Section Five: Person-Centered Planning Toolbox

Person-Centered Planning:
Following Up on Instruction

The University of Maine Center for Community Inclusion and Disability Studies has studied the effectiveness of a two-part transition-planning model for several years. In this model, instructional activities related to transition are followed with a series of person-centered planning meetings. We believe this second component is essential. Person-centered planning provides an opportunity for students to clarify postsecondary educational and career goals, identify how they will achieve their goals, and identify the supports that they will need as they work toward those goals. Students also learn and practice self-determination skills as they begin to take more responsibility for their own plans.

What is Person-Centered Planning (PCP)?

PCP is a process in which people work together to develop a positive description of an individual and to plan for a future consistent with the person's goals and dreams. The individual for whom the planning is done, or the focus person, is at the center of the planning. To the maximum extent possible, the focus person should determine how the meeting will be conducted, what goals will be pursued, and how she or he will achieve those goals (including the identification of supports from others and accommodations).

PCP typically consists of the following:

⇨ A vision of the future;

⇨ A personal profile identifying the focus person's strengths, interests, gifts, preferences, and learning style;

⇨ Identification of Goals and Short-Term Steps that can be taken in pursuing those goals;

⇨ Action Planning – specification of the next steps that need to be taken; who will be responsible for them (typically the focus person is not solely responsible for achieving the step); and a timeline for completing the step; and

⇨ Ongoing meetings to monitor progress on goals and to make revisions to the plan as the individual gains more experience.

STEM PCP focuses more specifically on issues such as the following:

⇨ Matching your strengths and interests with careers

⇨ Finding out more about careers and identifying the education you will need to succeed in your chosen career

⇨ Identifying what you need to do to prepare for college

⇨ Choosing a college

⇨ Choosing a major

⇨ Identifying possible rewarding careers

⇨ Obtaining healthcare when you are away from home

⇨ Maintaining a healthy lifestyle

⇨ Identifying supports that you will need to succeed in transition and in college

⇨ Determining who you need to enlist to help you reach your goals

⇨ Determining what assistive technologies will be useful to you in college

Why Person-Centered Planning?

Youth who develop self-determination skills are more likely to successfully transition to postsecondary education and to find jobs. Self-determination essentially is the capacity to identify one's own goals, pursue those goals, and monitor one's progress in achieving those goals. PCP provides a way for youth to plan the small steps that they need to take on their way to achieving their larger educational and career goals. We recognize that goal setting is never done in isolation and that youth often rely on their families and friends to help them think about and pursue goals. In PCP, youth identify who they can enlist to help and support them as they begin to take more responsibility for their own future.

We have also learned that we can make the instruction that youth have received more concrete and meaningful through participation in the ongoing PCP process.

PCP Activities

We have included a "toolbox" of PCP tools that you can use with the focus person, his or her family, and professionals. This is certainly not comprehensive. Feel free to modify these tools, use other tools, or invent your own PCP strategies.

We have also identified activities within this model that a participating youth may have already completed. These are listed in the document: *Items from Your Portfolio that You can Use to Develop Your PCP.* In those cases, with his or her permission, you may simply want to summarize the results of those for the team. Better yet, try to get the youth to summarize those results instead.

Hints for Facilitating the PCP

⇨ Maximize the youth's involvement in the planning. They should select the activities to use in the planning.

⇨ Identify ground rules at the beginning of the process, making sure that the youth plays an active role in identifying them.

⇨ Keep the meeting positive. It's extremely important to stay focused on the youth's strengths as you discuss their strengths, talents and interests. It often helps to have a ground rule about keeping the discussions positive. It's especially important to keep the meeting positive for individuals who have had negative experiences with meetings in the past.

⇨ Use activities that have already been completed from this model to construct a vision of the future for the youth and a personal profile. A list of curricular activities that can be used for this purpose is included.

⇨ PCP should be considered a process and not a meeting. Goals and plans usually evolve over time.

⇨ The process should be flexible. The youth may decide to try different planning activities or revise their goals. It's also okay to invent new activities to meet the planning needs of the youth. (For example, one young man decided that they needed to develop a list of things that his VR counselor needed to know about him.)

Items from Your Portfolio that You Can Use to Develop Your Person-Centered Plan

You have probably completed a number of activities already that you can incorporate into your Person-Centered Plan. Many are already in your portfolio. Review some of these activities and documents – either alone or with a teacher or family member. Decide if any of the materials that you have already completed would contribute to your team's understanding of who you are and what you want to accomplish in your life.

Personal Profile

Strengths and Interests (from Section 1)

Strengths and Interests Assessments

- Assessment: Find Your Strengths! — Multiple Intelligences for Adults Literacy and Education. (n.d.). *Assessment: Find Your Strengths!* (web form). Retrieved from http://www.literacyworks.org/mi/assessment/findyourstrengths.html **(or)**

- Worksheet for Identifying Interests, Values, and Strengths (PDF) — Cornell University, Career Services. (n.d.). *Worksheet for identifying interests, values, and strengths* (PDF). Available online from https://www.ilr.cornell.edu/sites/ilr.cornell.edu/files/understanding-yourself-worksheet.pdf **(and)**

- Knowing my Strengths — Virginia Commonwealth University, Going to College. (2009). *Knowing my strengths*. Available online at http://going-to-college.org/myplace/strengths.html

Learning Styles – Learning Styles Inventories (from Section 1)

- Going to College; My Learning Style — Virginia Commonwealth University, Going to College. (2009). *My learning style*. Available online at http://going-to-college.org/myplace/style.html

- Learning Style Inventory — Bixler, B. (n.d.). *Learning style inventory*. Available online at https://ccids.umaine.edu/resource/learning-style-inventory-pdf/

- Learning Style Quiz — What is your learning style? Free quiz to find out what your learning style is. Available online at: https://www.learningstylequiz.com/

Exploring Colleges

Choosing a College Activity (from Section 4)

- Comparing Colleges (Doc) — Virginia Commonwealth University. Going to College. (2009). *Comparing colleges (Doc).* From the Planning for College section of the Going to College website. Available for download at http://www.going-to-college.org/planning/activities.html#deciding. Also available at https://ccids.umaine.edu/files/2014/06/c-comparingcolleges.doc

Applying for College Activity (from Section 4)

- [Going to College - Applying for college](#) — Virginia Commonwealth University. Going to College. (2009). *Applying for college.* Available online at http://going-to-college.org/planning/applying.html.

Applying for College Activity (from Section 1)

- *Critical Steps Checklist* — a checklist of important steps as you transition from high school to postsecondary education. You can use this in your planning to help identify things that need to happen before you go to college.

Deciding on a Major Activity (from Section 4)

- [Virginia Career VIEW (website)](#) — Virginia Career VIEW. (2014). Available online at http://www.vaview.org/careers

Assistive Technology

Students Sample Assistive Technology (from Section 4)

- This activity may be helpful as you explore various technologies that would be useful to you in college.

Who is _____?

With this activity, people on your planning team get together and brainstorm words and short phrases that they would use to describe you. These should be positive descriptions. Sometimes, it's helpful for the planning facilitator to ask people how they would describe you if they were *bragging* about you.

The planning facilitator will start by putting the question below on the top of chart paper, or on a board or screen that everyone can access.

◊   Who is (Your Name)?

Under this question, the facilitator will record all the positive words and statements they use to describe you. People should think broadly when they answer this – the description should not focus on just your academic performance. It can include things you like to do, places you like to go, the type of people you like to hang out with, your favorite food, your contribution to groups to which you belong, and your talents, etc.

Short Examples (Actual lists developed in brainstorms are usually much longer):

Who is Mary?

◊   Passionate about great food
◊   Good at chemistry and physics
◊   Good at math
◊   Detail oriented
◊   Remembers things that others show her
◊   Talented actor

Who is Gene?

◊   Loves to eat at McDonald's
◊   Interested in biology and anything related to natural world
◊   Big picture person
◊   Remembers things that others say to him
◊   Writes well
◊   Loyal friend
◊   Loves music

Relationship Circles

Decisions about the college someone will attend or the career they will pursue are seldom made in isolation. People may talk to friends, family members, or teachers as they make important decisions about what they will do with their lives. This activity is designed to help you identify people whose support you would like to enlist as you transition to college.

Using the Relationships Circles (PDF) map, brainstorm a list of people you are very close to. The circles are usually drawn on a large piece of chart paper, but they can also be put on a computer and projected so that everyone can see them. The planning facilitator should record the team's responses in the circles. The inner circle usually includes family members, but it can include anyone on whom you rely. List friends in the second circle and professionals (e.g., medical providers, teachers, therapists, etc.) in the outer circle.

When this has been completed, review the list of people. Then answer the following questions:

1. Who in this circle should I engage in my transition planning process?
2. What do I need the person to do?
3. How will they be involved (e.g., attending meetings, informal conversations, etc.)?
4. Are there others who I should invite to participate formally or informally in this process?

As you continue with the planning process, it may be helpful to come back and revisit your circles. You may find that there are some specific things that you need help with, such as identifying an appropriate college or determining the course that you need to take while you are in high school. You can come back to your relationship circles to help you figure out who can be of assistance in helping you complete any of these or other transition-related tasks.

Download the Relationships Circles (PDF) (see example below).

University of Maine Center for Community Inclusion and Disability Studies. (2014). *Relationship circles* (PDF). Available for download at https://ccids.umaine.edu/files/2014/06/relationship-circles.pdf
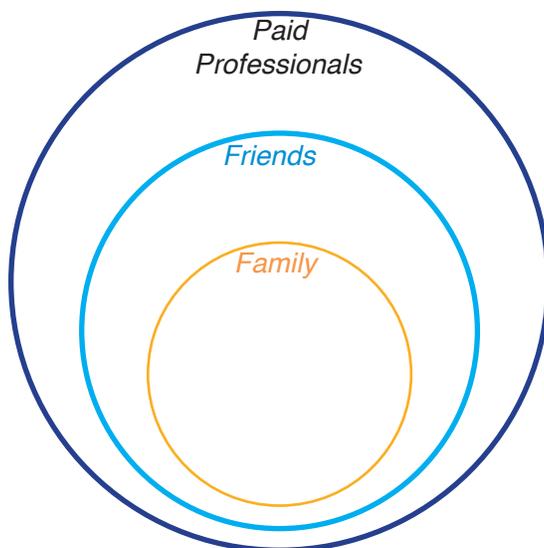
What Will My Life Look Like in 10 Years?

This activity is designed to help you identify some long-term goals and to begin thinking about some of the things that you need to do to achieve your dreams.

Activity:

Answer the following question: "What do you think your life will look like in ten years?

Some questions that the planning facilitator may ask to help you think about these things:

⇨ Where will you live?

◊ Rural, suburban or urban area?

◊ Apartment or house?

◊ Renting or owning?

◊ With others or alone?

⇨ What kind of work do you think you will be doing?

⇨ How much do you think you will be getting paid?

⇨ What will you do for fun?

⇨ Who will you spend time with outside of work?

⇨ What will your romantic life look like?

⇨ What role will your family play in your life?

⇨ Will you have pets?

⇨ What will you do for recreation?

⇨ How will you meet your healthcare needs?

The planning facilitator can record your responses. The facilitator and other members of the planning team may also ask you questions to prompt you to provide more detail.

The facilitator may also provide some illustrations – if that is something they are good at doing. You can illustrate it yourself. With some advance planning, you could also bring pictures from magazines or clip art that you could use to illustrate your life.

See an example on the following page.

Where I will be in 10 Years?

⇨   Working in a job in the field of chemistry.

⇨   I will be married.

⇨   I will have a gym membership.

⇨   I will play chess and computer games with friends.

⇨   I will have a dog.

When you have completed your vision for your life ten years from now – identify some of the things that you will need to do this year, next year, and in five years to reach your ten-year goals.

Creating Your Portfolio

This activity is an ongoing activity that you can complete as you participate in the person-centered planning process. In fact, some of the things that you create through your person-centered plan can be included in the portfolio.

The person-centered planning process can also be used to identify additional items to include in your portfolio and a plan for obtaining those items. For example, you may decide to include a list of accommodations that you will need in high school in the portfolio. You and your team can decide in the planning process how you will go about identifying possible accommodations, deciding which ones might be appropriate for college, and determining which ones will be available at colleges that you are considering.

Items for Student Portfolio:

Why create a student portfolio? A portfolio can demonstrate accomplishments and competencies; and assist the admissions recruiter at your college interview.

- ❑ Samples of your work: reports, models, or pictures of projects you have completed, papers you have written, evidence of your participation on teams (academic, sports, art/music, etc.) or school activities, descriptions of volunteer work.

- ❑ **Personal Inventories**:
  - ❑ Student's Critical Steps Checklist
  - ❑ Learning style*
  - ❑ Strengths
  - ❑ Interest inventory results
  - ❑ Aspirations inventory
  - ❑ Assistive technology inventory

- ❑ Letters of recommendation (e.g., teachers, school counselors, employers, administrators, coaches, etc.)

- ❑ State and/or district assessment results

- ❑ Summary of Performance (SoP) from IEP, Measurable Postsecondary Goals (MPSG), and age appropriate transition assessments

- ❑ PSAT, ACT/SAT scores

- ❑ Accommodations that will be needed *

- ❑ Current documentation and description of disability*

- ❑ Appendix items may include additional items such as the following:
  - ❑ Calendar of your timeline/To-Do list for applying for colleges
  - ❑ Information on laws that apply in college vs. high school
  - ❑ Contacts
  - ❑ College Comparison

❑ *Opening Doors to Post Secondary Education and Training* (PDF)

❑ *A Student's Guide to the IEP (PDF)*

❑ *Students with Disabilities Preparing for Postsecondary Education: Know Your Rights and Responsibilities (PDF)*

*May be required by a college in order to receive accommodations.

Portfolios: Personal Documents, Worksheets & Resources

Worksheets	Personal Documents to Save in Portfolio
Career and Postsecondary Aspirations Survey	Results of *Career and Postsecondary Aspirations Survey* (in class)
Employability Maturity Interview	Results of *Employability Maturity Interview* (prior to Session 1)
Critical Steps in the Transition from High School to College For Students with Disabilities Interested in STEM Careers	Results of *Critical Steps in the Transition from High School to College For Students with Disabilities Interested in STEM Careers (prior to Session 1)*
Self-Advocacy Determination Scale	Results of *Self-Advocacy Determination Scale* (completed prior to training)
Learning Style Inventory Bixler, B. (n.d.). *Learning styles inventory.* Available online at https://ccids.umaine.edu/resource/learning-style-inventory-pdf/	Student results from the *Learning Style Survey*
Assessment: Find Your Strengths! Multiple Intelligences for Adults Literacy and Education. (n.d.) *Assessment: Find your strengths!* (web form). Available online from http://www.literacyworks.org/mi/assessment/findyourstrengths.html	Student results from the *Find Your Strengths! Survey* For more extensive exploration of interests and strengths, see: O*Net Interest Profiler Sponsored by the U.S. Department of Labor, Employment & Training Administration, (2019). O*Net Interest Profiler. Available online at https://www.mynextmove.org/explore/ip

Worksheets	Personal Documents to Save in Portfolio
[Study Skills Assessment](#) Virginia Commonwealth University, Going to College. (2009). *Study skills assessment.* Available online at http://going-to-college.org/campuslife/activities.html#grades	Copy of *Study Skills Assessment*
[Worksheet for Identifying Interests, Values, and Strengths (PDF)](#). Cornell University, Career Services. (n.d.). *Worksheet for identifying interests, values, and strengths* (PDF). Retrieved from https://archive.ilr.cornell.edu/sites/.../understanding-yourself-worksheet.pdf	Student results from Cornell University Survey
Assistive Technology: Assistive and educational technology tools and resources to support learning for students with disabilities and their classmates.	
Documentation of my disability and registration for Disability Support Services at UMaine.	Completed documentation of your disability. See appropriate form at this page: [Registration with Disability Support Services - Guidelines for Disability Documentations](#) University of Maine. (n.d.). *Registration with disability support services - Guidelines for disability documentations.* Available online at http://umaine.edu/disability/registration/guidelines-for-disability-documentations/

Worksheets	Personal Documents to Save in Portfolio
[The 411 on Disability Disclosure: A Workbook for Youth with Disabilities (99 pg PDF)](http://www.ncwd-youth.info/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/411_Disability_Disclosure_complete.pdf) National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability (n.d.). *The 411 on disability dsclosure: A workbook for youth with disabilities (99 pg PDF)*. Available online at: http://www.ncwd-youth.info/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/411_Disability_Disclosure_complete.pdf	A copy of your personal script disclosing your disability. Directions provided in Chapter 6, page 11-12 of this resource.
[Comparing Colleges Activity Form (Doc)](http://going-to-college.org/docs/comparingcolleges.doc) Virginia Commonwealth University, Going to College. (2009). *Comparing colleges (Doc)*. Available online at http://going-to-college.org/docs/comparingcolleges.doc	The completed Comparing Colleges worksheet.
Planning for College Resources: [Portfolio: Planning for College.](http://going-to-college.org/portfolio/planning.html) Virginia Commonwealth University. Going to College. (2009). *Portfolio: Planning for college*. Available online at http://going-to-college.org/portfolio/planning.html	This webpage has a number of planning sheets*:* • *Comparing colleges worksheet;* • *High school "to-do" lists;* • *College Application Checklist;* • *Asking for Recommendation letters; etc.*

Developing Your Personal Profile Identifying Strengths, Interests and Learning Style

The activities below are designed to help you and your team develop a better idea of your strengths and interests. You may have already completed one or more of the activities described here. In that case, you may simply want to review the results with your team.

Activity 1

Complete the worksheet, [Worksheet for Identifying Interests, Values, and Strengths (PDF)](#)

> Cornell University, Career Services. (n.d.). *Worksheet for identifying interests, values, and strengths* (PDF). Retrieved from https://archive.ilr.cornell.edu/sites/default/files/understanding-yourself-worksheet.pdf

You may find that working with a teacher or family member on this activity can be useful. Some people struggle with the question about what you would do if you had no financial limitations. The intent of this question is simply to help you figure out what you want with your life – not what you need to do to become a billionaire. As a team, you should explore what your answers mean in terms of a potential STEM career or for your major.

Activity 2

Go to the [Going to College, Activities](#) web page.

> Virginia Commonwealth University, Going to College. (2009). *Activities, knowing my strengths.* Available online at http://going-to-college.org/myplace/activities.html#strengths

They list several online activities that you can use to identify your learning style, strengths, and interests. Choose one or more activities that you would like to complete. Review the results with your team.

Activity 3

Complete the online [Multiple Intelligences Assessment, Find Your Strengths!](#)

> Multiple Intelligences for Adults Literacy and Education. (n.d.). *Assessment: Find your strengths!* (web form). Available online at http://www.literacyworks.org/mi/assessment/findyourstrengths.html

Review the results with your team. You can use the following questions to guide your discussion: "What does it say about the kind of work that might be interesting for you?" and "What motivates and challenges you academically?

Activity 4

Complete one of the following online learning style inventories below (or review the results if you have already competeted them):

- [Learning Style Inventory](#)

    Bixler, B. (n.d.). *Learning style inventory*. Available online at https://ccids.umaine.edu/resource/learning-style-inventory-pdf/

- [Learning Style Quiz](#)

    What is your learning style? Free quiz to find out what your learning style is. Available online at: https://www.learningstylequiz.com/

Review the results with your team. Brainstorm some ideas about good careers or good fields of study for someone with your learning style.
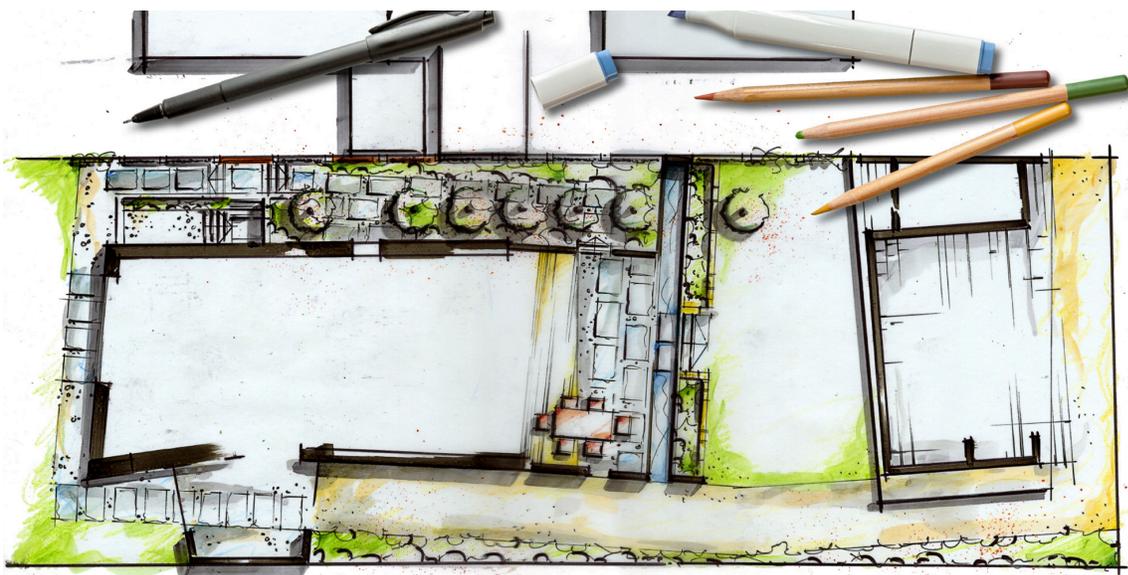
What Works for You in School?

This is an activity that can help you understand what works for you in classrooms and what does not work. You may have a good understanding of this already, but it can help to write it down and get the perspectives of others who know you well. This information can be very helpful to you when you go to your college's disability support services office to ask for accommodations.

In this activity, the facilitator creates two columns on a sheet of chart paper. On top of the left hand column, the facilitator should write: "What <u>works?</u> (i.e., What helps you succeed in class or complete an assignment?). In the right-hand column, they should write: What <u>doesn't work</u>? (i.e., What causes anxiety, makes it difficult to complete assignments, or interferes with success in a class?). The facilitator then asks people to list some of those things. *Remember that you are the one who knows best what works and does not work for you! As someone who may be working on increasing your self-determination skills, it is important to make sure that you are heard.*

Short Example:

What <u>works</u> for you in school? (i.e., What helps you succeed in class or complete an assignment?)

◊   Small classes

◊   Clear expectations in writing

◊   Extra time for tests

◊   Structure

◊   Using a keyboard to write

◊   Tools to help me organize my time

◊   A note taker

◊   Sitting in front of class

What <u>doesn't work</u>? (i.e., What causes anxiety or makes it difficult to complete assignments or succeed in class)

◊   Having to write a lot of notes

◊   Unclear assignments

◊   Fire alarms

◊   Lab partner who is impatient with me when I take longer to complete a task in the lab

◊   Small group activities

◊   Sitting in back of class

Matching STEM Careers to Interests and Strengths

There are a number of PCP activities that can be used by your team to develop your "Personal Profile." This is just a description of who you are, what you like, what you are good at, and your learning style. Some of the PCP activities that can be used to construct this profile include: Who is…?; What Works? or any of the Developing Your Personal Profile - Identifying Strengths, Interests, and Learning Style activities.

Brainstorming Careers Activity

With your team, review and summarize your profile. Then, brainstorm possible STEM-related (or non-STEM) careers that would be a good match for someone with your unique set of strengths, interests, and learning styles. While brainstorming, participants should avoid commenting on other people's ideas. Some may seem very unrealistic – but that is all right for now.

After you have brainstormed, discuss realistic possibilities as a team.

It may help to go to the Virginia Career VIEW website where you can look up various careers, the pay range for people in those careers, and the educational requirements.

> Virginia Career VIEW. (2014). *Career search*. Available online at http://www.vacareerview.org/careers/careerawareness/

Photo courtesy of the University of Maine

Increasing Self-Determination Plan

This is an activity that you can work on with members of your team. The goal is to develop a plan for increasing your self-determination skills by identifying self-determination goals, skills you will need to learn, who you will get support from, and where you can practice those skills. In addition, you and your team should determine how you will know if you are succeeding in your goals.

1. Identify some part of your life where you would like to have more control. Think especially of things you will need to do when you go to college. (For example, you might want to have more control over when you do your homework – something you will need to schedule for yourself when you are in college.)

2. What skills do you need to learn to do this? (In the example above, you might need instruction in how to organize your time.)

    a. Who can you ask to teach you those skills? (e.g., parent, teacher, friend, etc.)

    b. What is the next step you need to take to make sure that you learn this skill? (e.g., Ask my mother to help me. Ask my guidance counselor for ideas. Ask that it be addressed in my IEP meeting.)

3. How can I get more experience practicing this skill? (e.g., Ask for opportunities to set my own study schedule at home. Work on organizational skills in school.)

4. Are there other supports that I need? (e.g., Request help in learning how to use a scheduling app, reminders, etc.)

5. How will I know that my strategy for achieving my goal is working? How can I keep track of my progress?

Planning:
Exploring Possible STEM Careers

The purpose of the activity described here is to begin exploring possible STEM careers. This is something you may choose to do throughout the planning process. Many people have an idea about the career they would like to pursue, but as they learn more about it, gain some experience, or take classes, their career goals can change or become more refined. You and your team may want to come back to this activity several times.

In this activity, you begin by listing as many as six STEM fields or disciplines that you think would be a good fit for you. For each of these career fields, answer the nine questions about that field or discipline. We have included a list of six online resources that you can use to find out more information about these fields and the jobs that are available to people who enter those fields. This will help you to get a better idea of why the field might or might not be a good fit; examples of jobs that are available within the field; how much money people earn; the pros and cons of different jobs; and the amount of education you will need.

Potential STEM Careers

You can complete this alone or with help from members of your team.

List some of your ideas about STEM fields or disciplines you think would be a good fit for you.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

Field or Discipline _____

(e.g., Chemistry, Engineering, Computer Science, Life Science, etc.)

1. Why would this be a good STEM discipline for me to enter? What are some of the strengths and why would this be a good fit for me?

   _____

   _____

   _____

   _____

2. What are some of the jobs that people in this field do?

   _____

   _____

   _____

3. How much money does someone earn working in this field?

   _____

4. What kind of degree do you need to work in this field?

   _____

       a.   What can you do with a Bachelor's Degree?

       b.   A Master's Degree?

       c.   A Doctorate

5. How many years will you have to go to school to work in this field?

   _____

   _____

6. What are some of the courses you will need to take?

   _____

   _____

   _____

7.   What are some of the pros and cons to pursuing a career in this field?

                    Pros   Cons

        _____   _____

        _____   _____

        _____   _____

        _____   _____

        _____   _____

8.   As you explored this career, did you learn about any jobs in this field that you did not know of before? If so, what?

        _____

        _____

        _____

        _____

        _____

        _____

9.   What are some other ways you can learn more about a career in this area?

        _____

        _____

        _____

        _____

        _____

        _____

Resources for Exploring STEM Careers

STEMCareer for those seeking and promoting STEM careers. —

> Feller, R. (2010). *STEMCareer for those seeking and promoting STEM careers*. Available online at http://stemcareer.com/tag/jobs/

O*Net Online —

> O*Net Online. (n.d.) Available online at https://www.onetonline.org/find/career

STEMJOBS: Do what you love.—

> STEMJOBS. (2013). Available online at http://stemjobs.com

STEM Occupations: High Tech Jobs for a High Tech Economy (PDF).—

> Terrell, N. (Spring, 2007). STEM occupations (PDF). *Occupational Outlook Quarterly*. Available for download at https://www.bls.gov/careeroutlook/2007/spring/art04.pdf

Virginia Career VIEW —

> Virginia Career VIEW. (2014). Available online at http://www.vaview.org/careers/
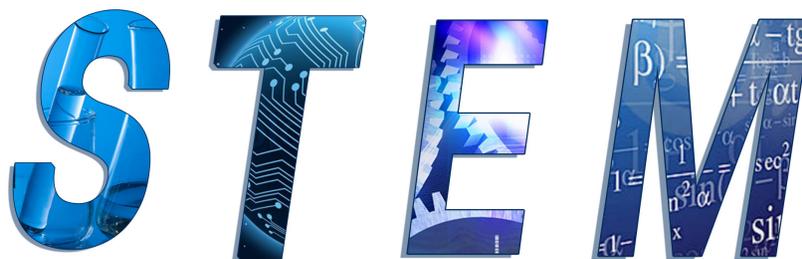
STEM
Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics

Graphic designed by Bonnie Robinson, University of Maine Center for Community Inclusion and Disability Studies. © 2014

What Do I Need in a College?

This is a planning activity that you can use as you begin to narrow your choices about where you want to go to college. You can use it to develop a list of what is most important to you in a college that you can use in your college exploration.

Activity: Together with family members, teachers, friends and your planning facilitator, list some of those things that you think are most important to you in a college. These can include things such as the following:

⇨ Geographical location

⇨ Quality of food

⇨ Financial aid

⇨ Type of supports provided by the disability support services office

⇨ Availability of particular majors

⇨ Quality of the academic programs

⇨ Entrance requirements

⇨ Accessibility

⇨ Availability of special programs

⇨ Sports programs

⇨ Social life

⇨ Dorm options or other residential options

⇨ Fraternities or sororities on campus

⇨ Extracurricular activities

List the things that **you** feel are most important in a college. The facilitator or other team members may have some ideas or they have some questions, but ultimately it is you who needs to make the decision about what is important.

After you have developed your list, decide which features are most important to you. One way of indicating your preference is by labeling an item as *non-negotiable* (which means college would be impossible if you did not have this); *strong preference* (college would be difficult, but I could give this up if most of the other things I need in a college are there), or *will consider* (you would consider the school if this is not a strength).

Short Example: One person's list is on the following page. In this case, he labeled each item using the key at the bottom to help him identify what was most important to him. Your list will probably be longer than this.

Sample: What I Need in a College

◊ School with good electrical engineering program. NN

◊ Single room in dorm. SP

◊ Good recreation program. WC

◊ Disability support services office that can meet my need for a note taker in class. NN

◊ School that does not require SATs for admission. WC

◊ Availability of gluten-free food in the cafeteria. NN

Key:

NN = Non-Negotiable

SP = Strong Preference

WC = Will consider school if this is not a strength of school.

Another Example: Here, the student is exploring his needs regarding his living situation in more detail.

My Ideal Living Arrangements in College

◊ Close to classes – don't want to have to take a bus. NN

◊ Close to dining. SP

◊ Single room or suite. WC

◊ Physical accessibility. NN

◊ Fraternity – maybe. NS (I don't know much about fraternities.)

Key:

NN = Non-Negotiable

SP = Strong Preference

WC = Will consider school if this is not a strength of school.

NS = Not sure yet.

Comparing Colleges

The process of selecting a college can be overwhelming for everyone. Among all the other considerations, students with disabilities also may have to determine if supports and accommodations to meet their needs will be provided on a campus.

This activity from *Going to College* provides individuals with a template they can use in comparing features of different colleges.

Activity: Download the document Comparing Colleges activity form (Doc) from the Going to College website, or have the copy you used in Section Four.

> Virginia Commonwealth University - Going to College. (2009). *Comparing colleges (Doc)*. Available online at http://going-to-college.org/docs/comparingcolleges.doc

As a team, review the questions on the template. Determine if they need to be modified. Also decide if there are questions that need to be added to the template.

When you have finished editing the template, decide how you are going to answer these questions for each of the colleges that you are interested in attending. Identify the following:

⇨ How you will go about getting this information (e.g., by making phone calls or sending emails, by reviewing websites, by visiting a college).

⇨ What supports you may need to answer these questions (e.g., use of assistive technology, reminders, a ride to a particular campus).

⇨ When you will have completed this activity.

⇨ A time to meet with team members to talk about how the process is working and any changes that you may need to make.

Photo courtesy of the University of Maine

Photo courtesy of the University of Maine

Supports and Accommodations: Those You Get Now and Those You Expect to Get in College

High school youth with disabilities are sometimes unaware of the supports and accommodations they are receiving in school. This activity provides you with an opportunity to review the supports that you are currently receiving and to think about the accommodations that you will have to formally request when you are in college.

Preparing for this Activity:

This planning activity works best if you do a little preparation. The most important thing you can do is to review the accommodations and supports that you are currently receiving in high school. One way of doing this is to simply ask to see a copy of your IEP. The supports and accommodations you are currently receiving should be listed there. If you have difficulty finding them, ask a teacher, guidance counselor or parent or guardian to help you.

Next, go back to the materials you received in Section Two of this training on the differences between high school and college. The presentation, *Differences between High School and College*, and the handout, *Accommodation vs Modification* may be particularly useful. It might also be helpful to have copies of the document on accommodations and modifications to share with others on your planning team.

The Activity:

The facilitator should create two columns on a piece of chart paper. At the top of the column on the left, the facilitator should write, "Supports and Accommodations You Get Now" and on the top of the column on the right, "Supports You Expect to Get in College." If members of the planning team have a copy of the document, *Accommodations vs Modification* (from Section Two) the facilitator can ask the planning team members to briefly review it before beginning the activity.

The facilitator will then ask the members of the planning team to list the kinds of supports and accommodations you currently get, including formal accommodations and informal supports. You should take the lead on this! As you transition to college, it is important for you to know what supports you have been receiving. Next, the facilitator will ask team members to list the types of accommodations that you might be eligible for in college.

When you are finished listing the supports you receive now and those you hope to receive in college, review each of the supports you listed in the right-hand column and discuss whether this is an accommodation. If the support is not a formal accommodation or if it is a modification, discuss as a team how you might get the support you need to be successful.

Steps to Successful
Postsecondary Education Transition

As you prepare to transition to postsecondary education, there many things to do. Sometimes, creating a list can help. Equally important, however, is identifying who will be responsible for completing the steps and creating a timeline for their completion.

Activity

Identifying Vital Steps to Postsecondary Education Transition

1. Complete one or more of the checklists below:

   a. [Going to College: High School "To Do" Lists](#)

   Virginia Commonwealth University, Going to College. (n.d.). *High school "to do" lists*. Available online at http://going-to-college.org/planning/list.html **(OR)**

   b. [Opening Doors to Postsecondary Education and Training (pages 8-9) (PDF)](#) — "How and when do I develop a timeline for transition planning to postsecondary education?

   Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction. (2007). *Opening doors to postsecondary education and training* (pp 8-9) (PDF). Available online at http:// https://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/imce/sped/pdf/tranopndrs.pdf
   (OR)

   c. *Critical Steps to Postsecondary Education and STEM Careers* (PDF) from your portfolio.

2. Review the results of the checklist(s) with members of your team. Use the results to create your own timeline using the format shown on the next page.

My Postsecondary Education Transition Timeline

Postsecondary Education Transition Goal	Date When it Should be Completed	People Who Are Responsible
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		
7.		
8.		
9.		
10.		
11.		
12.		
13.		
14.		
15.		
16.		
17.		
18.		
19.		
20.*		

* Use as many rows as you need to identify all the steps that need to be completed before transitioning to postsecondary education.

Start with things that you should complete in the next few months, then things that have to be completed this year, and finally things that should be done before you finish high school.

You can also use the *Critical Steps Checklist* to develop your list.

Disclosure

Whether or not you disclose your disability in college is an important decision. If you want to receive accommodations in your classes, you may have to disclose to some people on campus such as the disability support services office and professors. You also have to decide to whom you will disclose. This activity gives you an opportunity to do some planning related to what you might disclose and to whom you might choose to disclose your disability.

Prior to this activity you and some of your planning team members may want to read Unit 6: Postsecondary Disclosure...Why, When, What, to Whom, and How (PDF) from *The 411 on Disability Disclosure, A Workbook for Youth with Disabilities (PDF)*.

> National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability (n.d.). *Unit 6: Postsecondary disclosure...why, when, what, to whom, and how (PDF).* From The 411 on Disability Disclosure: A Workbook for Youth with Disabilities (99 pg PDF). Available online at: http://www.ncwd-youth.info/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/411_Disability_Disclosure_complete.pdf

You may have already read this when you completed Section Two. If you developed a script for disclosing in Section Two, you may also decide to review it.

Activity

Use the following questions to guide your discussion with the planning facilitator or other planning team members about when you might decide to disclose and to whom:

1. When would it be in my best interest to disclose my disability?
2. What are some reasons not to disclose my disability?
3. When would I disclose my disability?
4. To whom?
5. When would I not want to disclose my disability?

Healthcare Transition Planning

As you plan for your transition to college and ultimately to a career, it is important to think about how your healthcare needs will be met as you become more independent from your family. Choose one of the two transition planning activities that are described below. Both have links to the resources you and you team can use to complete the activity.

Activity 1 – Making an Action Plan

Download the Sample Self-Care Assessment for Young Adults (PDF):

> Got Transition. (2014). *Sample Self-Care Assessment for Young Adults (PDF)*. National Health Care Transition Center. Available online at https://www.gottransition.org/resourceGet.cfm?id=255

Complete the relatively short form with the help of your family or healthcare providers. Use the form to identify specific healthcare transition goals related to the following: 1) you and your family's healthcare issues and concerns; 2) your knowledge of health issues and your diagnosis; and 3) your preparation to direct your healthcare after you have turned 18.

Using this form, identify what actions need to be taken in the "Plans" column. These are actions that can be taken by you, others on the team, or by you and your team members together. In the final column, identify who will be responsible and by when they will complete the task. Also make sure that the team sets a date for another meeting so that everyone can report on their progress.

Activity 2 – Healthcare Transition Planning Guide

Download the Sample Medical Summary and Emergency Care Plan (PDF)

> Got Transition. (2014). *Sample Medical Summary and Emergency Care Plan (PDF)*. Washington, DC: The National Alliance to Advance Adolescent Health. Available online at https://www.gottransition.org/resourceGet.cfm?id=227 **(OR)**

The Sample Welcome and Orientation of New Young Adults (PDF):

> Got Transition. (2014). *Sample Welcome and Orientation of New Young Adults* (PDF). Washington, DC: The National Alliance to Advance Adolescent Health. Available online at https://www.gottransition.org/resourceGet.cfm?id=251

These worksheets are designed to help you identify, in much greater detail, your healthcare needs, the healthcare activities that you can complete independently, and your transition needs. It also contains a worksheet that your parents can complete. These worksheets can be used to identify specific healthcare transition goals. Remember to include, for each goal, who will be responsible and when the goal should be completed.

Assistive Technology Planning

Assistive technology can be complicated and the needs of any student are unique. For that reason, it is usually valuable to have a multidisciplinary team involved. The team might include the student, family members, an educator, assistive technology expert, speech/language pathologist, occupational therapist, speech therapist, or others. Of course, you may not need each of these participants on your team.

When planning for the use of assistive technology, it is important to remember that you should have some practice with any technology you plan to use in college – **before** you transition to postsecondary education. For example, one young man knew that he would have difficulty taking notes in the fast-paced lectures of the college classroom. While still a senior in high school, he practiced using several technologies including a tape recorder and an electronic tablet that he could type on by "swiping." Ultimately, he found the swiping technology much more useful and was able to start his freshman year in college with the technology he knew would work.

There are several good planning tools that a team can use to plan for the use of assistive technology in postsecondary education settings. You and your PCP team can use these tools to do the following: 1) identify potentially useful technologies; 2) determine how you will find out if the technology is a good fit for you; and 3) identify how you will obtain the technology. Work with your team to decide what planning process you will use to identify the technology that will work best for you.

Planning Tool:

⇨ Assessing Students' Needs for Assistive Technology (ASNAT)—This detailed resource manual was developed for use by Wisconsin school districts, but includes a number of assessment activities and worksheets that could be used by a student and his or her team to assess assistive technology needs.

> Wisconsin Assistive Technology Initiative, Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI). (2009). *Assessing students' needs for assistive technology (ASNAT)*. Available online at http://www.wati.org/free-publications/assessing-students-needs-for-assistive-technology/

⇨ [SETT (Student, Environments, Tasks and Tools) Framework](#) — The SETT framework for Assistive Technology Assessment is described. Included are worksheets that can be used for the process. The framework is intended for use by collaborative teams to create a student-centered Assistive Technology Plan.

Zabala, J. (2002). *SETT (Student, Environments, Tasks and Tools) Framework.* Available online at http://assistedtechnology.weebly.com/sett-framework.html.

Person-Centered Planning Action Planning

Perhaps the most important component of PCP is the action plan. It may be especially important for students transitioning to postsecondary education because of the many things that you, and those who support you, need to do before you go to college. PCP helps break these large tasks into small, concrete and achievable steps. The action plan does the following: 1) identifies the next steps; 2) who will be responsible; and 3) when they will be completed. An action plan should be completed at the end of each PCP meeting. As part of the action plan, the team should also identify the next time to meet to review progress on the steps. Also make sure that you identify a date to review progress on the action plan and to revise it if necessary. The following is a format that you can use for your action planning.

Action Plan

Date of Action Plan _____   Date to Review _____

Goal or Step to be Taken	Who is Responsible?	By When?
Example: Will complete FAFSA application	Parents and Student	December 15, 2015