Believing in Employment: What It Really Means, Where We Go From Here

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Employment: What are we talking about?
Competitive Integrated Employment

- **Wages & benefits**: similar to those without disabilities performing same work
- Location *typically* found in the community
  - *Not created with specific intent of employing people with disabilities*
- Same opportunities for **advancement** as other workers
- Same **conditions of employment** as employees without disabilities
- Both within the work unit and entire workplace, **must interact with co-workers, customers, and vendors** to the same extent as employees without disabilities in comparable positions
Physical integration is a precondition for the attainment of social integration.

“Ultimately, integration is only meaningful if it is social integration – if it involves social interaction and acceptance, and not merely physical presence.”
• Presumption of employability
• Strength-based
• Job placements = good match between individual’s skills, personality, interests,
• Individual fully engaged and empowered throughout the process
• Driven by individual’s interests and preferences
Why is it that everything we know about a good job search for people without disabilities, we too often forget when it comes to a job seeker with a disability?
Persons with disabilities succeed on the job and in careers for the same reasons as other individuals.
- Clear goals
- Experience in trying new things
- Use of personal networks
- A good job match
- A supportive work environment
Persons with disabilities are unemployed for many of the same reasons as any other individual.

- Lack of education
- Lack of skills
- Poor personal networks
- Cultural expectations
Deviate from typical employment process
ONLY AS ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY
(but sometimes it’s necessary)
Do you REALLY believe in employment?

✓ Everyone has an **employment plan**
✓ Plan regularly **updated**
✓ Individuals **in charge** of their employment plan
✓ Staff spending most of their **time** on employment
✓ Exploration and assessment occurring in the **community**
✓ Understand and highly engaged with your **local labor market**
✓ **Job development** ≠ filling out job applications and internet searches
✓ **Tracking** employment processes and outcomes
✓ Employment **goals/benchmarks**
✓ **Budget dollars** focused on employment
✓ Staff have necessary **competencies**
✓ Truly **informed choice** regarding employment
The “Choice” Issue
“If I had asked people what they wanted, they would have said a faster horse.”

- Henry Ford
Do you want to work in the community?

NOT INFORMED CHOICE
1. Provide information about the **benefits of working** in integrated settings.

2. Facilitate **visits or other experiences** in such settings: *situational assessment, informational interviews, job shadowing, job tours, etc.*

3. Peer-to-Peer Opportunities: **Individuals with disabilities & families.**

4. **Identify and address any concerns or objections** raised by individual or relevant decision-maker.
People with disabilities should have the same level of choice in their lives as those without disabilities.
Create a program for individuals to participate in existing opportunities in the community.

Support individuals to fully participate in existing opportunities in the community.

Old Paradigm

New Paradigm
The Changing Role of the Professional

FROM
• Caretaker
• Trainer
• Authoritative figure

TO
• Facilitator of inclusion
• Facilitator of community supports
• Support professional
• Social change agent
This is a social justice and social change movement
Civil Rights Worker
Jobs and Community
It’s not just about changing individual lives.
“It is very clear to me now, that the manner in which we interface with people with apparent disabilities is far more reflective of our own personal capacities, than those of the person we interface with.”

• Kay Drais, Parent
Old habits die hard
Typical employment in the general workforce

- Create a pre-vocational “program”
- Create an enclave

Start an agency business
Create a non-work “program”
“What you do proves what you believe.”

Simon Sinek
“Martin Luther King gave the ‘I Have a Dream’ speech, not the ‘I Have a Plan’ speech.”

- Simon Sinek
Do you want a program?

Or do you want a job?
What’s your response?

- Don’t want to work
- Only want to work a few hours
- Can’t work because of benefits
- Better off in a day program
- Happy in sheltered work
- Person isn’t work ready
- Individual loses a job
What’s your response?

- Production rate is too slow
- Service provider: *Let’s start a business.*
- Let’s create an enclave
- No jobs
- Business: *We have no openings.*
- Provider not finding jobs
- Too disabled to work
TRENDS AND OPPORTUNITIES
APPS: The New Revolution in Job Supports
Expand Boundaries of Industry-Based Credential Training for Skill Enhancement
New support models:

- Embedded job coaches
- Compensating employers for supports
Federal Policy: Murky Future
Proposed cuts to discretionary programs and Social Security benefits
Tax cut proposals
Efforts to eliminate regulations
Few undersecretary/commissioner appointments to date
“We must accept finite disappointment, but never lose infinite hope.”

- Martin Luther King, Jr.
“When you are born in a world you don’t fit in, it’s because you were born to help create a new one.”
Let’s make employment for people with disabilities **NOTHING SPECIAL**