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Incorporating Career and Technical Education in Transition Planning for Students with Emotional Disturbance

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Translating Evidence for Successful Transitions (TEST)

INCORPORATING CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION IN TRANSITION PLANNING

FOR STUDENTS WITH EMOTIONAL DISTURBANCE

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Foreword

Young adults with mental health difficulties are capable of successfully engaging in school, training, and employment. The support these individuals receive as they progress through secondary education can help them realize their potential in life after high school. Many times teachers see different results for these students such as high school drop-out, lower rates of post-secondary education and employment, and even higher rates of involvement with law enforcement, poverty, and homelessness upon their exit from high school (Wagner, Newman, Cameto, & Levine); however, with the right information, resources, and determination teachers can make a lasting impact on these students.

To help students with Emotional Disturbance (ED) experience post-secondary success, teachers need resources to assist them with planning and preparing for student transition from high school into education and training programs and employment in young adulthood. This guide will offer practical ways to plan for these students' successful transition from high school to post-secondary life, which can lead to positive outcomes for students with ED.

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About this Guide

What is it?

This is a guide about how to include Career and Technical Education (CTE) into the transition plans of high school students with Emotional Disurbance (ED). It can be used as a roadmap and reference for steps to take and activities to engage in when planning for and incorporating CTE courses into the transition component of Individualized Education Plans (IEP). This document brings together existing tools and creates a continuum for how to braid them together into a transition plan that includes at least four credits of CTE within a concentration.

Who is this for?

This guide is for a variety of educators who support and serve students with ED and other disabilities such as special education teachers, transition planners, guidance or mental health counselors, as well as other related service providers who serve students with ED. For this guide, "students with ED" includes students formally identified as having an ED who receive special education services, some students identified as having Other Health Impairment (OHI), or students with IEPs who have behavioral goals. Students with other disabilities, or students with 504 plans for whom teachers are providing extra support would also benefit from the content and lesson plans included in this curriculum.

This guide is, in part, intended to help educators increase their awareness of the struggles that students might have with their mental health conditions (MHC). Mental health conditions are "invisible disabilities" and are not overt to everyone. MHCs can manifest themselves in different ways and conditions can co-occur. Some co-occurring disabilities are depression, anxiety disorders, learning disorders (such as dyslexia), mood swings, and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD).

Why is this important?

High school students with ED who receive special education services are a vulnerable population that is often under-recognized and underserved by existing school-based services. Students with ED drop out of school more than any other group of students, a shortening of their education that has been related to lower wages, lower employment rates, and poorer health (Pleis, Ward, & Lucas, 2010). Youth with ED also participate in postsecondary education less frequently and have lower rates of post-school employment than many other categories of students with disabilities. Missed early employment and educational opportunities can result in individuals achieving little economic progress, a pathway that can be difficult to modify later in life.

Obtaining 4 or more credits of CTE during high school is an evidence-based strategy to improve post-secondary employment and education outcomes for youth with ED.

Research indicates that:

- Students with ED with four or more units of CTE within a concentration are four-times more likely than their peers without CTE coursework to have competitive employment in their early post-high school years (Wagner et al., 2017).
- Students participating in CTE programs have reduced drop-out rates and increased post-secondary success (Brand, Valent, & Browning, 2013).
- Students who participate in vocational education and receive vocational education credits in high school are more likely to engage in post-secondary education (Baer, Flexer, Beck, Amstutz, Hoffman, Brothers et al., 2003; Halpern, Yovanoof, Doren, & Benz, 1995; Harvey, 2002; Leonard, D'Allura, &

Horowitz, 1999; Fast facts – Vocational Education, 2012).

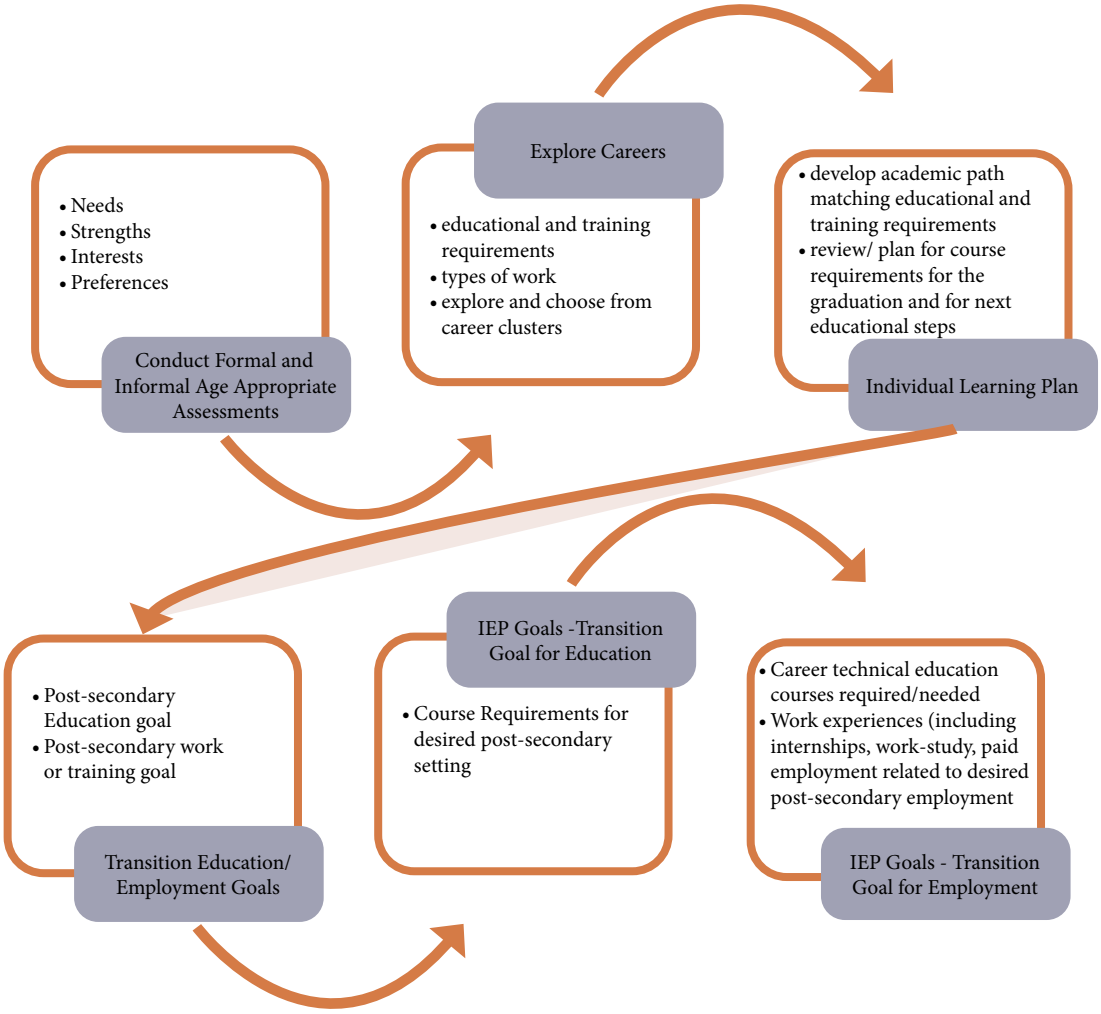
- Youth who participate in career exploration and other transition services in a quality learning environment have higher self confidence in selecting and preparing for a career (Solberg, Howard, Gresham, & Carter, 2012).

Steps to incorporate CTE coursework into your student's IEP are described in this guide. They are linked to the transition planning process you already complete and are listed below:

STEPS TO TAKE FOR CTE PLANNING
1. Conduct assessments and explore careers
2. Use an Individual Learning Plan to identify careers and course-work
3. Establish education/employment postsecondary transition goals in the IEP
4. Set education goals for the upcoming year
5. Set career training goals for the upcoming year

The roadmap on the next page displays the major steps and activities for incorporating CTE into the transition component of the IEP.

Roadmap for Planning for CTE in the IEP Transition Component



I. Understanding the Basics

- ✓ Federal legislation supports the alignment of education with workforce needs
- ✓ CTE is a sequence of academic and vocationally oriented coursework
- ✓ CTE provides students with “employability” skills

I. Understanding the Basics

What you need to know about Incorporating Career and Technical Education into the Transition Components of IEPS for Students with ED.

What is CTE?

✓ **CTE is a sequence of academic and vocationally oriented coursework**

Career and Technical Education, sometimes referred to as "vocational education," is an educational strategy for providing young people with the academic, technical, and employability skills and knowledge needed to pursue postsecondary training or higher education and enter a career field (Brand et al., 2013).

CTE should include the following essential program characteristics: (Rowe, Alverson, Unruh, Fowler, Kellems & Test, 2013):

- A sequence of entry-level and advanced integrated academic and vocational courses designed to improve students' reasoning and problem-solving skills, academic knowledge, work attitudes, specific occupational and/or technical skills, and general skills needed for employment.
- A combination of in-school and community-based academic, competency-based, applied and hands-on learning experiences in the career pathways most appropriate to the local labor market.
- Linkages to post-secondary education and/or employment through site visits and connections with support services (e.g., vocational rehabilitation, disability support services).
- Opportunities to earn certificates in specific career areas (e.g., certified nursing assistant, welding, food handlers certification).
- Career counseling and guidance to assist students in career planning and development that is aligned with the students' preferences, interests, needs, and skills.
- Instruction in career development through volunteer work, job shadowing, work-study, apprenticeships, or internships.
- Accommodation and supports to ensure students' access and mastery of content.
- Instruction in soft skills (e.g., problem-solving, communicating with authority figures, responding to feedback, promptness) and occupation-specific skills.
- Development of business partnerships to ensure a relevant curriculum.

Stages of CTE Coursework Planning

✓ **CTE provides students with "employability" skills**

The process of planning and incorporating CTE coursework into an IEP transition plan includes key steps that will be covered in this guide. For each step, we describe how the general process of planning for CTE is nuanced for the unique population of students with ED.

Legislation supporting CTE

✓ **Federal legislation supports the alignment of education with workforce needs**

In 2006, the federal government enacted the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act to develop the academic, career, and technical skills of secondary and post-secondary students. This act is a reauthorization of a similar piece of legislation from 1998 and others going as far back as 1917 (Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act., 2018). In its current form, the Perkins CTE legislation includes language that focuses on key principles important in creating a prepared and effective workforce. These principles include 1) alignment of school curricula with employment skills, 2) collaboration between business, industry and education, 3) accountability for meeting high academic standards, and 4) innovation to create a skilled and prepared workforce.

II. Assessments and Career Exploration Activities

- ✓ Conduct formal and informal assessments that suggest possible career paths
- ✓ Various career exploration strategies can be used to hone a student's career cluster and goals
- ✓ Students with ED and their families may need special encouragement to foster a vocational identity, that is the idea of themselves (or their son/daughter) as a person with a career and intention to work

II. Assessments and Career Exploration Activities

Formal and Informal Assessments

✓ **Conduct formal and informal assessments that suggest possible career paths**

> **Of special note:**
>
> All public-school districts in the U.S. are obligated by law to conduct transition assessments, an obligation that has been reinforced in court decisions. Many districts that have failed to conduct transition assessment have incurred costly financial penalties (e.g., Gibson v. Forest Hills School District Board of Education, 2013; Carrie I. v. Department of Education, State of Hawaii, 2012).

Age-appropriate transition assessments are an important part of the transition process. Choose a variety of age-appropriate assessments, both formal and informal, that focus on students' needs, strengths, interests, and preferences.

Formal assessment tools. As special educators and transition planners, you most likely are familiar with available assessment tools. Online resources we recommend include:

- ***Age Appropriate Transition Toolkit***
  This resource is published online by the National Technical Assistance Center for Transition (NTACT). Section 2 of this toolkit reviews samples of formal and informal assessment instruments and methods. Instruments range from interview protocols, questionnaires, direct observation guides, and curriculum-based assessments to achievement, intelligence, and aptitude tests, career development, and interest inventories, and self-determination assessments. Also included are a limited number of links to instruments that are available online at no cost. https://transitionta.org/system/files/toolkitassessment/AgeAppropriateTransitionAssessmentToolkit2016_COMPLETE_11_21_16.pdf
- ***Zarrow Center for Learning Enrichment at the University of Oklahoma***
  Useful resources include curricula and lessons for self-determination, timelines for transition activities, and a Transition Assessment and Goal Generator (TAGG) to use with students. Materials are free but require registering and creating an online account. http://www.ou.edu/education/centers-and-partnerships/zarrow.html
- ***The Transition Coalition at the University of Kansas***
  This website includes a "Tools" tab with tips for conducting transition assessments. Tips are searchable by category, state, and keyword. Reviews of assessment tools also are provided. For access to other resources on this site, an account must be created. http://transitioncoalition.org/

Informal assessments. In addition to the formal assessment materials described above, we recommend encouraging your student to ask him/herself the questions detailed below. Doing so can increase the student's self-awareness regarding transition issues as well as ensure that you have all the information necessary about their needs, strengths, interests, and preferences. Questions include:

1. What are my unique talents and strengths?
2. What do I want in life, now and in the future?
3. What are some of life's demands that I can meet now?
4. What are the main barriers to getting what I want from school and my community?
5. What can I do to prepare for what I want now and in the future? (Walker, Kortering, Fowler & Rowe, 2010)

These assessments can identify concrete interests that can inform career choices for which a student may

be best suited. For example, interests in mechanics and finding practical solutions using machines or hand tools could suggest careers such as civil engineering, sound engineering, electronics engineering, and so on.

Career Exploration

✓ **Various career exploration strategies can be used to hone a student's career cluster and goal.**

Conducting assessments is only a first step to setting a post-secondary career or education goal. A directed effort is needed to explore careers that can match a student's assessed needs, strengths, interests and preferences. Exploring careers leads to the next step of setting a career goal, and finally identifying the career and technical education needed to meet the goal.

Career exploration activities are described as "experiences in the community that help young people to: a) identify how their interests, values, and skills relate to careers; b) describe the skills and activities associated with those careers; and, c) identify the post-secondary training, two-year, four-year, or graduate degree programs needed to successfully pursue those careers" (Career Exploration in Action, 2012).

Career exploration can be achieved in multiple ways, such as job shadowing, workplace visits/tours, employer presentations, career fairs, internships, and career-focused mentoring (Career Exploration in Action, 2012). Such opportunities will help further hone the students' career goals.

Career exploration activities will allow students to narrow in on their "career cluster" of interest. "Career clusters encompass occupations in the same field of work that require similar skills. Students, parents, and educators can use career clusters to help focus education plans towards obtaining the necessary knowledge, competencies, and training for success in a particular career pathway."(US Department of Education Career Clusters Archives (n.d.) & All Career Clusters (n.d.)). The result of the assessment and career exploration is that students are better informed about the career opportunities available to them and are equipped to move on to set a career goal as part of the transition component of the IEP.

Of special note:

Recent legislation (Workforce Innovations and Opportunities Act (WIOA) has required state agencies of vocational rehabilitation to deliver career exploration services to eligible students (Marrone, 2016). See TEST curricula on Community Partnerships to learn how to involve these agencies in IEP meetings to capitalize on VR funded career exploration activities. (see Appendices C & D for more information)

Special Considerations for Students with ED

✓ **Students with ED often face unique challenges when identifying and pursuing career exploration activities**

Some of the challenges include:

- Historic discouragement of individuals with psychiatric disabilities from pursuing work
- Unrealistic career plans
- Challenges in developing a vocational identity
- Family reliance on student's financial assistance (e.g., social security)

Individuals with psychiatric disabilities have historically been discouraged from pursuing work.

Negative messaging about work. Some care is needed when exploring careers with students with ED. Many adults with psychiatric disabilities have heard messages from health care and service providers and sometimes family members that work is too stressful for them and may aggravate symptoms of their disability. However, research shows that adults with psychiatric disabilities want to work in competitive jobs and, with the right supports, can be successful (Becker & Drake, 2003). It is crucial that youth and young adults don't receive these same negative messages. Educators have an important role to play in countering these negative messages with more positive images of work and students' possibilities for employment success. Educators can use the IEP transition process to foster an intention and an expectation that students strive to be employed and/or continuing education upon leaving high school.

Unrealistic career plans. Sometimes when pressed to imagine a career, a youth with ED will make unrealistic choices. While it may be tempting to discount the dream of being a rock star, the activity of career exploration will allow the student to learn the requirements or expectations of that job and to assess whether those requirements are achievable. Similarly, by job shadowing or talking to people in a particular profession, students can learn how long preparing for a particular career can take, what is required to be successful, and how much training it needs. The educator also can explore achievable jobs that are related to an unrealistic career goal. For example, the wannabe rock star may consider instead exploring a career as a studio engineer, music producer, merchandiser, or promoter. These redefined goals can be mapped on to CTE courses that are building blocks for that career.

Challenges in developing a vocational identity. The years of transition services are important to developing a perception of oneself as a worker. However, some young people with ED may be hindered in developing a vocational identity by a lack of self-confidence. A troubled present may limit their ability to think of a positive future or to try to plan for one. Some students with ED also may have few family role models of vocational self-sufficiency. For others, a round robin of residential treatment placements, hospitalizations, and/or medication trials can result in a young person viewing him/herself as a permanent part of the mental health system. Targeted and "matched" career exploration activities can counter these messages and enable youth to view themselves as a part of the workforce instead. Career exploration experiences such as internships or volunteer work can be a critical step to changing that self-perception.

Family reliance on financial assistance. Many students with ED receive federal or other disability benefits (e.g., SSI) and may have pressures to continue receiving those cash benefits because they provide financial support for the whole family. Other concerns, such as loss of health insurance, also can dissuade young people from seeking careers. Involving families to support career exploration activities may be an important activity for educators. One strategy to alleviate family concerns is to arrange benefits counseling for both the student and the family. Social Security offices, One-

Virtual learning

While online course have been around for some time, virtual learning has become the new normal for students to continue due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Association for Career and Technical Education (ACTE) has pulled together online sources for teachers to aid in the move to virtual learning. The site includes "CTE Learn" provides 150 plus online courses for students (through ACTE and MaxKnowledge) that cover a range of topics, is self-paced, and take about 4 hours to complete.

- *Students can connect to CTE Learn by going here:* https://www.ctelearn.org/
- *Information and other resources for teachers can be found here:* https://www.acteonline.org/professional-development/opportunities/distance-learning-resources/

stop Career Centers, and other human service agencies may be able to refer transition team members to Certified Work Incentives Counselors who can explain in great detail to the student and their family how, whether, and to what extent working will impact receipt of disability benefits. Also students may lose their cash benefits when they turn 18, you can help families understand what happens when youth turn 18 in Appendix E.

Parental involvment. There needs to be a partnership with families in creating postsecondary transition goals. The Center for Parent Information and Resources (CPIR) has parent centers that serve families with children with disabilities and help parents become involved in their child's transition planning. CPIR has either a Parent Training and Information Center (PTI) or Community Parent Resource Centers (CPRC) in each state, with over 100 locations total in the US and its territories. These centers work with families with children up to age 26. Parents can find their center here: https://www.parentcenterhub.org/find-your-center/. Their website offers webinars and a resource hub that family members can access.
Familial buy-in is needed to combat the historical discouragement of people with mental health conditions from working. Families should encourage youth with ED to attain employment and should not encourage youth with ED to avoid employment in to maintain federal benefits and financial assistance. Students with ED and their families should keep in mind that incentives to pursue employment are available through the Social Security Administration (SSA):

- SSDI recipients have nine trial work months every five years in which to test their ability to work while remaining eligible for cash benefits (Diehl, Douglas & Honberg, 2014).
- Under section 1619 (b) of the Social Security Act, Medicare coverage can continue for up to 93 months after the date of hire (Diehl, Douglas & Honberg, 2014).
- SSA work incentive programs such as the Plan to Achieve Self Support (PASS) and the Ticket to Work allow beneficiaries to keep medical benefits until their earnings and benefits are sufficient to cover their expenses (Diehl, Douglas & Honerg, 2014).
- The ABLE Act, enacted in 2014, allows for young adults to save money for "qualifying expenses" such as a car, college, training, healthcare, and prevention and wellness in an ABLE bank account without being taxed by the government on interest accrued. All funds placed in an ABLE account do not affect SSI status unless they exceed $100,000 (Mizrahi, R., Duperoy, T., Youth Advisory Board of the Transitions ACR & Logan, D., 2017).

Students with ED pursuing postsecondary training and employment allows these students to utilize their talents and capacities for productivity (Harnois & Gabriel, 2002). Research shows that most adults with mental illnesses want to work and about six out of ten can succeed with appropriate supports (Frounfelker et al., 2011; McQuilken et al., 2003; Mueser, Salyers & Mueser, 2001; Lutterman, 2013). The perception that students with ED would not be successful in a work environment is often not true and limits their community integration, sense of self-efficacy, and independent living prospects. Employment provides time structure, social contact, collective effort and purpose, social identity, and regular activity (Harnois & Gabriel, 2002, p. 5).

Resources for Fostering a Positive Vocational Identity

There are resources the educator can use to help foster a student's identity of themselves as a worker. These include:

"Possible Selves" (Hock, Schumaker & Deshler, 2003). This evidence-based curriculum gives teachers and counselors a tool for increasing student motivation. Lesson plans are presented in a step-by-step format and have accompanying worksheets to distribute to students. Lesson plans within the "Possible Selves" curriculum include "Discovering strengths and interests," "Thinking about hopes, expectations, and fears," Sketching me and my possible selves," "Reflecting on goals," "Planning ways to reach goals," and "Working to reach goals." This curriculum is part of the Strategic Instruction Model Learning Strategies created by the University of Kansas Center for Research on Learning.

"Whose Future is it Anyway?" (Whose Future is it Anyway, 2004). ***This*** curriculum is designed to help prepare students to lead or participate in their IEP meetings and improve their sense of self-determination. It includes 36 lesson plans in each of 6 sessions addressing self-determination skills. Topics include planning for the IEP, choosing who should attend the IEP meeting, exploring interests, disability awareness, learning needs, and helpful supports.

Of special note:

See TEST curricula on Student-Led IEP Planning for a step-by-step curriculum specifically designed to support educators and students with ED to actively participate in and/or lead their own IEP planning and meetings.

III. Develop an Individual Learning Plan and/or Formulate Post-Secondary Education/Training and Employment Goals for the Transition Component of the IEP

- ✓ Consider using an Individualized Learning Plan (ILP) as a model for developing a career goal within the IEP
- ✓ Identify a post-secondary career goal in the transition component of a student's IEP
- ✓ Build hope for future career and higher education despite present-day challenges

III. Develop an Individual Learning Plan and/or Formulate Post-Secondary Education/Training and Employment Goals for the Transition Component of the IEP

Individualized Learning Plan (ILP)

✓ **Consider using an Individualized Learning Plan (ILP) as a model for developing a career goal within the IEP**

The transition component of the IEP includes the formulation of goals for post-secondary education/training and employment to ready the student to achieve post-secondary goals during their high school experience. One model for developing post-secondary career goals is the Individualized Learning Plan (ILP). An ILP can be used to outline a course of study that is associated with a student's career goals and aptitudes. The ILP specifies an academic path comprised of specific CTE courses and other district-approved internships and/or work-based learning opportunities to develop a student's career path. Elements of ILPs are based on the framework outlined in the Perkins Act (One Hundred Ninth Congress of the United States of America, 2006) and include:

- choosing from defined career clusters;
- district- (or state-) level graduation requirements;
- college entrance requirements;
- career preparation certificate requirements,
- post-secondary plans;
- lists of courses to be taken each year
- short- and long-term goals, and
- parental involvement.

Identified goals and aptitudes can be connected to 16 career clusters that link to more than 70 career pathways and more than 1,800 career specialties. An ILP outlines an explicit pathway to get to a student's career of choice. Some states require that the ILP be completed for students with disabilities; however, this is not the case in all states. Whether your state requires an ILP or not, you may find it helpful to use the strategies for completing the ILP when helping students create the transition component of their IEP.

Consider Apprenticeships

CTE programs can be a catalyst for apprenticeships. Apprenticeships are highly valuable because young workers can earn an income, hands-on experience and professional credentials through these experiences. The businesses/individuals which employ these apprentices also benefit as their workforce needs are met. Plumbers, Electricians, and Precision Machinists are a few of the many occupations that often offer training through apprenticeships. Federal and state job websites as well as local unions often post apprenticeship opportunities. (https://www.thebalancecareers.com/what-is-an-apprenticeship-526218)

High School CTE programs can serve as pre-apprenticeships, preparing students for entry into an apprenticeship after high school graduation. Pre-apprenticeships provide basic skills training, academic skills, and an introduction to an industry. There is currently no formal federal registration of pre-apprenticeship programs. The Tech Ready Apprentices for Careers in Kentucky (TRACK) program is one example of a pre-apprenticeship program. TRACK creates a pipeline for students to enter an apprenticeship after high school graduation. Employers communicate their prefers for CTE courses and skills taught in high school in order to prepare students to become their apprentices immediately after

high school graduation. Students are given credit for the courses taken in high school and the on-the-job hours worked in high school upon entry into their apprenticeships. (https://education.ky.gov/CTE/cter/Pages/TRACK.aspx, https://education.ky.gov/CTE/cter/Documents/TRACKBrochure.pdf)

CTE programs can also facilitate high school students' entry into Youth Apprenticeship. Youth Apprenticeship is a program registered with the U.S. Department of Labor for those aged 16-18 and intended for those in high school. Youth Apprenticeships must include: 1) employer involvement; 2) on-the-job training; 3) technical instruction; 4) paid work experience; and 5) award of a nationally recognized industry credential. For example, the Apprenticeship Maryland Program (AMP) is a youth apprenticeship program for careers within CTE career clusters. High school students start the program in the summer of fall of their junior or senior year and complete 450 hours of work-based training and at least one year of instruction under an employer. (http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/programs/Pages/CTE/ApprenticeshipMD.aspx, https://s3.amazonaws.com/PCRN/reports/Planning_Guide_for_Aligning_CTE_and_Apprenticeship_Programs.pdf)

Selecting High School Courses to Meet Goals

Once a student has determined post-secondary career goals, the course selections and manner of exiting high school should be aligned with accessing the training and education required by the career choice. Below are differing exits from high school and their alignment with post-secondary education goals.

Exit from high school....	The forward path in post-secondary life...
Graduation (college prep course of study)	4-year college or university
Graduation (technical school course of study)	2-year technical school, technical school certificate program, apprenticeship, 2-year transfer course of study to 4-year college or university
High School Certificate	College or university housed transition to life program (non-degree)
GED	2-year technical school, technical school certificate program, 2-year transfer course of study to 4-year college or university

Knowing your exit strategy from high school will allow you to strategically plan the courses and credits you need as you progress in high school. This in turn provides an opportunity for selecting which CTE courses you may need and conversely, which CTE courses lead away from your career plan. Following is an example of four possible high school exits and the generic graduation requirements for these types of exits (these requirements can vary by school system).

Generic Requirements For Four Types of School Exit

Regular Diploma	College Prep Diploma	High School Certificate	GED
Students who wish to attend a community college or graduate employment-ready with a certificate in a career 4 credits of English 3 credits of social studies e.g. History, Gov't/Econ., 3 credits of science 4 credits of math 1 credit of PE/ JROTC 1 credit of computer science 1 credit of foreign language or CTE classes 7 credits of electives	Students who wish to attend a traditional 4-year college 4 credits of English 3 credits of social studies, e.g., US History Gov't/Econ. World History 3 credits of science 4 credits of math 1 credit of PE/ JROTC 1 credit of computer science (e.g., keyboarding) 2 credits of a single foreign language 7 credits of electives *depending on the college a student wishes to attend, there may be more or specific core classes required	Students receiving IEP services who will not earn a diploma (students who cannot pass the state high school exit exam are awarded a high school certificate) A program of study will be established for students completing high school on this path. Courses will include functional work and living skills.	A high school equivalency degree traditionally for students who have dropped out of high school. Students may take the GED at age 16 with special permission and at 17 with an official withdrawal form from the high school they attended. This may be appropriate for students who: Re-enter high school after dropping out Are older than their same- grade peers Capable of completing coursework but not passing exit exams

After discussing the variety of paths through high school to post-secondary life, it is appropriate to return to the assessments conducted with the student to determine strengths, interests, aptitudes, and needs (see section 2). The assessments can be used to make choices about careers that interest the student. This choice of career cluster and associated education, employment and independent living skills needed will provide the basis for articulating post-secondary transition goals. Once these goals are stated, academic courses,

employment experiences and independent living skills can be planned for within the student's IEP for the upcoming year. Career interests and goals should be revisited and adjusted as appropriate at the student's annual IEP meeting.

Transition Component of a Student's IEP

✓ Identify a post-secondary career goal in the transition component of a student's IEP

Upon creation of age-appropriate assessments and career exploration activities, begin working on career or employment goals. Career clusters articulated on the Advance CTE website (Career Clusters, n.d.) will provide direction for CTE coursework planning and assist in effectively writing-related goals in the transition component of the IEP.

To get the conversation going with the student, you might ask:

- How do the jobs related to the career cluster you have identified seem to fit with your plans and future goals?
- Tell me about some of the classes you are interested in taking while in high school that relate to these jobs.
- Do you see yourself going straight to work after high school or spending time getting more education or training?
- How much education and training are you interested in getting?
- What kinds of places have you considered getting this training?

To make an effective plan for the future, students need to learn a method for setting SMART goals, that is ones that are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Timely. A guide for making SMART goals is included here, and more information about teaching students to use them can be found in the companion curriculum, Student-Led IEP Transition Planning.

Time Management

As a student progresses from introductory to upper level CTE courses, they can expect to be assigned increasingly challenging tasks/projects. For this reason, it will become more important for students to organize and plan out their time to meet project goals/deadlines. Breaking down their more complex assignments in a calendar (or another agenda format) will help students pace their work to meet project deadlines.

Creating SMART Goals

Use this worksheet to practice writing a SMART goal, and to draft your own SMART goals for your IEP. Remember, SMART goals should be:

- **Specific** – What am I going to do?
- **Measurable** – How will I know I have done it?
- **Achievable** – What steps do I need to take to make this happen?
- **Relevant** – How does this relate to my plans and needs?
- **Timely** – When will I have done it?

Goal:	
Specific - What I am going to do?	
Measurable- How will I know I have done it?	
Achievable-What steps do I need to take to make this happen?	
Relevant- How does this relate to my plans/ needs?	
Time-bound- When will I have done it?	
Possible obstacles:	Solutions:
Revised/final goal example: _____	

Sample Goal

"The student will attend a culinary arts program at a technical school of his/her choice."	
Specific - What I am going to do?	The student will identify technical schools with culinary arts programs, choose a school, and complete the required application package.
Measurable- How will I know I have done it?	Complete school application
Achievable-What steps do I need to take to make this happen?	1. Locate technical schools with culinary arts programs; 2. Plan visits to those schools; 3. Download (or create) a list of steps to complete the application process for schools to be applied to.
Relevant- How does this relate to my plans/ needs?	Culinary arts matches my enjoyment of cooking and has good job opportunities
Time-bound- When will I have done it?	End of senior year

Special Considerations for Students with ED

✓ **Build hope for future career and higher education**

As you formulate post-secondary employment goals, there are some special considerations to keep in mind for some students with ED. These include:

- A tendency to underestimate the potential for a career
- Students with ED have rights to accommodations to support employment
- Consider higher education

Underestimating potential for careers. Sometimes students with ED are considered to have behaviors, attitudes and capacities that will make successful careers very difficult to achieve. Despite often having typical intellectual and cognitive abilities, youth with ED may have histories of poor performance in school, leading others and often themselves to believe that certain careers are out of reach for them. Youth with ED have often heard repeatedly about their deficits and what they don't do well, leading to a cascading effect of low self-esteem and worsening behaviors. It is important to remember that youth have a long period in which developmental changes will occur. Risky behaviors, substance use, and trouble with the law that some students experience likely will decrease as they mature and learn coping skills for managing their ED. The teenager at 16 is not the young adult at 26 or the adult at 30 when maturation can expect to be completed. By providing positive messages of hope for the future, educators can plant a seed that will later flower, even if today for some it may seem bleak.

Students with ED have rights to accommodations to support employment. Students with ED may have a better outlook for their future if they are aware of the accommodations that employers and schools are required to provide for people with disabilities, including those with mental health conditions (Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990). Students with ED can be supported and encouraged in their career potential by hearing about the ever-evolving innovations in employment practices for this population (Stone, Ellison, Huckabee, & Mullen, 2017). Let your students know the prospects for a career for youth with ED are more hopeful than ever.

Consider higher education. Having established a career aspiration, the student can be helped to understand the training, education, and competencies that will be needed to obtain that career. If higher education is required to reach a student's career goal, this may be intimidating. For many students with ED, graduating high school may be in doubt, they may be the first generation of college students in their family, or affording college may seem insurmountable. The student may opt for post-secondary employment instead of higher education. In such situations, a teacher may be able to make an effective argument that will encourage

Of Special Note:

In 2016, 7% of students with less than a high school diploma were unemployed, while having an associate's degree cuts the probability of unemployment in more than half to 3.6 percent (Unemployment rates and earnings by educational attainment, 2016). By finishing high school and pursuing a 2-year degree, students are likely to fall below the average unemployment rate in America, (4%) (Unemployment rates and earnings by educational attainment, 2016). In terms of earning power, students with a high school diploma were found to have median weekly earnings of $692 (Unemployment rates and earnings by educational attainment, 2016). An associate's degree increased this median earning power by over $100 a week, and a bachelor's degree by over $400 a week (Unemployment rates and earnings by educational attainment, 2016).

the student to consider higher education. For example, it will help to remind students of the higher earnings power and protection from unemployment that each year of post-secondary education brings (Employment Projections, 2016).

Sometimes it's helpful to go through the requirements listed for real job openings in a student's career of interest to see the importance and value of higher education. Working through the possibilities of loans and financial aid or Vocational Rehabilitation aid and other opportunities for financing college can also help. As with employment, students with ED are entitled to academic accommodations that can smooth their way in college. These tip sheets are useful resources for preparing students to obtain educational accommodations. (Costa, 2011; Degalbo, Logan, Duperoy & Smith, 2017).

IV. Specify a Progression of CTE Courses and Credits That Meet Career Transition Goals

- ✓ **Specify a progression of four credits of CTE in the transition component of the IEP**
- ✓ If relevant CTE courses are unavailable, be creative to design credit-available work experiences or internships
- ✓ Special considerations to keep in mind as students with ED develop their plan for CTE coursework

IV. Specify a Progression of CTE Courses and Credits That Meet Career Transition Goals

Specifying a Progression

✓ **Specify a progression of four credits or more of CTE in the transition component of the IEP**

Empirical evidence suggests that including four or more units of CTE within a concentration during a student's course of study makes them four times more likely to find competitive employment during the early post-high school years.

A critical step in acquiring these credits is to specify them annually in the transition component of the IEP. Consequently, the task of the special educator and/or transition coordinator with direct input from the student, and potentially the student's parents, is to identify at least four credits of classes (or other credit-bearing work experiences) that are offered by your school system and are related to a student's career goals. It is important to ensure a student is included in course decisions and that a specified course trajectory meets their interests. If they aren't motivated to pursue their CTE courses, it is unlikely they will become invested in them and succeed. All decisions should be driven by student choice.

Ideally, there will be CTE courses available within your district that represent a wide variety of career clusters so that students can take CTE courses that match their preferences, interests, needs, and strengths. Having taken these courses, upon graduation the student may well have achieved certification for that career (e.g., certified nursing assistant) or will then be ready to enter into postsecondary training in their area of interest.

Ideally a student's CTE courses will have the following characteristics:

- Learning opportunities involving technology use, 21st-century skills, and employability skills for specific careers/career clusters, and
- Hands-on and community-based opportunities to learn occupation-specific skills (Fast Facts, 2013)

Specific steps are detailed below to develop and indicate at least 4 credits of CTE coursework in the annual transition component of the IEP. These steps are designed to be done in order and in collaboration with your student, other educators, and a student's family.

Specific Steps to Develop and Earn 4 Credits or More of CTE Coursework

1. Review descriptions of high school occupational classes to become familiar with the skills, expertise, and knowledge being developed in each class.

2. Collaborate with occupational class teachers and guidance counselors to identify appropriate classes for individual students that match the skills needed for a student's identified career goal.

3. Share class descriptions with students and families to help students identify appropriate occupational courses that align with the career goal developed, as described in Section III.

4. Identify a progression of at least 4 credits that are needed/desired for the career area/job of interest that also counts against graduation requirements.

5. Identify and plan for supports and or accommodations needed to progress in the chosen classes (described in Section V).

6. If workplace experiences or internships can qualify as an elective and this is desired by a student, take steps to identify or arrange for a work site (working with other agencies at the transition meetings may help – see the companion curriculum on Community Partnerships).

7. Ensure occupational coursework is specifically stated in students' IEPs.

8. Monitor the selection of classes over a student's high school career to ensure that graduation requirements are met.

9. Participate in curriculum alignment activities at the school, district, and state levels to ensure skills, expertise, and knowledge relative to a single occupation or career cluster are explicitly stated in curricula and that curricula are designed to include students with diverse abilities.

Some examples of how to implement a progression of CTE coursework are highlighted below. We describe a CTE progression that varies according to whether the post-secondary career goal is to obtain a trade certificate, or to become employed, or to go to college.

Examples of How to Implement a Progression of CTE Coursework for Different Post-secondary Goals

The post-secondary goal of:

- **Trade certificate** - To earn a certificate in Automotive Technology, students may complete training requirements for an entry-level position at a high school career center. First, identify the core courses required for high school graduation. Then free up time to pursue Automotive Technology training in school. During one semester in the second 2 years of high school, a student could participate in an Automotive Technology program for 2 hours a day. At the end of the coursework, the student can take a qualifying exam to earn a certificate.
- **Employment** - After taking a few shop classes in woodworking in high school, a student may be granted a work-based learning opportunity for course credit. For example, the student may be offered an internship working with a local carpenter. If the student does well in the internship, the carpenter may hire the high school student to work as his assistant after graduation.
- **Higher education** - A progression of CTE courses may not seem related to a higher education career goal. However, CTE experiences and credits will help students develop discipline, stamina, a commitment to working to an expectation, and other work-related behaviors that will help in a college as well as a work setting. If a student has a specific college degree in mind, for example graphic design, the foundational courses in high school (e.g., foundational drawing or drafting and computer-aided design) will give this student a strong advantage to applying for and succeeding in a college arts program. Keep in mind that students with ED can also qualify for accommodations or even exemption from achievements tests (e.g., SATs).

Navigating CTE Course Availability

✓ **If relevant CTE courses are unavailable, be creative to design credit-available work experiences or internships**

If appropriate courses for a given career or career cluster are not available, educators can seek out work experiences (preferably for credit) that can substitute. Types of CTE experiences other than coursework may include: dual enrollment with community colleges to work on a student's career-based skills (e.g., finance, computer technology); internships with employers or other opportunities to observe/be involved in settings related to the career area/job of interest, and on-line classes. Educators also can "think outside the box" to come up with career preparatory experiences. For example, participation in "career centers," where students learn basic skills such as technology-based activities (e.g., website design), can be a substitute for structured classwork. Educators can be creative and ask questions e.g., can the student do an internship, can they go to a class at a career center, can they take certain CTE classes at the school?

Special Considerations for Students with ED

✓ **Special considerations to keep in mind as students with ED develop their plan for CTE coursework**

The stigma of CTE classes. Historically, vocational tracks or schools have been thought of as appropriate only for students who would not be able to perform well in "college preparatory" courses. Thus, some students with ED may resist taking CTE classwork to avoid being stigmatized. It is important to correct this misconception and inform students that they can take CTE courses and then go to college if they wish. CTE courses could be advertised as a means to pay for college. For example, a student could get their CNA certification in high school and then work as a CNA during their college years to help pay tuition. At the same time, a student who does not intend to go to college should not feel ashamed or stigmatized as a result of enrolling in CTE courses. It is impressive that they have begun to pursue their work goals in high school. It is helpful to make the direct connection of CTE coursework to a student's career goal apparent so students can take pride in the training they are receiving.

Barriers to students in therapeutic settings. For ED students who are in therapeutic settings or homebound, access to CTE coursework may be especially challenging. The educator should check into policies and attempt to link the student to other work-based learning opportunities, such as volunteer work in the community or internships. On-line classes or even adult education courses may be an option as well.

Limited development of soft skills. Often a student with ED will have the cognitive abilities to succeed in employment but will lose a job over poor social or "soft" skills. Educators can seek out soft skills training as part of the CTE progression of courses. A recent curriculum for this is Skills to Pay the Bills (United States Department of Labor, n.d.). This curriculum includes hands-on activities in which students learn about communication, enthusiasm, attitude, teamwork, networking, problem-solving and critical thinking, and professionalism in employment and professional settings.

Transportation. Some career and technical training courses are offered off of a high school's campus such as internship opportunities. Arranging to get a student to and from their CTE course may take some planning in terms of transportation. It is worthwhile to investigate public transportation options in your area if a student would be comfortable commuting independently. You could also have a conversation with a student's family around if anyone in their household would be able to offer them rides or if the student would be able to drive themselves to and from their career training opportunity.

Additional Costs. Some career and technical training for high school students are accompanied by additional costs. For example, a student may be required to purchase a uniform to wear at a work placement. A student should always be made aware of any expenses associated with a CTE course before enrolling so as not to be disappointed at a later date. If a student is particularly interested in a course that has challenging expenses associated with it, perhaps a payment schedule could be agreed upon through

which a student could be costs in monthly increments as opposed to an up-front lump sum. One could also search for and apply to scholarship opportunities available to finance career training courses.

CTE instructors, who may not be familiar with supporting students with ED, should be informed at the beginning of the school year that absences are likely among these students. CTE instructors should feel empowered to reached out to a student's special educators if said student is not attending class. CTE instructors can be incorporated into a problem-solving conversation with the student, their family, and the transition team.

Adhering to the strict attendance policies of CTE programs can be difficult for students with ED. This is especially true if programs have a required number of in-person program hours (e.g., cosmetology, nursing). Systems to facilitate make-up work, especially for programs with strict hour requirements, are a reasonable ask. To help students make up any needed hours or assignments, perhaps your school can be give a student access to CTE labs at additional times in the day or week in addition to their regularly scheduled time.

When requirements are less strict, measures of competency rather than units of times could be used to determine if a student has successfully completed CTE coursework. Blended learning environments of both in-person and online material can be helpful. Students can review content while not physically attending school through an e-learning platform and can be given attendance credit for the time they spend logged into the platform and progressing through the e-curriculum. Then, hands-on activities would be completed during days students are able to physically attend school.

CTE instructors should take heart that their relationship with students can make a difference in student's attendance. Teachers report that attendance issues tend to be less of a concern if the student is involved in a CTE program that they are interested in, that engages them in authentic activities, and that prepares them for a career.

Time Management

As a student progress from introductory to upper level CTE courses, they can expect to be assigned increasingly challenging tasks/projects. For this reason, it will become more important for students to organize and plan out their time to meet project goals/deadlines. Breaking down their more complex assignments in a calendar (or another agenda format) will help students pace their work to meet project deadlines.

V. Develop IEP Supports and Related Activities That Reinforce CTE Learning

- ✓ Use accommodations to address common challenges for students with ED
- ✓ Creatively design academic supports for CTE for students with ED, especially in non-school settings
- ✓ Attempt to preserve CTE and work-based learning opportunities even if the school setting changes (e.g., residential placement)

V. Develop IEP Supports and Related Activities That Reinforce CTE Learning

Accommodations for Students with ED

✓ **Use accommodations to address challenges that are common for students with ED**

The following chart lists some typical educational needs and the ways that accommodations can address them (See Appendix F for more information).

Things for Special Educators to do to Support Students with ED in Their CTE Classes

Needed Supports	How to meet these needs
Test accommodations	• Plan for times when the special education teacher can be present to administer tests with accommodations • Work with the CTE teacher to modify tests as prescribed by the IEP • Consider allowing the student to have a testing aide or testing partner to ease anxiety
Behavioral accommodations	• Support CTE teachers in learning how to recognize possible triggers for poor behavior and address them before they can escalate • Provide examples of effective communication strategies to increase the likelihood of student compliance • Develop a plan with the CTE teacher in case a student with ED experiences a trigger --- set aside a 'safe space' in the CTE setting for students with ED to spend time if feeling emotional • Work with CTE to arrange for the student to be able to exit the classroom environment and take a break in a quiet space when needed
Appropriate work behavior at employment sites (see Appendix G for more information)	• Use time with the student to teach "soft skills," including how to talk with employers and appropriate workplace language and tone • Practice with the student ways to communicate about problems encountered in the workplace and ways to communicate with other employees and customers • Identify another student, co-intern, or someone other than the CTE instructor who is willing to be a resource and the "go-to person" for a student if they are having difficulty at an employment site

Returning from absences/ hospitalizations (sometimes for long periods)	• Prepare the CTE teacher for the student's return, provide assistance in helping the student get up to speed on class assignments and activities • Practice with the student ways to talk about their absence with others they encounter
Assignment to home-based instruction for other than disciplinary reasons	• Advocate for the student's continued participation in the CTE classes (perhaps suggesting partial home-based services) to encourage continued engagement in the school setting • Clarify to school personnel such as administrators and other teachers that the student should be allowed and able to participate in all school activities that are allowed by their physician

Be creative in designing other academic supports for students in CTE

✓ **Creatively design academic supports for CTE for students with ED, especially in non-school settings**

Offering academic supports to students in CTE courses may be challenging. Often these courses take place away from the student's home school, and the special educator who normally works with students and general education teachers serving them are not accessible. Additionally, students with ED may have needs that go beyond the usual academic accommodations, requiring behavioral supports in their CTE class settings. Addressing these challenges requires creativity and cooperation. Some ways these challenges can be overcome:

For the student and educator

- Visit the site of the CTE class ahead of time to find the room and become familiar with classroom routines.
- Anticipate what might be challenging about the CTE setting and plan how to address these concerns.
- Plan and advocate together before starting coursework for specific academic and behavioral supports in the CTE setting (Please see Appendices H & I for more information).

For the CTE instructor

- Review procedures for handling possible escalation of the student's behavior before class begins.
- Meet with the CTE teacher to discuss the student's strengths and needs before the student enters the class.
- Invite CTE teachers to attend IEP meetings and assist with transition planning and establishing a course of study in the area of student interest.
- Visit students at the CTE center (if allowed) and provide supports, such as testing accommodations.
- Establish a working relationship with CTE teachers to make collaborating easier.
- Assess attendance and behavioral policies and discuss accommodations to them that may help the student.

Special Considerations for Students with ED

✓ Attempt to preserve CTE and work-based learning opportunities even if the school setting changes (e.g., residential placement). In the case of extended absences that do not allow for students' regular participation in CTE classes, options for continuing career-related education and experiences should be provided whenever possible. If a student is placed in a therapeutic setting but remains a student of record at the local high school, the special education teacher should lead a discussion at the required change of placement IEP meeting regarding preserving CTE educational and employment opportunities.

General tips to help students manage anxiety

Adjusting to new situations can be challenging, especially for students who are prone to experiencing general and social anxiety. Some students may avoid or even refuse to participate in activities or events that make them anxious. Below are some general tips to help support students who experience anxiety.

- **Modify expectations and praise small accomplishments.** It can sometimes seem like a student is uninterested or underachieving when exhibiting avoidance behaviors, but the opposite might be true. Students with anxiety may avoid situations because they are afraid of making a mistake or being judged. To combat this, try your best to refrain from expressing frustration or punishing mistakes. You may need to adjust your perceptions of success or progress according to the student or situation. Every success — even something small or simple — merits praise.

- **Prepare for the situation.** Help the student feel prepared by giving them a general sense of an event or situation beforehand (where it will be, who will be there, and what might happen). Scripting, role-playing and previewing are all excellent tools. Preparation will help an activity or event feel less new and scary. Students with social anxiety may benefit from arriving to an event or situation early for this reason. Make sure to account for extra time for this preparation if needed.

- **Reframe negative thoughts.** Students with anxiety are often overwhelmed by negative beliefs that reinforce their anxious thoughts (e.g., assuming the worst-case scenario, believing that others see them through a negative lens). Help a student to recognize negative thoughts and replace them with positive, realistic ones. If a student tends to say things like, "My teacher thinks I'm stupid because I'm bad at reading," help the student recognize the negative thought, ground it in reality (a teacher's job is to help students learn not judge them on what they already know), and replace it with a positive thought ("I'm having a hard time reading but my teacher will help me get better.")

- **Use relaxation techniques.** It is nearly impossible to accomplish a task or engage in an activity while dealing with intense physical symptoms of anxiety. Deep breathing and progressive muscle relaxation are helpful tools used to calm the body's anxious response.

  Deep breathing can calm rapid heart rate, shallow breathing and feeling dizzy. Instruct the student to count each breath to help slow the breathing (4 in, 4 hold, 4 out).

  Progressive muscle relaxation, or the act of tensing and releasing muscles, can relieve some of the built-up tension in the body. Beginning with hands, have the student make a fist and hold it tight for five seconds then slowly release. Move on to the arms, neck and shoulders, and feet and legs.

- **Peer support**. Identify a current or former CTE student who may be willing to help as friend or supporter to your student with ED. Having someone with you as you enter a new environment can greatly help to alleviate anxiety.

VI. Re-Assess Career Goals and CTE Course Progression

- ✓ Monitor and measure progress toward meeting IEP goals
- ✓ Adjust career goals, if needed, to align with the student's changing learning and experiences

VI. Re-Assess Career Goals and CTE Course Progression

Tracking Progress

✓ **Monitor and measure student progress toward reaching IEP goals**

For transition planning and setting IEP goals to be meaningful, the student's progress should be carefully tracked. When goals are created, a plan should be in place for who will collect the data relevant to the goals, and how the data will be collected and reviewed with the student.

To measure goals, help the student make a checklist of the needed actions required to complete all parts of the goal and keep it in the classroom to review with the student regularly. The student can check off the steps as they are completed to measure their progress towards their goals. For steps that must be completed outside of the classroom, the teacher and student can plan for and practice what the student must do to complete them. For academic goals linked to post-secondary employment, progress might be measured using interim reports, quarterly report cards, the occurrence of behavioral issues, tracking absences, and the student keeping a calendar to track assignments, due dates, and planned assessments.

For example, the post-secondary goal is: "The student will attend a culinary arts program at a technical school of their choice." The supporting IEP goals can be: The student will identify technical schools with culinary arts programs, choose a school, and complete the required application package. Steps may be to 1) Locate technical schools with culinary arts programs; 2) Plan visits to technical schools with culinary arts programs; 3) Download (or create) a list of steps to complete the application process for schools to be applied to; 4) Complete school application.

Starting when the IEP goes into effect, the student and teacher should discuss progress toward the goal weekly (e.g., what needs to be happening?, what are you doing to make that happen?, what supports do you need (if any) to take the next required actions?). As the intermediate steps are completed, the student can check off the corresponding items on the checklist.
Measuring progress toward goals will differ with the type of goals the student is trying to reach. The important thing is to check for progress and then make adjustments as needed to facilitate meeting the IEP goals in support of attaining the post-secondary goals included in the transition planning component of the IEP.

Adjustments along the Way

✓ **Adjust career goals, if needed, to align with the student's changing learning and experiences**

As the IEP year winds down and planning for the next transition planning and IEP meeting begins, meet with students to review the documentation created, monitor progress, and revisit the student's interest, strengths, and needs. There may be adjustments needed regarding the CTE curriculum the student is following- perhaps their interests have changed, or their circumstances are now different in a way that makes the previous CTE curriculum less relevant/feasible. Further, some students may have thought they were interested in a certain career and then after trying relevant activities, job experiences or classes realize that it is not what they would like to do after all. It is during these discussions with the student that the post-secondary transition goals can be adjusted if necessary and new IEP goals can be formulated. If the student is on a path she or he likes and wants to continue following, the discussion can be centered on appropriate next steps to facilitate meeting the desired post-secondary goals. This might mean selecting

more CTE classes, identifying new or different employment sites for work experience, and making sure that needed classes for high school completion and post-secondary training opportunities are signed up for by the student during registration for the following school year.

Success Story

A student who was a senior had been interning at a screen-printing company, but unfortunately the company had to shut down. The educator worked with the student and the career center at the school to help him get another screen-printing internship that was paid. The student interned there twice a week for four hours each day. The internship went well and the student said that this was the kind of work he wanted to pursue. The educator believes that the business owner was impressed with the previous skills that the student had developed. The student was excited that the owner paid him for his work. The supports that were used were:

- Weekly check-ins
- A journal that outlined everything that the student learned that day or that week.
- His Weekly quizzes on what he learned created by his supervisor
- Revised resume and cover letter (this was done after the previous internship fell through)
- Mock interviews.

The student did not have to receive on-site coaching because he was independent, and his educators were getting great reports from his internship. Over time the supports for the student slowly phased out. The internship ended with his upcoming graduation and post-graduation paid employment was being considered.

VII. Summary

VII. Summary

An educator can play an important role in supporting students with ED as they develop a vocational identity and take advantage of CTE learning opportunities, both concrete and important tasks that can provide students with the necessary skills and behaviors to succeed in the workplace. This guide has provided an outline of steps that can lead a student with ED from beginning to assess their strengths and aptitudes to exploring careers and developing a career-related post-secondary goal based on those activities.

VIII. Implementation Guide

- ✓ Determine which Student You are Targeting
- ✓ Develop an Implementation Plan

VIII. Implementation Guide

Before embarking on *Incorporating Career and Technical Education for Students with Emotional Disturbance*, it will be best to complete initial steps to ensure a successful process. If you are reading this Guide, you are likely planning to coordinate or "facilitate" the Guide's use. It is suggested that the "implementer" (counselor, teacher, transition coordinator, administrator) who has determined to use this resource might follow the steps in this chapter to increase the likelihood of success. These steps are offered as supports. They may not all be necessary for you; but review and consideration of each step below is recommended.

1. Determine which Student You are Targeting

You may have looked at your data regarding the students in your school and determined that you want to target increased enrollment of 12th graders in Career and Technical Education (CTE) courses prior to graduation or sophomores, to ensure their completion of a sequence of CTE courses, leading to a credential. Maybe enrolling students with emotional disturbance (ED) is part of a larger plan in your school district to connect students' interests with their program of study. However, you intend to proceed, being clear about the target population is a first step.

2. Develop an Implementation Plan

As you consider activities and associated components (see the chart below), it may be useful to skim the sections that follow this chart on *buy-in, readiness,* and *logistics*. The content in these sections may help you and your colleagues plan steps that otherwise might be overlooked. This is a good time to review the table *Steps to Take for CTE Planning* in the About This Guide Section, and the *Special Considerations for Students with ED* in Sections II, III, and IV. Reading these sections may help you and your team pre-plan regarding potential barriers or facilitators for successful implementation. Record any notes to remember as your developing your plan.

Notes on *Special Considerations* that are relevant to our school/program/students:

Below is a chart to use as you organize your resources to incorporate CTE courses in the program for more students in your school.

School/ Program Implementation Plan

Team Members (who is helping implement this work? List other school/district/agency partner staff. Are youth leaders or parents involved in this initiative? List their names, also):

Start Date	Activity **Hint:** A team may choose to pull activities from the Implementation Checklist provided later in this Guide to identify some activities	Person(s) Responsible (names)	Materials Needed?	What Documentation is Expected?	Anticipated Completion Date	Differentiation for Students in Different Settings

Start Date	Activity **Hint:** A team may choose to pull activities from the Implementation Checklist provided later in this Guide to identify some activities	Person(s) Responsible (names)	Materials Needed?	What Documentation is Expected?	Anticipated Completion Date	Differentiation for Students in Different Settings

Sample Implementation Plan

Names of Team Members (includes: those who help implement the work, school/distract/agency partner staff, youth leaders or parents involved in the initiative): Tyler Thoreau, Kiera Kooper, Greta Gonzalez, Hank Harker, Ira Ing, Jenny Jones

Start Date	Activity **Hint:** A team may choose to pull activities from the Implementation Checklist provided later in this Guide to identify some activities	Person(s) Responsible (names)	Materials Needed?	What Documentation is Expected?	Anticipated Completion Date	Differentiation for Students in Different Settings
2/15/2021	Prepare training meeting for team of staff to be engaged in effort: • Schedule space & time • Invite transition coordinator, CTE instructors from high school and Tech School, 10th & 11th grade special education teams (teachers, paras), behavior specialist • Share email or letter overviewing purpose • Have conversations with each invited teacher (build buy-in)	Tyler Thoreau (principal) Kiera Kooper (CTE coordinator)	NA	Training meeting invitation	3/15/2021	NA
3/20/2021	Conduct meeting: • Present rationale • Explain selection of initial implementation team (garner buy-in) • Complete readiness questions as a group • Walk through guide • Facilitate brainstorm of challenges & solutions • Recruit volunteers to identify students to target, necessary supports, schedule changes, etc.	Kiera (CTE Coordinator)	Incorporating CTE for Students with ED (Guide) Chart paper, post-its	Meeting attendance Copy of consensus Readiness rating Notes from brainstorm List of volunteers and schedule for next meeting	3/20/2021	Discuss during guide brainstorm

Start Date	Activity **Hint:** A team may choose to pull activities from the Implementation Checklist provided later in this Guide to identify some activities	Person(s) Responsible (names)	Materials Needed?	What Documentation is Expected?	Anticipated Completion Date	Differentiation for Students in Different Settings
3/21/21	List of 10 - 12 students in 9th and 10th grades (a) @ risk of not graduating, (b) with potential interest in one of the 3 CTE pathways identified by planning team for initial implementation	Kiera & 2 – 5 volunteers (@ least one SPED and @ least one CTE)	Class lists from office with latest GPA & attendance data	List finalized (must be @ least 1/3 females or males) Have a list of 5 alternates.	4/15/21	
4/15/21	• Meet with students • Conduct assessments • Finalize course selections	Kiera & Ira (school counselor)	Career Assessments Course listings	Copies of completed assessments	5/15/21	
4/15/21	IEP meetings (as necessary to add specific courses to program of study) or ILPs developed	Tyler, Greta (special ed. coordinator)		IEPs updated or ILPs developed	5/31/21	
5/31/21	• Enrollments finalized • Letters sent to students/ parents	Ira		Fall schedules	6/15/21	
8/1/21 – 8/3/21 (2 hours each day)	Teacher PD	Kiera, Jenny (ED teacher) Hank (transition coordinator) Participating CTE teachers, special education teachers, and paraprofessional	• Slides and handouts on characteristics of students with ED (pulled from the tips in the Guide) • Specific information on effective supports (accommodations, tips from educators who know them) for students enrolled for fall (Note: don't include student names on handouts or PowerPoints [confidentiality]) • Specific information on universal design for learning (pull from http://www.cast.org/) and accommodations (from students' IEPs)	Attendance log	8/3/21	Discussed in sessions

Start Date	Activity **Hint:** A team may choose to pull activities from the Implementation Checklist provided later in this Guide to identify some activities	Person(s) Responsible (names)	Materials Needed?	What Documentation is Expected?	Anticipated Completion Date	Differentiation for Students in Different Settings
8/24/21	Students enrolled (add specific classes later)	Kiera, Hank, Ira, specific teachers and paras once assigned		Student work Observation notes Team Planning notes Course performance data Attendance data Office referral data	12/21/21	

3. Building Buy In

You are planning to enroll students with disabilities in larger numbers in CTE courses than they may be currently in your school or program. You have done the research and understand that students with disabilities, including those with ED, who complete CTE coursework in high school are more likely to succeed in school and after high school. You also know that while good attendance may be a common deficit for some students with ED, finding relevance in CTE coursework can promote improved attendance and relate to improved academic and behavior performance overall. Do other stakeholders understand the importance of this effort?

What of the *Special Considerations* for students with ED – or students with disabilities, in general – are relevant to your school or program? Will your administration be supportive? Can you coordinate with your school counselor to ensure students you are targeting can enroll in the most appropriate courses? Are your CTE teachers in favor of this effort? Do they feel they have the support and information to effectively provide instruction? Are your CTE courses offered on campus or in another building? If shortened days are part of your student's IEP, can transportation be accommodated? Is vocational rehabilitation involved with any of your students? Can such resources be engaged appropriately related to community work experiences for course credit?

With any new intervention or initiative, it is critical to identify allies or champions of the work. As you and your team complete your implementation plan, consider which teachers or counselors are likely to be most receptive to *Incorporating CTE for Students with ED* and bring them on board to assist in planning. Individuals with intimate knowledge of students' schedules and course demands will be important in planning the logistics of implementation. Additionally, individuals with a deep knowledge of each student's skills and skill deficits are important to planning.

4. Readiness

What is your school/program's current culture regarding expectations for students with ED? What are the status quo practices for inclusion of students with disabilities? Is implementing this new process in alignment with other initiatives in your school/district or a major sea change in practice?

Answering the questions below with your partners may help you plan for implementation.

Question	A few (0 - 25%)	Some (26 - 50%)	Most (51% - 75%)	Almost all (75% - 100%)
How many students in the school (all students) currently enroll in CTE concentrations (a sequence of 2 or more courses)?				
How many students (with ED or disabilities, generally) in your school or program completed at least one career interest inventory or other career assessment for transition planning in the past year?				

Question	A few (0 - 25%)	Some (26 - 50%)	Most (51% - 75%)	Almost all (75% - 100%)
How many students (with ED or disabilities, generally) have postsecondary employment goals in their Individualized Education Program (IEP) that align with their interests and skills?				
How many students (with ED) are currently enrolled in one CTE course?				
How many senior students (with ED) have completed a sequence of two or more CTE courses prior to graduation?				
How many educators in your school view CTE as preparation for college and successful careers?*				
How many parents of students in your school view CTE as preparation for college and careers?*				
What CTE programs are available to students in your school?				
What CTE programs are available through partnerships with a neighboring district? Vocational school? Accessible community college? Other supports?				
What businesses are hiring or offering internships to young people in your community?				

* you may not (yet) have accurate date for some of the questions above; however, the discussion of these items may contribute to the team's conversation on readiness for implementation

5. Logistics

To implement *Incorporating CTE for Students with ED* requires completion of transition assessments with students, IEP analyses, possible IEP or ILP meetings, and schedule changes. *Each of the Steps to Take for CTE Planning* table from the beginning of the Guide should be considered individually as part of planning for successful implementation. Planning for implementation may take you and your team one intense week, a month, or an entire semester. As with any new endeavor, thoughtful planning will be critical for your success.

6. Facilitating

We suggest identifying a point person (a facilitator) who is knowledgeable about the Guide as a coach for other team members.

Training materials should reflect the school or program's context. Depending on the size of the implementation group, a facilitator may (a) develop a formal presentation with slides to operationalize each section the Guide; (b) assign pre-reading to the possible implementation team and lead a working meeting to identify specific career assessments, review students' IEPs, or identify potential supports for CTE teachers; or (c) meet with a very small implementation team and discuss each section of the Guide, sequentially. Sections II - V of the Guide are intended to lead a team through the steps of increasing the participation of students with ED in CTE courses. However, the designated facilitator or "coach" will be necessary to keep activities on track.

It is important to note that throughout this chapter we reference a "team". This effort is likely not one that a single educator can successfully complete alone. It is important to establish some form of a professional learning community or team meetings to monitor progress and problem solve barriers along the way.

Possible team meeting agenda

- Report out on progress (i.e., tasks completed, student progress data)
- Report out on successes
- Report out on concerns, barriers, challenges
- Group discussion of potential solutions
- Action plan for next meeting

7. Ready, Set, Go!

Once the team has developed a plan, get started. More than likely a school or program will not be able to move from adopting the Guide to enrolling multiple students in new courses immediately. Follow your Implementation Plan and use the Implementation Checklist (below) to increase the likelihood of success. Depending on the context of the Guide's implementation and the number of teachers and students participating, a school may maintain one Implementation Checklist or may monitor a separate Checklist for each student or teacher involved.

Conduct assessments to match students with potential courses. Make necessary changes to students' IEPs and schedules. Enroll students and monitor their progress in their CTE course(s).

Adjust and update the student's IEP or Individualized Learning Plan (ILP), as appropriate, based on course performance and other updated assessment data (including career assessments).

8. Evaluate

In addition to the Readiness rating (earlier in this chapter), and evidence of career assessments aligned with course of study and postsecondary goals in students' IEPs, a team may want to gather information from stakeholders on their satisfaction with the process of *Incorporating Career and Technical Education for Students with Emotional Disturbance*. In addition, a team may choose to measure impact by examining the quality of IEPs following implementation, as well as student performance indicators in their CTE courses (i.e., grades, attendance). The chart below may help a team evaluate the work.

Measure	Of	Collected By	When
Formative Measures			
Implementation Checklist	School/Program	Team	Following each phase/ at least quarterly
Implementation Team Meeting Notes	School/Program	Facilitator(s)	During/ immediately following each meeting
Summative Measures			
Readiness Rating	School/Program	Facilitator(s)	Pre/ Post
IEP Rating Form	School/ Program	Facilitator(s)	Pre/Post
Parent Survey	Parent	Facilitator(s)	At end of a quarter or semester of enrollment in CTE
Student Survey	Student	Facilitator(s)	End of intervention
Completed Implementation Checklist	School/Program	Team	End of intervention
Team Member/ Intervening Teacher Satisfaction Form	Team Members	Facilitator(s)	End of intervention
Student Performance (e.g., grades, attendance)	Student	Team	End of grading period

Implementation Checklist

Content/ Materials	Component was Initiated	Component was Completed	Adaptations made to delivery	If not completed, explanation	Outcome data from this component
Assessment and Career Exploration Activities					
Conduct formal and informal assessments that suggest possible career paths					
Career exploration strategies used to hone a student's career cluster and goals					
Assist Students and families with fostering a vocational identity for the student					
Postsecondary Education/Training/Employment Goal Development and Individual Learning Plans					
The Individualized Learning Plan (ILP) (or IEP, whatever is more appropriate in context)					
Identify a post-secondary career goal					
Formulate post-secondary education/ training and employment goals (*use Student Led IEP Guide lesson 3 on SMART Goals for this step*)					
Specify a Progression of CTE Courses and Credits that Meet Students' Career Goals					
Design credit-available work experiences or internships					
Develop IEP Supports/Activities to Reinforce CTE Learning, and Plans for Preserving Work-Based Learning Opportunities (even if school settings change)					
Use accommodations to address challenges					
Visit site of technical education activities. Identify and plan for challenges.					
Develop working relationship with CTE instructors to facilitate collaboration					

Content/ Materials	Component was Initiated	Component was Completed	Adaptations made to delivery	If not completed, explanation	Outcome data from this component
Assist student in advocating for academic & behavioral support in CTE setting					
Invite CTE instructors to attend IEP meetings					
Review Procedures for handling escalated behaviors of student before student attends class					
Meet with CTE instructor to review strengths and needs of student					
Visit site of CTE instruction to assist with provision of supports, testing, etc. if possible					
Identify creative solutions/options for student to continue in their CTE placement if not able to attend their regular classes but can participate in CTE placement					

IEP Rating Form

Check all that apply

Student Name or ID	
Transition Assessments including career interests or aptitudes documented (completed)	
Transition Assessment results documented	
Postsecondary Goals, including employment, reflect transition assessment results	
Course(s) of study align with postsecondary goals	
Course(s) of study or Transition Services include enrollment in CTE courses	
Transition Services (or completion of course work indicated) include work-based learning experiences	

Parent/ Family Member Survey

(this can be converted to SurveyMonkey © or some other survey program typically used, if preferred)

Student's Name (optional): _____

Student's Grade: _____

This school year, your student had the opportunity to take a Career and Technical Education (CTE) class. Please mark how much you agree or disagree with the following statements:

	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
My student completed a career interest inventory or some other activity to help provide information about their career interests					
My student enrolled in a CTE course					
My student completed a work-experience (paid or unpaid) related to the CTE course					
I participated in the decision-making about my students' CTE course enrollment					
The school/program matched my student with an appropriate course (if they enrolled)					
The school/program provided my student with supports to be successful in the new course (if they enrolled)					
CTE coursework is an important option for all students					

What did/do you like about your student taking a CTE course(s)?

What did/do you not like about your student taking a CTE course(s)?

Student Survey

(this can be converted to SurveyMonkey © or some other survey program typically used, if preferred)

Student's Name (optional): _____

Student's Grade: _____

This school year, you had the opportunity to take a Career and Technical Education (CTE) class. Please mark how much you agree or disagree with the following statements:

	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I completed career interest checklist or test					
My counselor/teacher/case manager (school) met with me to talk about careers					
I helped set goals about my future career(s)					
My school talked to me about CTE classes					
I signed up to take a CTE class I wanted to take					
I completed the class					
I completed a work-experience (paid or unpaid) related to the class					
I received the support I needed (accommodations) to complete the class					
CTE coursework is an important option for all students					

What did/do you like about CTE course(s)?

What did/do you not like about CTE course(s)?

Team Member Survey

(this can be converted to SurveyMonkey © or some other survey program typically used, if preferred)

Team Member Name (optional): _____

Role (e.g., CTE instructor, transition coordinator, school counselor): _____

Number of students you engaged with related to this initiative this grading period: _____

Number of students you engaged with who completed the process (i.e., transition assessments, identified a post-school employment goal, selected a related course, enrolled in and completed the course):_____

Number of students you engaged with that developed an Individualized Learning Plan (ILP): _____

Number of students you engaged with that updated their Individualized Education Program (IEP): _____

Please rate your agreement with the following statements:

	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Completing the process outlined in *Incorporating CTE for Students with ED* (the Guide) increased my skills for using transition assessment information to guide planning (i.e., IEP, ILP, general)					
Using the Guide increased my ability to connect post-school goals to other parts of the IEP (i.e., courses of study)					
Using the Guide increased my knowledge of accommodations to use in general education classrooms (e.g., CTE)					
The Guide was helpful in working with students ED, specifically					
The Guide is easy to understand					
The Guide is easy to use					
More students were enrolled in CTE courses after our school/program completed the process outlined in The Guide					
CTE coursework is an important option for all students					

What were the most useful aspects of the Guide?

What adaptations did you make to the guide (that could help other educators)?

What were the least useful aspects of the Guide?

Were there any particular successes with student(s) you want to share?

IX. Resource List

IX. Resource List

Age Appropriate Toolkit
https://transitionta.org/system/files/toolkitassessment/AgeAppropriateTransitionAssessmentToolkit2016_COMPLETE_11_21_16.pdf

CTE Apprenticeships
https://www.thebalancecareers.com/what-is-an-apprenticeship-526218
https://education.ky.gov/CTE/cter/Pages/TRACK.aspx
https://education.ky.gov/CTE/cter/Documents/TRACKBrochure.pdf
http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/programs/Pages/CTE/ApprenticeshipMD.aspx
https://s3.amazonaws.com/PCRN/reports/Planning_Guide_for_Aligning_CTE_and_Apprenticeship_Programs.pdf

The Transition Coalition at the University of Kansas
http://transitioncoalition.org/

Zarrow Center for Learning Enrichment at the University of Oklahoma
http://www.ou.edu/education/centers-and-partnerships/zarrow.html

Tip Sheets
School that Makes Sense Cent$: Taking CTE Courses
https://escholarship.umassmed.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1156&context=pib

Supporting Employment for Young Adults living with Mental Health Conditions
https://escholarship.umassmed.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1130&context=pib

WIOA: New Law Helps You & Young Adults Get Jobs – What Families Need to Know
https://escholarship.umassmed.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1127&context=pib

Vocational Rehabilitation (VR): A Young Adult's Guide
https://escholarship.umassmed.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1070&context=pib

Supplemental Security Income: What Happens to your SSI when you turn 18?
https://escholarship.umassmed.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1058&context=pib

How to Keep a Job: The Young Adult's Guide
https://escholarship.umassmed.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1090&context=pib

Do I Tell My Boss? Disclosing my Mental Health Condition at Work
https://escholarship.umassmed.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1077&context=pib

Strategies for Engaging Young Adults
https://escholarship.umassmed.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1132&context=pib

How to Speak UP and Be Heard: Self-Advocacy
https://escholarship.umassmed.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1092&context=pib

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Appendices

- ✓ **Appendix A: School that Makes Sense Cent$: Taking CTE Courses**
- ✓ **Appendix B: Supporting Employment for Young Adults living with Mental Health Conditions**
- ✓ **Appendix C: WIOA: New Law Helps You & Young Adults Get Jobs – What Families Need to Know**
- ✓ **Appendix D: Vocational Rehabilitation (VR): A Young Adult's Guide**
- ✓ **Appendix E: Supplemental Security Income: What Happens to your SSI when you turn 18?**
- ✓ **Appendix F: How to Keep a Job: The Young Adult's Guide**
- ✓ **Appendix G: Do I Tell My Boss? Disclosing my Mental Health Condition at Work**
- ✓ **Appendix H: Strategies for Engaging Young Adults**
- ✓ **Appendix I: How to Speak UP and Be Heard: Self-Advocacy**

School that Makes ~~Sense~~ Cent$

Taking CTE Courses

TEST
Translating Evidence to Support Transitions

Tip Sheet 16 | Transitions to Adulthood Center for Research | September 2020

Career and Technical Education (or CTE) classes are a great way to learn skills for your future career. CTE is the practice of teaching career skills to students. A concentration of CTE courses is 4 classes that add up to prepare you for a particular career. If you take a concentration of CTE courses, you can graduate with special certifications that make you eligible to work in certain jobs, for example as a Certified Nursing Assistant or Auto Repair Technician. These certifications can help you get a head start on your college or career.

Which CTE focus is right for me?

Choosing a focus that matches your interests is important. Your school guidance counselor or transition planner can do activities with you to help you choose a concentration:

- Tell you about all of the different career paths and what types of classes you would take
- Complete a "career interest inventory" or other survey to think about careers that are a good fit for you
  https://www.rcsdk12.org/cms/lib/NY01001156/Centricity/Domain/4459/Career%20Interest%20Survey.pdf
- Be sure that your career goal and the courses you will need get listed in your Graduation Plan, Individualized Learning Plan (ILP) or Individualized Education Program (IEP)

It's okay if you change your mind!

It's okay if you learn that the first concentration you try is not the direction you want to go with your career. For example, you may have thought you wanted to go into fashion design; but, during the first course of sewing realize this concentration is not for you. That's okay. You have learned something about yourself and can check that career off your list.

Why now?

Right now your focus may be on finishing high school. But, taking CTE classes can be one of the best ways to be sure that what you are doing while you're in high school is useful for your future. Whether you're interested in getting a job right after school or going to college, CTE classes can help you shape a better future.

Sometimes I need extra Help. Can I take CTE classes?

CTE classes are for ALL students. If you have accommodations that are listed in your IEP, 504 Plan, or behavior plan, those can be used in your CTE class, too. It will be important for your CTE teacher to know what those accommodations are. Your teacher or guidance counselor should help you communicate with the CTE teacher about accommodations or other supports you need.

I need to take certain classes to graduate. Do I have time for CTE classes?

CTE courses are usually elective credits (not required courses) that count towards high school graduation. Some schools may allow certain CTE courses to substitute for other academic requirements for graduation. Meet with your counselor and explain your graduation and post-school plans. Ask for their help in determining how CTE courses can fit in those plans.

How's it going?

It will be important for you and your teacher or guidance counselor to keep track of how you're doing in CTE classes. If things are not going well, make some decisions.

- Do I not like this topic and should take a course in a different area in the future?
- Do I need more or different accommodations to help me succeed (e.g., a change in attendance policy, do I need the information presented in a different way)?
- Do my post-school goals for school and work need to change? Are the courses I'm taking helping me prepare for my goals?

Continue to meet with your IEP team each year and be sure that things are still on track – and make changes when needed.

RESOURCES

Incorporating Career and Technical Education in Transition Planning Practice Guide

https://www.umassmed.edu/contentassets/7ffeebded6274601b3baa4de4a33b630/updated-test-guides/career-and-technical-education-pre-pub.pdf

The 16 Career Clusters: Definitions and Guide

https://www.indeed.com/career-advice/finding-a-job/what-are-the-career-clusters

Career Clusters

https://careertech.org/career-clusters

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Supporting Employment for Young Adults Living with Mental Health Conditions

Work is Especially Important for Young Adults

Having a job as a youth or young adult is a predictor of long-term work success. Having a job has also been related to improved self-esteem, self-efficacy, and life satisfaction.[1-2] However, there is a significant gap in work experience for many young adults living with mental health conditions. The lack of experience can become too large to ameliorate later in life.[3-7] Despite this, young adults with mental health conditions are capable of working and they want to work. It is important to encourage and support young adult work efforts as early as possible. Early work efforts can also help foster an identity as a worker and provide experiences that ready young adults for better jobs and more success. Employment builds human capital (skills and experience) that can lead to career paths into the primary labor market, one that provide benefits, informal accommodations, and potential for future financial self-sufficiency. Without human capital, many young adults wind up stuck in dead end, minimum wage and non-benefitted jobs (sometimes called the four F's of food, flowers, filth and filing). Most young adults with mental health conditions are not "too sick to work" and neither is work too stressful for them. Work can contribute to their self-esteem and their long-term success.

The Impact of Receiving Disability Benefits Rather Than Employment Early in Life

Keeping as many young adults as possible off disability rolls and benefits is good for young adults as well as the community. Some clinical providers will encourage young adults to obtain benefits because it provides a safety net. However, in time disability benefits will only support a young adult in poverty. For example, a person receiving Supplemental Security Income would have to pay 133% of their monthly income to pay for a one bedroom rent in Massachusetts. Further, receiving social security benefits can be a disincentive to employment. Less than one percent of Social Security Disability Income and Supplemental Security Income beneficiaries leave the rolls and return to work. There may also be family pressure to remain unemployed if a young adult is receiving disability benefits that the family counts on for income. In these situations, it is best to access benefits counseling for young adults and their families or allies at programs like Work Without Limits or Project Impact to allay fears. Help the family understand that while immediate income may be helpful, there are long-term strategies that will provide better income. Educate young adults and families that Medicaid can be continued even when the cash benefit ends; help young adults enroll for Medicaid only and avoid using Social Security benefits as the mechanism for Medicaid (or MassHealth).

Cultivate Motivation Toward Employment Goals

If the young adult is reluctant to seek employment, try these approaches:

- Explore what/where the young adult would like to be at 30 years old; this can help clarify values and preferences in job choices for the present and future and motivate current job search.
- Ask the young adult what they are good at and interested in, because these skills and interests can help identify jobs to try. Identifying good times of day may also be helpful.
- Exposing young adults to peers who are working or have employment goals is critical!
- Discuss the difference between a job and a vocation/career as well as the importance of education and training in starting a career path.
- Explain that college is not the only way to develop job skills. Apprenticeships (usually via trade unions)

or other skill development courses via job training are also ways to get good jobs with good pay.

- Normalize that work can be challenging and that if one job does not work out, that doesn't mean none of them will. Reference the experience of your own first job or the number of jobs you have held on your own employment journey.
- Use motivational interviewing to help a young person articulate the pros/cons of getting a job.
- Use all opportunities to convey that you believe the young adult can succeed at work and have a career.

Promote Work Experiences

Having an income helps reinforce the value of work, fosters a reliance on work, develops skills (e.g. budgeting), and most importantly, forms an identity that transcends disability. Find ways to promote work:

- Encourage and assist young adults to get work-based learning experiences while in high school (e.g., internship, job shadowing, volunteering, etc.); collaborate with high schools to get related goals onto their learning or special education plan. Find out if they are eligible for Pre-employment Transition Services at school and make the connection.
- Encourage summer employment and other youth-typical jobs like waiting tables, retail, babysitting and landscaping. Every little bit helps to build a resume!
- Encourage consistent work experience; explain that it is a foundation for real career development.
- Provide exposure to and experience with the demands of holding down a competitive job; working through difficult times builds resilience and confidence.
- Encourage attachment to work; not job tenure. It is developmentally normative for young adults to change jobs frequently. With each experience ask: "What did you like about that job? What did you dislike? What are we not going to look for again? Did we learn anything?"
- Over time begin to focus on jobs that will lead to the young adult's intended career goal.
- Don't be afraid to start small. A few hours a week can be a good way to build tolerance and confidence!

Helping Young Adults Get a Job

Sometimes the hardest part is landing those first jobs, these strategies may help:

- Provide concrete direction on how to apply for a job; be familiar with online job boards and application procedures.
- Make sure young adults are taught the basic soft-skills all employers expect them to come in with, such as how to dress, appropriate communication (internal and external), problem-solving, how to ask for help, and time or task management.
- Discuss the pros and cons of disclosing a mental health condition, and what accommodations to ask for.
- Refer the young adult to services and agencies that can provide job coaching and placement, career exploration, and supported employment (e.g., Clubhouses, One-Stop Career Centers).
- Keeping young adults motivated throughout the process is essential so make sure expectations are reasonable (e.g. Job applicants won't get a call back right away!)
- Check-in regularly and pay attention to any part of the process where it looks like a person might be getting stuck.
- Stay positive and offer encouragement! Getting a job is tough for everyone.

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Resources

For more resources for young adults in this area, go to the ReachHIRE website at http://reachhirema.org/.

Find these helpful resources at the Transitions to Adulthood Center for Research website for publications: https://www.umassmed.edu/TransitionsACR/publication/#tipsheetEmployment

- **Do I Tell My Boss? Disclosing My Mental Health Condition at Work**
- **There's More to Young Adult Unemployment Than Mental Health: What to Look For**
- **Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act and its Application to Youth and Young Adults with Serious Mental Health Conditions**
- **Making it Work: Vocational Peer Mentors for Emerging Adults with Serious Mental Health Conditions**
- **Vocational Rehabilitation: A Young Adults Guide**
- **Supported Employment Adapted for Young Adults with Peer Mentors: A Feasibility Study**
- **Appealing Features of Vocational Supports for Latino and non-Latino Transition Age Youth & Young Adult Consumers: Study Goals & Methods**
- **Entering the World of Work: What Youth with Mental Health Needs Should Know About Accommodations**
- **TAC Priced Out in the United States**

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WIOA: New Law Helps Youth & Young Adults Get Jobs – What Families Need to Know

Tip Sheet 16 Transitions ACR Revised November 2020

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) P.L. 113-128, 2014 mandates services for youth and young adults (ages 14-24) with disabilities, including those with psychiatric disabilities or serious mental health conditions, to help them prepare for, obtain and pursue careers in integrated settings that offer competitive salaries and benefits. This tip sheet provides information that parents can use to advocate for and educate themselves about WIOA services that are available to youth and young adults living with serious mental health conditions.

What is important about this law for youth and young adults with psychiatric disabilities?

- Students with disabilities can get new career and educational development services.
- There is a focus on providing career and educational development services to youth and young adults who are not in school.
- The focus is on competitive jobs in integrated settings paying at least minimum wage or higher.

Who Can Access WIOA Youth Program Services?

1 Out-of-School Youth

2 In-School Youth

Youth and young adults between the ages of 14-24 with a psychiatric disability are eligible. A youth or young adult with a disability is defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) as a person who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activity, a person who has a history or record of such an impairment, or a person who is perceived by others as having such an impairment.

Eligibility Criteria

Out-of-School Youth (including those with a psychiatric disability) **must be**	✓ Between the ages of 16-24 at enrollment (age may differ in your state). ✓ Not attending any school (as defined under your state's law).
In-School Youth (including those with a psychiatric disability) **must be**	✓ Between the ages of 14-21at enrollment (age may differ in your state). ✓ Attending school (such as high school, alternative school, or college). ✓ "Low income", which is based on the young adult's own income--not the family's income (e.g., living in a high poverty area or is eligible to receive a free or reduced price lunch). ✓ Meet the definition of disability under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Documentation of a disability includes having an Individualized Education Program (IEP), a 504 plan in place, or a physicians note.

What Services Are Available?

All Eligible In-School and Out-of-School Youth	**Per Title I of WIOA, the following 14 program elements are to be provided to eligible youth and young adults.** Local agencies decide what services a youth or young adult will get based on each participant's objective assessment and individual service strategy. **The 14 elements of WIOA youth services are:** 1. Tutoring, study skills training, instruction, and dropout prevention. 2. Alternative secondary school and dropout recovery services. 3. Placement in paid and unpaid work experience. 4. Occupational skills training. 5. Integrated education and training model combining workforce preparation, basic academic skills, and occupational skills. 6. Leadership development opportunities. 7. Supportive services, such as transportation, child care, dependent care, and housing, etc. 8. Adult mentoring for the period of participation. 9. Follow-up services provided after program exit to help ensure success in employment or education. 10. Comprehensive guidance and counseling provide individualized counseling to participants, including drug/alcohol and mental health counseling. 11. Financial literacy education. 12. Entrepreneurial skills training. 13. Services that provide employment and labor market information about in-demand industry sectors or occupations. 14. Postsecondary preparation and transition activities help youth and young adults prepare for and transition to postsecondary education and training.
In-School Youth Only (i.e. Students only)	**Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) are only available to In-School Youth (i.e., students as defined by federal and state laws). These services are:** 1. Job exploration counseling, which may include helping students learn about the world of work, explore their interests and abilities, work with a job mentor, etc. 2. Work-based learning experiences, which may include paid or unpaid in-school or after school opportunities, experiences outside of the traditional school setting, and/or internships. 3. Individualized student strategies to support a smooth transition from high school to postsecondary education settings and employment. 4. Workplace readiness training to develop social and independent living skills. These are the skills and behaviors employers expect employees to possess prior to starting a job. 5. Instruction in self-advocacy (which may include peer mentoring), which helps students to effectively communicate, convey, negotiate or assert his/her own interests and/or desires.

A youth or young adult may not receive all WIOA youth program services—only those services they need. Typically, youth and young adults go through an assessment at an American Job Center (AJC), and, with assistance develop an individual service strategy to determine the services they need, which may or may not include vocational rehabilitation services. Once enrolled in a WIOA youth program, youth or young adults may be able to continue receiving these youth services after reaching the maximum eligibility age (21 for In-School Youth; 24 for Out-of-School Youth).

Where Can Youth and Young Adults Get WIOA Services?

Out-of-School Youth

Out-of-School Youth should go to a local American Job Center (also known as a One-Stop Center) to apply for and access WIOA youth services. While some services may be provided elsewhere in the community, AJCs serve as the hub to access WIOA youth program services. Some AJCs offer different youth services than others, so it may require some research to find the best fit. Staff at the AJC can help youth and young adults find employment, get training or education for a career path, or go back to school.

Find a local American Job Center (AJC) here:
https://www.careeronestop.org/LocalHelp/local-help.aspx

In-School Youth (i.e. Students)

State Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) agencies and local school districts work together to identify students with disabilities who may benefit from receiving Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) from the VR agency; however, students with disabilities enrolled in the WIOA youth program who are in high school or recognized postsecondary education/training programs may benefit from such services as well, and the VR agency may serve as another referral base.

Pre-ETS services are provided in a variety of ways across the country. In some areas, the VR agency contracts with schools to provide the services, while in others the VR agency may be providing direct services or contracting with a college, university, or even community rehabilitation provider to provide the services. Schools are not necessarily the places in which the Pre-ETS are provided but certainly serve as prime locations for such collaborations. However, keep in mind that all students receiving special education services are entitled to transition services coordinated by the schools under IDEA irrespective of WIOA. If you have questions about how your in-school youth or young adult can get Pre-ETS, contact your local VR agency to find out about the referral process. Since Pre-ETS are not delivered that same way in every area, you can also contact your local AJC to see if they can provide any information or guidance on how your in-school youth or young adult can access similar or other WIOA youth program services.

Find a State Vocational Rehabilitation Agency:
https://askearn.org/state-vocational-rehabilitation-%20agencies/

What If a Youth or Young Adult Needs More Comprehensive Services?

Youth and young adults who are receiving WIOA youth services may also be eligible for their state's VR services. Therefore, if a WIOA enrolled youth or young adult with a psychiatric disability needs more personalized services, they should apply for VR services through their state's VR agency. This way, if approved, they can have access to their state's VR services, which would include the specific services they need to prepare for or find competitive, integrated employment. This is true for both In-School and Out-of-School youth.

Don't let your youth and young adults with psychiatric disabilities miss out on these valuable services to get the training and education they need to achieve their post-school employment goals and get jobs that will help them have rewarding work lives.

Resources

- **Find local American Job Centers:** https://www.careeronestop.org/LocalHelp/local-help.aspx
- **Find your State Agency of Vocational Rehabilitation:** http://www.askearn.org/state-vocational-rehabilitation- agencies/
- **Institute for Educational Leadership (IEL):** http://iel.org/home
- **Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) Resources for Youth:** https://www.dol.gov/odep/categories/youth
- **RSA: Transition of Students and Youth With Disabilities from School to Postsecondary Education and Employment:** https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/osers/rsa/wioa/transition-of-students-and-youth-with-disabilities-from-school-to-postsecondary-education-and-employment.pdf
- **Teens on IEPs: Making My "Transition" Services Work for Me -** http://escholarship.umassmed.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1067&context=pib
- **Vocational Rehabilitation (VR): A Young Adult's Guide -** http://escholarship.umassmed.edu/cgi/viewcontent. cgi?article=1070&context=pib
- **Vocational Rehabilitation Youth Technical Assistance Center (VR Y-TAC):** http://y-tac.org/
- **WIOA Youth Program Eligibility:** https://youth.workforcegps.org/resources/2017/03/09/11/34/WIOA-Youth- Program-Eligibility
- **WIOA Youth Program Fact Sheet:** https://www.doleta.gov/Youth_services/pdf/WIOA_Youth_OWI_Fact-Sheet_12_2016.pdf
- **WIOA: What it means for people with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities (I/DD):** http://www.thearc. org/document.doc?id=5183
- **Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and its Application to Youth and Young Adults with Serious Mental Health Conditions (SMHC) -** https://escholarship.umassmed.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1105&context=pib

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Visit Transitions ACR online at https://www.umassmed.edu/transitionsACR

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Vocational Rehabilitation (VR): A Young Adult's Guide

The Word on Work - Tip Sheet 6 **Transitions RTC** *April 2012*

Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Agencies are located in every US state. VR helps people with physical or mental health disabilities achieve employment and live independently by offering vocational counseling and related individualized services. The information below explains how young adults with serious mental health conditions can take advantage of the VR services in their state.

What support services can I get from my state VR agency?

Transition Services: These are a variety of services students with disabilities use to make the adjustment from school to work after high school; VR can work with students and their special education teachers to develop an Individualized Education Transition Plan (IETP). VR will consider providing any service that is needed to achieve the agreed upon vocational goal.

Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE): This is the map for achieving your vocational goal, which when reached, will help you work and live as independently as possible. The IPE includes: work goals, steps and services to reach your goal, time frames, cost of services and who will pay, and your responsibilities for carrying out those plans.

Funding for Other Needed Services to Help You Work: The VR agency may be able to provide financial assistance for the services in your IPE such as training and post-secondary education, transportation, supplies, job search assistance, and assistive technology.

Vocational Counseling: VR can also help you decide what kinds of jobs or careers make the most sense for you. This could happen by talking it through with the counselor or taking tests to help you figure out how your interests and skills fit into different types of jobs.

Job Development: This includes job searching, skills training, resumé preparation, and placement into a desired position. Your VR counselor may refer you to job developers who work for the VR agency when you are ready to begin a job search.

Post-Employment Services: One or more short term VR services that help you to maintain, regain, or advance in employment.

Other services: To see information about more services offered by your state, contact your state Vocational Rehabilitation office or search for your state VR agency online. You can find a listing of state agencies at:
Job Accommodations Network (JAN):
https://askjan.org/concerns/State-Vocational-Rehabilitation-Agencies.cfm?cssearch=2057690_1

Tips From People Who Found Jobs Through the VR Program:

Flexibility: Be flexible about what services you ask for.

Ask questions: Make a list of questions to ask whenever you meet with the counselor or other VR staff and find out about your options, both pros and cons, so you can make informed decisions.

Communicate with your VR Counselor: Ask for the best way to contact them: email, phone, texting, etc. Identify your needs and ask for help.

Advocate for yourself: Contact the office supervisor if you are having problems with your counselor.

Talk to your peers: See what their experience was like using VR services to get a job.

Be Organized: Make a calendar and mark appointments. Keep a folder for VR paperwork. Take notes during meetings.

What do I need to be eligible for VR?

- You need medical documentation of a physical or mental disability that causes significant barriers to working/ employment.
- You need a determination that VR services are needed for you to get a job or keep working.
- Individuals who receive SSI or SSDI usually also qualify for VR services.
- The time frame to either deny or accept an application is usually 60 days. Certain groups of people with a disability may have priority to get services and there may also be a wait list for services.
- For more eligibility or application information, check out your state VR website or handbook.
- If you were determined not qualified, you can appeal the process using The Client Assistance Program (CAP). Please see additional information on the next page.

What is the VR process?

1. The VR counselor will outline available services during a group or individual meeting.
2. Once you are determined to be eligible, an initial interview will be scheduled with a VR counselor.
3. Your VR counselor and you will develop your Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE), which includes your chosen job goal and all the services needed to achieve that goal.
4. You meet periodically with your counselor to reach your goal.
5. VR services last until employment has been maintained for at least 90 days and you and your counselor agree that you are performing well on the job, **or** your case file is closed for lack of cooperation on your part or other reasons.

What are the Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors' responsibilities?

- Inform you of resources available to you and give you specific help in connecting with them
- Provide information on your rights and legal information, such as the appeals process, and the Client Assistance Program (CAP)
- Participate with you in the development of an IPE which you and your VR Counselor will sign. Give you a copy of the IPE and all subsequent amendments and reviews
- Assist in the coordination of IPE services and review your progress; at least annually
- Keep you fully informed throughout the VR process, including the opportunity to talk about why your case is being closed when that time comes

What can I do if VR services do not meet my needs?

Discuss your questions with your VR counselor.

Ask for whatever you think your needs are. As tax payers, the VR system belongs to all of us.

If dissatisfied, you can speak to the supervisor or request a change in counselors.

Contact your local Client Assistance Program (CAP), some decisions and problems can be appealed.

Get informed about your state VR agency. You can get help from advocacy organizations like the National Alliance for the Mentally Ill (NAMI).[1]

Where Else Can I Get Help If Problems Occur With My VR Services?

The Client Assistance Program (CAP) is a program for persons with disabilities who are applicants or clients of Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) or Independent Living programs. CAP:

- Provides information about Vocational Rehabilitation Services
- Advises you on your rights and responsibilities and investigates your compliant
- Assists in resolving problems with your counselor during any part of the process
- Helps you write a formal request for appeal and move your concerns through the system[2]
- Represents you at administrative reviews, mediations and a formal appeals hearing

How do I find my state agency?

To find your state agency, a listing is available at Job Accommodations Network (JAN):
https://askjan.org/concerns/State-Vocational-Rehabilitation-Agencies.cfm?cssearch=2057690_1

Sources:

Office of Special Education Rehabilitation Services:
http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/osers/rsa/index.html

Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Youth and Transition Services:
http://www.maine.gov/rehab/dvr/youth_transition.shtml

Vocational Rehabilitation Services for High School Students with a Disability: http://www.mass.gov/

Vocational Rehabilitation Services: https://dhs.sd.gov/rehabservices/vocrehabservices.aspx

Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE):
https://ocfs.ny.gov/main/cb/vocrehab_manual/Web%20Version%20SEC06-00%20%20%20%20IPE.pdf

Department of Rehabilitation Services Client Assistant Program:
https://dors.maryland.gov/resources/Pages/CAP.aspx

Getting the Most from the Public Vocational Rehabilitation System:
https://www.communityinclusion.org/article.php?article_id=129

Massachusetts Consumer Handbook for Rehabilitation (VR) Services:
http://www.mass.gov/eohhs/consumer/disability-services/vocational-rehab/consumer-handbook.html#3

Vermont Policy and Procedure Manual: https://vocrehab.vermont.gov/about-us/policy-and-procedure-manual

California Department Of Rehabilitation Regulations: https://govt.westlaw.com/calregs/Browse/Home/California/CaliforniaCodeofRegulations?guid=I81D8B290D45311DEB97CF67CD0B99467&originationContext=documenttoc&transitionType=Default&contextData=(sc.Default)

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1. To find your local NAMI, please visit: https://www.nami.org/Find-Your-Local-NAMI
2. Appeal processes in Vocational Rehabilitation programs differ by state; check with your local office. A good guide is available at https://dors.maryland.gov/resources/Pages/CAP.aspx

Supplemental Security Income: What Happens to My SSI When I Turn 18?

Tip Sheet 3 **Transitions RTC** *Revised March 2016*

Can I keep my SSI?

- The answer is – it depends; you need to re-apply
- Social Security will complete an age 18 disability review and determine if you meet the criteria for disability benefits as an adult
- Since you are not a child anymore, you will need medical evidence to prove that you are disabled as an adult

Can I work?

- Yes, you can work
- For every $2 you earn, Social Security will deduct about $1 from your SSI check
- If you earn enough so that there is no money left to deduct from your SSI check, you may still be able to keep your Medicaid (depending on how much you earn)

Are there ways to earn money without reducing my SSI check?

- Yes, Social Security has other ways to help you keep more of your SSI check if you are earning money
- If you are under age 22 and regularly attending school or enrolled in a training/ education program, Social Security will not count up to $1,850 of earnings per month (up to $7,180 per year) before deducting from your benefit check (Student Earned Income Exclusion).
- Social Security will let you save money for college or training, a computer, and other expenses by helping you write a Plan to Achieve Self Support (PASS Plan)
- There are other deductions and programs to help you, too

What if Social Security turns me down when I turn 18?

- Appeal your case
- You may continue getting your SSI check if:
  - Social Security has approved of your participation in a vocational rehabilitation or similar program
  - You have told Social Security that you are currently participating in an Individualized Education Program (IEP)
- You must be participating in these programs before Social Security turns you down and at least 2 months afterwards

For help, contact the Work Incentives Planning & Assistance (WIPA) Program in your state. Contact information can be found on the Social Security website by clicking on the Service Provider Directory link at: https://secure.ssa.gov/apps10/oesp/providers.nsf/bystate

Additional Resources

Understanding Supplemental Security Income SSI Work Incentives -- 2015 Edition: https://www.ssa.gov/ssi/textwork-ussi.htm
The Redbook - A guide to Work Incentives: https://www.socialsecurity.gov/redbook/
SSI booklet (PDF): https://socialsecurity.gov/pubs/EN-05-11000.pdf Ticket to Work Site: https://www.socialsecurity.gov/work

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How to Keep a Job:
The Young Adult's Guide

Community of Practice, Northeast Massachusetts 2013

Starting and keeping a new job can be stressful for anyone. However, there are healthy ways to deal with this stress. This sheet has some tips to help you be more prepared to start and keep a new job, and hopefully be a little less stressed.

You Are Not Alone

Make sure you have people to talk to. Create a list of your supports. These people can be anyone that you talk to when you have problems: friends, family, teachers, role models, coworkers, church members, online friends. You may be surprised how many people can relate to how you are feeling right now.

Know the Rules Before You Begin

Most companies have a clear policy or handbook on many of these questions. Take the time to review it, and sit down with your boss to ask questions if any part of it is not clear before you begin working.

Questions to ask

- **Cell Phones** – Are they allowed at work? What about texting?
- **Computer Use** – Facebook, Twitter, and other social media sites are generally not appropriate while at work, check the policy.
- **How do I request or schedule time off?**
    - How long do you have to work before you have personal time?
    - Do you have to find someone to cover for you?
    - Do you need to call a certain amount of time before your shift?
- **Breaks** – When do I get them? Where do I take them? What are the rules?
- **Is there a uniform or dress code?**
- **Overtime** – What are the rules? Is it in the Handbook?
- **What are the guidelines** for workplace relationships?
- **Trainings**
    - Is there orientation training where policy and procedures are reviewed?
    - Mandatory vs. Voluntary – (What trainings do I have to go to and which are optional?)
    - Are there ways to advance your career?
    - What trainings are paid for by the company? What trainings are non-paid?
- **Harassment** – What is it and what is the policy?
- **Raises** – How are they given?
- **Probation Period** – What does this mean? How long is it?

** If you are wondering if you should disclose your mental health condition on the job, please see the tip sheet, "Do I Tell My Boss" at:* www.umassmed.edu/transitionsRTC/publication

How to Succeed Once You Begin

Here are suggestions to help you keep your job and avoid some mistakes people make when they start a new job.

- **Keep track** of your schedule—make an extra copy to keep in a safe place.
- **Arrive on time** - being late frequently will get you fired. If you are late once, explain why.
- **Plan ahead**
    - How are you going to get to and from work?

- What's a backup plan to get to work?
- What should you do in an emergency?

- **Know your job description**
  - Just like an employee handbook, most jobs have a job description.
  - Review your job description carefully and ask your supervisor any questions.
  - Let your supervisor know if there are tasks that you aren't able to complete.

Use Your Supervision Time Well

Having supervision does not mean you are in trouble. Some bosses schedule time to meet with employees. Use this time to ask questions, build skills and be curious.

- Your boss does not expect you to know everything; it is ok to ask questions. There are no dumb questions.
- If your boss does not regularly schedule supervision, ask him or her if he or she could give you a few minutes each week to discuss how you are doing.
- Ask them what you are doing well, what they would like to see you change, and make an effort to apply this information to your work.
- It's ok to ask your boss for help with difficult situations (such as with customers, co-workers, etc.).

Take Care of Yourself

You can't be a good employee if you do not take care of yourself.

- Live a healthy lifestyle.
- Get enough sleep.
- Take care of any health issues you may have.
- Just as important is taking care of your emotional health.
  - Schedule time to do the things that you enjoy
  - Spend time with the people you love
  - Don't stop doing the activities you love, work them into your schedule responsibly
  - Reach out to people who care about you: friends, family, mentors, church members, counselors, etc.

Reasons That Could Cause You to Lose Your Job

- Being late
- Being rude
- Breaking the company rules
- Lying
- Using drugs or alcohol on the job
- Not being flexible
- Not showing up
- Stealing
- Being unprofessional (language, dress/hygiene, or sharing too much)
- Badmouthing the company (to other coworkers/on social media)

Leaving a Job on a Good Note

- Generally, you want to give your job advanced warning if you plan to quit, so you can leave on good terms.
- Most employers expect at least a two-week notice, but more can be helpful.
- Be honest and polite when telling your boss why you're leaving.
- Be careful about speaking negatively about former employers or coworkers when you leave a job.
- Doing the above can help you get a good reference from a past employer for future jobs.

For useful tips on how to get a job, download our free "How to Get a Job" tip sheet:
www.umassmed.edu/TransitionsRTC/publication

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Do I Tell My Boss?: Disclosing My Mental Health Condition at Work

The Word on Work, Tip Sheet 7 **Transitions RTC** *2012*

What Should I Say About My Mental Health Condition at Work?

Every young adult with a mental health condition will face the decision of whether or not to tell others about, or "disclose" their condition at work. Typically the reason for disclosure is to ask for an accommodation in order to perform better at your present job. An accommodation is modifying a job, the job site, or the way things are done in order to enable a qualified individual with a disability to have an equal opportunity for employment.[1] The following information can provide some guidance in helping you make an informed decision.

Some Reasons to Disclose Having a Mental Health Condition on the Job:	Some Reasons Not to Disclose Having a Mental Health Condition on the Job:
• To obtain protection under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)[1] • Required in order to request job accommodations[2] • To serve as a role model and educate others • Reduces stigma • Relieves the stress some may feel about "hiding" a disability • Makes employers better able to respond to sudden symptoms or hospitalizations • Disclosure to a supervisor is kept confidential by law	• There is no need for accommodations • Hiring or promotion chances may be negatively affected due to stigma • To protect your privacy • Fear of: - Negative employer or coworker reactions to you or your work - People not respecting your privacy and confidentiality (others in community/ workplace will be told) - Being held to a different standard, i.e., less will be expected of you

If I Want to Disclose, How Should I Do It?

- Let your employer know you have a medical disability. Steer clear of medical terms and a specific diagnosis. Instead provide examples of how your disability affects you i.e., "I have a medical condition that affects my concentration."
- You will need to provide information about the existence and extent of your disability or diagnosis, how your condition may limit your functioning in the job, and the accommodations that address these barriers. YOU DO NOT need to disclose your entire medical record, progress notes or tests, etc.
- Focus on your abilities, not disabilities.
- Prepare and practice what you will say ahead of time.
- List your strengths and qualifications related to this job. You can also give examples of how your experiences with a disability will positively affect your work performance.
- Share what issues you may face in the workplace due to your diagnosis and try to word it in a positive way. For example, "My disability requires me to take frequent breaks in order for me to stay productive."

- You should engage in an "informal interactive process" with your employer and provide a specific list or a written statement that summarizes the disability and accommodations that would help you at this job.[2]
- Inform your employer of an action plan that works best for your safety if you become unwell at work.
- Some employers may have policies and processes in place for disclosure, which may be helpful to look over and potentially use.

If I Want to Disclose, When Should I Do It?

There is no exact point in time that is best to disclose, however, each has its advantages and disadvantages. You have the right to disclose at any time during your employment. You also have the right not to disclose. The Americans with Disabilities Act(ADA)[1] states that employers cannot ask questions that will likely reveal the existence of a disability before making a job offer.

SOME TIMES YOU CAN DISCLOSE	PROS OF DISCLOSURE AT THAT POINT IN TIME	CONS OF DISCLOSURE AT THAT POINT IN TIME
In a cover letter/ resume/ job application	Shows honesty, gives the opportunity to prepare a written statement including your abilities	Employer may have pre-conceived opinions on disabilities and may not offer you an interview
Before an Interview	You can discuss the accommodations that you may need during an interview[2]	May affect the interview process and how you are viewed due to stigma
During the interview	Opportunity to discuss strengths and how disability will positively affect employment Can interact with people and flexibly respond to questions/concerns	May affect the interview process and how you are viewed due to stigma
Once hired	Avoids possibility of discrimination during the hiring process. Secure accommodations and coverage under the ADA[1]	May affect how your job duties and assignments are handled due to stigma
During Employment	You may find that you will need accommodations once you've been at the job for a while You may want to wait until you form a relationship with your boss, prove your abilities and feel confident with your job. Disclosing enables you to have a conversation with your boss. Hopefully you are perceived as a valued worker and they will be motivated to make adjustments in order to keep you.	May affect co-workers responses to you May affect how your performance is evaluated by the employer May affect promotional opportunities
After Performance Difficulties Arise	If you become sick or hospitalized you may need to request time off, so you will need to inform your workplace.	Your employer may feel betrayed, wonder why you waited so long, and look at it as an excuse for bad performance.

Footnotes

1. Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, Pub. L. No. 101-336, § 2, 104 Stat. 328 (1991); ADA Amendments Act of 2008, PUB. L. No. 110-325 (2008) found at: http://www.eeoc.gov/laws/statutes/adaaa.cfm
2. Job Accommodation Network Accommodation and Compliance Series: http://askjan.org/media/downloads/accommodationrequestletter.pdf

What Employers Can & Cannot Ask During a Job Interview About Your Mental Health Condition:

In the table below, we have posed some questions that are allowed and not allowed during a job interview, including ways to answer appropriately and in a professional manner.

EMPLOYERS CANNOT ASK	EMPLOYERS CAN ASK	SUGGESTED EXAMPLES OF ANSWERS
Do you have any physical or mental impairment that would keep you from performing the job you seek? What physical or mental impairments do you have that would affect your job performance?	Are you able to perform the essential function of the job you are seeking, with or without accommodations?	If you are able to perform the essential functions with accommodations, you can simply answer "I am confident that I will be able to handle the requirements of this position". You are not required to give details about what specific accommodations you would need or why you may need them until after you are hired.
How many days were you sick during your last job?	Can you meet our attendance requirements? How many days were you absent from your last job?	Indicate that you are able to meet the attendance requirements of the job. If you are disclosing, you can speak about schedule accommodations that may be needed for hospital or therapy visits.
What medications are you currently taking?	Are you currently using illegal drugs?	Reply no to illegal drug use and that your medications are private information.
Questions to a third party (service providers/friends/state agency) that they could not directly ask the applicant.	Questions to a third party (service providers/ friends/state agency) that they are legally allowed to ask the applicant directly.	Tell them you can supply medical information if you are disclosing; if not, that is private information.
The employer is prohibited from asking disability-related questions or requiring a medical examination before making the individual an offer.	After the employer extends an offer for the position, he may ask the individual disability-related questions or require a medical examination as long as he does so for all entering employees in the same job category	A question about your disability that is asked before a job offer is illegal and you can politely state that these questions do not affect your ability to perform the job.

References:

The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission: http://www.eeoc.gov/policy/docs/preemp.html

National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability for Youth. *The 411 on Disability Disclosure: A Workbook for Youth with Disabilities:* http://www.ncwd-youth.info/411-on-disability-disclosure

National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability for Youth. *Cyber Disclosure For Youth with Disabilities:* http://www.ncwd-youth.info/cyber-disclosure

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Doyle, A. (2014). How to Answer Illegal Interview Questions: Interview Questions Employers Should Not Ask. Retrieved from http://tinyurl.com/ascxuud

To Whom Do I Disclose?

You are only required to share disability information with the person/s in the workplace who is involved with approving or providing accommodations. You can choose whether or not to tell other people at the workplace. An employment specialist or counselor may be able to help you determine who that might be. Some examples of types of disclosure include:

- **Full Disclosure:** Being open with everyone at work (bosses and coworkers) about your mental health condition, including details and your diagnosis. Note: not all coworkers will understand, and some may resent accommodations.
- **Targeted Disclosure:** Telling specific people such as:
  - Your immediate boss /supervisor if they will be the one providing accommodations and support.
  - A higher level manager such as your immediate supervisor/boss's manager.
  - The human resources manager who can help you with legal rights, health insurance, medical leave, etc.
  - A job coach or transition youth advocate who may represent you if you are uncomfortable/unable to disclose yourself.
  - Your co-workers who may be able to provide informal supports. Note: The ADA requires your employer to keep all information about your disability confidential. Keep in mind when disclosing disability-related information to co-workers, that they are not held to the same standard.
- **Inadvertent Disclosure**: Others find out about your condition without you telling anybody.

Think About "Cyber Disclosure" When Using Social Media Sites!

With sites like Facebook and Twitter becoming increasingly popular, you may find yourself sharing a lot of information about yourself, and disclosing your mental health condition online without realizing it. Here are some tips to avoid inadvertent cyber disclosure:

- Know what information about you is available for all to see online. Do a check by entering your name every few months into search engines (Google) to see what information comes up.
- Check the privacy settings on any site you may be a part of i.e., Facebook. You can make your profile private so only the friends you choose can see your page, photos, and specific information. Double check that you have made each part of your profile private.
- Realize that others, including employers, may see information you post that could relate to you having a mental health condition i.e., awards you received from mental health organizations or memberships in self advocacy groups, etc.
- During employment, review your rights and privacy laws when it comes to using work computers. You should assume that any work equipment is the employer's, not yours, and you have no privacy on that equipment. For example, some organizations have public e-mail that can be looked at by request of your employer.

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Strategies for Engaging Young Adults

What We Know From the Field

Young adults can be actively engaged and retained in services that are important to them by using proactive approaches. We know that young adults often under-utilize services for serious mental health conditions. The scarcity of treatment resources, the lack of adaptation to young adult culture or needs, and the challenges of navigating the treatment system as adults may explain unmet treatment needs. Moreover, young adults may need to develop self-advocacy skills because their parents or others in their support system may have advocated for them in the past. Simply providing young adults with information about how and where to get care or services does not always work.

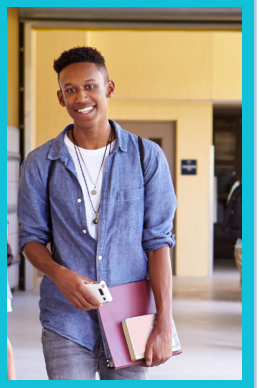
Change is a cornerstone of the transition to adulthood. Aside from their mental health needs, young adults living with mental health conditions may need support with obtaining meaningful employment, education, housing, community integration, mentoring and peer supports, and/or developing supportive relationships or social networks.[1-4] Be aware that their services may need adjusting as their needs and goals change.

Providers need to develop a connection, build trust, and create a working therapeutic alliance with each young adult. See each young adult as a partner. Try to be flexible, and respond according to where the **young adult is at in his or her life.** Utilizing these principles will help providers to develop a strong foundation of mutual respect and the rapport needed to work effectively with young adults.

Guiding Principles for Working with Young Adults

- **Develop a therapeutic alliance with each young adult by**:
  - **Establishing a connection by using a functional and person-centered approach** (rather than a medical approach). Focus on the young adult, their goals, interests, desires, and skills rather than their diagnosis.[5] Find out what the young adults' goals are and allow them to drive the process. Ask questions and really listen to what they want and which areas they would like support.
  - **Being helpful** by connecting young adults with the services they feel they need to achieve their goals.[6]
  - **Being genuine and likable** (e.g., friendly, empathetic, compassionate, honest, and amiable) with young adults by clearly expressing interest in helping them find the services and supports that meet their goals/needs. Avoid taking on an authoritarian or parental role.[7]
  - **Allowing for flexible meeting times and locations**. Help with transportation, if needed. Young adults may miss appointments more than older adults so try to be flexible with cancellations and missed meetings. Assist young adults in scheduling and setting up reminders about future appointments, and brainstorm with the young adult about ways to hold them accountable to attend their appointments.
  - **Being consistent and following through** on plans and promises.[6]
- **Get to know each young adult by:**[6]
  - **Understanding their** reason or reasons for coming to services
  - **Finding out the importance** of school and work in their life
  - **Discovering who influences** them in their life; getting to know their social influences
  - **Discussing the role of family** biological or otherwise youth-defined
  - **Describing** releases of information and making sure they understand their purpose and need

Some tips for meeting with young adults:



- **Ask one open-ended question such as** "What do you like to do for fun?" or "What do you need help with?" and then STOP to listen to the answer. Do not ask questions in quick succession.[9]
- **If you think the young adult is missing something** or needs more information, ask a question instead of just giving them the answer. For example, if a young adult wanted to take an art class ask him or her "I wonder if there are costs associated with taking the class".[9]
- **Try to be descriptive when offering praise** or talking about a strength. Say more than "great". Also offering congratulations for accomplishments (large and small) is important.[9]
- **Provide reflection** when a young adult says something meaningful, important, or personal, or mentions something often.[9]

- **If technology is available to you, use texting and social media to engage young adults.** Young adults rely on heavily on texting and social media (e.g., Twitter, Instagram) to communicate. Checking in using texts and sending appointment reminders via text are good ways to connect with young adults. Discuss with the young adult what his or her preferred communication and establish parameters for using them.
- **Ask the young adult about any desires or goals** they may have to make academic and/or employment changes.[6] Refer to services that:
  - Focus on career development and exploration that may include resume building, how to apply for a job, how to dress, and how act being in a professional environment.[8]
  - Assist young adults in finishing high school and/or transitioning to post-secondary school education.
- **Identify services and supports that are developmentally appropriate**. Young adults may have stronger skills in some areas than others. Try to find services and supports that match the developmental stage of the young adult.
- **Make and keep connections with other agencies and organizations** to create a more integrated approach and to assist with referrals. Use a proactive, but gentle approach. Do not assume the young adult will follow-up later. Do a warm hand off. Encourage young adults to use their service authorization person or case manager's telephone number to schedule the appointment.
- **Assist young adults in developing important life-skills** such as advocacy and self-determination.
- **Refer young adults to services and supports** that have been specifically adapted for young adults and that have near-age peer mentors.
- **It takes cultural sensitivity and respect** to relate to young adults effectively.
  - Providers should have sensitivity to the diverse cultural/linguistic values they may come across while working with young adults. Be aware of socioeconomic differences, sexual orientation, and gender identity.
  - Be attuned to the generation you are talking to. In general, young adults have different values, language, technology dependence, and expectations when compared to older adults.

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SUGGESTED RESOURCES

- Achieve My Plan (AMP's) Top Ten Tips for Engaging with Young People: https://www.pathwaysrtc.pdx.edu/pdf/proj-5-AMP-top-ten-tips-for-engaging-young-people.pdf
- Davis, M., & Golden, L. (2018). Annotated bibliography: State-of-the-science conference proceedings. Worcester, MA: University of Massachusetts Medical School, Department of Psychiatry, Systems and Psychosocial Advances Research Center (SPARC), Transitions Research and Training Center. Retrieved from https://www.umassmed.edu/globalassets/systems-and-psychosocial-advances-research-center/images/annbib-sos2018.pdf
- During Meetings I can't Stand It When…: A Guide for Facilitators and Team Members: https://www.pathwaysrtc.pdx.edu/pdf/proj3-facilitator-guide-2013.pdf
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How To Speak Up and Be Heard: Self Advocacy

Community of Practice, Northeast Massachusetts 2014

Self advocacy is the ability to speak up for yourself and for the things that are important to you. As you become older and take on more responsibilities in your life, self advocacy helps you:

- Get what you need
- Make your own choices
- Learn how to say no
- Express your feelings respectfully

Places to Use Self Advocacy

AT WORK OR SCHOOL

- Adjusting your schedule
- Participating in meetings
- Asking for accommodations
- Requesting tutoring
- During a job interview
- Asking for a raise

AT HOME

- Managing finances (bills/ roommates)
- Requesting personal space/time
- Renting an apartment
- Sharing food costs
- In a relationship

IN THE COMMUNITY

- Arranging transportation
- Presenting in court
- Making a complaint
- Paying a check

AT THE DOCTORS OFFICE

- Making an appointment
- Reviewing a treatment or recovery plan
- Requesting a second opinion
- Asking for clarification

Putting it Into Words

- **At School:** E-mail to professor: "I am asking for a week extension for this assignment. I haven't been feeling well and I fell behind."
- **At Work:** "I can't work on Sunday, I have a family commitment. Can I work a different shift instead?"
- **With Roommates:** "I have class at 8 A.M. Can you stop playing your music by 10 P.M.?"
- **Argument with a Significant Other:** "I need to remove myself from this conversation, could we talk about this later when we are both feeling less angry?"
- **At the Bank:** "I don't understand this statement, can you explain the fees to me?"
- **Splitting a Check:** "I'd love to go out to dinner. Can we split the check?"
- **At the Doctor:** "Before we make a final decision, I would like to get a second opinion."
- **Medical Appointment:** "The side effects of this medication are bothering me. Can we discuss other options or choices?"

10 Ways to be Heard

1. Ask questions.
2. Listen! Be interested in what the other person is saying.
3. Think before you speak. People listen when you choose your words carefully.
4. Write down your thoughts and/or rehearse what you will say with a friend or in a mirror.
5. Speak to others in the way you want to be spoken to.
6. Know to whom you are talking. For example, friend, grandparent, or boss and use language and tone that they would find respectful.
7. Know when to stop talking and how to exit a conversation politely.
8. Be willing to compromise and be flexible.
9. Using words like "please" and "thank you" go a long way.
10. Do your research. Find out if what you're asking for is reasonable.

Questions to Ask Yourself

If you are getting ready to advocate for something you need, think about the questions below. You can review your answers with someone you trust. Role-playing the scenario can also help you to figure out exactly what you want to say and how.

1. What am I advocating for? What do I want?

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2. Why is it important?

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3. How should I make my request?

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4. Who do I need to talk to?

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5. Who else will this affect?

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6. Is there a compromise or another option?

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7. What should I do if my request is denied?

For additional information on self advocacy visit these websites:

http://www.ncwd-youth.info/tip-sheet/becoming-a-self-advocate,
http://www.selfadvocacyonline.org/learning/
SAMHSA Guide on self advocacy: http://store.samhsa.gov/shin/content/SMA-3719/SMA-3719.pdf

Visit us at: http://www.umassmed.edu/TransitionsRTC

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