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Expanding Employment Opportunities for Youth using
Customized Employment

will begin at 2:00 PM ET

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Please consult the reminder email you received about this session for instructions on submitting your request.

Requests must be received by 5 PM ET on Wednesday, February 6th, 2019.

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About your Host

Mission Statement: Improving lives of people with disabilities through meaningful work and community inclusion.

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Expanding Employment Opportunities for Youth using Customized Employment

Laura Owens President TransCen, Inc.

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Times are changing...

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What We Did (and why it didn't work)

“Job Readiness”

Focus on jobs, not careers

Low expectations (“realistic”)

“People with disabilities should be spared the soft bigotry of low expectations”, Dr. Roy Grizzard, First Assistant Secretary of ODEP

Focus on job placement (versus job development)

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Employment should be the Expectation not the Exception

“If people are treated as capable, they often surprise everyone and live up to expectations.”

~Ken Steele “The Day the Voices Stopped.”

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Employment First: Raising Expectations

Competitive integrated employment should be the first and preferred service option for individuals with disabilities, including those with more support needs

Image: cartoon character holding sign above head reading "There's a job for everyone who wants one regardless of disability, need for support or economic vitality of their community!"

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Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)

The days of students with disabilities leaving school poorly educated, with no employment experience, no job prospects, living lives of poverty, and too often ending up in segregated programs need to come to an end.

Image: Congress in session

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WIOA: Pre-Employment Transition Services

1. Job exploration counseling
2. Work-based learning experiences
3. Counseling on postsecondary education options
4. Workplace readiness (preparation) training
5. Instruction in self-advocacy

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Implications for Services

Competitive integrated employment as a priority

Meaningful community inclusion/engagement as an imperative

Change the way we operate is inevitable

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What we are doing (and how it's working!)

Presumption of employment – all means all

Services versus programs

No more asking “Do you want to work?” but instead
“Where do you want to work?”

Opportunity - Job shadowing, internships, volunteering, community involvement

Working is the norm – not the exception

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Social Security told me I can't work

Image: Group of caricatures each saying individual lines: You're not Job ready, There are no jobs, You're better off not working, You'll loose your health care

Changing the message!

Image: Charicature of a wheelchair user saying: I think I should go to work!

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Simple yet powerful message...

People with disabilities want to work, deserve to work and are great for business!

#IWantToWork

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Killer Concepts

® Readiness

® Realistic

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Customized Employment

“Customized employment is based on individual’s match between the strengths, conditions and interests of the job candidates and the identified business needs of an employer” (ODEP, 2012)

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Customized Employment

Old model of Train and Place uses sheltered workshops to get people “ready” for work

Place and Train Model quickly became “Place and Pray”

New approach...Discover, Connect and Support

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Employment “Readiness” Myth

Employers are expecting perfect employees

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Have you ever worked with anyone who...

Couldn't get along with others?

Acted inappropriately?

Had behavioral outbursts?

Was chronically late?

Complained about everything?

Didn't communicate well?

Didn't work very fast?

Got distracted easily?

Couldn't follow directions?

Acted impulsively without thinking?

Refused to take public transportation?

Had a messy office?

Wasn't organized?

Wasn't always professional?

Was rude?

Couldn't take criticism?

Was lazy?

Wasn't very good at their job – but managed to still keep it?

Preferences Are Important

Peanuts comic strip:

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Discover the Possibilities!

Listen to your student/job seeker

Focus on skills – not deficits

No prerequisites

Everyone is “job ready”

Look for “rays of light”

Ask: “What value will the student/job seeker bring to a business?”

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Building a Positive Personal Profile

Dreams and goals

Talents

Skills and knowledge

Learning styles

Interests

Personality traits (quirks included)

Temperament

Values

Environmental preferences

Dislikes

Work experiences

Support system

Challenges

Solutions (accommodations)

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How Can you Find This Information?

Interviews: Person, family, friends, stakeholders

Observations: School, agency, home, community, worksite

Career Assessments: Formal, informal, printed, computerized, situational

Experiences: Opportunities in “real” settings

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Most valuable discovery/assessment strategy...

Spending time with the job seeker in a variety of settings

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Meet Mattie

What her file told us:

Developmentally disabled; deaf and blind

Lived in an institution most of her life

“Failed” at several work placements

Nonverbal

“Behavior outbursts”

Moves slowly

Stubborn

What we “discovered”:

Very curious

Loves variety and learning new things (including tactile communication)

Likes working with her hands

Always smiling

Enjoys cooking (smelling the food, stirring, pouring)

Loves swimming (especially sitting in the whirlpool)

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What are good jobs for Mattie?

What would an employer value in her?

Likes swimming

Enjoys cooking

Likes to keep busy; likes working with her hands

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18 years at Pizza Hut

6 years at Menomonee Falls School District

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Customized Employment is...

Employment where job tasks are reassigned from an existing job, restructured from one or more existing jobs, or created to match the skills and accommodation needs of the job seeker and...

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...Customized Employment approach **MUST** help the employer's operation in some specific way!

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Job Placement & Job Development

Job placement

Existing openings Competing with others “what opportunities exist” How do job seekers “fit” “Order taker”

Job development

Unique skills/abilities Create/Develop opportunities Labor market info = questions Employment “consultant”

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Essential Elements of Job Development

Avoid using job openings and typical personnel processes

Use all connections and networks

Develop strategies for assisting employers to identify areas of need

Emphasize informational relationships with employers

Customize job descriptions

Negotiate a support plan

Source: WINTAC, 2017 (<http://www.wintac.org/topic-areas/resources-and-strategies-competitive-integrated-employment/resources#resc-ce>)

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Find out as much as you can about which companies that...

exist in your community

hire people to do the kind of work that matches your job seeker's profile

have the kind of "atmosphere" that would match your job seeker's temperament and preferences?

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So where do you start looking?

Business section of newspaper or business publications

Chamber of Commerce and other professional organizations (become an active member)

American Job Centers (Workforce Centers, One Stops)

The Internet (e.g. Linked-In, Google, Facebook, company websites, YahooYellowPages, Indeed.com)

Boards of Directors

Personal sphere of influence

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Personal Sphere of Influence

The people you know – people who are directly or indirectly part of your life

–Immediate family – distant relatives

–Close friends – casual acquaintances

–People you do business with – mail carrier, plumber, tailor, barber, dry cleaner, deli counter clerk, gas station attendant, etc.

–People who do business with you – family members, other businesses, school personnel, etc.

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Getting your foot in the door needs a good opening line

An Innovative Business Resource YES!

Assisting youth with disabilities and other challenges get jobs NO!

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Make the Request Easy to Say "Yes" to!

My company provides area businesses with employee recruitment and retention support. Our success comes from learning about the hiring needs and expectations of businesses. I'd like to learn more about your company and arrange a tour to see your work first hand.

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Make the Request Easy to Say "Yes" to!

"I work with students interested in your industry. I would love to set up a 20 minute visit to see what you do and talk to you about the skills needed to work in this field so I can help the students learn what they need for these types of jobs"

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Patrick

Photos of Patrick playing basketball, working, and practicing martial arts

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During your meeting or tour, find out about the business...

Customer /employee complaints

Log jams/backlogs/ long lead times

Unassigned, but critical tasks

Burn-out or high turnover

Managers or key staff pulled away from core tasks

Workload fluctuations

Rush times, crunch times, seasonal fluctuations, sporadic-but important- tasks

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Informational Interview

Do you have any jobs?

I'd like to learn more about your company

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Maddie's Informational Interview

Photos of Maddie at work

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Customizing employment for students with significant disabilities – DO's

Approach an employer you know OR spend time developing a relationship

Sell yourself and services; use features to benefits

Focus on job seeker assets; use a features to benefits

Create a customized task list

Be honest about the needs for possible extra supports – and sell yourself as the main support

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Meet Ivan – Positive Personal Profile

Loves all sports – Brewers, Packers, Bucks (baseball, football, basketball)

Easy to work with

Happy

Full of potential

Independent

Sweet

A great spirit

Determined

Close knit family

Very persistent

Funny/ humorous

Friendly

Jokes

Caring

Hard worker

Very smart

Good listener

Champion bean bag tosser

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Marquette University Student Recreation Complex
Needed Help!

Five full sized basketball courts

About 2000 students and alumni used the facility every
day

Courts were filthy – especially in the winter

Janitorial staff had to clean them constantly – which no
one liked to do

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What We Did...

Informational Interview - refined task list based on
observed needs

Compared task list with Ivan's Positive Personal Profile to
determine match

Presented employment proposal to Marquette

Set up "working interview"

Negotiated terms of employment

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Ivan's Skills

Employment Proposal

Loves sports - especially Marquette

Persistent

Hard worker

Funny

Easy to work with

Refined Task List

Clean five courts during high peak time

Adapting the wet mop so Ivan could drag it behind him

Pick up extra basketballs left behind and returning them to desk

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"Human Zamboni"

Photos of smiling Ivan at the basketball court, and cleaning the basketball court with an adapted sweep attached to his wheelchair

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Things to Remember...

Listen to your job seekers!

Don't expect them to stay in jobs they don't like

Focus on assets – not deficits

Be strategic in approaching targeted companies

Become an expert at infiltrating the “Hidden Job Market”

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Things to Remember...

Employers are always looking for employees who are interested in their business and willing to learn

Get to know employers and determine how can you help their company

Present relevant skills & assets of your job seeker, in a professional manner (visual resume, reverse job fair)

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Final Thought...

“In the end, it is important to remember that we cannot become what we need to be by remaining what we are.”

Max De Pree

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Questions

On the webinar platform use the questions feature to submit your questions.

Email elearning@transcen.org

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About TransCen, Inc.

TransCen, Inc. is a national organization offering web-based and in-person training for state agencies, school districts, provider organizations, and others interested in meaningful work and community inclusion for individuals with disabilities.

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Thank You