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# Engaging individuals and families around employment

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# *Engaging individuals and families around employment*

*John Kramer, Nancy Nickolaus  
2016 National APSE Conference  
Tuesday, June 21 2016*



Rehabilitation Research and Training Center on Advancing Employment  
for Individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities

A project of

**ThinkWork!**

at the Institute for Community Inclusion, UMass Boston



# Questions for you to consider

- How do you define family?
  - How have you interacted with families?
  - What should the role of family be in employment?
  - How can we engage families in smarter ways?
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# What we're doing

- State Employment Leadership Network
- ThinkWork Research

Biologically - Legally – Emotionally



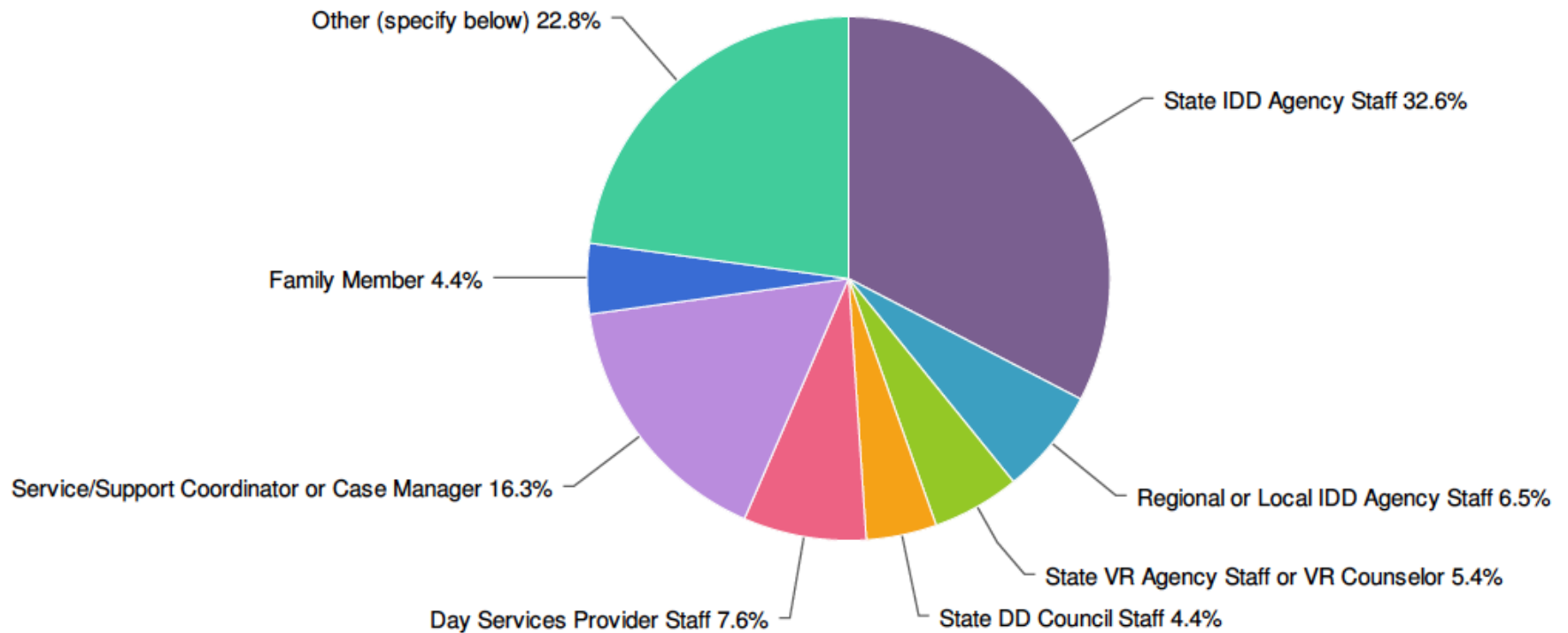
Related - Unrelated



# 2015 SELN Survey to Members

- Target Audience: state I/DD agencies and partners.
  - What are you doing?
  - Is it working? How do you know?
  - Challenges

# Roles of the 92 Respondents





# Survey Results

- Family Involvement
  - Case Management
  - Barriers
  - Family Training
  - Communication and Messaging
  - Ages Targeted
  - Tracking Family Engagement Success
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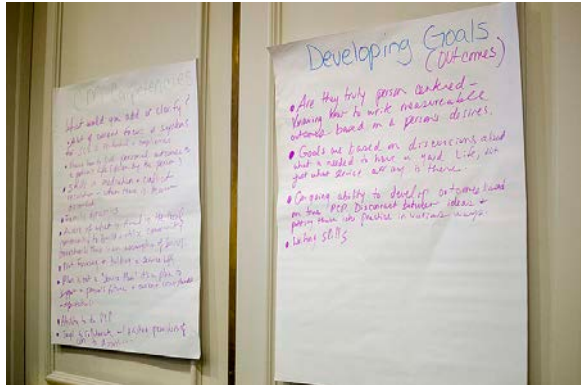




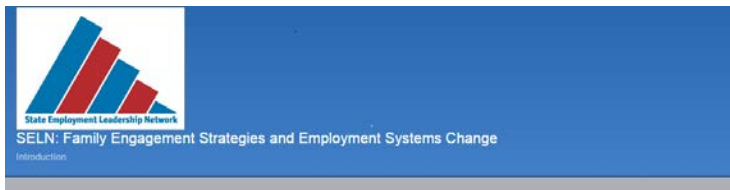
# What We Have Learned

- Ensure Staff Understand the “WHY”
- Prepare Staff to be Responsive
- Support Families to Make Connections

# SELN Related Work



## Discussions



Families are critical to the successful employment of family members with intellectual and developmental disabilities. The public system of paid supports and the role of the state agency for persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) can assist families in:

- Developing and maintaining an expectation of work,
- Establishing a working knowledge of earnings and benefits,
- Encouraging participation in employment services planning, and
- Providing access to needed resources and supports.

This survey is intended to assist SELN member states in improving or creating supportive family engagement strategies and while feedback is welcome from anyone who regularly works with or accesses publicly funded services, the questions are written primarily to resonate with state/regional/local agency staff. With the broad array of resources available to states today, learning more about each SELN member state's current practices and barriers will assist in directing the most applicable resources.

More than one response is welcome from each member state and results will be discussed during individual state technical assistance calls.

You are receiving this survey because your state is a member of the State Employment Leadership Network (SELN). The SELN is a joint initiative of the National Association of State Directors of Developmental Disabilities Services (NASDDDS) and the Institute for Community Inclusion (ICI) at the University of Massachusetts Boston. The SELN is a membership-based network of state developmental disability (DD) agencies committed to making changes in their service systems and improving integrated employment outcomes. For more information please visit: [www.seln.org](http://www.seln.org)

## Survey

## SPECIAL SERIES



### Building Capacity and the Role of Case Managers and Services/Supports Coordinators

The role of the case manager and services/supports coordinator is instrumental in moving the employment agenda forward and, as a result, their job is becoming more complex. Person-focused care coordination requires knowledge and expertise in many areas, and community-based employment is just one of them. Case managers and services/supports coordinators are one of the best resources for explaining the role of work, the impact of employment on public benefits, and how to navigate the path of services and supports. This year, SELN provided members and guests with a three-part series on Qualities of a High-Performing Case Manager.

#### Qualities of a high-performing case manager:

- Recognize that families are the nation's true long-term care system of support.
- Understand new ideas may be rejected many times before the ideas are accepted into a family's culture and plans.
- Listen, interpret, and assimilate the information gathered day to day with individuals and families.
- Make person-centered thinking evident in all activities.
- Maintain a basic understanding of work incentives and Social Security benefits, and know where to point families and individuals to delve deeper into the specifics.
- Express high expectations about employment.
- Communicate early and often that work is fundamental to earning the means to exercise our freedoms.
- Understand that earnings and benefits are not an either/or choice.
- Connect people to resources that will help them make informed decisions about working.

### The Role of Family Involvement in Employment

SELN hosted a series of discussions on how to reframe expectations around employment, provide tools for having conversations with youth, families, and professionals; and share concrete examples from around the nation. The discussions were based on the LifeCourse Framework, which was developed by University of Missouri-Kansas City, Institute for Human Development to help individuals with disabilities and families at any age or stage of life develop a vision for a good life, think about what they need to know and do, identify how to find or develop supports, and discover what it takes to live the life they desire. The framework serves as a guide for policy, service provision, and planning. It can be used not only by families, but also by professionals in state systems and organizations, or project teams striving to improve family engagement efforts.



#### Session I: Strategic Mapping Using the LifeCourse Framework Objectives

Participants learned how to use strategies and tools to assess current services, gain a better understanding of the concept of family engagement, and consider employment options.

#### Session II: LifeCourse and Employment Outcomes Objectives

Participants learned to use the framework and its tools to advance employment outcomes in transitioning youth, spread the message of employment to families and professionals, and explore opportunities for interacting with families.

#### Session III: Implementing Lessons-Learned Objectives

Presenters shared first-hand stories on how the framework has been used to change policy and practice, promote self-determination, and improve planning, so employment and life outcomes are planned for and achieved.

## Special Series





# Tools Some States are Using

- **When I Grow Up**

<https://youtu.be/j4S8LnHZuuE>

- **Tapping into the Power of Families: How Families of Youth with Disabilities Can Assist in Job Search and Retention**

<http://www.ncwd-youth.info/infobrief/tapping-into-the-power-of-families>

- **South Dakota Person Centered Employment Guide**

<https://dhs.sd.gov/dd/documents/SD%20Person%20Centered%20Employment%20Guide.pdf>

# Transitioning? Working? Working Soon? No Thanks!

Sample Questions	PCT Tools for Discovery	Participant Responses and Direction	Employment Action Plan and ISP Content ✓ Employment Discovery OR Supported Employment/Career Planning
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Path to Employment	Sample Questions	PCT Tools for Discovery	Participant Responses and Direction	Employment Action Plan and ISP Content ✓ Community Life Engagement
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Can you think of how your life might change if you had money for what you wanted?</li> <li>2. Can you think of how your life might change if you were more involved in the community? (friends at work, etc.)</li> <li>3. How will you spend your days while you are unemployed and/or retired?</li> <li>4. Are you a morning person?</li> <li>5. Do you like to do things later in the day?</li> <li>6. Do you like to be with other people?</li> <li>7. Do you like to be alone?</li> <li>8. Do you feel good when you are helping someone out?</li> <li>9. Do you like physical activity?</li> <li>10. Do you prefer quiet activities?</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Important To/For</li> <li>• Presence to Contribution</li> <li>• Routines/Rituals</li> <li>• Dreams/Goals</li> </ul> <p><u>If the working age participant says "I don't want to work" It is the responsibility of the team to:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider how present plan and life activities, experiences and interests may lead closer to employment in the future</li> <li>• Present information about and opportunities for employment on an annual basis</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;">AND</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clearly document that participant has made an "informed decision" not to work (See Draft criteria)</li> </ul>	<p><b>Draft criteria: Possible Evidence of "informed choice related to decisions about employment"</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Environment supports choice-making</li> <li>• Information is available on a variety of employment options</li> <li>• Person has had experience with options to develop personal preferences</li> <li>• Information is provided in a manner reflective of person's ability to understand and communicate</li> <li>• Non-judgmental advice and support are offered.</li> <li>• Support includes consideration of positive and negative consequences of the decision.</li> <li>• Presentation of information is provided by more than one provider or team member.</li> </ul>	<p><u>If the participant is beyond typical working age (62) and has not expressed an interest in employment</u>, Employment Action Plan is not required within ISP</p> <p><u>For those of working age:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Identifies the desired weekly schedule, including:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hours of Service and Outcome (1-40)</li> <li>• Schedule and environments</li> </ul> </li> <li>2. Describes non-work activities in which the participant chooses to participate in during this plan period.</li> <li>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.</li> <li>4. There is a discussion record that captures efforts to assure that the participant is making an informed decision about not working.             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Documentation of team recommendation if Community Life Engagement services are provided in residential setting.</li> </ul> </li> </ol>

The purpose of the Person Centered Employment Guide is to assist Case Managers, job development staff and others to prepare for discussions with individuals, families, and support teams to choose and implement supports that will lead to a Path to Employment.



# Family Employment Systems Interaction Study

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# Individuals and families

## Our Approach

- ❖ Scoping Literature
  - ❖ Online/In-person Focus Groups
  - ❖ Intervention study
-

# 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
-



# Gaps and need

- Outreach to families from diverse communities, with the help of community liaisons
  - Earlier engagement with families of young children/sustained engagement with older families
  - The use of social media to educate and connect families
  - Community conversations to increase inclusion and employment opportunities
  - Effects of positive role modeling? Portrayal of people with disabilities in work, etc.
-



# Findings...

- Family engagement is not effective when its late
- Family v. service – working against, not with each other
- Beliefs about employment are not uniform across providers...confusing for families
- Forward movement happens sometimes when families give up on engaging services
- IEP process – lack of clear employment goals
- Fear of disclosure and discrimination (Self-Advocates)

# Intervention planning

- 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?
-

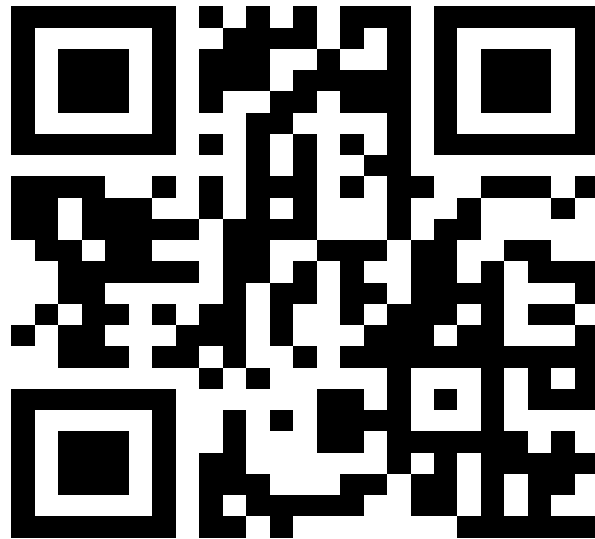
# Discussion

## Three action questions

1. How are you preparing staff to have positive pro-employment conversations with families?
  2. Name 1 successful strategy you have used to engage families successfully. What makes it successful?
  3. How do you think we can work together to increase expectations and outcomes?
-

# Next steps – Continuing the discussion

- How can we continue the discussion?
- Sign up list
- Download the slides here...



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