

# PERSONAL PROFILE FORMATS

## Person-Centered Career Planning

Anyone conducting a job search should do some type of planning, to ensure that the objectives and goals for the job search are clear, that the steps in the process have the best chance of resulting in a successful job search, and to avoid wasting time, going off in arbitrary directions. Job seekers vary significantly in the amount of planning that needs to be done, before undertaking an active job search. Some job seekers have a fairly clear idea of what type of job they are looking for, based on the individual's past experience, education, skills and personal preferences. Others need to spend substantial amount of time doing some upfront planning, determining what direction makes the most sense, and possibly doing some significant soul searching, before moving ahead in the job search process. Job seekers with disabilities are no different.

Like other individuals, some people with disabilities (but not all) need to undertake a substantial and deliberate planning process, before actively seeking a job. The reality for many people with disabilities, is that they have had limited work and life experience on which to base job search decisions, and also have limited expectations for themselves. Some people with disabilities have also had limited experience in making decisions for themselves, and are used to deferring to others. Some job seekers therefore may not be sure of what type of job to pursue, may have abstract ideas about the type of job they may enjoy based on limited information, or may only be interested in a field of work because others have told them that's what they would be good at.

A good planning process for people with disabilities (and anyone else) must be empowering to the individual, and promote self-reflection, personal insight, creativity and a wide range of possibilities. A useful approach is "person-centered" planning, which develops individual solutions through collaboration, creative thought, and group problem solving. This planning process is not a whole lot different than that used by many other job seekers. Some key elements are:

- initial focus on helping a person identify needs, interests, choices, desires, and dreams
- identify employment options that fit well with the job seeker's personal vision
- the professional's role is to guide and support the individual, not to be an "expert" who makes decisions on the person's behalf
- family, friends and community resources help generate career directions, employment contacts, and supports
- consideration of relevant multicultural issues.

### **The Purpose of this Packet**

This packet consists of a series of idea generation and information-gathering tools that can be used in conjunction with a person-centered career planning process. These tools are based in part on various person-centered planning approaches and methods that have been developed by a wide range of experts. The resources on person-centered planning on page 4 are the basis for the development of many of these tools, and in particular the underlying philosophy and context within which they were developed.

The goal in putting this packet together was to provide a wide range of information gathering formats and tools that can be adapted to the specific needs of the individual. Taken as a whole, these tools can help ensure a comprehensive look at a person's life, which can then be used as the basis for a job search. Such a comprehensive approach can be particularly helpful for those individuals whose job goals are unclear, or who require a particularly creative approach to the job search process. In some cases the tools are somewhat redundant. That is intentionally so, in part to act as confirmation for other information gathered, and to also provide various mechanisms for gathering similar information. For some individuals, some of the tools may be more useful and appropriate than others, and service providers may want to use the individual's discretion regarding which tools they use with particular individuals. There may be cases where just a couple of these tools are sufficient for idea generation and information-gathering.

### **How to Use These Tools**

These tools can be used as templates for flipchart paper as part of a group person-centered planning meeting consisting of the job seeker and individuals from the individual's personal network they invite to be part of the process. The tools can also be used as part of a more individual information gathering and idea generation process with the individual and possibly family members and other people important in the individual's lives. The final tool in the packet, *Positive Personal Profile*, developed by TransCen, Inc., can serve as a highly effective one-page summary of the information generated.

### **Considerations in Using These Tools**

- These are not just forms to be filled out: These tools are intended to guide an idea generation and information gathering process that occurs through dialogue with an individual and their network. To be used effectively, a person should not simply be asked the questions, with the forms then filled out, nor should the job seeker fill out the forms on the individual's own. Instead these tools should be used to guide a conversation and dialogue, within which this information is gathered. Since one of the fundamental goals of using these tools is to identify what is most important to the person, as information is gathered, part of the conversation should include gaining an understanding of why certain things are more important to the individual than others in an effort to identify consistent themes and core principles within which the job search should be conducted. An additional intent is to identify members of the individual's personal network who can assist with the job search process and employment support.
- Should be utilized within context of person-centered approach: These tools are all designed around the concept of a person-centered approach. The responses recorded should all be based on information provided by the individual in an atmosphere of unconditional positive regard, empathic understanding, and congruence. This information can be supplemented by family members, caregivers and others, but always with the preferences of the individual as the underlying basis. These tools should not be used to record professional judgments or evaluations, or to reflect the opinions of family members or caregivers in terms of what they see as "best" for the job seeker.
- Brainstorming is a core strategy: In using these tools, be sure to abide by the basics of brainstorming: a) Generate as many ideas as possible; b) Involve as many people as possible; c) There is no wrong answer - all ideas are good ideas. d) Avoid "Yes, buts..." and "Be realistic."

- Skills and knowledge in person-centered planning is essential: Using these tools effectively requires a strong understanding and belief in person-centered planning. Professionals using the attached tools are strongly urged to consult one or more of the resources listed on the next page to increase their knowledge of person-centered planning and/or pursue training and other staff development activities on person-centered planning.

## Resources on Person-Centered Planning

- *Whole Life Planning: A Guide for Organizers and Facilitators* by John Butterworth, David Hagner, Bonnie Heikkinen, Sherill Faris, Shirley DeMello, Kirsten McDonough (1993)  
Published by the Institute for Community Inclusion  
Children's Hospital, University of Massachusetts Boston, Boston, MA  
Voice: (617) 287-4300  
TTY: (617) 287-4350  
E-mail: [ici@umb.edu](mailto:ici@umb.edu)  
Web site: [www.communityinclusion.org](http://www.communityinclusion.org)  
Manual and video available from Training Resource Network, Inc. -  
<http://trninc.com/products/morelikedance.html>
- *Listen to Me!*, Allen Shea & Associates in collaboration with Michael Smull, Steve Sweet, Claudia Bolton and Pam Lopez Greene  
Available from: USARC/PACE  
419 Mason, Suite 105  
Vacaville, CA 95688  
Voice: (707) 448-2283  
Web site: [www.allenshea.com/listentome.html](http://www.allenshea.com/listentome.html)
- *It's Never Too Early, It's Never Too Late: A Booklet About Personal Futures Planning*, by Beth Mount and Kay Zwernik (1988).
- *It's My Choice: Individual Plans- Individual Employment Plan*  
Published by the Minnesota Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities  
370 Centennial Office Building  
658 Cedar Street  
St. Paul, Minnesota 55155  
Voice: (651) 296-4018  
E-mail: [admin.dd@state.mn.us](mailto:admin.dd@state.mn.us);  
Web site: [www.mncdd.org/extra/publications.htm](http://www.mncdd.org/extra/publications.htm)
- *Planning Possible Positive Futures: Planning Alternative Tomorrows with Hope*; by Jack Pearpoint, John O'Brien, Marsha Forest.
- *Person-Centered Planning with MAPS and PATH*, by John O'Brien & Jack Pearpoint  
Available from Inclusion Press International  
24 Thome Crescent  
Toronto, ON., Canada M6H 2S5  
Voice: (416) 658-5363  
Fax: (416) 658-5067  
E-mail: [includer@idirect.com](mailto:includer@idirect.com)  
Web site: [www.inclusion.com](http://www.inclusion.com)
- The Learning Community for Person Centered Practices – [www.elpnet.net](http://www.elpnet.net)

## **Additional ICI Publications on Person-Centered Planning**

### ***Self-Determination: A Fundamental Ingredient of Employment Support***

Tools for Inclusion - Issue #22

By: Lora Brugnaro, & Jaimie Ciulla Timmons

### ***Starting with Me: A Guide to Person-Centered Planning for Job Seekers***

Tools for Inclusion - Vol. 10, No. 1

By: Melanie Jordan, & Lara Enein-Donovan

Available at: [www.communityinclusion.org](http://www.communityinclusion.org)