

# Employment Supports for People with Significant or Multiple Disabilities

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# Best Practice

## EMPLOYMENT SUPPORTS FOR PEOPLE WITH SIGNIFICANT OR MULTIPLE DISABILITIES

- People who live with I/DD can experience major complications with understanding what people are saying to them and relaying their wants or needs
- There are many ways that have been developed within the I/DD field to work with individuals with these barriers.

In this presentation, we will discuss BEST PRACTICES when establishing supports and coordinating services for people who require significant supports on their employment journey.

As VRCs, you are the ultimate coordinator when it comes to careers. Some of you may be very familiar with this information and it will be a refresher. Others new to working with people who experience I/DD and major barriers with communication may find it makes working with some of the people you support easier.

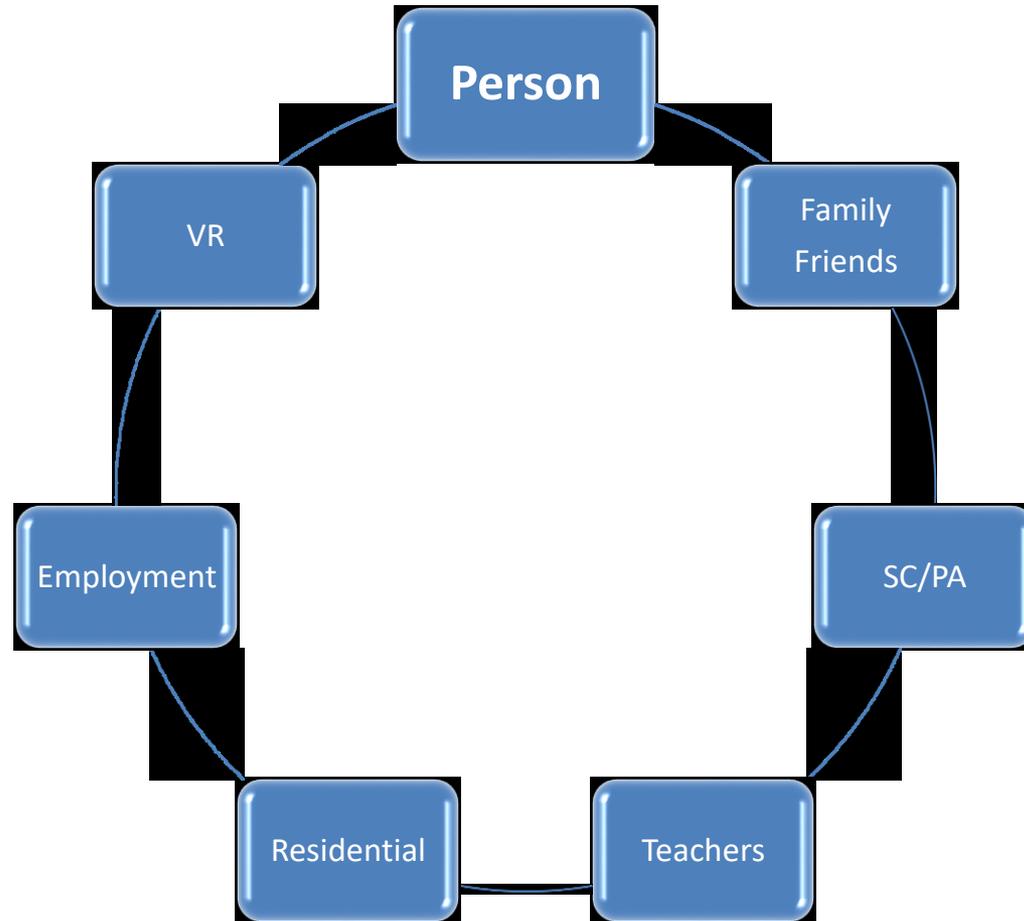


# The Golden Rule

You need a team to support someone who experiences expressive and receptive communication challenges and also needs significant supports



# Team Members



# Team Members

- ❖ The Person
- ❖ VRC
- ❖ I/DD Service Coordinator ( CDDP,SC) or Personal Agent ( Brokerage, PA)
- ❖ ODE Case Manager ( Special Education Teacher, YTP Director)
- ❖ Family and Residential Supports ( Family, Foster, 24 hour Residential or Supported Living)
- ❖ Community Inclusion Supports ( DSA, ATE, YTP or School Transition Educator)
- ❖ VR Job Developer and VR Job Coach
- ❖ I/DD Employment Supports (Employment Path, Small Group, Discovery, Job coaching)
- ❖ Behavioral Specialists, medical support staff and DSP's if 1 to 1 or 2 to 1 ratio of staffing is required.
- ❖ Anyone else they want on their team.

# Person Centered Individualized Supports

- ❖ Supports are individualized depending on the person's strengths, wants and needs.
- ❖ People choose who is on their team in many different ways and their team will grow shrink and change as they move through their career path.
- ❖ Some supports are with them for a limited amount of time and some supports are with them throughout their lifetime.

# CRYSTALLINE WISDOM

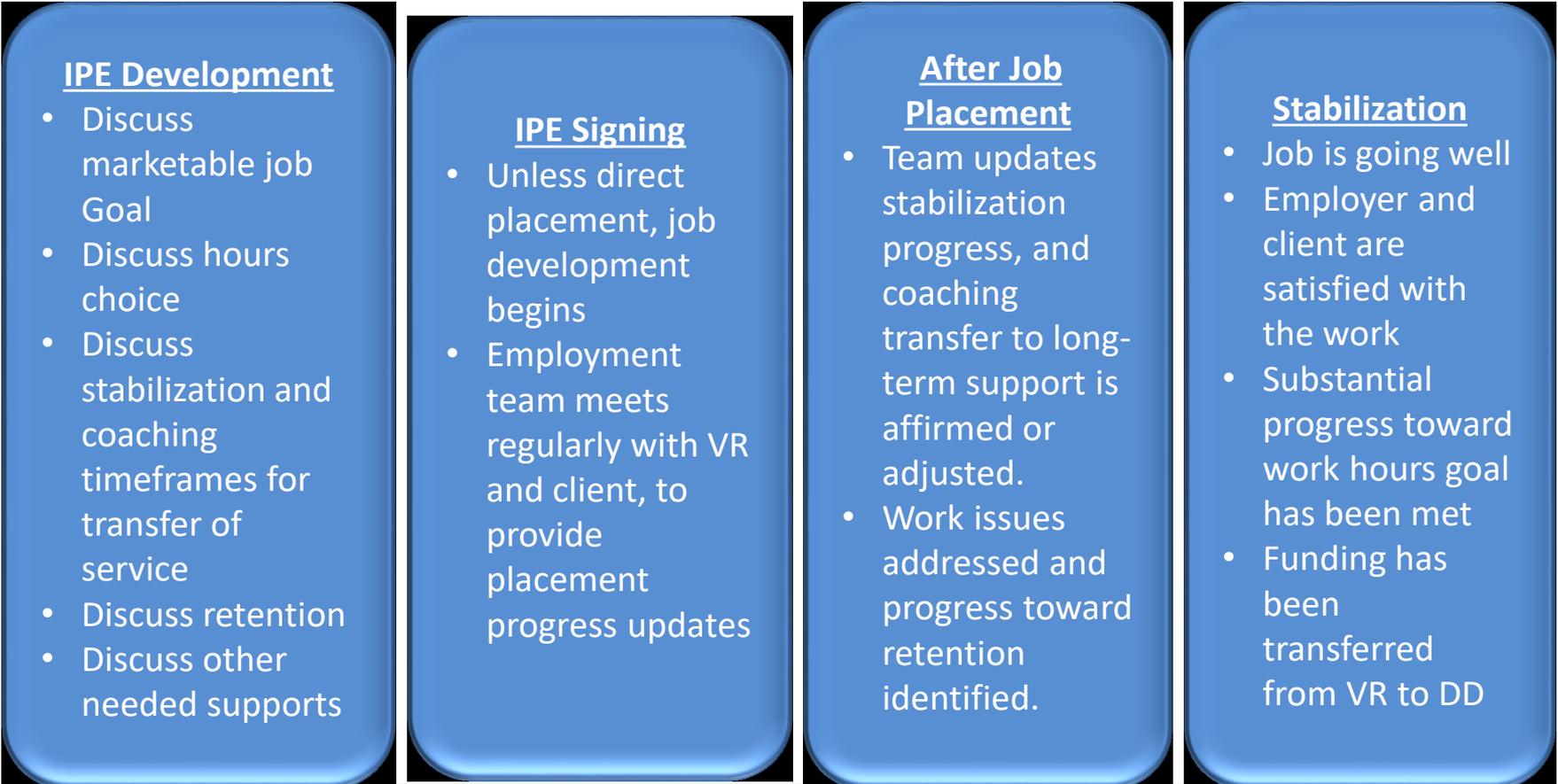
Keeping everyone on the team in the loop, sharing information and working together throughout their employment journey is how to ensure a positive experience and outcome.



# How do we ensure everyone is working together?

- ❖ Know who is on the team and set up a solid cohesive way to contact them at intake.
- ❖ Establish what type of meetings will work for the person and their team. (In person, at VR, in the community, at home, Skype, Email etc.)
- ❖ Have Employment Team meetings where all key players attend. The frequency and venue of these meetings should have a tentative agreement from the start of VR Services.
- ❖ Establish consistent contact meetings in the beginning. Or at least have any pertinent information available
- ❖ Understand I/DD timelines for setting up long term supports.
- ❖ Help your partners understand VR timelines for their journey with VR.

# Points of Collaboration



# How do we know what a person wants and needs if they cannot answer our questions?

- ❖ Rely on their team to help you find the answers.
- ❖ Team members will have valuable information for you regarding the persons, wants, needs, gifts and talents.
- ❖ Find out how the person communicates, socializes, and receives information.
- ❖ Trust, observe, think outside of the box and adopt new accommodation techniques.
- ❖ Help the Job Developer and Job Coaches understand the team approach if they have not worked with people who face these barriers. Ensure they are part of the employment team.
- ❖ Team members will have information regarding supports on the job that can help the job developer set up a successful employment opportunity for someone

# What are significant supports on the job?

- ❖ Communication Supports required
  - Team support
  - Adaptive equipment
- ❖ Behavior Supports required
  - Behavior Support Plan
  - Line of sight supervision
- ❖ Activities of Daily Living Support (Physical assistance)
  - Gait belt
  - Transfers
  - Hoyer lift

# ADL/IADL: What is this really?

In VR regulations, it's called "Daily Living Activities."

What it really means is that someone needs support to be successful in their home and community (including work).

May be:

- ❖ Assistance communicating with their supervisor, setting up their work station, planning their day, etc.

May also be:

- ❖ Behavior supports, communication support, etc.
- ❖ Best to call it what it is!

# Medical Supports

When a person has significant medical supports:

- ❖ A person who requires significant medical support needs either a medical professional to be involved or training should be provided to the Employment Support Provider on how to safely provide supports.
- ❖ Extremely individualized and requires using all employment team resources.
- ❖ In some cases residential providers or family members have certification to train staff to provide medical supports.

# Medical Supports (continued)

When a person has significant medical supports:

- ❖ Ask the team and have a cohesive plan to deal with medical needs.
- ❖ Residential Providers and Community Inclusion Providers (DSA) are required to have protocols for all significant health risks, as are employment support providers. Historically residential providers have shared these protocols and plans with employment providers so they could adapt them to the employment setting and have a plan accessible for the work site.

# Behavior Supports

- ❖ Positive Behavior Support Plan

  - Who writes it?

  - What may it entail?

  - Does it apply to work?

- ❖ Implementing the Plan

  - Trained to the PBSP

- ❖ What if someone needs a plan while they are at VR and have not had one before?

  - ODDS can assist

# PEARL OF KNOWLEDGE

ANYONE CAN WORK RIGHT NOW WITH THE RIGHT  
SUPPORTS

TAD'S STORY



# Family Perspective

## Tad's Father:

### What are your hopes and dreams for Tad?

- That he becomes a tax payer- which means your part of society like all other people.
- That he is contributing and is a valuable member of society.

### Why does Tad want a job?

- Why not? He wants a job like everyone else in the world.

### What have been some challenges?

- The VR language and policy
- When people call our son special, he is not special he is just like everyone else.
- The lack of exposure for people with significant disabilities was apparent and we think more exposure is needed.

# Family Perspective (continued)

## What have been some challenges?

- The acceptance for our son, and others like our son, as valuable employees.
- As parents we had to be strong advocates, stand up for his rights and be his voice, we have been doing that for 40 years.
- Guardianship does not mean Tad doesn't have a voice, we want others to listen to Tad and try to understand what they can through him first, but it may take time to get to know him. It is a team approach, so ask his team after you work to get to know him.
- What would you say to others about Tad and his journey to find a job?
- It may be difficult for a person to communicate verbally, they may use gestures so it takes someone to recognize his way to communicate and how to make his life whole.

# Family Perspective (continued)

- **What would you say to others about Tad and his journey to find a job?**
- The System needs to be flexible enough
- The more he is in the community, the more the community accepts his differences.
- **What would you say to other parents?**
- Learn your rights, be aware of your rights
- Be willing to make change and educate the people about your child, for the better of society
- **Any final words our thought you would like to share?**
- Put yourself in the shoes of the person and family and treat others how you would want to be treated
- Tad deserves to be accepted for who he is and it is our responsibility to ensure his future

# Examples of approaches to engagement, exploration, plan and job development

Jill will not say she wants to get a job in her intake meeting and she is refusing to sign her application or referral to VR.

**Idea:** Reach out to her team. It may be that Jill has never signed her name to anything and an accommodation or adaptation has been adopted by Jill and her ISP or IEP Team that serves as a confirmation, similar to a yes or a signature (Person Centered).

Tom does not answer when his VRC asks him if he wants to do the Targeted Vocational Assessment.

**Idea:** Bring in his team members. Ask for any past DSA or Workshop, EPC or School Supports and share with them the parameters around the TVA. Get team input regarding if they feel he would like it or if accommodations or adaptations are needed.

# Examples Continued

Lisa cannot tell you what she likes to do or is interested in. She is in your intake meeting and you are struggling to set up supports for her.

**Idea:** Observe Lisa when she is doing activities with her family or at school or in a community inclusion program. Find out how she interacts and what she likes. Bring her employment team together to help build supports based on experiences with Lisa.

Sam had a Community-Based Work Assessment and it was not a good fit, but you are not sure where to go from here.

**Idea:** Bring the team together to review. Brainstorm how to address the parts of the assessment that worked/did not work. Review the IPE as a team and see if adjustments or accommodations need to be made.

Matt has a seizure disorder and a behavior support plan. He needs ADL and you do not have a Job Developer that knows him/how to support him.

**Idea:** Bring employment team together. Reach out to established supports for assistance with helping the job developer and Job Coach to adapt protocols, receive training and fully prepare to support Matt in everyway on the job.

# Contact Information

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