

# Handbook on Community Living and Employment Training Modules

Institute on Community Integration, University of Minnesota, USA

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CHAPTER 5

# Supporting Inclusive Community Living: A Person-Centered Approach





## Guiding questions

- What are the primary components of person-centered inclusive community living?
- What are the skills, knowledge, and attitudes/beliefs of direct support professionals that facilitate inclusive community living?

# Introduction

- Direct support professionals (DSPs) need to incorporate the concept of person-centered thinking and practices into their work with persons with disabilities.
- Within the person-centered thinking framework, DSPs focus on delivering personalized services that assist people to achieve their personal desired life outcomes, including first understanding and then supporting what is most important to the person, their dreams and goals for the future.

- Training programs for staff can include online courses and assessments, in-person training, coaching, and mentoring, and in some contexts certification after an individual passes an exam.
- A set of competencies for DSPs has been developed in the U.S. that include —
  - » Empowerment of people with disabilities
  - » Communication
  - » Assessment
  - » Facilitation of services

- » Community Living Skills and Supports
- » Education, Training and Self-Development
- » Advocacy
- » Building and Maintaining Friendships and Relationships
- » Providing Person Centered Supports
- » Supporting Health and Wellness



## Barriers

- Staff serving in caregiver roles (e.g., ensuring health; supporting activities of daily living), rather than a navigator/advocate to support what is most important to the person, their goals and dreams.
- Lack of competence-based training for direct support staff that goes beyond safety concerns.
- Limited work compensation (i.e., low wages).
- Inadequate support from organizational leadership (e.g., professional development, management, valuing employees).



## Solutions

- Promote a social vs. medical model of disability when training staff.
- Encourage staff to base provision of supports on the preferences, goal and dreams of each person with disability.
- Develop and provide training for staff that includes not only guidance on safety, but also strategies for successful inclusion of the person with disability in the community.



- Develop a supportive organizational culture of direct support staff, including effective supervision, mentoring, flexibility and access to professional development.



## Tips & Strategies

- Provide training for staff whose content is supported by the latest approaches, strategies, competencies and other research findings in the field
- When matching staff with clients with disabilities, consider their behavioral style; common interests; skills that are congruent with what the person with disability would like to learn; gender, age, etc.

- Be creative when recruiting staff, including technical college and university programs in the field of social services and similar.
- Establish a relationship with college/university programs to create potential internship sites for students in social services fields.

CHAPTER 6

# Self-Determination: A Critical Aspect of Community Living





## Guiding questions

- What unique contribution does self-determination make to community living outcomes of persons with disabilities?
- In what ways can community living programs support the self-determination of persons with disabilities?

# Introduction

- From a social-ecological perspective, self-determination refers to an individuals' capacity to exercise the degree of control they desire within the context of their relationships with other persons, groups, systems, and/or cultures over those areas of life that are important to them.
- The degree to which people are able to exercise self-determination is facilitated by their skills, knowledge and attitudes/belief they possess.

- Some cultures have a long-standing history of supporting self-determination, while others tend to be more selective in upholding the rights of certain groups in exercising self-determination.



## Barriers

- People with disabilities are often wrongly viewed as not able to make their own choices and decisions
- People with disabilities often have low self-esteem and self-confidence in making choices and decisions as a result of not being provided with adequate opportunities and supports
- Caregivers and support staff tend to protect individuals with disabilities, rather than encourage them to be self-determined
- Persons with disabilities often lack the knowledge and skills of how to be self-determined due to lack of teaching and modeling





## Solutions

- Provide people with disabilities with opportunities for choice-making and decision making on a daily basis.
- Promote self-determination of people with disabilities by supporting their choice-making, decision-making, problem solving, goal setting and self-regulation skills.
- Educate direct support staff to deliver services in a person-centered manner, based on the preferences and needs of the people they serve.

- Self-directed or individualized funding can be used as a option for people with disabilities that provides a more self-determined way to purchase services, select who provides them, and how they are provided.



## Tips & Strategies

- All persons with disabilities are capable of exercising self-determination, if they are provided with appropriate supports.
- The exercise of self-determination is a life-long process; it begins shortly after birth and continues throughout the life-span.
- Development of self-determination can and should begin at an early age with families providing their children with choice and decision-making opportunities from simple to more complex.

- Rather than assuming that we know what people with disabilities need or want, always communicate with the person himself/herself to provide them with an opportunity for self-determination

## CHAPTER 7

# The Importance of Engagement in Activities of Daily Living





## Guiding questions

- Why is it important that people with disabilities are engaged in different types activities of daily living?
- What is the difference between being actively engaged in daily life and receiving services under a “hotel” model?

# Introduction

- Engagement in activities of daily living provide all of us, including persons with disabilities, with opportunities for making daily choices and decisions and to feel a sense of accomplishment, which leads to having control of our lives.
- In order to be engaged in daily activities (cooking, laundry, calling a friend) people with disabilities need different types of supports.

- Active Support (AS) is an approach to preparing direct support staff to better support the engagement of people with intellectual and developmental (IDD) and related disabilities in daily activities.





## Barriers

- Providing services using the “hotel model” —
  - » Staff do not provide people with disabilities opportunities and supports to participate in their daily activities, but rather do things for them.
- Assuming that people with disabilities are not able to participate in their activities of daily living, because they require supports.
- Doing tasks for, rather than with people with disabilities, because staff find it is easier to do the work themselves.

- Ignoring the need for every person to live a fulfilling by exercise choice and control over their daily lives.



## Solutions

- All human beings, regardless of their ability or disability, are able to participate in their daily lives with the appropriate supports.
- Provide people with disabilities with opportunities to participate in their activities of daily living.
- Use a person-centered approach when supporting people with disabilities in activities of daily living.
- Support people with disabilities in exercising their self-determination in their daily lives.



## Tips & Strategies

- Being engaged in the activities of one's life brings everyone a sense of agency and self-determination, leading to greater life satisfaction and quality.
- Taking responsibility for one's daily activities not only improves the person's quality of life, but also leads to the acquisition of new skills necessary for living independently.

- The “hotel model” of services is outdated and does not support people with disabilities in achieving their optimal life outcomes and inclusion in their communities.
- Apply the concepts of Active Support when you support people with a disabilities to increase their opportunities for life engagement and learning new skills.

CHAPTER 8

# The Importance of Social Networks in Community Living and Employment





## Guiding questions

- How do social relationships aid people with disabilities to feel included in the community?
- What strategies assist in building social networks for people with disabilities?

# Introduction

- Social inclusion is a critical aspect of personal wellbeing for people with disabilities.
- Social networks in the form of diverse interpersonal relationships lead to social inclusion.
- When people feel socially included, their experience of loneliness decreases and their sense of belonging increases.



- The extent to which an individual is connected to others (friends, colleagues) and the degree to which such relationships are reciprocal is called social capital.
- Access to social capital is linked to many benefits, including improved health, and positive behavioral, educational, and vocational outcomes.



## Barriers

- Limited access to social capital due to the lack of —
  - » Social opportunities in person and remotely (phone, social media)
  - » Adequate supports
  - » Accessibility of public spaces
  - » Access to social activities and events
  - » Social stigma
  - » Opportunities for social reciprocity

- Living arrangement that does not support development of relationships outside of the residential setting.



## Solutions

- All human beings, regardless of their abilities, are entitled to social relationships of their choice.
- More personalized living arrangements (apartment) are more likely to provide more opportunities for diverse social activities and interactions than institutional or family settings.
- Adequate supports (transportation, modeling social interactions) can significantly increase the chances for successful relationships.

- Open and welcoming public events can reduce the stigma society has toward social inclusion of people with disabilities.



## Tips & Strategies

- Provide opportunities for others in the community to recognize every person for who they are (interests, skills, characteristics), rather than just for their disability.
- Provide opportunities for people with disabilities to engage in activities that are of personal interest; to challenge themselves and try new things.

- Do not assume that every person knows how to initiate a relationship, including having effective communication skills.
- Model social interactions that will help people with disabilities to build their own relationships.

CHAPTER 10

# Health, Wellness, and Sexuality







## Guiding questions

- » What is the health and wellness status of people with disabilities?
- » What are the advances to improve the health and wellbeing of people with disabilities?

# Introduction

- People with disabilities experience poorer health and wellness compared to people without disabilities —
  - » High blood pressure
  - » Diabetes
  - » Cardiovascular disease
  - » Loneliness

- These conditions are often related to lifestyle choices —
  - » Sedentary lifestyle
  - » Poor diet
  - » Limited social opportunities
- Organizations that provide supports to people with disabilities need to pay better attention to health and wellness needs of their clients.



## Barriers

- Limited awareness of the health needs of people with disabilities in society/community —
  - » Stigma, negative attitudes
- Lack of training of healthcare staff (physicians, nurses, therapists) to communicate with and treat persons with disabilities.

- Limited awareness of service provider organizations about health and wellness options for people with disabilities in the community —
  - » Clinics sensitive to people with disabilities
  - » Accessible exercise facilities
  - » Healthy food choices



## Solutions

- Build awareness in society/community about people with disabilities.
- Provide people with disabilities with opportunities to —
  - » Exercise
  - » Have access to healthy foods
  - » Develop friendships and relationships
  - » Access to information and training on hygiene, cooking and sexuality

- Develop and implement information sessions and programs for healthcare staff about the people disabilities —
  - » For physicians, nurses and therapists



## Tips & Strategies

- Offer opportunities for preferred physical activity and affordable, healthy foods into daily life of people with disabilities.
- Teach people with disabilities about how their bodies and emotions.
- Educate direct support staff on how to support physical activity, healthy eating and healthy relationships.



- Include healthy lifestyle and other health goals into service plans for persons with disabilities.
- Encourage community organizations (community centers or public health agencies) to include people with disabilities in their programming.
- Encourage people with disabilities to communicate with health care providers about their health needs.

# EMPLOYMENT



**CHAPTER 14**

# Introduction to Customized and Supportive Employment





## Guiding questions

- » What are essential characteristics of customized and supported employment?
- » What processes guide customized and supported employment?

# Introduction

- Customized employment is a —
  - » “Flexible process designed to personalize the employment relationship between a job candidate and an employer in the way that meets the needs of both.”
  - » Person-centered, strengths-based strategy designed to negotiate competitive jobs in ways that fit the known abilities, interests and potential contributions of a job seeker.

- » Voluntary, flexible, non-comparative, and interest-driven employment negotiation between an individual job seeker and an employer.
- Supported employment includes the innovative practices of customized employment and at the same time features access to short-term and long-term (ongoing) job supports that may be needed by some employees with complex disabilities.

- A few commonly used strategies for planning, negotiating, and customizing jobs includes but are not limited to —
  - » Job carving—strategy for carving of tasks or restructuring of job duties from existing employment positions to fit the skills and abilities of a job seeker.
  - » **Job creation**—strategy for creating new tasks, duties, or jobs that directly contribute in meaningful ways to existing work processes or new work process of a an organization’s operations.
  - » **Self-employment**—supporting a job seeker with unique interests, strengths, and skills to launch an entrepreneurial

business plan that will result in economic opportunities through self-employment.

- » **Business within a business**—strategy that includes entrepreneurial innovations, such as introducing a self-contained microenterprise within an already established business (e.g., introducing a coffee kiosk enterprise inside an existing bakery).





## Barriers

- Prevalence of center-based approaches to employment that lead to segregation and limited options for people with disabilities.
- Overemphasis on needing to have certain qualifications for a job, rather than developing a position that matches the person's qualities.
- Lack of employment opportunities for people with more complex support needs.

- Lack of awareness employers have about the benefits of employing people with disabilities.
- Lack of appropriate supports to perform job tasks successfully.



## Solutions

- There needs to be a shift from —
  - » Center-based programs where people with disabilities are segregated to inclusive employment.
  - » Qualified to quality job seekers.
  - » Viewing people with disabilities as needing assistance to being active contributors to society and its economy.
  - » Viewing people with disabilities as unable to work to providing them with the right supports to be successful.

- » Viewing accommodations benefitting only for people with disabilities to accommodations benefiting all employees.



## Tips & Strategies

- Provide persons with disabilities, including those with the most significant disabilities, with real opportunities to work in the community's competitive workforce.
- Provide training to employers about customized and supported employment.
- Consider the value of self-employment and entrepreneurial approaches as options for job seekers with disabilities.

- Consider multiple ways to partner with business leaders, such as participating in —
  - Job shadowing and work exploration
  - On-the-job training programs
  - Informational job interviews
  - Other “hands on” experiences

## EMPLOYMENT [ THE CORE KNOWLEDGE & SKILLS OF EMPLOYMENT CONSULTANTS ]

These modules complement the Handbook on Community Living and Employment.

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