

Direct Support Professional Workbook

# Supporting Self-Determination in Your Everyday Work

## **SELF-DETERMINATION IS THE ABILITY FOR PEOPLE TO:**

- *Make things happen in their lives,*
- *set and reach goals, and*
- *take part fully in the world around them.*

The right to self-determination includes individuals with ***all types of disabilities***.

**Source:** *Center on Self-Determination, Oregon Institute on Disability*

### **Workbook Introduction**

Often people think that if a person has a disability someone else will always need to be in charge and make decisions for them. However, even children with disabilities can be taught the skills they need to make the important things happen in their lives, starting at a very young age and developing over time. Those skills include: choice-making, decision-making, problem-solving and goal-setting.

You want the person you support to lead a happy and productive life. You can help that person learn to set his/her own goals and live a more self-determined life. Research shows that teaching self-determination skills to children and youth results in better adult outcomes such as higher levels of employment and community participation.

This workbook will help you to explore your own experience of developing self-determination skills and to plan for ways you can help the person you support become more self-determined.

**Introduction (continued):**

**Growing up in your family, how were you encouraged/discouraged from being in charge of your own life?**

**What do you think are some commonly held beliefs about self-determination and individuals who have disabilities?**

## **SELF-DETERMINATION SKILL: CHOICE MAKING**

Providing opportunities for a person with a disability to make meaningful choices that impact his/her daily life is the first step towards self-determination.

**List all the choices that you made today from the time you got up until you left your home.**

**What was the most important choice for you?**

**What if someone else made a different choice for you – how would you feel?**

**Think of someone you support - what choices does this person make when spending time with you?** *(For the purposes of this workbook, please focus on one specific individual whom you support)*

**List three new opportunities for choice-making you can provide the person you support in the course of their day:**

1.

2.

3.

## **SELF-DETERMINATION SKILL: DECISION MAKING**

Decision-making involves knowing about the options available, weighing the consequences of each option and deciding your action.

**What Was the first big decision you made in your life?**

**How did you arrive at that decision?**

**How were you supported/ who helped you?**

**What was the outcome?**

**What decisions does the person you support currently make?**

**List three ways you can support that person to make (or participate more fully in) the next important decision that affects them:**

1.

2.

3.

## **SELF-DETERMINATION SKILL: PROBLEM SOLVING**

Problem solving involves responding to challenges and creating solutions. It is the basis for all learning and allows people to have control and feel more capable and independent.

**Think about a recent problem you had to solve? Describe the problem.**

**How did you approach it?**

**What was the outcome? How did you feel?**



**Think of a recent problem that the person you support encountered? Did he/she solve the problem or did someone else step in? Was he/she involved at all in coming up with the solution?**

**List three ways you can support the person to solve problems of everyday life (or participate in identifying solutions)?**

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

## **SELF-DETERMINATION SKILL: GOAL SETTING**

Learning how to set goals creates structure – a roadmap to get from where you are now to where you want to be in the future.

**Growing up, what were some of the goals that you set for yourself?**

**How did you go about achieving those goals?**

**Did your family have the same goals for you or different ones?**

**What is a goal that your focus person is currently working on (or would like to work on) at home or in school / program?**

*Help your focus person to keep their goals SMART:*

**S**pecific and simple -- If it is complicated, help break it down into simple steps

**M**easurable -- It is clear when they have met the goal (or the small step)

**A**ttainable – It is something they are likely to be able to do or learn to do

**R**elevant -- Reaching this goal is important to them and will make a difference

**T**ime-bound – There is a target date to reach the goal or make adjustments

## GOAL SETTING CONTINUED...

To help the person to set and achieve his goals, try guiding him/her through the 12 steps of the Self-Determination Learning Model:

### PHASE 1 – Set a Goal

1. What do I want to learn or be able to do?
2. What do I know about it now?
3. What must change for me to learn what I don't know or do what I haven't done?
4. What can I do to make this change happen?

### PHASE 2 – Take Action

5. What can I do to learn what I don't know (or do what I haven't done)?
6. What could keep me from taking action?
7. What could I do to remove these barriers (the things that stop me)?
8. When will I take action?

### PHASE 3 – Adjust Goal or Plan

9. What actions have I taken?
10. What barriers or problems have been removed?
11. What has changed about what I know or am able to do?
12. Have I met my goal?

**Adapted from:** "Self-Determined Learning Model for Early Elementary Students – A Parent's Guide", Beach Center on Disabilities, Susan Palmer and Michael Wehmeyer, 2002. Available on line at - [http://www.beachcenter.org/resource\\_library/beach\\_resource\\_detail\\_page.aspx?intResourceID=2505&Type\\_book](http://www.beachcenter.org/resource_library/beach_resource_detail_page.aspx?intResourceID=2505&Type_book)

**REMEMBER!**

- **Start small and build over time.**
- **Stop and think in everyday situations – is this an opportunity to teach a skill of self-determination?**
- **Individuals who live with a disability often see their own potential through the vision of their families and support staff – set high expectations!**

For additional resources on self-determination, visit the Sherlock Center website at [www.sherlockcenter.org](http://www.sherlockcenter.org)