

Roles Based Planning Foundational Discussions Tool

Person's Name: _____

Completion Date: _____

Completed By: _____

People Who Attended Planning Meeting and/or Who Contributed to the Creation of this Document

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INTRODUCTION

OVERVIEW

The purpose of this document is to build a common philosophical foundation and vision amongst network members by providing key information and stimulating critical discussion about topics important to each person's future. As such, it is important that facilitator's be well versed in the following topics and prepared to explain supporting rationales:

- Impact of negative societal stereotypes
- Societal expectations of all people
- Impact of expectations upon personal growth and accomplishment
- Identification of each person's most pressing needs
- Constructive time use versus filler activities
- Valued versus devalued roles
- Relationship facilitation principles
- Career search and employment support principles

At the beginning of each section, key messages surrounding each topic have also been included for the facilitator's benefit.

PREWORK OBJECTIVES

- Build trust and rapport with individual
- Determine person's current schedule, likes, dislikes, and aspirations
- Determine network composition
- Determine which network member(s) have the most influence within the group
- Determine current support for SRV principles for each network member
- Determine reasons behind fears and resistance to SRV for each network member where this applies
- Determine who the person trusts the most and wants invited to their meeting
- Identify who (if anyone) should not be invited to attend the planning meeting

WHY IS DETERMINING EACH PERSON'S MOST PRESSING NEEDS SO IMPORTANT?

- People with developmental disabilities are the second most rejected/ devalued population within today's society
- Rampant negative stereotypes have existed about people with developmental disabilities throughout history and have even been used as rationales for exterminating them
- Today's most common negative stereotypes include: child, dangerous, incompetent, having nothing to offer, better off with their own kind, suffering and being a drain on the economy. Such stereotypes are frequently held in the minds of network members, support staff, entire agencies, and community members, and pose strong barriers to inclusion.

- Where networks maintain normative expectations and an optimistic vision for each person's future, their success in life consistently emerges as far superior to those where such assumptions and expectations are not maintained
- Expectations frequently become self-fulfilling prophecies, for better or worse, i.e. two people starting from an identical place will emerge very differently as adults when raised and treated with different sets of expectations
- People with disabilities are prejudged and treated in accord with prevailing negative stereotypes in virtually all circumstances i.e. they are rarely treated or approached as unique adult individuals, nor assumed to be competent or have anything to offer
- People generally look for information which reinforces what they already believe about marginalized groups. When isolated examples that contradict stereotypes are encountered, they are generally written off as 'an exception to the rule' since it is far easier to hold on to what you already believe than change your entire way of thinking
- If we are not realists about what the majority of society thinks, we cannot be effective in combating prejudice nor help people become valued and socially included within today's society. Failing to accomplish this objective, leaves the entire population extremely vulnerable to political and economic priorities
- Given the limited support dollars and support hours available, it is critical that available resources be used in ways that will make the most difference possible
- Everything we pursue with people with developmental disabilities is strongly influenced by societal beliefs and stereotypes. As such, achieving a better life in the community cannot be accomplished without accompanying efforts to dismantle prejudices and disprove negative stereotypes over time and through practical example
- Community education is not an effective means of shifting societal perceptions about people with developmental disabilities when used in isolation. Without widespread, positive, practical examples that prove negative stereotypes wrong, our efforts to help people with disabilities have a better life in the community will be severely diminished in impact.

COMMON PRESSING NEEDS OF PEOPLE WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES - i.e. things that will make the most positive difference in opening new opportunities, helping them achieve a better life within the community, and disproving negative societal stereotypes about the population as a whole.

- Full time employment
- Improving nature of employment roles i.e. valued versus devalued roles
- Higher wages
- Interview skills
- Advanced education
- Educational credentials that will help in obtaining better employment and in career advancement
- Having reciprocal friendships with people in the community

- Expanding social network size, involvement and opportunities gained through network connections
- Valued and meaningful community involvement within socially contributing roles i.e. – volunteer, club member, community association member etc.
- Literacy skills
- Appropriate social and communication skills
- Augmentative communication assistance
- Travel independence
- Personal appearance/ image enhancement

LEGITIMATE PURVIEW OF WEEKDAY SUPPORT PROGRAMS IN MEETING THESE NEEDS

- Determining work related interests and most valued roles through which each can be realistically explored
- Career search in pursuit of FT employment, valued roles and higher wages
- Career support within inclusive settings
- Teaching/ providing tools and skills to increase work independence
- Facilitating natural supports within the workplace
- Researching and providing logistical support to attend work related social events
- Researching, referring, and providing logistical support related to career education, literacy, and communication assistance
- Educational upgrading within inclusive settings
- Researching, connecting and supporting within valued volunteer roles – note: volunteerism should not be considered an acceptable substitute for employment
- Assisting to increase travel independence related to work

LEGITIMATE PURVIEW OF HOME SUPPORT IN MEETING THESE NEEDS

- Establishing as a regular within community environments, and socially contributing roles, that are related to peoples' interests
- Intentional relationship facilitation within the community
- Providing logistical support necessary to meet and entertain friends
- Providing logistical and supplemental support (where required) surrounding the pursuit of continuing educational courses, hobbies, and leisure interests within inclusive settings
- Providing logistical support to participate in retirement related activities – including employment and volunteerism where these are desired
- Teaching home living, home management, and yard maintenance skills
- Increasing independence surrounding personal care and providing ongoing supplementary support where required
- Assisting to improve personal image - including shopping for image enhancing apparel and attention to personal hygiene
- Improving money, budgeting, banking and shopping skills
- Teaching and increasing independent travel skills

- Logistical and follow up support surrounding medical appointments and health concerns
- Providing support surrounding health and fitness related activities

PROBLEMS ASSOCIATED WITH MIXING LEGITIMATE PROGRAM PURVIEWS

- Non-normative approach makes person appear incompetent
- Strongly reinforces common negative stereotypes about people with disabilities i.e. child, incapable, nothing to offer, drain on economy etc.
- Person becomes confused about what is normative within society
- Person is set up to fail within the community i.e. they remain unaware of societal expectations and are never prepared to be successful
- Lower and non-normative expectations impair personal growth i.e. person lives down to low expectations. Eventually this leads to the creation of a viscous cycle in which lack of accomplishment leads to ever further decreases in expectations until a point is reached where the person is treated as a child and has few, if any, remaining expectations placed upon them
- Importance of work is not taken seriously i.e. treated as hobbies, or a choice, versus a societal expectation and necessary source of income
- Person and network frequently shift to expecting the person to be entertained by paid supports instead of pursuing a career and other worthwhile objectives
- Focus of support shifts to filling schedules, keeping busy and being entertained rather than pursuing things that will make an important difference in the person's life
- Person becomes increasingly socially isolated, devalued, and dependent due to lack of valued roles, social contribution, and reinforcement of negative stereotypes
- Person loses significant opportunities for their future
- Rather than making a major difference in a few important areas of the person's life, supports tend to become minimally, or non-effective in making any difference in any area, due to over diversification of efforts
- Support staff become confused about their role and demoralized by lack of progress leading to increased turnover
- Support agencies attempt to become all things to all people, end up standing for nothing, and accomplishing even less

PART ONE – THE PAST

Why is this topic important?

- Provides an understanding of how this person came to be who they are today
- Provides an understanding of the role that environmental influences and expectations may have had in determining who this person is today
- Provides awareness of past experiences and what the person liked/ disliked about each
- Permits us to build on success and prevent repeating past mistakes

What events have had the most impact upon shaping who this person is today?

What kinds of expectations was this person raised with i.e. what did family members believe about what this person should be doing doing as an adult?

What have been this person's most significant challenges? How have these challenges been addressed and what have been the impacts upon shaping who they are today?

What are the best things that have ever happened to this person?

What are the worst things that have ever happened to this person?

To what extent has this person's life been spent within segregated/ congregated/ special services or activities and what have been the impacts?

What valued roles has this person earned in the past (*as defined by societal perceptions versus the necessity of a role*)?

How has the presence or absence of valued roles shaped who this person is today, self expectations and expectations of others?

Where did this person go to school, what sort of education have they had, and what skills did they emerge with compared to other students?

Where has this person lived in the past?

What sort of work or volunteer roles has this person had in the past?

What life experiences has this person missed that most people ordinarily experience by the current age of this individual?

PART TWO – RELATIONSHIPS

Key Messages

- On average only 12-15% of adults with developmental disabilities have any friends in their lives if family, paid staff and other people with disabilities are not included in the calculation
- The overwhelming majority of people with developmental disabilities report feeling incredibly socially isolated. Self-advocates consistently identify having

more friends in the community as the single most important factor that would make a positive difference in their lives.

- Many people with disabilities are so desperate for friends that they confuse someone who is “friendly” as being their friend - even when they do not know their name. Others overwhelm people who come into their lives by making numerous calls to them simply because there is no one else in their lives.
- Imagine what it would be like not to have any friends and be surrounded by people who are paid to be there?
- Friends are critical to feeling valued and building self esteem .
- Having friends and social networks are strongly beneficial in opening new opportunities for the person, providing employment leads, introducing to other people, providing advocacy, role modeling and just plain enjoying each other’s company.
- Having friends in the community is one of the most effective means of tearing down negative stereotypes.
- People with disabilities and/ or other marginalized groups with whom they are frequently associated can be legitimate friends and this should be supported; however they cannot provide the same opportunities nor impact in terms of advocacy and opening new opportunities for the person in the community.
- Paid staff are not the same as friends – there is a strong power differential in the relationship and they are unable to provide stability due to incredible staff turnover rates.
- Volunteers are not the same as friends because they generally approach people with disabilities from a place of charity or wanting to do a good thing versus based upon valuing them and having something in common.
- Being in the community and being a valued part of it are two very different things – friends and valued, contributing roles are what have proven to make the most difference

What approaches have helped people the most in developing friendships with people in the community?

- Meeting people who share the same interests through network connections
- Establishing as a regular i.e. same day, same place, same time, over time within environments where the same people attend on a consistent schedule and share a common interest
- Meeting people through employment and volunteerism
- Attending work and volunteer related social functions
- Joining inclusive classes, church, hobby and interest groups
- Inviting acquaintances out for lunch or coffee
- Active/ intentional relationship facilitation by support people i.e. getting to know community members, inviting them to join person, guiding conversations to what they have in common, and eventually asking the community member to take the person out on their own to do something of shared interest
- Making sure people have a valid and contributing role within all activities and environments that they attend regularly

- Always pursuing relationship facilitation in a 1:1 support ratio – shared support virtually never works when pursuing this objective

Who are the people that this person spends the most time with?

What other people does this person see on a regular basis?

Which of these people are not family members, do not have disabilities, nor are paid staff?

What kind of relationship does this person have with family members, how often do they visit?

Who are this person's best advocates?

Are there any people from the past that this person would like to renew a relationship with? If so, does anyone know how to get in touch with them?

Does this person currently have a boyfriend/ girlfriend/ spouse? If not, have they in the past? If not, why not, and what have been the impacts?

What are the barriers to strengthening this person's network of relationships?

What interests does this person have that other community members share and which could be use as a basis for connecting?

What other ideas do people have about what can help strengthen this person's existing relationships and help them to make more friends within the community?

PART THREE – SOCIAL CONTRIBUTION

Key Messages

- People with developmental disabilities are heavily stereotyped as being incompetent, having little to offer and as being a drain on the economy
- Many people with disabilities have not been raised with an expectation that they would one day need to work
- Many service providers further reinforce such stereotypes by entertaining people and pursuing leisure instead of employment and contributing roles
- Employment is not a choice nor a right, it is a societal expectation, unless one is rich and able to fully support oneself financially
- Few people in today's society like the idea of anyone being given a free ride when they are capable of working
- People who do not work within the full extent of their abilities will predictably be further rejected by society based upon this factor alone i.e. the unemployed, underemployed, and homeless all face similar rejection for this reason

- Leisure has its place, but is generally conducted during evenings and on the weekends for everyone else. During the day, adults are generally expected to be at work, or in school. When we pursue leisure during the day, we only contribute further to reinforcing stereotypes that people with disabilities have nothing to contribute and are a drain on the economy.
- A large part of our identity and what other people's first impression of us will be is based upon what we do for a living
- Economic crisis has already started – people can expect to get less support and proportionally less funding in years ahead; we need to be prepared for this by having supplementary income sources.
- Most people with developmental disabilities are unemployed, or work only a few hours per week.
- Most people with developmental disabilities who do work, are employed within devalued roles that nobody else wants to perform, have no future, nor opportunity for advancement e.g. cleaning, recycling, dishwashing etc.
- There is a big difference between having a job and having a career – wages, opportunities, relationships, advancement, respect etc.
- Valued employment is one of the most effective ways to make friends, network, and open more opportunities for a better future.

What does this person currently enjoy doing?

What does this person not like doing?

What is this person good at i.e. what are their marketable skills?

What sort of work has his person done in the past (include both paid employment and volunteerism)?

What work environment characteristics would provide the best match for this person?

What are the most valued work roles related to this person's interests that people envision as being positive yet realistic to obtain?

What types of courses or training would help increase this person's career prospects or advancement opportunities?

What other ideas do people have about how to improve this person's work situation in terms of type of work, hours worked, wages, advancement etc?

PART FOUR – OVERCOMING BARRIERS

Key Messages

- Barriers can be addressed in empowering and respectful ways
- Barriers to plan success must be addressed within the creation of any realistic plan if it is to succeed
- People often get immobilized by barriers and accept them, rather than trying to find ways to minimize their negative impacts or overcome them
- Brainstorming is a powerful tool in generating ideas to overcome challenges

What are the most significant barriers to this person becoming more valued and having a better future in the community e.g. communication ability, work qualifications, academic qualifications, social skills, image/

appearance, transportation, financial barriers, medical considerations, where they live etc.

What has proved to be the most help in addressing each of these barriers in the past?

What approaches are most effective in teaching this person something new?

What ideas do people have about what else can be done to help overcome current challenges and barriers?

PART FIVE – CURRENT SCHEDULE

Key Messages

- The content of a person's current schedule has a lot to say about expectations that others have had for this person.
- Content of people's schedule frequently lies in complete contradiction to both their own vision, and to societal norms.
- Mismatches in times during which activities are pursued by the broader community, reinforce negative stereotypes about people with disabilities as being incompetent, having nothing to offer etc. e.g. pursuing leisure during the day instead of during evenings and on weekends.
- Content of peoples' schedules goes a long way in disproving or reinforcing negative stereotypes
- In order to make a positive difference in peoples' lives, schedules must be grounded in an ambitious vision, be effective in addressing their most pressing needs, and guide the provision of intense supports.

What does this person currently do on a regular basis i.e. what is their current schedule?

Which of these activities is beneficial to this person's future and why?

Which of these activities will not make a big difference for this person's future and/ or reinforces negative stereotypes about people with disabilities?

Which of these activities is legitimate to pursue, but is currently being supported during the wrong times of day i.e. which activities do not fit within legitimate program purviews?

Which activities should be stopped, reduced or moved to a different time of day so that support can focus more on pursuing things that will have the most positive impact for this person's future?

What other ideas do people have about how this person's schedule could be altered to ensure support is used to accomplish the most good possible in the limited time available?

PART SIX – GOALS & ACTION PLAN

Why this topic is important?

- Ideas must be translated into establishing priorities and taking action if we are to make a difference in this person's life
- The manner in which goals are pursued can make all the difference in their success
- Any interest can be pursued in ways that will benefit or be harmful to this person's future and how people view them

Based upon everything we have talked about, what do people see as the three to five most pressing priorities that need to be addressed for this person to have a more promising future?

What are the targets that we want to accomplish in relation to each identified priority/ goal over the upcoming year?

What are the initial action steps related to each goal, that need to be completed within the next month to get the ball rolling? – be specific