insight, creativity and a wide range of possibilities. A useful approach is "person-centered" planning, which develops individual solutions through collaboration, creative thought, and group problem solving. This planning process is not a whole lot different than that used by many other job seekers. Some key elements are:

- initial focus on helping a person identify needs, interests, choices, desires, and dreams
- identify employment options that fit well with the job seeker's personal vision
- the professional's role is to guide and support the individual, not to be an "expert" who makes decisions on the person's behalf
- family, friends and community resources help generate career directions, employment contacts, and supports
- consideration of relevant multicultural issues.

This packet consists of a series of information-gathering tools to be used in conjunction with a person-centered career planning process. The end result of these tools is intended to be a comprehensive personal profile of an individual, which can then be used as the basis of a job search.

These tools are based in part on various person-centered planning approaches and methods that have been developed by a wide range of experts. The resources on person-centered planning on page 3 are the basis for the development of many of these tools, and in particular the underlying philosophy and context within which they were developed.

These tools can be used as templates for flipchart paper as part of a group person-centered planning meeting consisting of the job seeker and individuals from the individual's personal network they invite to be part of the process. The tools can also be used as part of a more individual information gathering process with the individual and possibly family members and other people important in the individual's lives. Some important considerations in using these tools:

- These tools are intended to guide an information gathering process that occurs through dialogue with an individual. To be used effectively, a person should not simply be asked the questions, with the forms then filled out, nor should the job seeker fill out the forms on the individual's own. Instead these tools should be used to guide a conversation and dialogue, within which this information is gathered. Since one of the fundamental goals of using these tools is to identify what is most important to the person, as information is gathered, part of the conversation should include gaining an understanding of why certain things are more important to the individual than others in an effort to identify consistent themes and core principles within which the job search should be conducted. An additional intent is to identify members of the individual's personal network who can assist with the job search process and employment support.
- These tools are all designed around the concept of a person-centered approach. The responses recorded should all be based on information provided by the individual in an atmosphere of unconditional positive regard, empathic understanding, and congruence. This information can be supplemented by family members, caregivers and others, but always with the preferences of the individual as the underlying basis. These tools should not be used to record professional judgments or evaluations, or to reflect the opinions of family members or caregivers and what they see as "best" for the job seeker.
- In using these tools, be sure to abide by the basics of brainstorming: a) Generate as many ideas as possible; b) Involve as many people as possible; c) There is no wrong answer - all ideas are good ideas. d) Avoid "Yes, buts..." and "Be realistic."
- Taken as a whole, these tools can help ensure a comprehensive look at a person's life. Such a comprehensive approach can be particularly helpful for those individuals whose job goals are unclear, or who require a particularly creative approach to the job search process. In some cases the tools are somewhat redundant. That is intentionally so, in part to act as confirmation for other information gathered, and to also provide various mechanisms for gathering similar information. For some individuals, some of the tools may be more useful and appropriate than others, and service providers may want to use the individual's discretion regarding which tools they use with particular individuals.
- Effective use of these tools requires a knowledge base regarding the principals of person-centered planning. Professionals using the attached tools are strongly urged to consult one or more of the resources listed on the next page to increase their knowledge of person-centered planning and/or pursue training and other staff development activities on person-centered planning.

Resources on Person-Centered Planning

- *Whole Life Planning: A Guide for Organizers and Facilitators* by John Butterworth, David Hagner, Bonnie Heikkinen, Sherill Faris, Shirley DeMello, Kirsten McDonough (1993)
Published by the Institute for Community Inclusion
Children's Hospital, University of Massachusetts Boston, Boston, MA
Voice: (617) 287-4300
TTY: (617)-287-4350
E-mail: ici@umb.edu
Web site: www.communityinclusion.org
Manual and video available from Training Resource Network, Inc. -
<http://trninc.com/products/morelikedance.html>
- *Listen to Me!*, Allen Shea & Associates in collaboration with Michael Smull, Steve Sweet, Claudia Bolton and Pam Lopez Greene
Available from: USARC/PACE
419 Mason, Suite 105
Vacaville, CA 95688
Voice: (707) 448-2283
Web site: www.allenshea.com/listentome.html
- *It's Never Too Early, It's Never Too Late: A Booklet About Personal Futures Planning*, by Beth Mount and Kay Zwernik (1988).
- *It's My Choice: Individual Plans- Individual Employment Plan*
Published by the Minnesota Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities
370 Centennial Office Building
658 Cedar Street
St. Paul, Minnesota 55155
Voice: (651) 296-4018
E-mail: admin.dd@state.mn.us;
Web site: www.mncdd.org/extra/publications.htm
- *Planning Possible Positive Futures: Planning Alternative Tomorrows with Hope*; by Jack Pearpoint, John O'Brien, Marsha Forest.
- *Person-Centered Planning with MAPS and PATH*, by John O'Brien & Jack Pearpoint
Available from Inclusion Press International
24 Thome Crescent
Toronto, ON., Canada M6H 2S5
Voice: (416) 658-5363
Fax: (416) 658-5067
E-mail: includer@idirect.com
Web site: www.inclusion.com
- The Learning Community for Person Centered Practices – www.elpnet.net

Additional ICI Publications on Person-Centered Planning

Self-Determination: A Fundamental Ingredient of Employment Support

Tools for Inclusion - Issue #22

By: Lora Brugnaro, & Jaimie Ciulla Timmons

www.communityinclusion.org/article.php?article_id=205&type=topic&id=11

Starting with Me: A Guide to Person-Centered Planning for Job Seekers

Tools for Inclusion - Vol. 10, No. 1

By: Melanie Jordan, & Lara Enein-Donovan

www.communityinclusion.org/article.php?article_id=54&type=topic&id=11

Work and Life: Likes, Dislikes, Preferences

Our life experiences teach and tell us a lot about what we like, dislike, and prefer. This section is designed to gather information from an individual regarding past experiences, and how the job seeker spends their time currently. The job seeker should be the primary source for this information, supplemented as necessary by other individual's in their lives.

Job Seeker's Name: _____

Work History (Paid & Volunteer)

PLACE	DUTIES	LIKES	DISLIKES

Work History (Paid & Volunteer)

PLACE	DUTIES	LIKES	DISLIKES

School History

School(s):

Likes

Dislikes:

Favorite Classes/Favorite Teachers:

Activities at school (clubs, sports, extra-curricular)

Friends from school still in touch with

At Home and In the Community

Chores and responsibilities at home:

Likes:

Dislikes:

What does the individual do with free time at home?

What does the individual like to do for fun at home and in the community?

Interests/Hobbies:

Who does the individual like to spend time with?

What places does the individual like to visit in the community?

Who are the most important people in the individual's life?

SUCCESS AND DREAMS

Where has the individual been happiest? Where has the individual experienced the most success?

Where has the individual not experienced success?

What kind of environments does the individual enjoy/fit in? (Examples: noisy, quiet, crowded, not crowded, indoors, outdoors, etc.)

Are there specific personality types who this person is most comfortable with or fits in well with? (Examples: social, quiet, outgoing, etc.)

What are the individual's dreams for the future? What does the individual really want in her/his life that they don't currently have?

What are the job seeker's accommodation and support needs (including transportation and benefits planning)?

Important To? Important For?

This portion of the planning process is intended to help distinguish what is "important to a person" versus what is "important for a person". The purpose is to help a person get more of what is important to them without ignoring what is important for them. This information can then be used as part of critical decision making in the employment planning process.

What's important to the person? [Include all the things that are important to the person in the individual's daily life and how they live the individual's life.]	What's important for the person? [Include only: a) those things that need to be kept in mind regarding issues of health or safety; b) what others see as important to help the person be a valued member of the individual's community]

Tool based on materials from Michael Smull, Support Development Associates

What's Working? What's Not Working?

This tool is intended to help identify areas of an individual's life they are happy or satisfied with and areas they would like to change. This can be helpful in determining how a job can positively impact a person's life, as well as issues for consideration as part of the job search.

(Tool based on materials from Michael Smull, Support Development Associates)

	What's working? What makes sense? What needs to be maintained?	What's not working? What doesn't make sense? What needs to change?
Individual's perspective		
Staff perspective		

JOB PROFILE

Through this tool a "picture" begins to emerge of what a potential job would look, based on the individual's interests, preferences, dreams and strengths. The information recorded should be based in part on information previously generated. The first column focuses on the positive aspects of the individual's personality (i.e., soft skills), while the second column includes work-related skills. The third column is intended to gather information about what motivates the individual to want to work (examples may include money, friendship, personal fulfillment, etc.). The last column lists the criteria for a perfect job. Remember, this last column is about a person's dreams. Don't worry whether it's realistic, practical and avoid "Yes, buts....". Efforts should be made to include as many items as possible under each of these categories.

Job Seeker's Gifts & Personal Qualities	Skills They Bring to a Job	What Is Most Important to Them About a Job?	What Would a Dream Job Look Like?

WORK ENVIRONMENT – WHAT’S IMPORTANT

This part of the planning process looks at work environment preferences. There is a wide range of things that could be listed here, and should be based at least in part on the information already gathered.

These could include (but should not be limited to): location (indoor/outdoors, near home, transportation, etc.), work hours (days/nights/weekends/holidays), level of supervision, dress/uniform requirements, formality/informality, level of supervision, number and types of co-workers (e.g., peers, various ages, etc.), quiet vs. noisy, level of interaction with co-workers/supervisors, level of interaction with general public, physical labor requirements, cleanliness of work environment, etc.

What works for them at a job? What are the qualities of a job and environment that should be present?	What does not work for them at a job? What are the qualities of a job and work environment that should be avoided?

Possible Work Places and Jobs

Review all the information generated, and brainstorm a list of possible jobs and workplaces to further explore. Include as many ideas as possible. However, be sure to base all ideas on the criteria listed on the "Job Profile" and "Work Environment - What's Important" sheets. If a job or work place does not meet these criteria, it should not be included.

ACTION PLAN

Now it's time to develop a plan and translate the ideas generated into action steps. In addition to these materials, the "30-Day Placement Plan" materials from ICI can also be helpful in putting a placement plan together.

Questions to consider:

Do we know enough to move ahead with a job search? Are there specific types of workplaces and jobs that can be explored, based on the information generated?

Are there things we can do to generate more information (e.g., situational assessment, volunteer work, job tours, informational interviews, etc.)?

Who does the individual know and whom does the staff/program know who can help us?

What kind of network connections are available to businesses to help us learn more about possible jobs?

Action Step	Who's responsible	Deadline for Completion

Action Step	Who's responsible	Deadline for Completion