Section 1

Career Planning Begins with Informed Choice

How do you define Informed Choice?

What role does informed-choice play in Self-Determination?
Choosing and choice making are not the same: Asking "what do you want for lunch?" is not self-determination, Martin Agran, et al., Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation 33 (2020) 77-88.
Section 2

Informed Choice Leads to Self-Determination

Choice Making —
A central element of self-determination

- Self-determined individuals make choices, act on those choices, experience results, and then make new choices
- Providing choice-making opportunities leads to greater engagement and motivation
- Promoting choice opportunities is considered a universal right

Agran, M. 2008

The road to success is paved with informed decision-making, self-determination, and self-advocacy skills

Self-Awareness

Knowledge of Rights & Responsibilities

Communication skills

Understanding of Disability

Career Interests

Where do I want to live?
74% OF THOSE WHO INDICATE THEIR DESIRE FOR A JOB DO NOT HAVE COMMUNITY EMPLOYMENT AS A GOAL IN THEIR SERVICE PLAN (Hall et al., 2011)

Self-awareness
- Interests, strengths & preferences
- Goals & dreams
- Support / accommodation needs
- Characteristics of one’s disability
- Responsibilities

Knowledge of rights
- Personal rights
- Human rights
- Rights as a citizen
- Educational rights
- Steps to advocate for change
- Knowledge of resources

Communication
- Assertiveness
- Negotiation
- Body language
- Use of assistive technology
- Listening
- Compromise / persuasion

Leadership
- Knowledge of group’s rights
- Advocating for others or for causes
- Knowledge of resources
- Organizational participation
Defining Informed Choice

Informed choice in employment entails:

- Knowledge and experience with appropriately high expectations for full community integration
- Valued social roles
- Normative routines and rhythms appropriate to the person’s age


The Role of Informed Choice

1. Based on principle of presumed competence
2. Encompasses the dignity of risk
3. More likely to choose integrated option
4. Due to disability, are not aware of employment options
5. Informed choice will lead to competitive integrated employment


Section 3

Components of informed choice
Supported Decision-Making (SDM) is a great alternative to guardianship — it provides a dependable, formalized process for people with disabilities when they need to make a decision. SDM is flexible and can change with their needs. It will give them more independence and freedom.

SDM is a way to get help making choices. SDM means that individuals make their own choices. They can choose family, friends, staff, or whoever they want to help make their choices. SDM is a way to get help making choices. SDM means that individuals make their own choices. They can choose family, friends, staff, or whoever they want to help make their choices.

Scenario for Breakout

Lester is 24 years old and lives with his grandmother. He has been in Day Hab since exiting high school and has never had paid employment or volunteered. His grandmother is very protective of him, and he often defers to her before answering even basic questions. Lester’s grandmother relies on her SSDI and his SSI as income. Lester’s grandmother is not his legal guardian.

During his most recent Life Plan meeting, when Lester was asked about his interest in competitive integrated employment, he looked to his grandmother for guidance.
Breakout | Informed Choice

Based on the component your group has been assigned, answer the following regarding the LP meeting with Lester:

• How will you ensure this component in Lester’s meeting?
• What might get in the way?
• What strategies or techniques might you implement to improve this component?

Section 4

Making an Informed Decision

Identify options

Identify the decision to be made

Know yourself

Gather information - explore alternatives

Evaluate options

Select the best option
It seems so easy, what might get in the way?

- Lack of experience and knowledge
- Lack of, or inadequate training
- Work overload — High caseloads, documentation, staff shortages
- Expectations — Parents, job seeker, VSP
- Bias and distortions

Section 5

Cognitive Bias & Informed Decision-Making

What are the sources of your beliefs?

- Region of the country
- Society at large
- Religious Beliefs
- The law
- Employer/Co-workers
- Family/Friends
- Social Media
- YOU
- Social Media
- Employer/Co-workers
- Family/Friends
- YOU
- Religious Beliefs
- The law
- Region of the country
“The whole department knows that this is how Bob behaves.”

“The first assessment looks good; do I really need any more?”

“I asked everyone who knows Bob and they all agree with me.”

“Bob did awesome in his CBA; I don’t want to do any job.”

Bandwagon effect
Update of beliefs and ideas increase the more they have been adopted by others.

Confirmation bias
Focusing on information that only confirms existing preconceptions.

Halo or horn effect
Our overall impression of a person influences how we feel and think about their character.

Illusion of validity
Overestimating your ability to make accurate predictions, especially when data appears to tell a coherent “story.”

FLEX to do better

Focus Within:
• Tune into your emotions
• Recognize how your experience has shaped your perspective
• Stick to fact, and don’t make assumptions
• Turn frustration into curiosity

Learn about others:
• Recognize how their experiences have shaped their perspective
• Consider how they might see the situation and what’s important to them
• Think about how your actions may have impacted them

Engage in dialogue:
• Ask open-ended questions
• Listen to understand, not to debate
• Offer your views without defensiveness or combativeness
• Disentangle impact from intent
• Avoid blame, think contribution

“Expand” the options:
• Brainstorm possible solutions
• Be flexible about different ways to reach a common goal
• Experiment and evaluate

Section 6

Informed Decision-Making and Career Planning
Informed Decision-Making Throughout Career Planning

Types of Career Exploration

Experiential Opportunities
- Work readiness instruction
- Informational interview
- Job shadow/Virtual job shadow
- Business tours
- Community assessments/Situational assessment
- Volunteering
- Mentoring/Internships

Career Exploration
- O*NET

Breakout Exercise │ Manual

Group 1: Amanda
Group 2: Ben
Group 3: Leon
Group 4: Julie
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