

TO: White River Junction District Youth CORE Team

FROM: Rocko Gieselman, Transition Coordinator, Vocational Rehabilitation

RE: Supporting Diverse Individuals & Person-Centered Planning

DATE: October 14, 2021

### **What does person-centered planning look like?**

- Getting to know a youth over time, ideally through discussion, activities, assessment, and rapport building.
- It's vital to our work that we gather details about youth preferences so we can extrapolate out as we consider which learning, enrichment, and employment opportunities to share.
- Focus should be on youth autonomy and fostering informed decision-making. Referrals and applications to offering should not be made for someone who expressly doesn't want [optional, non-compelled] services.
- Promote the youth as leader-partner. Support the individual in directing as much of their plan and services whenever possible. This can include agenda setting, picking meeting time, choosing attendees, supporting information and data collection, creating a list of questions or areas of further research/discussion.

Note: Be Mindful! Meeting / Planning Sessions easily evolve to process or agency/school centric models.

### **What are strategies to meet students where they are at and still involve them meaningfully in the meeting?**

- Develop prompts and ask for their input and/or questions ahead of the meeting
- Agenda setting including identifying a high preference topics identified by the individual
- Limit constructive feedback to facts (e.g.: They struggled and didn't pass the class)
- Avoid judgment and blaming statements (e.g.: They're lazy; They blame it on their disability, etc)
- Offer alternative ways to attend (video, phone, in-person)
- Stimuli Reduction (fidget object, body movement, partial attendance, one speaker at a time)
- Give youth a week or more advance notice of a meeting, with the opportunity to opt out
- When youth plans to attend a meeting, offer the discussion topics in advance to prepare
- Direct communication to the individual first; also avoid speaking about them in the third person.

Notes: One important question to ask ourselves regardless of our role is what is the purpose of the meeting? What is mandated / compelled to happen and what is voluntary and optional? Guiding Question: Am I providing options / alternatives that are viable and meet the individual's needs?

### **How to move forward?**

- The most simple and basic level: Use the identifiers youth has asked to use (pronouns, gender, name, etc.) Refrain from sharing if you are struggling with this, apologize quickly and move on when you make a mistake
- Offer options to promote engagement rather than compliance, if you don't know what those options could be, ask the youth!
- Talk with your colleagues about their strategies
- MAPS