

# SDEP Module 4-Overcoming Barriers To Employment

## 1. SDEP Module 4 10-12-12

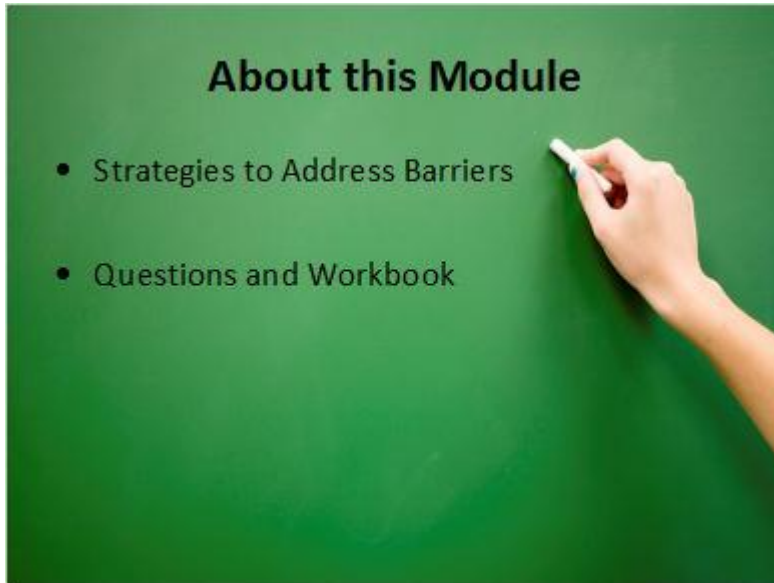
### 1.1 Title



#### Notes:

Welcome to Module 4 of the Self-Directed Employment Planning Training. This module is called “Overcoming Barriers to Employment.”

## 1.2 About this Module



### Notes:

In this Module, you will learn some strategies to address common barriers to employment, including lack of work experience or uncertainty about what to do for work, the need for training and education, transportation options for work, and maximizing your independence with assistive technology. You may only experience one or two of these barriers. If that is the case you can skip to the section or sections that apply to you.

You will find the questions and worksheets that go with this module in section four of the Employment Planning Workbook that you downloaded after the introduction to this training. If you have not downloaded the workbook yet, click on the Resources tab on the right hand corner of the screen to download the workbook before you go through this module.

### 1.3 Inexperience and Uncertain Goals



#### Notes:

As we discussed in Module 3, you may not have had experiences that help you make decisions about your employment goals. The only way to overcome the barrier of inexperience *is to figure out a way to get experience*. You and others in your life may be concerned that employers will not hire you because you do not have a work history or references from employers. That is ok, there are things you can do to build work skills and add experience and references to add to your resume.

High School is an ideal time to build work experiences, but it is never too late to start. Paid work experiences are the preferred option, after all work is more rewarding when you know you are getting paid for your effort! However, while you look for opportunities for paid work experience, don't wait around doing nothing. There are a number of things you can do to build your resume, gain experience, and build your confidence and self-determination skills.

## 1.4 Inexperience and Uncertain Goals

### Inexperience and Uncertain Goals

Things you can do:

- Make a list of things you have done to help people.
- Use a functional resume format.



#### Notes:

In Module 3 you created a list of places you go and things you do in order to identify skills that could be used in the workplace. Similarly, you could make a list of things you have done in the past to help people. Have you watched your sister's children? Have you helped a neighbor paint their fence? Do you mow the lawn for your dad every week? If you have done these things you have childcare experience, painting experience, and lawn care experience. **In Section 4 of your workbook, there is space for you to create lists of what you've done and what you would like to do to gain experience.**

People with employment gaps or limited employment experiences sometimes use a functional resume format, rather than a chronological resume. A functional resume format focuses on your skills and experience, not on the dates of your work history. Use the transferable skills list you created in Module 3 as a starting point to create your functional resume. To learn more about functional resume formats, you can search online for functional resume tips and examples.

## 1.5 Inexperience and Uncertain Goals

### Inexperience and Uncertain Goals

Things you can do:

- Volunteer



### Notes:

Another thing you can do to overcome the obstacle of inexperience or uncertainty is to volunteer your time. Volunteering can help you build employability skills and broaden your social network for job searching while providing much needed services to your community.

In Module 2 you learned that people who are working are healthier and happier than people who don't work. Research on volunteering has shown the same health and social benefits for people as well. If you choose to volunteer, be sure to find out if the organization you are interested in has a volunteer program. Most non-profit organizations can work with volunteers. However, private, "for profit" businesses cannot work with volunteers because there are laws, known as the Fair Labor Standards Act, that protect people from being taken advantage of as volunteers when they should be paid as employees by a business. You can find out about volunteer opportunities by visiting your local United Way office. Resources to find volunteer opportunities can be found in the Resource Guide that goes along with this training.

## 1.6 Inexperience and Uncertain Goals

### Inexperience and Uncertain Goals

Things you can do:

- Work experience with School and DVR



### Notes:

To get formal work experience, you can ask your school to help you find these experiences or apply to the Wisconsin Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (also known as DVR) for help. If you are working with DVR and you have limited or no work experience, you should talk to your DVR Counselor about DVR's options for Temporary Work, Internships, and On-the-Job Training. For example, during an On-the-Job Training, DVR will reimburse an employer for some or all of your wages while you learn your job.

Temporary Work Experience with DVR is when DVR reimburses an employer for your wages while you work a temporary job with that employer. This work experience can help you explore your skills and interests, learn new skills, add to your experience resume, and adjust to work. There is no minimum or maximum time frame to a DVR Temporary Work Experience. The timeframe is individualized to your needs and is negotiated between you, DVR, and the employer.

## 1.7 Inexperience and Uncertain Goals

### Inexperience and Uncertain Goals

Things you can do:

- Offer a working interview



### Notes:

If you connect with an employer that you are interested in, you can offer to do a working interview. Employers use working interviews to get to know how well you work with others, learn or perform job tasks. During a working interview you are not paid. Working interviews should also be short term arrangements.

It is your opportunity to show the employer that you are interested in the job and willing to learn. The employer should provide you with some initial training to do the job. If you arrange for or are offered a working interview, it is important to work out *in advance* how long the working interview will be and what the expectations are with the employer. You should also prepare yourself for the chance that you may not be hired by the employer. If this is the case, ask the employer for feedback so that you can improve your skills.

## 1.8 Inexperience and Uncertain Goals

### Inexperience and Uncertain Goals

Things you can do:

- Make a list
- Functional Resume
- Volunteer
- Work Experience
- Working Interview



**Tip:**  
*Do more than one of these!*

### Notes:

In summary, to address obstacles related to inexperience or uncertainty, you can

- Make a list of all the things you have done in the past to help people
- Use a functional resume format by identifying your transferable skills
- Volunteer your time to develop more employability skills and grow the number of people you are connected with which will be helpful when you start to look for a job
- Work with your school and the Wisconsin Division of Vocational Rehabilitation to develop work experiences or on-the-job training
- Arrange working interviews with employers

These options offer opportunities to learn what you are good at and build new skills. Exploring your options and trying new things is the best way to overcome barriers to employment and find the right job match. The most effective employment plans use more than one of the strategies listed here.



## 1.9 Education and Training



**Education and Training**

If you are still in high school, the Transition program can help you:

- Set future goals
- Connect you to more services
- Find work experiences
- Build skills
- Learn self-determination skills

### Notes:

Another barrier to employment that people with disabilities often face is lack of necessary education or training needed for an employment goal.

If you are in high school, your school may have talked with you and your family at your IEP meetings about attending the 18-21 Transition program available through the school. Ask questions about this program and the ways that it can help you create a plan to reach your employment goals. Transition programs are designed to prepare students with disabilities for community life. Transition programs focus on helping to create a bridge to adult services like DVR, Family Care and IRIS. They can help you build your work skills by finding community-based work experiences and provide support to you to explore job and career options. They should also be helping you to develop important self-determination skills.

The Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction Transition Services website is a one-stop portal to everything you need to know about Transition. This website and more transition resources can be found in the Resource Guide that goes with this training.

## 1.10 Education and Training

### Education and Training

If you are interested in college or specialized training:

- Disability Resource Center
- DVR support



### Notes:

Does your job goal require higher education or specialized training from a technical college?

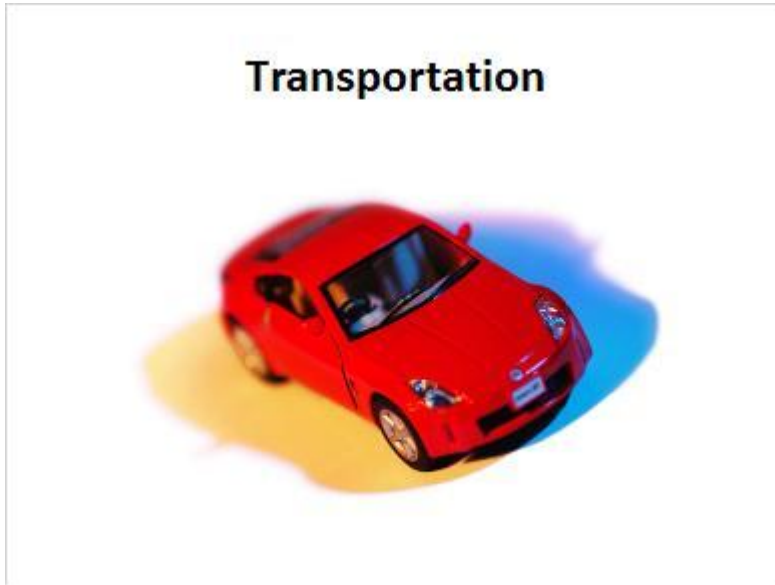
Having an Intellectual Disability does not exclude you from taking classes or entering a degree program at a post-secondary school. Technical Colleges and other Post Secondary educational programs have Disability Resource Center staff that can help you decide on options and access services and accommodations. The number of colleges that offer options for people with intellectual disabilities is growing.

If you are in High School you may even be able to begin taking classes while you are in an 18-21 year old Transition program. Ask your teacher, guidance counselor, or transition coordinator to help you explore your options.

Grants are available to students with disabilities who pursue post secondary education and training. DVR support may also be an option. If you have employment goals and are in transition from high school to adult life, you should apply for services with the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation ***at least two years before you graduate***. If you are out of school, you can apply for DVR services at anytime. DVR services can, and should, be coordinated with the school and other services in your life (like long term care support from Family Care or IRIS). While the school or long term care program can help you connect with DVR, it will be your responsibility to invite your DVR counselor to your transition IEP meetings or meetings with Family Care or IRIS.

Resources for post-secondary education options can be found in the Resource Guide that accompanies this training.

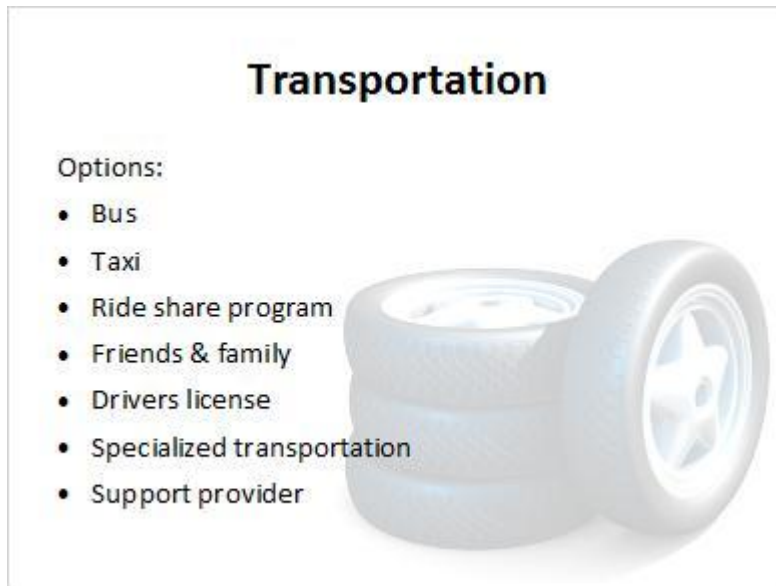
## **1.11 Transportation**



### **Notes:**

Getting to and from work could be a barrier for you, especially if you live in a rural area. There are several ways people get to work; knowing about these will help you explore options in your area. Before you start your job search, it will be important to figure out how you will get to work, as well as when and where transportation is available. This will determine where to conduct your job search and the hours you are available for work.

## 1.12 Transportation



### Notes:

If you live in a large community, there may be a public bus system. Riding the bus may seem like a confusing or scary idea if you are unfamiliar with it. There are Orientation and Mobility Trainers who specialize in helping people with disabilities learn to ride the bus. If you are interested in learning to ride the bus, contact your local Aging and Disability Resource Center or Independent Living Center for information and referral.

In many small towns in Wisconsin, taxi companies provide reduced fares to people with disabilities and seniors. Call your local cab company to ask about this option.

Ride Share Programs exist all over the state of Wisconsin. The Wisconsin Department of Transportation can help match you to other commuters in your area. The website for the Wisconsin Ride Share Program can be found in section four of the Resource Guide that goes with this training.

Many people rely on family, friends or other community members to get to and from work. You may also be able to arrange rides with co-workers. If needed, you can offer financial compensation, like mileage reimbursement, to people who help you get to and from work. Ways you can pay for this kind of transportation support are:

- Your own money (remember you will be earning wages and have more once you get a job). Most working people pay for their gas or transportation to and from work.
- DVR financial support
- Family Care or IRIS financial support
- Using Social Security Work Incentives like Plan to Achieve Self Support (known as a PASS plan) or Impairment Related Work Expense (also called an IRWE).

Depending on how your disability affects your life, it may be possible for you to get a driver's license. Work with your family and support team to explore this option. Sometimes people with disabilities who *do not* drive purchase a vehicle so that others can drive them places. Even if you do not have a license, you can purchase a vehicle. And, if you are on Supplemental Security Income (SSI), you are allowed to own one vehicle. If you need assistance to purchase a vehicle, Social Security's Plan to Achieve Self-Support (or PASS) might be an option. In the next module you will learn about Social Security Work Incentives and how to connect with a Work Incentives Benefits Specialist to get more information. Aging and Disability Resource Centers may also have information on affordable car purchasing programs in your community.

Specialized Transportation Services may be an option for you. The rates for these kinds of services may be higher than some other options, but they are often subsidized or funded by programs like Family Care or IRIS if you are eligible for services. Talk with your Family Care case manager or IRIS Consultant to determine if this option works for you.

If you receive job coaching services from a Supported Employment agency, they might be able to give you a ride to or from work. Like specialized transportation options, relying on a service provider may be more costly. Talk with your Family Care case manager or IRIS Consultant to evaluate the pros and cons of this transportation option.

### **1.13 Assistive Technology**



#### **Notes:**

When people think of workplace supports they usually think of people such as job coaches, co-workers or supervisors. What about a talking calculator, a picture task

board, a digital watch, headphones, an iPod touch? Depending on the task and support need, some creative solutions, known as Assistive Technology, might be a better fit for a worker with a disability than having a person at their side.

Assistive Technology is any item, piece of equipment, or product system, whether pre-made or customized that increases, maintains or improves what a person with a disability can do. Assistive Technology can be low tech (such as a picture board, digital watch, keyboard guard) or high tech (such as an iPod, iPad or standing wheelchair).

### **1.14 Assistive Technology**



#### **Notes:**

If you want to explore your assistive technology options there are a few simple things you can do.

First, you should figure out a few things you want to do for work and learn about the job tasks and what employers in your chosen career field expect.


Second, once you have a clear picture about a job, you can do some research about assistive technology ideas. The Job Accommodation Network (also known as JAN) has a searchable on-line database of accommodation and assistive technology solutions. You can also call JAN to share information about the job tasks and your disability. JAN is a free consulting service designed to increase the employability of people with disabilities by providing individualized worksite accommodation solutions. Information about JAN is in section four of the Resource Guide that goes with this training. Other helpful Assistive Technology resources can also be found in the Resource Guide.

The next step would be to meet with an Assistive Technologist for an assessment. Assistive Technologists are available through most of Wisconsin's Independent Living Centers. Independent Living Centers also have equipment loan closets for you to try devices before you decide to purchase them. If you are working with DVR, you should ask your DVR Counselor about an Assistive Technology assessment.

### **1.15 Questions and Workbook**

## Questions and Workbook

- What barriers do you have to employment?
- How will you overcome these barriers?
- What kind of education and training is needed?
- Who can help you?



#### **Notes:**

Hopefully, completing Module 3 helped you think about your interests and skills, the types of places you might like to work, the type of job you might want, and ways to check out jobs in your area. The questions that go with Module 4: Overcoming Barriers to Employment include:

1) After listening to Module 4, What do you think your barriers to employment are: (you should check all that you feel apply to you)

Lack of Work Experience

Not sure what I want to do

Little or No Education/Job Training

Lack of Transportation

Need for Assistive Technology (Equipment)

Other:

2) From the things you checked above, how do you think you can work to overcome your barriers to employment by (you should circle all that sound good to you)

Creating a Resume or developing a Portfolio

Volunteering

Seeking an Internship or Work Experience

Going on Business Tours

Setting up Informational Interviews or Job Shadows

Asking about Requirements for Jobs

Looking into Job Training

Getting Information about Transportation Options

Talking to Someone about my Assistive Technology Needs

Other:

3) Next, you will list:

Things that you have done:

Where you did those things:

Skills you developed:

By completing that chart you can use the information to develop a resume or employment portfolio using the “functional” format that is based on the skills you have and the things you can do for an employer. Resumes and Portfolios can be paper or electronic.

4) For the kind of job you want, what kind of education or training do people have to have?

You can place any information that you know here or ask someone to help you look it up.

5) Once you've done number four figure out what kind of training or education you will need to reach your employment goal.

6) Who do you want to talk to about addressing your education or training needs (you should circle all that apply to you)

Disability Resource Services at the College

My teacher or someone else at my high school



The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR)

My family members or friends

My Care Manager, Case Manager, IRIS Consultant, or Support Broker

Other People:

7) What transportation options do you have available to you? (circle all that you have)

Bus

Taxi

Ride Share program

Friends & family - If you have friends & family who can drive you, you will list who those people are.

Driver's license and my own car

Specialized transportation

Support provider

Other:

If you are not sure about any of the transportation options listed above, you can ask someone to help you check into your options and help you figure out how you can get to and from a job.

8) Do I want to explore how using Assistive Technology or Adaptive Equipment might help me at a job?                      Yes   or   No

If yes, how would you like to look into getting adaptive equipment? (you should check all that apply)

Meet with the Assistive Technologist at the Independent Living Center

Talk with my high school transition coordinator or special education teacher

Talk with my Disability Resource Services staff at the college

Talk with my Case Manager, IRIS Consultant, or Support Broker

Meet with my DVR Counselor

Research options on line using AbleData or Job Accommodation Network

Other: