



# TransCen

MEANINGFUL WORK + COMMUNITY INCLUSION

# **A Future that Includes Employment: The Importance of Family Engagement**

2023 NTACT- C CBI  
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# About TransCen

- TransCen, Inc. is a national organization offering web-based and in-person training for state agencies, school districts, provider organizations, and others interested in meaningful work and community inclusion for individuals with disabilities.
- Learn more about our work: [www.transcen.org](http://www.transcen.org)
- Contact us at [inquiries@transcen.org](mailto:inquiries@transcen.org)

# Sean Roy

- Sibling of a younger brother with intellectual disabilities
- Currently serving as the Chief Training and Innovation Officer for TransCen Inc.
- Formerly the Transition Projects Director for PACER Center, a national non-profit serving families
- National trainer on ACRE and a frequent speaker at disability employment and transition conferences
- Strong interest in employment, staff development, family engagement, expectations



# No Heroes or Villains

- Families want the best for their child
- Professionals want the best for the individuals they work with

Effective family engagement  
is rooted in understanding,  
relationships, communication  
and focus







# New Ideas

Empathy and  
understanding

Professional capacity  
building

Focus on partnership

Outcome based

Lifespan Approach

# Dual Capacity Framework

## Professional Capacity

		NO	YES
Family Capacity	YES	Demanding Consumer	Empowered Alliance
	NO	Distrustful Isolates	Insider Authority

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# Employment: Core Concepts

## Employment Core Concepts:

Everyone can work!

Work looks differently for everybody

Employment should be rooted in what your family member wants to do



# “Employment First”

Employment in the general workforce is the first and preferred outcome in the provision of publicly funded services for all working age citizens with disabilities, regardless of level of disability.

## APSE Statement on Employment First

- Chosen – Job is based on what a person wants to do.
- Integrated – Alongside those without disabilities, with opportunities to interact
- Employment – In the general workforce, on the payroll of a business or self-employed
- Minimum Wage – At or above minimum wage or at industry standard wage

# Why Should People with Disabilities Work?

“The growth in his personal development, confidence and maturity became apparent very soon after he started working. Everyone in his family took notice and was delighted with the happy adult my son had become.”

– Parent –

It is what is expected of  
adults

Socialization

Self-worth (dignity)

Purpose

Money

Promotes mental health

## Because they can!

# Possible Family Engagement Outcomes

- Increased attendance and participation at key meetings
- Expand information sharing that increases work experience opportunities for students
- Improved understanding of the impact of benefits
- Increased use of supported decision making

# The Vision

What if students with disabilities and their families were told early on that great things are in their futures and were supported to achieve the goals they set for themselves?



# Expectations Influence

- Family expressed preference for work was more predictive of future employment than high school work experiences (Simonsen & Neubert, 2012).
- Family expectations contribute to positive post-secondary outcomes:
  - Attending postsecondary education
  - Living in integrated settings
  - Attaining competitive employment



# Expectations Influence <sup>(2)</sup>

Professionals' expectations:

- Influence family and student expectations
- Influence the resources and information shared with students and families
- Influenced by pre-service training and compliance requirements
- Influenced by program and service requirements (severity of disability to qualify)

# Asking the Right Questions

- How are you doing?
- What does a good life look like?
- What does a good school experience look like?
- What worries you the most?
- What do you need right now?
- How can we help?

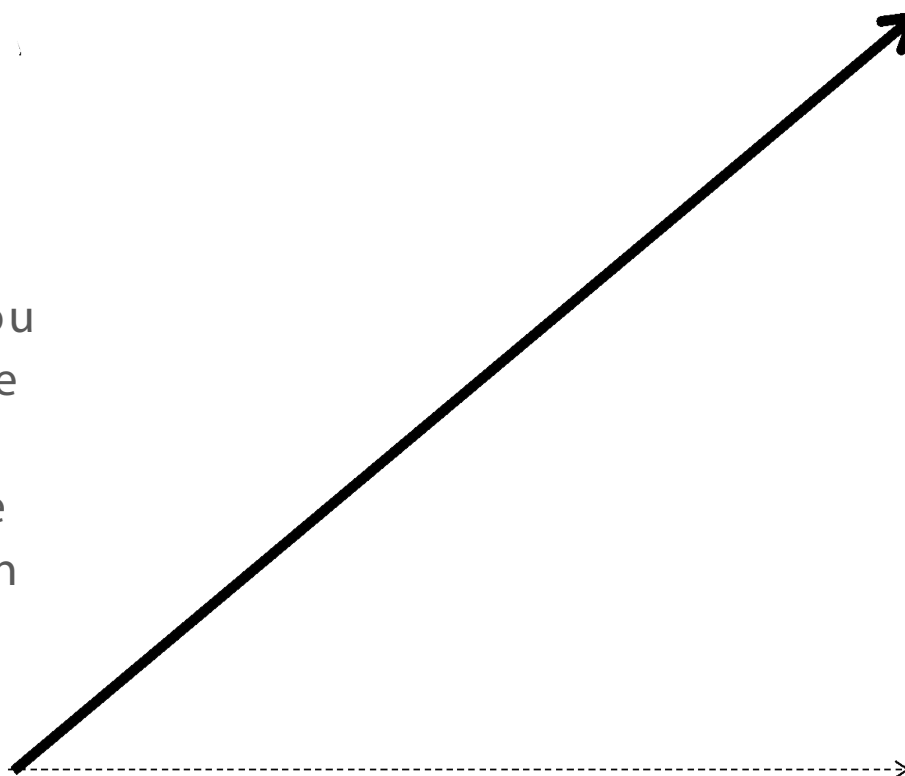
# Charting the Life Course

## Life Trajectory Worksheet: Families



Everyone wants a good life. The bubbles on the right will help you think about what a good life means for you or your family member, and identifying what you know you don't want. You can use the space around the arrows to think about current or needed life experiences that help point you in the direction of your good life.

Developed by the UMKC Institute for Human Development, UC EDD.  
More materials at [lifecoursetools.com](http://lifecoursetools.com)



VISION for a GOOD LIFE

What I DON'T Want







**Andy Meredith, High School Senior**

### Strengths

*Social  
Determined  
Shows initiative  
Hard working  
Independent  
Musical  
Creative*

**Vision Statement:** I get my own studio. My job is taking pictures. I get a small house. I get married to Maggie. I also work at Publix. It is really fun. I keep my money in the bank. I want to go to college and live in a new house by myself. My friends will come to my new house.

### Accomplishments:

- Worked at Publix since April 2017
- Earned Eagle Scout Award 2018
- Worked on Yearbook staff and lettered in Woodstock High School Mountain Bike Team
- Photography exhibited at Anna's Angels benefit auction and Russian Medical Colleges

### What works for me:

*Peer modeling and support  
Age-appropriate awards: breaks, money, music,  
Specific explanations*

### What doesn't work for me:

*Babying  
Removing me from friends*

### Areas I need help:

*Reading  
Math  
Counting money  
Managing time  
Keeping track of a  
schedule*

# Vision Statement

- Great tool to help youth express their goals
- Can double as a resume

<https://hdi.uky.edu/employment-checklists> (scroll down to "Vision Statement Template")

# Question

What do you think are the main reasons families might be apprehensive about exploring competitive employment as an option for their loved one?

# Reasons for Apprehension

- Fear of disruption of routine and services
- Fears over vulnerability
- Questions about ability to work
- Fear of losing benefits



**DON'T JUDGE  
MY CHOICES  
WITHOUT  
UNDERSTANDING  
MY REASONS.**

# Role of Families and Caregivers

Families can be a valuable partner in the job search process.

- Setting or reinforcing the expectation
- Contributing to assessments
- Tapping into networks
- Practicing soft skills
- Teaching real things





# The Goal: A Good Job Match

How often do we:

- Pick jobs “nobody else wants”
- Pick convenient options
- Offer same job year after year
- Exclude certain populations



# Positive Personal Profile (PPP)

- A way to “take inventory” of all of the attributes of a job seeker that will be relevant to the:
  - Job search
  - Employability
  - Job match
  - Retention
  - Long-range career development
- The best way to gather the info is to observe a job seeker in many different environments!

# Use Venn Diagrams to Generate Ideas

- Drop in a characteristic, a passion, a preferred environment, a skill, a previous experience, a job requirement such as close to home or no interaction with customers, etc.
- Only one thing in each bubble
- Center of the bulls eye = perfect place, perfect job
- Do multiple Venn Diagrams, each one different
- Open questions: What does this bring to mind for you?

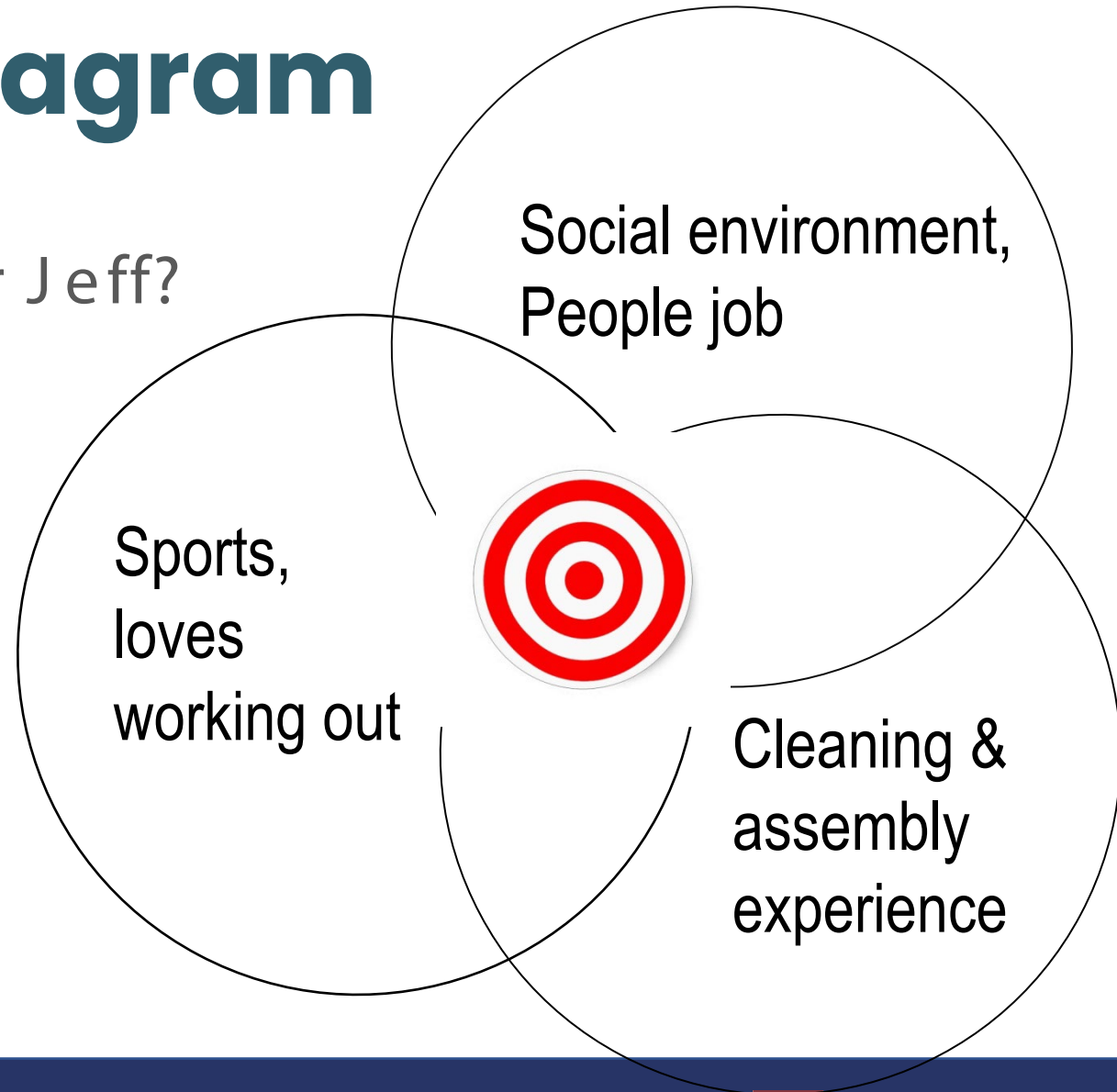
# Jeff's Profile

- Very outgoing, great sense of humor
- Loves to help others- people jobs
- Loves "Sports" – weight lifter (Special Olympics), Health conscious, loves working out, has belonged to a gym for 15 yrs.
- Loves musical theater- being on stage, dancing, singing
- Experience stocking supplies, cleaning, sterilizing, assembling medical kits, folding towels
- Can write/read simple phrases, good number matching skills
- Doesn't like computers- except to watch YouTube
- Does chores at home- laundry, used to walk the dog, vacuum s
- "Half Jewish"- strong interest in the culture

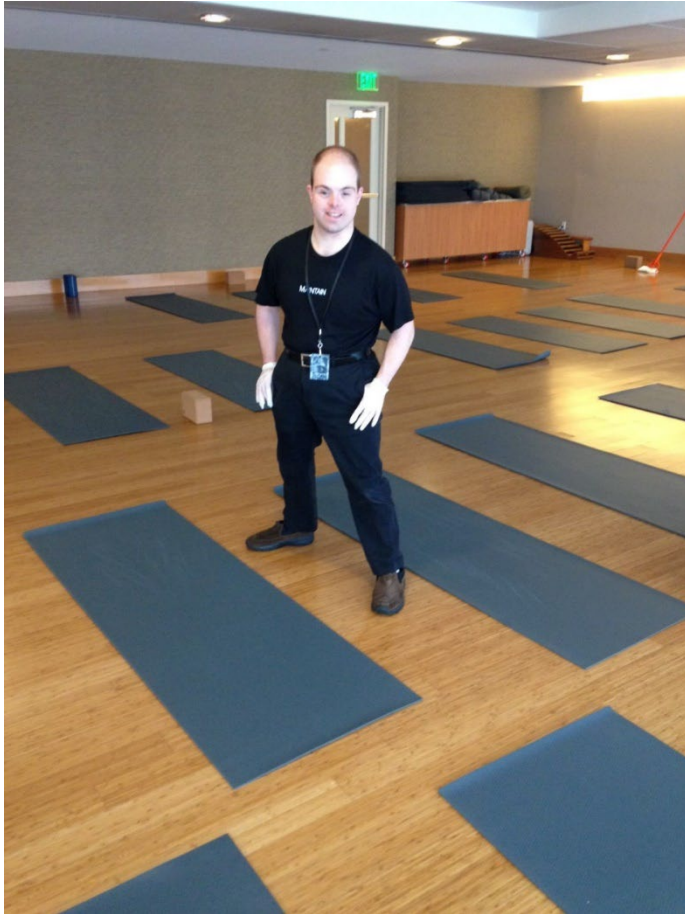


# Jeff's Venn Diagram

What is a good job for Jeff?



# Jeff at Equinox



Supports Maintenance team after the morning rush

- Collects and restocks towels through club
- Sanitizes yoga mats used for morning classes
- Straightens “prop wall”
- Cleans/stocks small studios
- Restocks “tea station”

# Working through Apprehension

- Build trusting relationships
- Negotiate the risk
- Provide benefits counseling
- Engage your partners
- Train your staff
- Start with small steps  
(time limited work experience)



By Frits Ahlefeldt

# Asking the Tough Questions

Are we going to engage every family so  
each side is happy?

# Asking the Tough Questions (2)

How do we deal with “unrealistic expectations?”



# Asking the Tough Questions <sup>(3)</sup>

Are we being culturally responsive?

# Asking the Tough Questions <sup>(4)</sup>

Is our focus parent and student engagement or compliance?

# Tips for State Teams

1. Establish competitive employment of the preferred outcome of transition services.
2. Consider coordination with middle schools (send positive messages earlier)
3. Utilize your partners to engage all families
4. Build your capacity to facilitate work experiences
5. Family engagement is an ongoing process which requires consistent attention

## Question <sup>(2)</sup>

What is one key takeaway  
from our time together  
today?

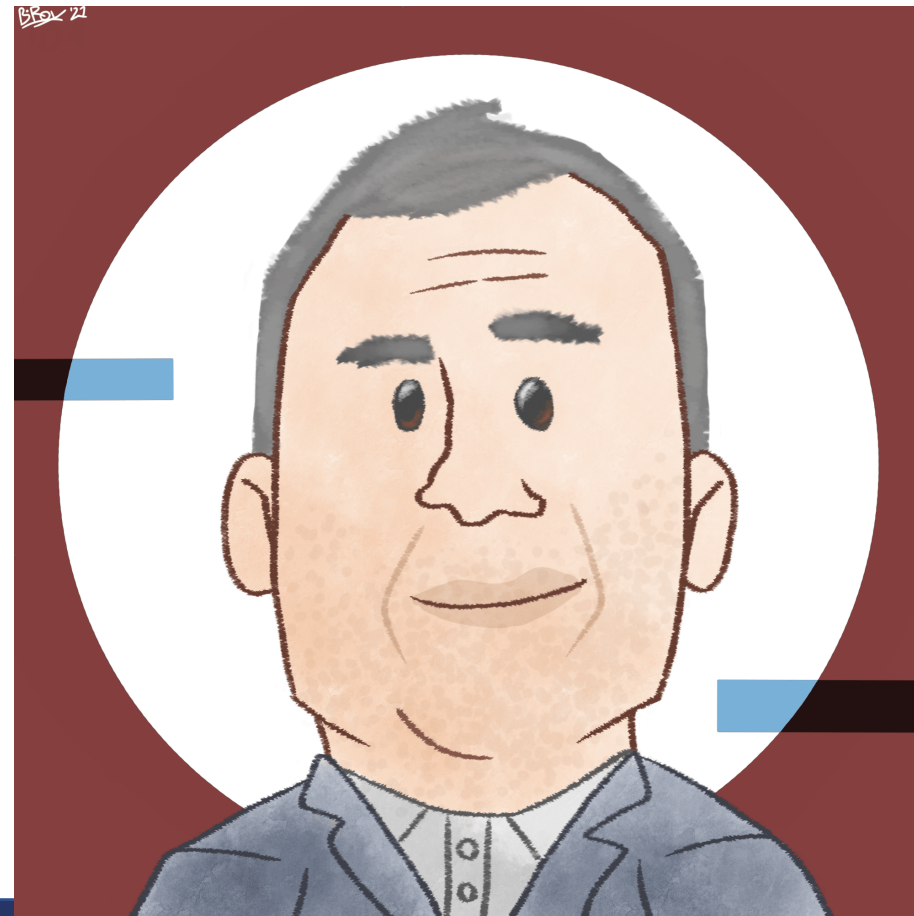
# Resources

- Charting the Life Course: [www.lifecoursetools.com](http://www.lifecoursetools.com)
- Open Doors for Multicultural Families: [www.multiculturalfamilies.org](http://www.multiculturalfamilies.org)
- PACER Center: [www.pacer.org](http://www.pacer.org)
- I'm Determined: [www.imdetermined.org](http://www.imdetermined.org)



# Thank You!

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Please take a moment to submit your session  
**Quick Reaction**

