



# Imagine the Possibilities: A Path to Employment Success

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Sean Roy - TransCen

# Today's Agenda

- Why are we talking employment?
- Employment: Background and possibilities
- Seeing things in a new way
- Preparing for employment success
- Address concerns: Social Security benefits
- Action steps
- Questions and connections



Remember to use your worksheet as we move along

# WORKSHEET QUESTION 1

What do you hope adult life will look like for your family member?



What do you hope adult life will look like for your son or daughter?

What is your son or daughter's greatest skill or attribute?

What is your greatest concern when thinking about employment for your son or daughter?

What do you need to feel hopeful and energized about your son or daughter's employment future?

Based on the information in this workshop, what are 3 action steps you will take to help start your son or daughter on the path to employment success?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

# Today, People with Disabilities...



# But There is Still Work to be Done...

**There is still a long way to go before people with disability experience equality of opportunity in the US.**

Employment rates

Poverty

Housing options

Social, recreational,  
relationships

A respected voice

Determine own futures



# Employment: So Much Is Possible

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# 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

# “Employment First”

**It is the policy of the state that opportunities for integrated, competitive employment shall be given the highest priority for working age individuals with developmental disabilities, regardless of the severity of their disabilities.**

*California Assembly Bill No. 1041 (2013)*

- **Individual** – Not in a group or enclave
- **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



# Why Should Your Family Member Work?

**“The growth in his personal development, confidence and maturity became apparent very soon after he started working. Everyone in his family took notice and was delighted with the happy adult my son had become.”**

*– Bay Area Parent –*

It is what is expected of adults

Socialization

Self-worth (dignity)

Purpose

Money

Promotes mental health

**Because they can!**

# New Reality

- More attention to health and safety
- More time in front of a computer or device
- Limited access to supports for periods of time?

**Certain job sectors will bounce back and employees will be needed.**





# Seeing Your Family Member in a New Way

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# How do We Define Expectations?

## **“Expectations”**

are a belief that someone will or should achieve something; that something will happen or is likely to happen in the future.

## **“High Expectations”**

are the belief that a person with a disability (or other barrier) can achieve the same life and have the same life choices as everyone else.

# Where Do Low Expectations Come From?

- Society's perceptions about the impact of disability
- Feelings about having a family member with a disability
- What we are told by others

**The secret is seeing that people with disabilities can do great things, and not letting other people's ideas impact your family member's ability to make lives for themselves.**

# The Importance of Having High Expectations

**Families set the bar for how the rest of the world sees their family member with a disability.**

- Avoiding restrictive programs or placements
- Lives lived in the community
- Lives based on the dreams your family member has for themselves
- Seeing that risk is good and failure can be constructive

A person is shown from the waist down, balancing on a dark wooden railing. They are wearing light-colored, speckled athletic pants and light-colored sneakers with a black swoosh logo. Their hands are held out to the sides for balance. The background features a lush green forest and a rocky mountain peak under a cloudy sky.

# The Balancing Act



Patience is Key



# What is Success?

Think of a couple things that you would not be successful at on your first try.

**Success in employment is an ongoing process and will look different for everyone.**

- Hours worked
- Tasks
- Tolerance
- Recognize and celebrate progress!!



## WORKSHEET QUESTION 2

# What is your family member's greatest skill or attribute?



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## HELPFUL TOOL

# Positive Personal Profile

### Positive Personal Profile

The Positive Personal Profile is a tool the job seekers, their families, or employment professionals can use to:

- Help see past the challenges of having a disability and put the focus on positive attributes
- Help inventory those attributes
- Help identify need supports or additional skill building
- Help to prepare for a job interview by finding key points to help “sell yourself” to an employer

Name:

Dreams & Goals	Skills & Knowledge
Learning Styles	Interests & Talents
Positive Personality Traits	Values
Environmental Preferences	Dislikes, Quirks, Idiosyncrasies
Work Experiences	Support Systems

List your features:

Potential jobs to explore:

# Building a Vision Statement

<https://hdi.uky.edu/employment-checklists>



**Andy Meredith, High School Senior**

## **Strengths**

*Social  
Determined  
Shows initiative  
Hard working  
Independent  
Musical  
Creative*

## **Areas I need help:**

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

**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*



# Preparing for Employment Success

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# The Power of Work Experiences

**One of the best predictors of employment success for people with disabilities is having meaningful work experiences while in high school.**

- Informational interview
- Job Shadowing
- Volunteering
- Internships
- Paid entry-level job

# Using Your Networks

Use the people you know to help find work experience opportunities.

- Friends
- Family
- Places you do business
- Neighbors
- People you are in clubs with, worship with, or serve with



# Building Responsibility

**Finding ways for young people to have responsibilities helps them be good employees.**

- Chores
- School work
- Soft Skills
- It's OK for young people to take risks and to experience failure. The goal is to have them give a good effort.



# Getting Involved



# School and Employment

**The high school and transition years are the perfect time to focus school programs on preparing for employment.**

- Are skills needed for work included as goals in the IEP?
- Career exploration
- Functional skills and soft skills
- Work experiences

*Quick Tip: Parent advocates can help coach you on asking for employment-focused activities in the IEP.*

# Consider ALL Possible Supports



- Only 25% of persons with I/DD will access formal services
- Consider community-based options, technology solutions, and personal relationships as possible employment supports



# Discussing Your Concerns

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# Having Questions or Concerns is Normal

**When thinking about a real job in the community for your family member, is there anything that makes you worried or concerned?**

- Vulnerability
- Safety
- Can they do the job?
- Who will hire them?
- Will they lose benefits?

## WORKSHEET QUESTION 3

What is your greatest concern when thinking about employment for your family member?



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# Myths about Employment

**Misinformation and misunderstanding can hold us back from considering employment.**

- People with disabilities don't work fast enough (MYTH)
- Employees with disabilities won't be accepted by co-workers (MYTH)
- Sheltered work is safer than community jobs (MYTH)
- People who leave workshops lose their friends (MYTH)
- People with significant disabilities don't need to work (MYTH)

*Don Lavin – Strengths at Work*

# Social Security Benefits: Myths and Resources

## MYTHS

- Getting students on SSI will take care of everything
- People who choose work will lose disability and healthcare benefits
- People can live independently in the community on what SSI provides

**Disability Benefits 101**  
working with a disability in California

Sign In | Register | What's This? | En español

Search

Home | Your Situation | Programs | Calculators | Glossary | News | Partners

**Disability Benefits 101** gives you tools and information on health coverage, benefits, and employment. You can plan ahead and learn how work and benefits go together. > More

**Your Situation**  
Take a personal approach to benefits planning. Find information that applies to you.

- **Going to Work**  
Planning to work? Find support for going to work and learn how a job can affect your benefits.
- **Young People and Benefits**  
Learn how to manage school, work, and benefits. Includes tips for parents.
- **Asset Building**  
Find out about programs and strategies that can help you save up money and plan for the future.

**Programs**  
Just the facts: Get details about benefit programs.

- **Cash Benefits**  
Learn about benefits that can help you meet your basic needs.
- **Health Care Coverage**  
Explore many health coverage options, from public and private sources.
- **Work Programs**  
Learn how state and federal programs can support your career plans.

**Calculators**

- **Benefits and Work Calculator**  
What will happen to your income, benefits, and health coverage if you go to work? You can use the Benefits and Work Calculator to find out how a job may affect your total income and your health coverage.
- **School and Work Calculator**  
Young people with disabilities can use the School and Work Calculator to find out how a job can affect their cash benefits and health coverage - and how staying in school

**In the News**

- **Medicare Open Enrollment**  
Medicare open enrollment is from October 15 until December 7
- **Starting July 1, You Can Get Up to 8 Weeks of Paid Family Leave**  
California's Paid Family Leave program is expanding to give up to 8 weeks of benefits per year.
- **Coronavirus/COVID-19 Resources**

**Get Expert Help**

SSI and SSDI	+
Medi-Cal	+
IHSS	+
Medicare	+

<https://ca.db101.org>



## WORKSHEET QUESTION 4

What do you need to feel hopeful and energized about your family member's employment future?



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# Action Steps: Getting Started

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## WORKSHEET QUESTION 5

Based on the information in this workshop, what are 3 action steps you will take to help start your family member on the path to employment success?



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# Takeaways

1. Have high expectations and set a vision for employment
2. Celebrate and cultivate strengths and interests
3. Recognize challenges and address them
4. As a family member, find the information and support you need

# Questions



# Contact Information

Omar Gomez

Harbor Regional Center

[Omar.Gomez@harborrc.org](mailto:Omar.Gomez@harborrc.org)

(310)543-0142