

Introduction to Employment and Community First CHOICES

FOR DIRECT SUPPORT PROFESSIONALS





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AbilityFirst

**DISABILITY IS A MATTER OF
PERCEPTION. IF YOU CAN
DO JUST ONE THING WELL,
YOU'RE NEEDED BY
SOMEONE.**

MARTINA NAVRATILOVA

Employment First: Important Starting Points

- People with intellectual or developmental disabilities **will want to work** if they understand how it could be possible and realize they can find work that they will enjoy
- People with intellectual or developmental disabilities **are capable** of work, with the right job match and supports
- Companies **will hire** people with intellectual or developmental disabilities to work for them if they understand the contribution a person can make
- People with intellectual or developmental disabilities **can and should** earn at least minimum wage

Community First: Important Starting Points

- People with intellectual or developmental disabilities **belong** in our schools, workplaces, neighborhoods and communities...with the rest of us
- Being part of the community means you are **known and valued** by other community members
- Every person has **gifts and abilities** that bring value to others who appreciate and benefit from those gifts and abilities
- People who don't have disabilities will want to get to know and have relationships with people who have disabilities, if we create and support **opportunities** for people to connect with each other



**OPPORTUNITIES
ARE USUALLY
DISGUISED AS
HARD WORK, SO
MOST PEOPLE
DON'T RECOGNISE
THEM**

- Ann Landers

Those who believe they
can do something and
those who believe they
can't are both right

Henry Ford

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Don't Under-Estimate the Positive Impact You Can Have

Sometimes the people whom we've known for only a short amount of time have a bigger impact on us than those we've known forever.



Help People Be As **Self-Reliant** As Possible

- More paid services **do not** equal better quality of life
- The goal of everything we do should be to **reduce people's reliance on paid services** by helping them be self-reliant
- Our goal should also be to help people develop a wider circle of relationships with other **people they can count on** - people who are not paid to be in their lives
- We should **celebrate** people needing less support from us as a result of the services we've provided to them – and redirect our time to other people waiting for services

Dignity of Risk

- Too much focus on **safety at all costs** or **safety above everything else** can cause us to restrict people's opportunities to grow
- **45 years ago**, Bob Perske wrote about dignity of risk, saying:
“Denying people with intellectual and developmental disabilities exposure to normal risks has a damaging effect on both their sense of human dignity and their personal development...The normal taking of risks in life is necessary for normal human growth and development.”
[1972]

Planned and Reasonable Risks Have a Place in All of Our Lives

- Too much focus on eliminating risk creates a ***barrier to social inclusion*** and a ***barrier to an interesting and productive life***.
- Every opportunity contains risks – and ***a life without risk is a life without opportunities***, without quality, without change.
- We must recognize that life and some degree of ***reasonable risk*** are inseparable.

SUCCESS AGAINST ALL ODDS

**SUCCESS
IS THE SUM OF
SMALL EFFORTS,
REPEATED
DAY IN &
DAY OUT.**

- R. Collier

Services Available in Employment and Community First CHOICES

There are 34 different services including:

- 14 different services to support community employment
- 3 services to support community participation and involvement, and to support people to develop and keep relationships with people who are not paid staff
- Services that support a person with an intellectual or developmental disability to continue to live with family or to move into their own home or apartment
- Services that support the family of a person with an intellectual or developmental disability who is living with their family
- And a variety of other services to help people with specific goals and needs

Your training will provide you with a in-depth understanding of the specific services you will be providing.

Learn Your Job But Remember:
A Commitment to Help the People You Support
Achieve the Best Life Possible is Most Important

**Unless someone like you
cares a whole awful lot,
Nothing is going to get better.
It's not.**

—Dr. Seuss, *The Lorax*



**WHEN PEOPLE ASK,
“WHAT DO YOU DO?”**

**ANSWER:
“WHATEVER IT
TAKES”**

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