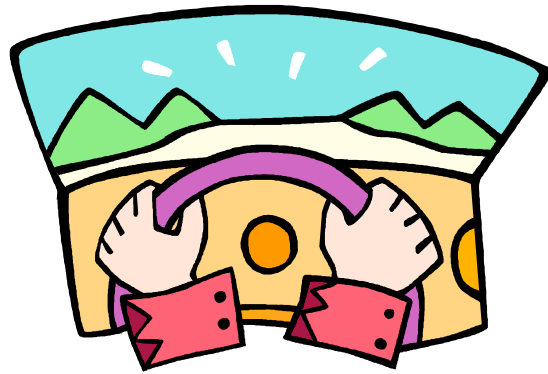


In the Driver's Seat



Six Workshops to Help with
Transition Planning and
Self-advocacy



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In the Driver's Seat

Introduction

The Vermont Family Network (VFN), in collaboration with VocRehab Vermont, developed the *In the Driver's Seat* curriculum to help youth take a more active role in planning for their future. The program was piloted with teenagers in several Vermont High Schools and with youth in a support group sponsored by a regional Vocational Rehabilitation office.

In the Driver's Seat is a series of six workshops for youth in transition from high school to adult life. Although this curriculum is suitable for all students, it was developed for students with special needs particularly those with development disabilities. During the workshops, youth experience hands-on learning that helps them achieve adult, life goals. With encouragement and support, young adults identify their skills, interests, and needs, and work toward improving their ability to self advocate.

Typically the workshops take place in high schools and involve special education students and those receiving Section 504 services. Other settings have included a Vocational Rehabilitation youth group and a juvenile detention center. Special educators and other school personnel help to recruit students and participate as facilitators in the workshops. Students should have their parents' permission to participate in the program, and parents are invited to a meeting to learn more about the curriculum. Workshops usually include four to six students, ranging in ages from 14 to 21.

Divided into six sections, each part addresses a different topic and builds on information from previous workshops. Depending on the size of the group and the needs of the students, each workshop takes about two to three hours. Workshops are best conducted in consecutive weeks to not lose the momentum of the process. The facilitator's role varies, depending on the student's abilities and needs, and student participation is critical and a necessary part of achieving program outcomes. Workshop activities require materials that are inexpensive and easy-to-use, including handouts that can guide a discussion in a workshop or be completed outside of the workshop to gather more information. Parents and teachers find the posters which are created by the student as part of the process very helpful in transition planning and in supporting the student in accomplishing his/her goals.

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In the Driver's Seat

Six Workshops to Help with Transition Planning and Self-advocacy

By participating in the six workshops, students will:

- Create a Positive Personal Profile Poster
- Identify at least one career/life dream and create a Life Dream Map
- Complete a Transition Planning Poster that can be used as a tool to guide them, teachers, and parents in setting transition goals in the IEP and 504 Plan
- Gain and/or grow the basic skills to actively participate in the IEP and 504 process
- Feel more confident in expressing their talents and preferences and in advocating for themselves
- Meet people that can help them better understand their goals and fulfill their dreams
- Understand how the skills they've learned will serve them throughout life.
- Have fun!

Description of the Six Workshops



Workshop One: Who are you? What do you have to offer to the world?

Workshop activities are designed to introduce the concept of self-advocacy. The student goes through a process of identifying his or her skills and talents, career and life dreams, challenges, and needs for accommodations.



Workshop Two: How do you put it in print?

Students develop a Positive Personal Profile Poster, which can be useful in transition planning, developing a resume, preparing to participate in the IEP or 504 processes, and helping youth identify and affirm their positive attributes.



Workshop Three: What are your goals?

Workshop Three explores the concept that every goal in life is attained through a path or a process made up of a series of steps. At the end of the workshop, students will have a plan that describes one or more of their career and life dreams and the steps needed to reach them. The student's plan will be recorded on a Life Dreams Map Poster.



Workshop Four: Who do you ask to help?

Students, with the help of others, identify resources in their school, community, and State to help in addressing their goals. Activities in this workshop help students to become knowledgeable about adult services, work, and post-secondary opportunities.



Workshop Five: How do you develop a transition plan?

The focus of Workshop Five is to incorporate the information gathered in previous workshops into a transition plan. The transition plan describes the areas the student would like to work on in the coming year and identifies the individuals who might assist the student in meeting transition goals.



Workshop Six: What have you learned and will it work?

Follow through is very important in all steps of transition planning. This workshop reviews what students have learned and achieved and helps them plan next steps.



Workshop One: Who are you, and what do you have to offer the world?

Introduction

During Workshop One, students identify their skills and abilities, hobbies and interests, positive personality traits, career goals, life dreams, specific challenges, and needs for accommodations. Students complete three activities which they will use as input to the Positive Personal Profile Poster that they will create during Workshop Two.

Setting

If possible, arrange the seating in a circle to de-emphasize the typical classroom environment and to allow everyone in the room to see each other.

I. Opening Activity—Personalized License Plates

Materials: Card stock and markers for each participant.

Instructions to students

1. In the upper right and left-hand corners, write a number that has some special meaning to you.
2. In large capital letters in the center of the card, write your first name.
3. At the bottom of the card, write, I live to [Insert an activity or hobby that you really enjoy a lot.]
4. On the back of the card, write the name of a job or career you would love to have sometime in the future.
5. Now, let's take turns having each person present his or her license plate to the group.

15	grade 8
Derek	
I Live to cook.	

Go to College

Workshop One (Continued)

II. Activity—Play the part of an advocate

Materials: Flip chart, markers, masking tape (or chalkboard)

Instructions

On a flipchart or the chalkboard, write the word **ADVOCACY** in large letters. Ask the group if anyone knows the meaning of this word. Write down comments.

Give the students several scenarios where advocacy comes into play. Ask them what they would do if they were in the advocate's position. Get as many different responses as possible. Record each response on the flipchart.

Review all of the different responses that students come up with. Tell the group that all of their responses are examples of advocacy. They are examples of people advocating for other people. Advocates help people solve a problem or meet a goal.

Ask the group: Is it possible to advocate for yourself? How?

Scenarios

You are a mother or father. Your child is in the first grade and having trouble learning how to read. What would you do?

You are a doctor and one of your patients comes to you complaining of having headaches every day. What would you do?

You and your best friend are playing Frisbee with your friend's dog. Suddenly the dog runs out in the street and is hit by a car. What are you going to do?

You are a high school teacher. One of your students graduated last year. He comes into your classroom one day and asks you if you can help him find a job. What would you do?

You are a police officer. While you are riding in your police cruiser, you see a little girl standing alone at a bus stop. She is crying. When you ask her if she needs help, she speaks to you in Spanish. What will you do?

Destination point: Self-advocacy is all about speaking up for yourself. Being a good self-advocate means you make sure other people know what you want and need and that they treat you fairly.

Workshop One (continued)

III. Activity—Personal Interview

Materials: Student Interview Questions, flip chart, markers, masking tape

Instructions

Explain to the students that the first thing they have to do in order to advocate for themselves is to be able to identify their positive qualities, such as skills, talents, abilities, hobbies, interests, and the things about their personality that they and other people appreciate.

Recruit a student volunteer to either sit in front of the group or in the center of the circle. The facilitator will ask the student a wide range of questions using the Student Interview questions on pages 7 and 8 as a guide.

During the interview, the facilitator will write the responses on a flipchart, putting the responses under the categories:

- √¹ Skills/Abilities
- √¹ Hobbies/Interests
- √¹ Life and Career Dreams
- √¹ Specific Challenges

At the end of the interview, the facilitator will ask the other students what they learned about the interviewee and add those comments to the flip chart as needed. Each student participates in this activity by being interviewed. Flip charts with responses are used in Workshop Two.

Point to the flip chart descriptions of the student who was interviewed and ask the group, “How might this information be used?” “How could this type of information help you?” Their responses might include:

- √¹ Develop a resume
- √¹ Set goals for the future
- √¹ Determine what classes to take
- √¹ Identify career development activities
- √¹ Identify where you might need help
- √¹ Develop a transition plan, IEP, 504 plan, etc.

Destination point. This is the first step in self-advocacy. The second step is being able to identify those areas where you need help. Everyone needs help at one time or another. If you’re a good self-advocate, you’re good at knowing when you need help and how to get it.

Student Interview Questions

Use the questions below as a guide for gathering information which will be used to create Positive Personal Profile Poster in Workshop Two. The student may also fill out the questionnaire with help from a teacher or parent if it is useful in gathering additional information.

Name: _____ Date: _____
Interviewer: _____ Relationship to Student: _____

1. What do you do for fun? What do you do with friends and family?
2. Where are some of your favorite places to go?
3. Have you ever gone on a vacation away from home? Where? How did you get there?
4. What do you like best about yourself?
5. What do your friends, family, and teachers like best about you?
6. What would you say are your skills and talents?
7. What would your friends, family, and teachers say are your skills and talents?
8. What things are hard for you to do? What things do you need help with?

Student Interview Questions

9. Who do you go to when you get stuck with a problem or have a challenge and need help? How do they help you?

10. What's the best part of school?

11. What's the worst part of school?

12. Have you ever had a job or been a volunteer before? Where? Tell us about it. What did you like? What didn't you like?

13. What are some of your big life dreams?

14. What career would you love to be doing 10 years from now? What else would you like to be doing 10 years from now?

15. What do you like about that career? What excites you the most about it?

16. Have you had any experience doing this kind of work (Probe: on-the-job experience; classes; activities with friends and family, etc.)

17. Facilitator: Ask any other questions you feel will be helpful in learning about this student.

(Adapted from Developing Self-Determination Skills, 1998.)



Workshop Two: How do you put it in print? Creating a Positive Personal Profile Poster

Introduction

At the completion of Workshop Two activities, students will gain experience in talking about their skills in front of a group and in creating a Positive Personal Profile Poster.

Setting

If possible, arrange the seating in a circle to de-emphasize the typical classroom environment and to allow everyone in the room to see each other.

I. Activity—Introduce yourself

Materials: Each student's flipcharts from Workshop One, markers, masking tape.

Instructions

Mount the students' flipcharts developed in Workshop One on the wall. Each student presents information from the worksheets to the group. The purpose of this exercise is to help students gain confidence in identifying their positive attributes and conveying that information to others.

Some students will be able to do this exercise easily and others will need considerable prompting. Every student should be expected to participate.

The skills practiced in this exercise are critical in order to enable students to actively participate in developing their education and transition plans and to become active members of their education planning teams.

II. Activity—Personal Profile Worksheet

Materials: Flip charts from Workshop One for each student, pens or pencils, flip chart paper, markers.

Instructions

Assist the students in taking information from their flipcharts and completing a draft a Positive Personal Profile Poster. Use the Personal Profile Template on page 11 to consolidate the information into a one-page, flip chart size poster.

Workshop Two (continued)

The information contained on the students' flipcharts developed in Workshop One should be shared with other students, parents, and people who know the student well, in order to get suggestions for additions and/or modifications to the flipcharts.



Suggestion: Type the flipcharts from Workshop One and the final Positive Personal Profile Poster on the computer and print a copy.

Make several copies of the Positive Personal Profile Poster. Copies can be placed in the students' files and in career portfolios. The student and parent or guardian should also have plenty of copies on hand.

This profile can be the foundation for developing a resume, as the student gains academic and vocational skills and work experiences

Positive Personal Profile

Name: _____ Date: _____

Career Dreams	Life Dreams
Talents & Skills	Hobbies & Interests
Positive Attributes	Challenges
Ideas to Help with Challenges:	

(Adapted from Transition for Life, 2000.)



Workshop Three—What is your goal?

Introduction

After completing the activities outlined in Workshops One and Two, the student now has a Positive Personal Profile Poster and some experience in presenting that profile to others. Continue to emphasize the importance of being able to convey positive attributes to others as an essential skill in self-advocacy. Also discuss self-advocacy as an essential aspect of career development; for example, the students can match the skills and interests they have identified with possible job opportunities.

The activities in Workshop Three are designed to help students set some important goals. The facilitator guides students through a thinking process that starts with a life dream or career goal and works backwards to the present.

Example

Suppose a student reveals that one of his or her life dreams is to become an airline pilot. Working backwards from the dream, the process would look something like this.

Start here →

Life Dream

Airline Pilot

Hands-on Training / Experience

Academic Training

Exploration

High School



In the exploration stages, the student would need to meet people who are pilots or meet people who work with pilots.

Determine what it is about the idea of being a pilot that "grabs" the student. (It may not be what you thought!)

The facilitator should help the student see the big picture. By looking at the big picture, it will be easier to accept the smaller steps that go into creating that picture.

Workshop Three (continued)

I. Activity—Life or Career Dreams

Materials: Flip chart paper for each student, masking tape, lots of color markers

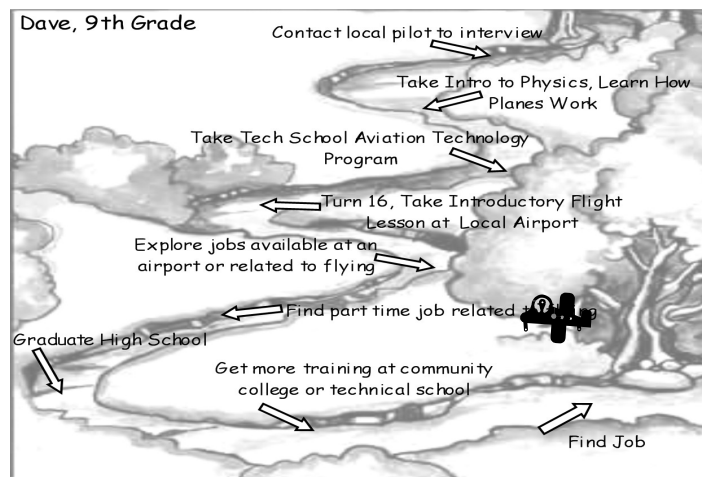
Instructions

Have the students review information about their career and life dreams from their Positive Personal Profile Poster. Ask students if they want to make any changes or additions to that information.

Instruct the students to turn their new flip chart paper horizontally and write their names across the top. Then have them write **one** of their career dreams.

Next, have them draw a small illustration of that dream on the far right side of the paper. Ask the students to write today's date somewhere on the far left side.

Instruct the students to develop a map depicting all the steps they think they will need to take to achieve their goal. Encourage them to be creative in their presentation, which can be written, drawn, or both. Some students may need a lot of prompting with this exercise.



When all the students have completed their maps, ask them to present their Life Dream Maps Posters to the group.

Destination Point. To achieve your goals you will need to identify the small steps you need to take first.



Workshop Four—Who do you ask for help?

Introduction

There are many people in schools and communities that can play a major role in helping a student transition from high school to adult life. Many students are not aware of the concept of community resources; therefore, Workshop Four identifies resources available to help students achieve future goals and introduces them to some individuals who can help them.

I. Activity—Can I do it alone?

Materials: Personal Profile and Life Dream Map Posters hanging in room, flip chart paper, color markers

Instructions

Instruct the students to take a piece of flip chart paper and write the following question at the top—**What do I need help with?** Tell the students to include needs that they or their parents will not be able to address alone. Have the students put the paper aside until **after** they listen to the guest speakers. Some students may need assistance completing this task.

II. Activity—Who can help me?

Invite guest speakers from the community to talk to students about their services. The following list suggests a variety of speakers to invite. It will be important to identify individuals and community agencies that are most likely to help with a student's transition to adult life.

- | | |
|---|---|
| √ ¹ Department of Employment and Training | √ ¹ College student with a disability |
| √ ¹ Vermont Student Assistance Corporation | √ ¹ Developmental Disabilities Center for Independent Living |
| √ ¹ Vocational Rehabilitation Transition Counselor | √ ¹ Employee with a disability |
| | √ ¹ Guidance counselor |
| | √ ¹ Others |

Make sure to allow time for students to ask questions and be involved in a discussion. This may be the first time that many students have met people from outside the school setting. It's a good idea to have the student invite their parents or guardians to this workshop.



Workshop Five—How do you develop a transition plan?

Introduction

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requires schools to develop a transition plan for special education students as part of their IEP. The student's IEP should contain goals and activities that will assist in planning for and addressing what the student will be doing and need once leaving high school.

A student on a 504 plan is not required to have a transition plan. The student and his or her parents, however, should talk to the 504 team about planning for the student's transition. It is important to note that in post-secondary settings there are no IEPs, but the student can have a 504 plan.

Developing a transition plan is a great opportunity for teachers, students, and parents to make school experiences relevant to the student's dreams for the future. This process also enables the student to make decisions that will affect his/her future. It is no surprise, therefore, that when students are encouraged to be involved in decisions that affect them, they are more likely to feel ownership of those decisions. And, when students perceive ownership, they are more likely to be motivated to accomplish their goals.

Workshop Five takes students through a process for developing transition objectives for the coming year.

I. Activity—Let's put it together

Materials: Flip chart paper for each student, lots of markers, masking tape, students' Life Dream Map Poster from Workshop Three and their "What do I need Help With" flip chart pages from Workshop Four. You may also want to refer to the student's Positive Personal Profile poster.

Instructions

Tape the posters completed in the previous Workshops to the wall; group each student's posters together.

Have each student review his/her Life Dream Map Poster completed in Workshop Three—depicting steps to attaining one career goal.

Lead a discussion about short-term steps. Talk about the process of taking one step at a time in order to move along their path. Ask each student to identify several things that they need to do this coming year.

Workshop Five (continued)

Emphasize that students' objectives will be uniquely their own, although they may find some commonalities with their peers. The facilitator will record the steps identified on the top half of each student's new flipchart paper.

Next, have the students review the information they collected during Workshop Four ("What do I need help with? Information from guest speaker visits."). Ask each student to identify a person or service that can help with the objectives outlined in the top half of his or her flip chart page.

Help each student list resource people on the flip chart paper and what these individuals can do to help the student.

II. Activity—Transition Planning Worksheet; One-on-One Activity

Materials: Each student's flip chart page from Activity 1 above, Positive Personal Profile Poster, and Transition Planning Worksheet on pages 17-19.

Instructions

Give each student a Transition Planning Worksheet and assist him or her in completing it. It would be very helpful if each student had a designated space in the classroom where they could review their Life Dream Map Poster, flipchart pages from previous Workshops, and Positive Personal Profile Poster. All of these materials can help jog the student's thinking. **This activity may be most effective if done one-on-one with each student.**

If there is no direct access to a computer in the classroom, the Transition Planning Worksheet may be completed by hand and later entered into the computer.

Make multiple copies of the students printed Transition Planning Worksheet. Ask the student's parent or guardian to review the draft and make comments and/or additions. Discuss these suggestions with the student.

Edit the Transition Planning Worksheet and print final copies. Put a copy in the student's files, with the IEP or 504 Plan, and be sure that the student and his or her parents have several copies. Student's can use and update this worksheet at their IEP or 504 team meetings.

Use the Worksheet to help the student create a **Transition Plan Poster**. This is the third and final poster the student will create.

Transition Planning Worksheet

We will use the information from this worksheet in the third poster you will create. Ask your parents and teachers for their suggestions. You may fill out the worksheet out on your own, or with help from your teachers or other students.

Name: _____ Date _____

Career Goals: Three careers I would love to have in the future are:

To start on my career path, here are some things I will do in the next year.

I will talk to:

I will visit and observe:

I will write:

I will:

HANDS-ON EXPERIENCE IN MY CAREER INTEREST AREA(S):

Career assessment (to find out more about my career interests and aptitudes; my talents; possible future opportunities, help in setting my goals, etc.).

Where?

How?

Who?

When?

SITE VISITS

Where?

Transition Planning Worksheet

JOB SHADOWING

Where?

TAKE A VOCATIONAL CLASS.

What course?

HAVE A VOLUNTEER JOB IN MY SCHOOL.

What job?

HAVE A VOLUNTEER JOB IN MY COMMUNITY.

What job?

HAVE A PAID JOB IN MY COMMUNITY.

What job?

AREAS IN MY LIFE WHERE I WOULD LIKE SOME ASSISTANCE:

My academics

What subjects? _____

Who can help? _____

What can they do? _____

My study and work habits

What do I want to improve? _____

Who can help me? _____

What can they do? _____

Transition Planning Worksheet

My hands-on experiences in my career areas

What experiences? _____

Who can help? _____

What can they do? _____

My participation in school activities (Ex. Sports, clubs, student government, etc.)

What activities? _____

How I get to the places I want and need to get to (transportation)

What forms of transportation would I like to use?

Who can help me?

What can they do?

How independent and responsible I am around my home and out in the community

What areas? (Ex. financial, chores, cooking, shopping, hygiene, grooming, etc.)



Workshop Six—What have we learned and will it work?

Introduction

In Workshop Six, students review the work they have done and practice setting up a meeting. They will also be asked to make a commitment to apply what they have learned during the coming year.

I. Activity—In the driver’s seat

Materials: Meeting Planning Worksheet on page 21, pen, student’s final Transition Planning Worksheet, and Transition Plan Poster

Instructions

Ask students to set up an agenda for an IEP or 504 meeting to discuss their transition from high school. Discuss with the students their role in the meeting and whom they want to invite. Use the Meeting Planning Worksheet on page 21 as a guide.

This activity is designed to help students plan for next steps and apply information they have learned. Encourage questions, talk about concerns, and identify needs for further support. It will be important to make sure that parents have an understanding of what students have been doing.

Meeting Planning Worksheet

1. Who should be invited to my IEP or 504 meeting?
2. What goals and dreams are most important to include this year in my IEP and transition plan?
3. What help do I need in school and when I finish school and who will help me?
4. What do I need to do to feel more confident in my ability to go to a meeting and be a major participant?
5. What questions do I want to ask in the meeting?

Making a Commitment

This year, I am committed to working on:

I will ask people in my life to help me accomplish these important objectives. I will have the courage to advocate for myself as much as possible, in order to move closer to my dreams for the future. I will work hard to achieve these objectives.

Student signature

Date





Transition Resources

Vermont Family Network
www.vermontfamilynetwork.org

Vermont Transition Learning Community
<http://tlcworkshops.pbworks.com/w/page/11558529/FrontPage>

Voc-Rehab Vermont
<http://vocrehab.vermont.gov/youth>

TRIPSCY <http://www.uvm.edu/~cdci/tripscy/?Page=TransHome.html&SM=TnsSubmenu.html>

Transition Coalition
http://transitioncoalition.org/transition/module_home.php

National Secondary Transition Technical Assistance Center
<http://www.nsttac.org/>

Sources

Developing Self-Determination Skills, Dr. George Tilson, Maryland 1998.

The School-to-Work Project, American Youth Policy Forum and Center for Workforce Development, June 2000.

Transition for Life, Nebraska Parent Center Transition Project, Nebraska, January 2000.

Road to Work, Introduction to Vocational Rehabilitation, PACER, Minnesota 1996.

Speak Up for Yourself and Your Future, University of Vermont, Department of Special Education, March 1993.