

CHOICES IN TRANSITION TO CAREER DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

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What is Transition and Transition Services?

Transition: preparing youth for and moving youth from school to work and community life.

Transition Services: coordinated set of activities for students with disabilities that is designed within an outcome-oriented process which promotes movement from school to post-school activities (IDEA: §602(a)(30)(A))

The Ideal: “Best Practices”

- Professionals in the field of transition have identified several best practices to guide transition-related service delivery
 - Person-Centered Planning
 - Social Support (Family Involvement)
 - Inter-agency/disciplinary collaboration
 - Skill Development
 - Chadsey-Rusch & Rusch (1996)

Challenges to Implementing Legal Mandates based on “Best Practices”

- LEAs differ in ability to implement best practices (Hasazi, Furney, & DeStefano, 1999)
- Differences in implementation are associated with the degree of “urbanicity” of schools (Newman, 1992) and funding formulas
- Top 20% of high school graduates are world class. The middle 40% are capable of completing college. The bottom 40% are in very bad educational shape due to poverty, disability, and living in violent neighborhoods (Hodgkinson, 1993, cited in Halpern, 1998)
- Community resources are inconsistent and at times limited
- Networks of support (consumers, families, friends) have limited information regarding rights and resources
- Community members have limited knowledge of rights and mandates (Hernandez, Keys, & Balcazar, 1999)
- Options (competitive employment, lifelong learning, independent living) are limited

Reality in Urban Environments

- Unstable neighborhoods
 - Over committed families (multiple jobs, multiple dependents)
 - Poor housing and transportation options
 - Limited communication/collaboration between social service & advocacy organizations (ILC's, VR, Rehab hospitals, schools)
- Under-resourced schools, ILCs & community rehab hospitals
 - Stressed organizations have a difficult time of implementing “Best Practices” strategies

Reality in Urban Environments (continued)

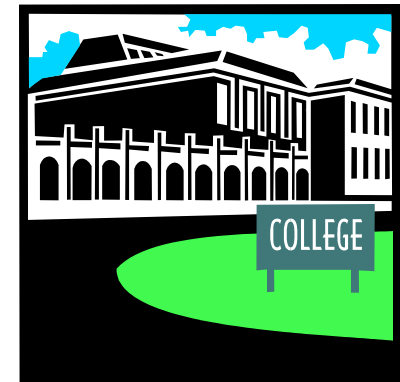
- High demand on service providers contribute to
 - Poor person-centered planning (e.g., IEPs, ITPG's)
 - Challenges of involving social support (families, peers, friends)
 - Challenges with collaborating with other agencies & service providers
 - Poor individual outcomes
 - Academic (i.e., schools placed on academic probation, high dropout rates, “crisis” driven intervention and support)
 - Transition (i.e., employment, independent living, post-secondary education)

Project Goals

Purpose:

- #1 Provide comprehensive supports to facilitate the successful transition from Secondary School to Community College Programs for career development that will result in competitive employment.
- #2 Provide comprehensive employment search support in field of skill preparation
- #3 Develop the capacity of local school system, a community college system, and a vocational rehabilitation agency to implement project strategies.
- #4 Assess needs from the perspectives of consumers
- #5 Evaluate effectiveness of intervention components
- #6 Inform future program development
- #7 Contribute to existing knowledge

Re: High incidence disabilities & need for VR



The College Connection to Career Development Project

Organizational Chart

Organizations

CPS

CCC

IORS

Activities

Outreach & Recruitment

Post-Secondary Support

Job Development

On-the-job Support

Service Delivery



Skills Development

- College Application
- Financial Aid
- Vocational Assessment
- Job Shadowing
- Help-Recruitment
- Self-Advocacy

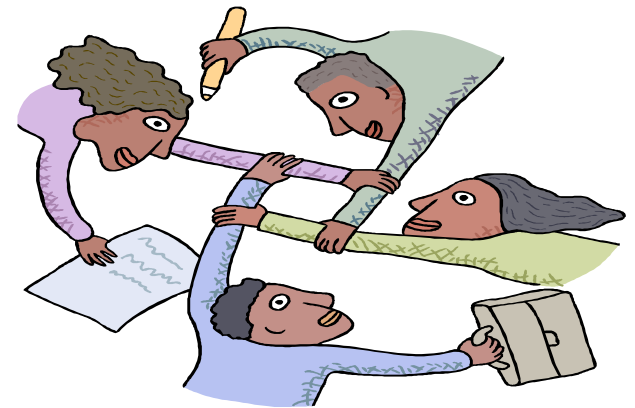
- Tutoring
- Curriculum Adaptations
- Assistive technology
- Problem Solving
- Rights & Services
- Peer Support

- Job Searching
- Interviewing
- Resume writing
- Job Clubs

- Job Etiquette
- Job Maintenance
- Career Adv.
- Assistive Tech.

Participant Demographics

- 164 Total Participants (excluding 21 who dropped shortly after intake)
- Gender
 - 52.4% Male (86)
 - 47.6% Female (78)
- Average Age: 19 y/o (18-25)
- Race/Ethnicity
 - 48.2% Latino/Hispanic (79)
 - 44.5% African-American/Black (73)
 - 4.9% European-American/White (9)
 - 1.1% Other (2)



Summary of Participant Disabilities

- **Primary Disability**
 - 67% Learning Disability
 - 23% Cognitive Disability
 - 7% Emotional or Behavioral Disorder
 - 3% TBI, Visual Impairment, or Orthopedic Impairment
- **Secondary Disability**
 - 85% None
 - 9% Speech or Language Disability
 - 2% Hearing Impairment or Deaf
 - 1% Learning Disability
 - 1% Emotional or Behavioral Disorder

Participant Recruitment Sources

Referral Source	N	%
CPS (presentations, mailings, special ed. lists, etc.)	145	78%
Referrals from individuals (other participants, family members, etc.)	13	7%
Marriott Foundation (Bridges from school to work Program)	12	6%
CCC Special Needs Office	10	5%
VR Counselors	5	3%

77% of Participants Placed in Post-Secondary Education (n=164)

- Associate's credit (30)
- Office specialist (19)
- Pre-credit (12)
- Referred to IORS for job placement (9)
- Pharmacy tech (6)
- A+ certification (5)
- Security training (5)
- Auto-mechanic program (4)
- CNA (4)
- Medical billing/coding (4)
- Cosmetology (3)
- Vocational training through Harold Washington College (3)
- Computer literacy (3)
- 4-year college (2)
- Radiology (2)
- EMT (2)
- Computer graphics (2)
- Medical terminology (2)
- Electronic industrial maintenance mgr. (2)
- Medical office specialist (2)
- Fiber optics, electrical classes, carpentry, sign language & PT/OT (1 each)

Participants' Career Training Status (n=164)

- 50 Completed programs
- 75 Maintaining progress in programs
- 9 Dropped or failed career training program



Employment Progress

Currently employed	Number	Percentage (n=164)	Frequent places of employment
Full time	39	24%	offices, retail stores, hotels, grocery stores, factories, and schools
Part time	68	41%	Wrigley Field, grocery stores, retail stores, UPS, and restaurants

10 students are currently employed in a field directly related to their career preparation program. These career training programs include - CNA, pharmacy tech, office specialist, medical billing and coding, and A+ certification programs

Professional Identified & Perceived Challenges

- Limited supports at the organizational level
- Limited education, training and knowledge about the issue
- ADA confidentiality protections
- Lack of a continuum of services and options
- Communication challenges

Participant Identified & Perceived Challenges

- **Multiple roles and responsibilities (i.e. parenting, financially supporting families)**
- **Little to no knowledge of rights and resources**
- **Limited understanding of disability and how it impacts information processing**
- **Limited skills for employment search and attainment**
- **Limited employment opportunities; competing with others in job market**
- **Limited support from education professionals, i.e. instructors and paid tutoring services**
- **Lack of comprehensive one-stop service delivery**

Participant Identified & Perceived Challenges (continued)

- **Family's limited understanding of the processes related to higher education and competitive employment**
- **Recruitment by other trade schools or independent schools with little understanding of and support for needed accommodations**
- **Limited options for alternative education programs that are integrated**
- **Limited preparation for adult life and lack of understanding at the high school level**
- **Testing that is not highly compatible with learning style, i.e. TABE and COMPAS**

Plans for Program Sustainability...

- Conducting large-scale outreach to existing students at CCC
- Expanding the services of the Special Needs Offices beyond the regular hours
- Working with the Mayoral Taskforce on Employment of People with Disabilities to develop policies
- Disseminating model with CPS in 16 high schools
- Developing a manual for VR and for Transitional Specialists.

Conclusions

- Comprehensive case management is necessary to fill the gaps within the transitional service provision system.
- Case management needs to address youth and their family's transitional issues, as well as life issues that may impact transition.

Conclusions (cont.)

- VR plays a critical role in funding the transition process to education and work.
- City Colleges offer many educational opportunities, but need to market them better. Too much focus on Associate Degrees and Remedial courses.
- There is a growing awareness in the City Colleges and the VR system on how to address the needs of students with learning disabilities.