

FACILITATING EMPLOYMENT: SELF-DETERMINATION & SELF-ADVOCACY

ESSC WorkFirst Transition Project Webinar

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TOPICS FOR TODAY

- The Concepts: Self-Determination, Self-Advocacy, and Informed Choice
- Importance and Impact on Employment
- It Starts Early/ What if it didn't?
- Supporting the Development of Self-Determination Skills
- Supporting the Development of Self-Advocacy Skills
- Supporting Informed Choice

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SELF- DETERMINATION

- Self-determination refers to the right of a person to make their own decisions and choices, and to manage and direct their own lives based on what is important to them.
- Self-determination is built on a combination of skills, knowledge, and beliefs that allow a person to make choices and take actions



SELF- ADVOCACY

Self-advocacy refers to effectively communicating, conveying, negotiating and asserting one's own interests, needs and desires.



Self-advocacy skills:

- *Speaking up for yourself*
- *Communicating your strengths, needs, and wishes*
- *Being able to listen to the opinions of others, even when their opinions differ from yours*
- *having a sense of self-respect*
- *Taking responsibility for yourself*
- *Knowing your rights*
- *Knowing where to get help or who to go to with a question*

INFORMED CHOICE

- Informed choice is decision making based on accurate and complete information.
- Informed choice happens through ongoing person-centered conversations and activities.
- A person making an informed choice understands the options as well as the risks and benefits of any given decision.



WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

- Increases life satisfaction in the present and in later life
- Job satisfaction, longevity, and productivity are impacted positively
- More likely to live independently and move out of the family home, to hold a job, and have greater financial independence.
- Feeling in control and intrinsically motivated can help people feel more committed, passionate, interested, and satisfied with the things that they do.
- Impact on motivation—people feel more motivated to take action when they feel that what they do will have an effect on the outcome.
- Stronger chance of being successful in making the transition to adulthood, including employment and independence.

IMPACT ON EMPLOYMENT

Self-determination skills, self-advocacy skills and informed choice are essential foundations for successful employment outcomes



IT STARTS EARLY!

Self-determination, self-advocacy, and informed choice typically start at the beginning of our lives! We learn very quickly...

- ✓ *How to get our bellies full*
- ✓ *How to get attention*
- ✓ *How to tell someone we are uncomfortable*
- ✓ *What brings us enjoyment*
- ✓ *How to find comfort*
- ✓ *How to get away with things!*



IT STARTS EARLY!

What are
you going
to be
when you
grow up?

- At home, at school, in the community- we learn through experiences, by trying things actively, physically and/ or by observing and interacting.
- These varied experiences shape our beliefs about the world, ourselves and our place in the community around us.
- They give us ample ideas about what we do and do not like or want, what we are good at, and where we fit in
- Ideally, children grow up with positive and continuous opportunity to exercise self-determination, self-advocacy, and to utilize informed choice

IT STARTS EARLY...

- Learning about the impact of his or her disability
- Practicing goal setting
- Contributing
- Building teamwork skills
- Developing an ability to speak up for oneself
- Participating in a process of resolving differences
- Gaining an understanding of one's strengths and needs
- Learning how to ask for and accept help from others

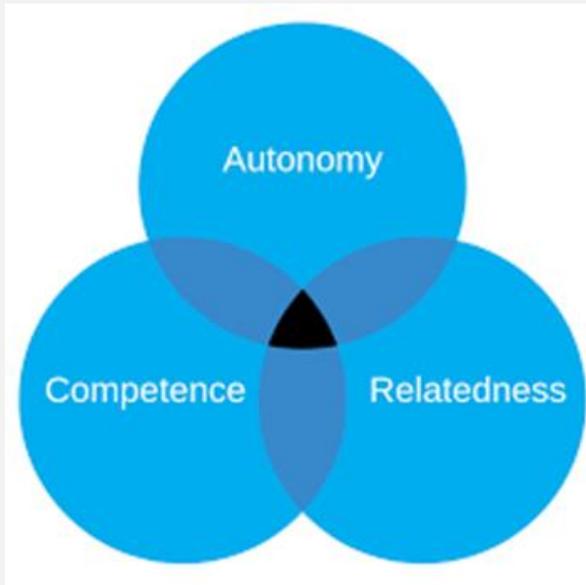
WHAT IF IT DID NOT START EARLY?

- Many people grow up with limited opportunities to explore the world around
- Results in impairment/ delay in development of skills
- Choice has not been “informed” and instead has often been dictated or limited
- Compliance mentality instead of empowerment
- Challenges with expressing interests and preferences, identifying skills, or knowledge of the support they need to be successful
- Limited view of themselves as workers
- Challenges with resilience and problem-solving skills
- Decreased awareness of the vast employment opportunities available
- May lack motivation or feel stressed about a path to employment
- Intervention must begin and focus on these skills

THE ROLE OF THE COACH/ EDUCATOR/ FACILITATOR

- Ideally, building on existing skills and experience
- Possibly, making up for lost time
- Individualized, but involves common principles
- Empowering people to make their own decisions
- Get to know the person
- Listen and observe
- Provide instruction and support in a way that fits the person
- Empower for self-advocacy/ self-determination
- Know and be able to explain rights

SELF DETERMINATION THEORY



People have three needs that must be met in order to live self-determined lives:

- Competence (feeling effective),
- Autonomy (feeling of being the origin of one's behavior)
- Connectedness (feeling cared for and understood by other people)

SUPPORTING THE DEVELOPMENT OF SELF-DETERMINATION SKILLS

- Self-determination skills are teachable, measurable, and developed through regular practice.
- People can learn to base their actions on their own goals and behaviors, intentionally taking actions that will bring them closer toward their goals.
- Involves taking responsibility for behaviors and actions- taking credit for their success, but also accepting the blame for failures.
- Improving self-awareness, decision-making skills, self-regulation, and goal-setting abilities can encourage the growth of stronger self-determination

SUPPORTING THE DEVELOPMENT OF SELF-DETERMINATION SKILLS

Choice Making Skills

An individual's ability to express their preference between two or more options, provides opportunities to exert control over one's own actions and environment.

Employment tips:

- Ensure that the person has the option to learn about and try out a variety of jobs, tasks and work environments
- Provide opportunity to make choices between those options based on their individualized level of interest, skill, and support needs
- Support the expression of choice by talking about what they liked and didn't like about each and what choices they would like to make moving forward

SUPPORTING THE DEVELOPMENT OF SELF-DETERMINATION SKILLS

Decision Making Skills

Decision-making requires effective judgments about what choices or solutions are right at any given moment.

Effective decision making requires identification of possible actions, potential consequences, risks of doing or not doing an action, and alternatives

Employment tips:

- Help students make decisions about next steps toward employment, such as what industries to explore further, when to apply for a job, and what steps to take and when.
- Help them think about the possible outcomes of making specific decisions

SUPPORTING THE DEVELOPMENT OF SELF-DETERMINATION SKILLS

Problem-Solving Skills

Problem-solving requires the identification of a problem, possible solutions, and an understanding of the potential pros and cons of each solution.

Employment tips:

- Work with students to identify potential barriers related to the decisions they are weighing
- Encourage students to NOT give up just because there may be barriers
- Practice brain-storming solutions to the problems

SUPPORTING THE DEVELOPMENT OF SELF-DETERMINATION SKILLS

Goal Setting and Attainment Skills

A goal is a person's desired outcome- can be broad or narrow and specific

Goal attainment is an action plan or steps required to reach the goal

Employment tips:

- Employment goals must be individualized/ person-specific
- Goals will change over time and with experience
- Goal attainment involves many steps that move forward and build sequentially.

SUPPORTING THE DEVELOPMENT OF SELF-DETERMINATION SKILLS

Self-Regulation Skills

Self-regulation is the ability to manage one's thoughts, emotions and behaviors.

Involves learning what triggers excitement, stress, joy and what an individual needs to be balanced and self-controlled.

Includes self-observation, evaluation, and reinforcement

Employment tips:

- Provide regular opportunities or “check ins” for the person to describe how they are feeling while exploring and learning about employment options
- Help the person to learn about and self-evaluate their responses to new situations (such as places of business or new tasks they are trying)
- Provide positive reinforcement
- Offer strategies for combating stress and over-stimulation

SUPPORTING THE DEVELOPMENT OF SELF-DETERMINATION SKILLS

Self Advocacy Skills

Self-advocacy refers to an individual's ability to express their needs and wants assertively and take action on their own behalf.

Employment tips:

- Provide hands on, real world opportunities for exploration
- Plan ahead for specific questions the person can ask during the experience
- Make room for them to share observations afterward
- Encourage critical thinking about the experience

SUPPORTING THE DEVELOPMENT OF SELF-DETERMINATION SKILLS

Positive Self-Efficacy

Self-efficacy refers to an individual's belief in his or her own capacities, strengths and abilities.

Self-efficacy is related to self-confidence, grounded in learned ability to exert control over one's own motivation, behavior, and social environment.

This belief in oneself impacts the ability to set and attain realistic goals.

Employment tips:

- Offer generous amounts of positive feedback, pointing out specific skills and attributes
- Provide opportunities for skills to grow, and help students realize how their efforts are paying off.
- Provide criticism constructively
- When a student has not yet mastered a skill, help them to see the steps needed to move forward, instead of confirming a belief that the skill is impossible.
- Support a student to identify and verbalize the positive things they notice about themselves
- Tie these skills/ capacities/ abilities to employment goals

SUPPORTING THE DEVELOPMENT OF SELF-DETERMINATION SKILLS

Self-Awareness Skills

Self-awareness skills allow individuals to identify and understand his or her needs, strengths, and limitations

Self-awareness includes self-efficacy, self-regulation and knowledge of areas in need of continuous improvement and development

Employment tips:

- When setting goals, help the person to think through their support needs, strengths, and responses to situations
- In career exploration settings or on a job, prompt the person to think about these same things in the new settings
- Help develop a plan for overcoming challenges

SUPPORTING THE DEVELOPMENT OF SELF- ADVOCACY SKILLS



- Self-advocacy skills are teachable, measurable, and developed through regular practice.
- Often associated with mastery of soft-skills, a challenge for many people
- Self-advocacy is integral to the development of self-determination
- The skill development is continuous based on experiences, practice, encouragement, and modeling
- Balance of rights and responsibility

SUPPORTING THE DEVELOPMENT OF SELF-ADVOCACY SKILLS

- Self-awareness
- Disability understanding
- Disability disclosure
- Decision making
- Setting goals
- Evaluating options
- Identify independence
- Request & utilize accommodations
- Know your rights & responsibilities
- Know how to request & accept help
- Intrinsic motivation
- Taking a leadership role in support plans
- Assertiveness
- Listen to others' opinions
- Problem solving
- Monitor progress
- Positive self-talk

SUPPORTING THE DEVELOPMENT OF SELF- ADVOCACY SKILLS

- Support participation and leadership in the classroom, in meetings, in community places
- Understand and explain ADA basics
- Practice asking for help
- Practice reciprocal activities that involve contribution
- Opportunities for learning from failures
- Pointed, specific and deliberate praise and recognition



FACILITATING INFORMED CHOICE

Informed choice means that someone has all the facts and information available to make decisions that connect to their own situation.

- Foundational to the development of self-advocacy and self-determination
- Myths and misinformation are addressed.
- Shares variety of options
- Teaches methods to overcome barriers
- Shares potential risks and benefits of their decisions.
- Knows where to direct people when not sure of the answers
- Familiar with community resources and supports
- Supports exploration of community and other informal supports and resources.
- Follow up or assist to ensure that connections are made, the resources/support met their needs, and they were able to make an informed choice.
- Assist in reflecting on outcomes
- Ongoing/ life long- not a once and for all experience

FACILITATING INFORMED CHOICE

Create Opportunities to Discover

- “Discovery”
- Experiential
- Exploratory
- Active
- Creative
- Variety
- Ideally hands on
- May also include engaging conversation about preferences, skills, interests



(ON THE JOB- WORK EXPERIENCES)

- Exploring a wide variety of tasks, in a wide variety of environments
- Continuously inventory skills, interests, character and personality traits, ideal working conditions – what is learned from each experience.
- Study yourself and the experience
- Have you been adequately trained, have the tasks been demonstrated and explained sufficiently
- Is the workspace supportive- can you find what you need, is it efficient
- Communication- what are your preferences and needs? Text? Phone calls, in person conversation, written,
- How do you feel about the tasks, are they interesting, can you do them with skill, are you learning what you need to learn to do better

FACILITATING INFORMED CHOICE

Plan

- Individualized/ Person Centered
- Includes action steps to achieving goals
- Addresses barriers
- Addresses supports needed and areas of autonomy



Implementing the Plan

- Supporting the person as they work to achieve their employment goals
- Available to help the person overcome unseen barriers and modify goals as needed.
- Utilizing other people and community resources as needed, such as connecting to employment professionals

FACILITATING INFORMED CHOICE

Follow Up/ Assess

- Ensuring that people feel supported by regularly checking in with them
- How is the information they've gathered helping them make choices
- Outcomes of those choices?
- What new plans can be put into place based on the new information and experiences?

RESOURCES

- A Career Woman's Guide to Self-Advocacy in the Office
<https://www.bestow.com/blog/self-advocacy-at-work/>
- <http://www.wintac.org/topic-areas/pre-employment-transition-services/overview/instruction-self-advocacy>
- <https://ldaamerica.org/>
- Real Work For Real Pay: A Self-Advocate's Guide to Employment Policy
<https://autisticadvocacy.org/policy/toolkits/employment/>
- Job Seeker's Guide <http://jobseekersguide.org/>
- Job Guide <https://jobguide.ohioemploymentfirst.org/tools.php>

RESOURCES

- Tips for Self-Advocacy in the Workplace <http://www.idonline.org/article/6011/>
- Self Advocacy and Disability Disclosure <https://www.pacer.org/transition/learning-center/employment/self-advocacy.asp>
- Self Determination Theory <https://www.verywellmind.com/what-is-self-determination-theory-2795387>
- <https://positivepsychology.com/self-determination-skills-activities/#worksheets>
- Informed Choice Toolkit <https://disabilityhubmn.org/hub-partners/work-toolkit/policy-and-practice/informed-choice>
- What is Self-regulation?
<https://www.yourtherapysource.com/blog/2020/01/19/what-is-self-regulation-2/>

THANK YOU

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