Engaging Individuals and Families in Conversations Around Employment

John Kramer  
*University of Massachusetts Boston*, john.kramer@umb.edu

Amie Lulinski  
*The Arc of the US*, lulinski@thearc.org

ThinkWork! at the Institute for Community Inclusion at UMass Boston

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Engaging Individuals and Families in Conversations Around Employment

John Kramer, PhD
Institute on Community Inclusion, University of Massachusetts, Boston

Amie Lulinski, PhD, The Arc of the US
Learning Objectives

Participants in this session will:
1) Share innovative strategies for engaging individuals and families that build collaboration;
2) Provide examples of how employment professionals, individuals and family members can build better, more sustainable collaborations around employment; and
3) Contribute to the design of a more sustainable and effective outreach approach.
• How do you define family?
• What is the relationship of family to employment?
REAL FAMILIES ROCK!

Dad's Partner Roy
Dad
Granny
Granny's new husband
My Cousin Kevin once removed
My Friend Aliq
Mom's Mum's Girlfriend
Aunty Jackie
Turtle
Rosie (age 5)

Dad's ex-wife
Spot the Dog
Me
My Brother

ALL YOU NEED IS LOVE

www.outforourchildren.co.uk
Funded by The National Lottery Awards For All
What we know...
Family involvement and employment of people with IDD

• Family members’ role modeling and expectations shape positive experiences of employment for individuals.

• Advanced knowledge and capacity within families leads to employment-focused decisions.

• Family and individual demographics are related to employment.
Family members’ role modeling and expectations shape positive experiences of employment for individuals with IDD.
Advanced knowledge and capacity within families leads to employment-focused decisions.
Family and individual demographics are related to employment decisions and patterns.
Effective ways exist to support individuals and families to develop an employment vision and expectations.
Examples of engagement strategies

- Trainings to inform families and teach them to advocate:
  - Explore, Prepare, Act
  - Let’s Get to Work
  - FEAT
  - Computer-based instruction

- Thinking about different types of approaches

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sample Questions</th>
<th>PCT Tools for Discovery</th>
<th>Participant Responses and Direction</th>
<th>Employment Action Plan and ISP Content</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>□ Employment Discovery OR Supported</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>□ Employment/Career Planning</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### Not Focused on Employment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Path to Employment</th>
<th>Sample Questions</th>
<th>PCT Tools for Discovery</th>
<th>Participant Responses and Direction</th>
<th>Employment Action Plan and ISP Content</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Can you think of how your life might change if you had money for what you wanted?</td>
<td>• Important To/For&lt;br&gt;• Presence to Contribution&lt;br&gt;• Routines/Rituals&lt;br&gt;• Dreams/Goals</td>
<td>Draft criteria: Possible Evidence of “informed choice related to decisions about employment”&lt;br&gt;• Environment supports choice-making&lt;br&gt;• Information is available on a variety of employment options&lt;br&gt;• Person has had experience with options to develop personal preferences&lt;br&gt;• Information is provided in a manner reflective of person’s ability to understand and communicate&lt;br&gt;• Non-judgmental advice and support are offered.&lt;br&gt;• Support includes consideration of positive and negative consequences of the decision.&lt;br&gt;• Presentation of information is provided by more than one provider or team member.</td>
<td>If the participant is beyond typical working age (62) and has not expressed an interest in employment, Employment Action Plan is not required within ISP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Can you think of how your life might change if you were more involved in the community? (friends at work, etc.)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>For those of working age:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>How will you spend your days while you are unemployed and/or retired?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1. Identifies the desired weekly schedule, including:&lt;br&gt;• Hours of Service and Outcome (1-40)&lt;br&gt;• Schedule and environments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Are you a morning person?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2. Describes non-work activities in which the participant chooses to participate in during this plan period.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Do you like to do things later in the day?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3. Addresses how preferred activities that could be related to future employment will be identified, through exploration and ways these may inform future decisions related to employment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Do you like to be with other people?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4. There is a discussion record that captures efforts to assure that the participant is making an informed decision about not working.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Do you like to be alone?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Documentation of team recommendation if Community Life Engagement services are provided in residential setting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Do you feel good when you are helping someone out?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
What we don’t know...
Gaps and need

• Family involvement matters, so why do some professionals feel they’re a barrier?
• Earlier engagement with families of young children/sustained engagement with older families
  – Transition age is not soon enough
  – Community conversations to increase inclusion and employment opportunities
  – Effects of positive role modeling? Portrayal of people with disabilities in work, etc.
• Inconsistent messaging to families
  – Access shouldn’t matter on “being in the know”
Forums and Facebook Study
Findings...

• Providers
• Giving up as moving forward...
• IEP process - lack of clear employment goals
• Fear of disclosure and discrimination (Self-Advocates)
Family engagement is not effective when it's late.
Where is the issue? Family and Self Advocate Expressions
The alienation produced by systems leads to mixed, muddled outcomes.
Family engagement relies on certain family structures and capacity to be effective.
Engaging in an innovative way

• Test a low touch, scalable approach for engaging families
• Tailor approach depending on where the individual is at
• Using low and hi-tech together
• Testing impact on employment planning and vision for the future
• The idea would be to test the strategy to repeat with staff
• Does this sound interesting?
Two ideas for your consideration

• Existing planning tools – model an employment specific engagement strategy
  – Target information in ways that are specific to where the person is at
  – https://futureplanning.thearc.org/

• Peer to peer approach
  – Existing efforts
  – Online/virtual approach/real world engagement using “light touch” or micro-engagements...

• Do you know of existing efforts that have worked well?
What do you think?
Discussion Question #1

What are some effective ways to engage with families?
Discussion Question #2

What are some effective ways to talk about job exploration and choice?
Discussion Question #3

What are some good examples of getting information “just in time?”
Additional discussion questions...

- What other examples (good or bad) can you share?
  - What can we learn from them?
- What have we missed?
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Questions?

John Kramer  John.Kramer@umb.edu
Amie Lulinski  lulinski@thearc.org