



**Career Assessment:  
Informed Choice  
Series 2**

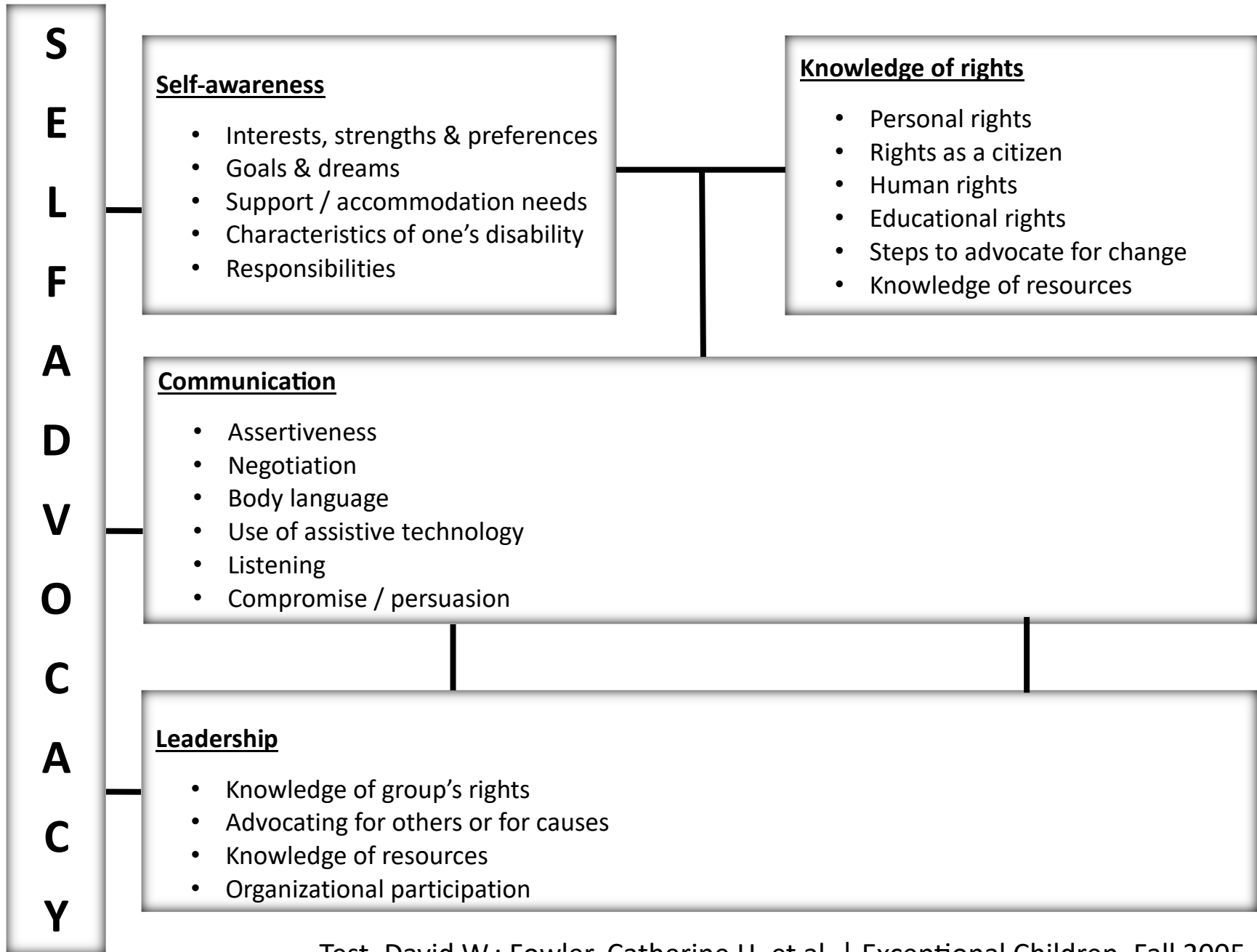
**Innovations in Employment Supports**

---

**[info@eleversity.org](mailto:info@eleversity.org)**

**(585) 340-2051**





Test, David W.; Fowler, Catherine H. et al. | Exceptional Children, Fall 2005

Career Assessment: Informed Choice

**Nonacademic Behaviors Associated with Post-School Employment and Education**

**Construct 1: Knowledge of strengths and limitations**

	Person tells someone about his or her strengths.
	Person tells someone what he or she does well.
	Person tells someone his or her limitations.
	Person tells someone what he or she has trouble doing.
	Person expresses accurate information about his or her academic strengths.
	Person expresses accurate information about his or her academic limitations.
	Person identifies academic situations where he or she will likely experience success.

**Construct 2: Actions related to strengths and limitations**

	Person finds situations to use his or her strengths.
	Person is aware of his or her strengths, and seeks situations where strengths are utilized.
	Person finds situations where his or her limitations are minimized.
	Person knows his or her weaknesses and considers the weaknesses when making choices.
	Person creates new strategies to compensate for his or her limitations.

**Construct 3: Disability awareness**

	Person expresses an understanding of the word “disability.”
	Person tells someone he or she has a disability.
	Person tells someone accurate information about his or her disability.
	Person uses the least stigmatizing disability label that results in getting most support.
	Person expresses types of accommodations or supports needed for his or her disability.
	Person views disability as only one aspect of his or her life.
	Person views disability as a positive aspect of his or her life.
	Person talks to parents about his or her disability.

**Construct 4: Persistence**

	Person views not giving up in school as important.
	Person keeps working until he or she accomplishes a goal.
	Person utilizes different strategies as needed to continue staying on task.
	Person keeps working to achieve a goal, even when it becomes hard.
	Person learns from mistakes and does better next time.

**Construct 5: Proactive involvement**

	Person maintains one or more good friendships.
	Person successfully participates in small groups to complete projects.
	Person participates in community organizations, such as sports clubs or organized social groups.

## Career Assessment: Informed Choice

	Person successfully interacts with teachers, family, and other adults
<b>Construct 6: Goal setting and attainment</b>	
	Person defines the word “goal.”
	Person learns how to set a goal and make it happen.
	Person talks about the importance of having goals.
	Person expresses importance of having post-school goals that match his or her interests and skills.
	Person creates short-term goals to attain long-term goals.
	Person determines effectiveness of his or her plans to attain goals.
	Person adjusts plans to attain goals if they do <i>not</i> work.
	Person completes the first step of a goal, and then moves on to the next step.
	Person attains one goal, and then moves on to the next goal.
	Person attains at least one transition goal.
<b>Construct 7: Employment</b>	
	Person expresses wanting a job.
	Person expresses wanting a job that matches his or her career interests and skills.
	Person actively looks for a paid job.
	Person demonstrates job-readiness skills such as being on time, completing work as assigned, or working cooperatively.
	Person exhibits self-care habits, such as personal hygiene or clothing choices, to match career interests.
	Person successfully participates in a career technology or job-training program.
	Person has an unpaid job, such as working for a family member.
	Person has an unpaid internship or apprenticeship.
	Person has a paid job.
<b>Construct 8: Self-advocacy</b>	
	Person uses the Internet or other sources to understand his or her disability, legal rights, supports, or accommodations.
	Person identifies accommodations effective for him or her.
	Person identifies accommodations <i>ineffective</i> for him or her.
	Person requests a new accommodation when the first one was <i>not</i> effective.
	Person asks for support only when needed.
	Person talks during his or her IEP and/or Life Plan meeting.
	Person tells the support team his or her post-school and employment goals.
	Person discusses his or her present level of performance at the IEP and or Life Plan meeting.
	Student explains at the IEP meeting how his or her course of study will assist in achieving post-school goals.

## Career Assessment: Informed Choice

<b>Construct 9: Supports</b>	
	Person distinguishes between individuals who are a positive source of support from those who are <i>not</i> .
	Person identifies situations when support people are needed.
	Person identifies the support person needed for a specific situation.
	Person accepts help from support people when offered.
	Person only uses support people when needed, not to get out of doing things.
	Person maintains the support network by showing appreciation or reciprocity.
<b>Construct 10: Utilization of resources</b>	
	Person actively seeks people to help with a situation when the current support people <i>cannot</i> help.
	Person uses available support people at school or work.
	Person uses the Internet to access information for possible support services or community agencies.
	Person seeks assistance from community agencies.

Adapted from: McConnell, A., et al., Hammill Institute on Disabilities, *Identifying Nonacademic Behaviors Associated with Post-School Employment and Education*, Career Development and Transition for Exceptional Individual 36(3) 174-187.

### Informed Choice Checklist:

	The Individual is the focal point and the driving force.
	The choice must be offered in a manner that the Individual understands.
	The Individual has information, knowledge, and experience to weigh the pros and cons of various choices.
	The individual has been exposed to the reality of work (vs. non-work or segregated work).
	The experiences offered as a foundation for decision-making should be varied in terms of types of work/jobs and based on discovering what is important to the person using a person-centered assessment.
	The Individual has a meaningful choice.
	The individual is choosing among a range of feasible options and new options are created as needed.
	Service provider accepts the choice and the reasonable risks associated with the choice.
	Resources are available to support the choice and the choice is accepted and implemented.
	The Individual has the power, confidence, and authority to make a decision.
	The Individual has the appropriate supports to make decisions.
	This 'person-centered' team meets to identify opportunities for the focus person to develop personal relationships, participate in their community, increase control over their own lives, and develop the skills and abilities needed to achieve their goals.
	The team takes action to make sure that the strategies discussed in planning meetings are implemented.
	The Individual has the right to choose people to support their decision-making process.
	Where needed, choice is a part of Supported Decision-Making.
	The Individual receives ongoing advice and support and has the opportunity to modify the choice.
	The Individual is free to decide without undue pressure.
	Reasonable Accommodations are requested and available in the workplace.

**Informed Choice is generally considered to have the following components:**

	<p><b>The Individual is the focal point and the driving force:</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The individual’s career goals and paths drive the employment service process.</li><li>• The individual has control of resources, selecting providers, targeting outcomes, and deciding what is relevant.</li><li>• The Individual determines the degree of privacy, disclosure, outside participation, and personal effort they want to embrace in order to be employed. (Callahan, 2000).</li><li>• The individual is primary focus is on the individual and not the guardian.</li></ul>	
	<p><b>The choice must be offered in a manner that the Individual understands:</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Information about possibilities and opportunities must be available and understood. It must be:<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>(1) Presented in the person’s preferred language, including the use of Assistive Technology when needed,</li><li>(2) Address the capabilities of the individual involved in the choice making process,</li><li>(3) Be experientially based for people who need concrete experiences for learning and</li><li>(4) Presented by someone who is trusted by the person.</li></ol></li></ul>	
	<p><b>The Individual has information, knowledge, and experience:</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Individual has accurate information and knowledge to weigh the possible values and consequences of various choices. This means that the Individual has the opportunity to experience different types of work. This is true for everyone, but particularly critical for individuals who have difficulty with abstract concepts.</li><li>• The individual must be exposed to the reality of work (vs. non-work or segregated work). If someone has greatly limited life experiences, it’s not informed choice to tell him/her what the options are without being able to experience and understand the offered choices.</li><li>• The experiences offered as a foundation for decision-making should be varied in terms of types of work/jobs and based on discovering what is important to the person using a person-centered assessment.</li></ul>	

**The Individual has a meaningful choice:**

A choice is meaningful only if:

- (1) The individual is choosing among a range of feasible options and new options are created as needed
- (2) Service providers are willing to accept the choice and the reasonable risks associated with the choice
- (3) Resources are available to support the choice and the choice is accepted and implemented

**The Individual has the power, confidence, and authority to make a decision:**

“There are a variety of factors that can diminish individual’s ability to exercise control in their lives and achieve personal empowerment. Low societal expectations, lack of opportunity, learned helplessness, employers’ misperceptions, institutional bias and unresponsive bureaucracies all present challenges to consumer empowerment.” (Institute on Rehabilitation Issues, 2003). Nevertheless, law and regulations have made it clear that clients are the decision-makers of their rehabilitation.

**The Individual has the appropriate supports to make decisions:**

- It is a central requirement of the new HCBS Final Settings Rule.
- “In person centered planning, groups of people focus on an individual and that person’s vision of what they would like to do in the future. This ‘person-centered’ team meets to identify opportunities for the focus person to develop personal relationships, participate in their community, increase control over their own lives, and develop the skills and abilities needed to achieve these goals. (National Parent Center on Transition and Employment)
- These individuals take action to make sure that the strategies discussed in planning meetings are implemented” (Pacer, n.d.).



**The Individual has the right to choose people to support their decision-making process:**

- People with intellectual disabilities have the right to receive assistance from one or more trusted friends, family members, professionals, or advocates – to help them understand the situations they face and choices and options they have, so they can make their own decisions.
- This process mirrors what happens for most adults when they make decisions such as whether to get car repairs, sign legal documents or consent to medical procedures: they seek advice, input and information from friends, family or professionals who are knowledgeable about those issues, so they can make their own well-informed choices. (Terrill, Campanella, & Melda, 2014).

**Informed choice is a part of Supported Decision-Making:**

- The Supported Decision-Making movement developed as an alternative to Guardianship and now has broader application.
- It is a means “. . . through which people with disabilities use friends, family members and professionals to help them understand the situations and choices they face, so that they can make their own decisions without the need for a guardian” (Blank & Martinis, 2015).
- Informed choice as a part of Supported Decision Making has legal mandates beyond providing a framework as an alternative to Guardianship. It includes an affirmative right to be provided meaningful experientially based choices to enhance self-determination, independence, and improved life outcomes.

**The Individual receives ongoing advice and support and has the opportunity to modify the choice:**

- It is important that the Individual is in the driver’s seat and that they have the opportunity to make mistakes and to learn from that like everybody does.

	<b>The Individual is free to decide without undue pressure:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• No part of the service delivery system should be able to use its power or influence to persuade the individual to make a certain decision.</li><li>• The individual has the right to leave one provider and be served by another.</li><li>• Every opportunity should be made to minimize conflicts of interest, particularly on the part of the person who is helping the Individual make the decision. This is often unconscious on the part of human service providers (Gordon, 2014).</li></ul>	
	<b>Reasonable Accommodations:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• “A reasonable accommodation is any change in the workplace, or the way things are customarily done that provides an equal employment opportunity to an individual with a disability” (U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, n.d.).</li></ul>	

### 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.

Group 1 — Choice is meaningful to the person	G2 — Choice is understood by person	G3 — The person has the power, confidence, and authority to make decisions	G4 — Person has information, knowledge, and experience
<b><i>Based on the component your group has been assigned, answer the following regarding the LP meeting with Lester:</i></b>			
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?			

# Cognitive Bias



# What we think

Anchoring	Relying too much on initial pieces of information, which can limit further assessment.	“This first assessment looks good; do I really need any more?”
Bandwagon effect	Uptake of beliefs and ideas increases the more they have been adopted by others.	“The whole department knows that this is how Bob behaves.”
Confirmation bias	Focusing on information that only confirms existing preconceptions.	“I’ve asked everyone who knows Bob and they all agree with me.”
Halo or horn effect	Our overall impression of a person influences how we feel and think about their character.	“Bob was so great [vs. not great] to work with in CBPV, I don’t need to assess for more information.”
Illusion of validity	Overestimating our ability to make accurate predictions, especially when data appears to tell a coherent “story”.	“Bob did awesome in his CBA, I’m sure he can do any job.”

## **FLEX — A TOOL FOR LEVERAGING DIVERSITY AND FOSTERING INCLUSION**

**F**

### **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.

**L**

### **Learn about others:**

- Recognize how their experiences have shaped their perspective.
- Consider how they might see the situation and what is important to them.
- Think about how your actions may have impacted them.

**E**

### **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.

**X**

### **“eXpand” the options:**

- Brainstorm possible solutions.
- Be flexible about different ways to reach a common goal.
- Experiment and evaluate.
- Seek out diverse perspectives.

[HTTPS://WWW.IBICONCONSULTINGGROUP.COM/INSIGHT/HR-AS-STRATEGIC-DIVERSITY-PARTNERS/](https://www.ibiconsultinggroup.com/insight/hr-as-strategic-diversity-partners/)

<b>Group 1   Amanda</b>
<p>Amanda is 42 and lives with her elderly parents. She aged out of high school at age 21 with an IEP diploma in 2001. She immediately started work in a sheltered workshop and was there until 2015, when she transitioned to Day Hab and Comm Hab during the transformation. At that time, Amanda was asked if she was interested in employment, but she declined on the advice of her parents, who worry about her SSI and being alone in the community. Amanda has never had a competitive job, but has volunteered through Day Hab delivering Meals-On-Wheels. She reports that she doesn't like volunteering and so she won't like community employment. At every Life Plan meeting Amanda is asked if she's interested in getting a job, but she always declines.</p>
<p>Your group is assigned to support Amanda regarding vocational exploration.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What may be impacting Amanda's vocational decisions, including biases?</li><li>• What components of informed choice would you address to support informed decision-making?</li></ul>
<p>Notes:</p>
<b>Group 2   Ben</b>
<p>Ben attends half-day Day Hab, and half-day CBPV. He is 28, lives in an IRA, and has been in day services since leaving high school. Since Ben's housemate has gotten a job at the local theater he has been asking daily when he can also get a job at the theater. At his life plan meeting Ben announces he wants to get a job at theater. The residential manager states this is a good idea but Ben needs to work the same shift as his housemate to reduce the stress on staff. When SEMP staff ask Ben about his desire to work at the theater, Ben states he is smarter than his housemate and thus would be a better worker.</p>
<p>Your group is assigned to support Ben regarding vocational exploration.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What may be impacting Ben's vocational decisions, including biases?</li><li>• What components of informed choice would you address to support informed decision-making?</li></ul>
<p>Notes:</p>

Group 3   Leon
Leon is 25 years old and lives in an IRA. He uses a motorized wheelchair to get about and requires assistance for his personal care. Leon wants a job working in a professional setting, such as a bank or law firm. He has recently completed a certificate course in computer programming. Leon has completed Discovery and is recommended for job development. His job coach believes that Leon will be a very good employee but has not been able to find him an internship during his preferred hours of work, 9a-12p, due his need for personal supports. His job coach reports that he agrees with the SEMP team, who believe that Leon is not able to work due to his high support needs.
Your group is assigned to support Leon regarding job placement. <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What may be impacting Leon’s career planning, including biases?</li><li>• What components of informed choice would you address to support informed decision-making?</li></ul>
Notes:
Group 4   Julie
Julie is 23 years old and has been attending CBPV for the past 2 years. She has never held competitive work but has had 3 volunteer positions through CBPV and has performed well. The CBPV staff informs the SEMP staff that Julie is just amazing and will do well in any job. They further discourage a formal Discovery, stating that Julie is eager to get a job and will do awesome in anything as she is so motivated. When the SEMP provider asks about Julie’s career interests, the CBPV staff states she is interested in working with children but does not have experience. CBPV staff state that Julie is agreeable and will do anything.
Your group is assigned to support Julie regarding career planning. <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What may be impacting Julie’s vocational decisions, including biases?</li><li>• What components of informed choice would you address to support informed decision-making?</li></ul>
Notes: