

[Home](#) : [Publications](#) :

Supporting Employment Choices: Lessons Learned - Part II

**From: The Job Training and Placement Report,
December 2010, Volume 34, No.12**

By:

- [Jennifer Bose](#)

Little is known about the factors that influence employment-related choice-making for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD).

As a result, research staff from the Institute for Community Inclusion interviewed 16 individuals with IDD at four community rehabilitation providers (CRPs) throughout Massachusetts, along with their family members and employment professionals.

Part one of this two-part article presented major findings from this important study. The conclusion of this article focuses on practical recommendations to better engage families, work with schools, build skills, and support self-determination.

For engaging families:

- Involve families as active members of the employment team. Family members can play an important role in job development, both for networking and to help the job developer get to know the individual.
- Engage the individual's family during the job search and placement process. Set regular face-to-face meetings and communicate periodically via phone and email.
- Think of family members as a resource. They are often experts in their level of understanding of both the individual's skills and support needs. Be sure to engage them in problem-solving.

For working with schools:

- Provide education to teachers and school personnel about the value of integrated employment and the importance of job matching.
- Establish relationships between teachers and school administrators, employment providers and the local adult service system to connect their students to the CRPs that will best support goals for employment.
- Facilitate CRP tours and transition fairs before graduation to increase exposure to the range of service options and philosophies and to broaden expectations about the choices available.

For improving the skills of employment support professionals:

- Attend trainings on innovative job search strategies for individuals with IDD, such as customized employment, job carving and creation, resource ownership, and micro-enterprise.
- Challenge your assumptions about an individual's readiness to work in the community so as not to impede the search for a creative job match. Do not let preconceived notions about job readiness affect employment planning strategies.

For supporting self-determination:

- In working with individuals, discuss the concept of self-determination. For some job seekers, understanding that choices are available, making decisions, and owning the responsibility for decisions are skills that need to be learned.
- Clarify expectations and consequences in understandable and accessible terms.
- Be a helper, not a doer. The job seeker should drive the job search from beginning to end. Remain in the facilitator role, even if this slows down the process.
- Respect the job seeker's opinions, even if they are different from your own or seem counter-productive. If a job seeker does not want a particular service, accommodation, job, or person involved, respect these wishes. While you can explain your perspective, the final decision is theirs.
- Ask for feedback. Periodically ask the job seeker for suggestions throughout the service delivery process. Leave room to allow the job seeker to change their mind or course of action.
- Provide opportunities to control funding. Use personal budgets, individual training accounts, and other forms of individualized funding that provide choice and control in the employment support process.

Summary

Throughout their lives, people with IDD interact with people and factors that influence their employment choices. Successful employment planning must take into account the roles these players can have in shaping individuals' perspective on employment and in supporting the employment process.

This is a publication of Access to Integrated Employment, a project of the Institute for Community Inclusion at UMass Boston, supported in part by the Administration on Developmental Disabilities, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services under cooperative agreement #90DN0216. The opinions contained in this manuscript are those of the grantee and do not necessarily reflect those of the funders.

For more detailed information about the "Choosing Employment" study, contact Jennifer Bose at 617-287-4353 or email Jennifer.Bose@umb.edu.

visit JTPRs publication website at www.impact-publications.com for the full versions of these newsletters.

Copyright 1992-2016 , the University of Massachusetts Boston. ICI is affiliated with the University of Massachusetts Boston and Children's Hospital Boston.

Permission to use, copy, and distribute all documents on this site, in whole or in part, for non-commercial use and without fee, is hereby granted provided that appropriate credit to the University of Massachusetts Boston be included in all copies. Alternate formats are available upon request.