



Introduction to Self-Direction

Developed by:
Partnership for People with Disabilities
Virginia Commonwealth University
2004



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This set of training modules was developed by a team of family members and professionals who share a common vision that all individuals with disabilities have the opportunity and support needed to make choices and exercise control over their lives. These materials were designed to give individuals with cognitive disabilities, their families, and the professionals who support them, introductory information about self-direction.

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OVERVIEW FOR TRAINERS

People with disabilities and their supporters have expressed that it is not enough to simply live in a community. They want to be active members of that community, living the kind of lives they choose. Real participation in community life is about people with disabilities having a greater role in choosing their present life, planning their future, and choosing the people who will support and assist them.

Self-direction is a concept that promotes the dreams and preferences of people with disabilities along with the freedom of choice and control over their lives. This training encourages people with disabilities to describe their dreams, make responsible choices, plan the life they want to live, and identify the people who will support them on their journeys to more self-directed lives.

This training curriculum is divided into four modules. Module 1 (Part A), Module 1 (Part B), and Module 2 are intended for an audience of individuals with cognitive disabilities. Module 3 is intended for an audience of families, professionals and other support persons.

Module 1 (Part A) Self-Direction: Dreaming

In this module, participants are introduced to the term "self-direction" and what it means for us as we live our lives. Participants are asked to think about dreams not as the things that go on inside their heads while asleep, but as the things they want to have happen in their lives when they are awake. Dreams are hopes for happy lives, filled with joy and meaningful connections to family, friends, and community.

Module 1 (Part B) Self-Direction: Making Choices and Planning

In this module, participants are introduced to the idea that we all make choices each day, some big, some small. The choices that the participants make show how they want to live their lives. Participants are also introduced to the idea of how to use their dreams and choices to plan their lives.

Modules 1 (Part A) and Module 1 (Part B) are designed to be presented in two parts to the same group of participants. Each section may take about two hours, so the presenter needs to use his/her best judgment regarding how far apart the training sessions should occur.

Some examples are:

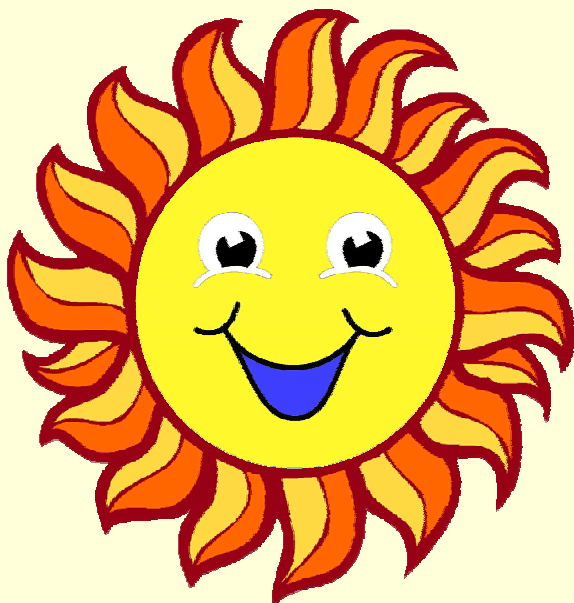
- Part A in the a.m., Part B in the p.m. with lunch in between OR
- Part A one day, Part B the next day OR
- Part A one week, Part B the next week or next meeting (if you are using these training materials with a group of self-advocates that meets on a regular basis, such as People First).

Module 2 Self-Direction: Dreaming, Making Choices, and Planning

In this module, participants are introduced to the concepts in Module 1 (Parts A and B) in an abbreviated format that can be presented in one session.

Module 3 Self-Direction: An Introduction for Families and Professionals

This module is designed for family members, advocates, service providers, and other support persons. It introduces the principles of self-direction and encourages a new approach to supporting people with disabilities.



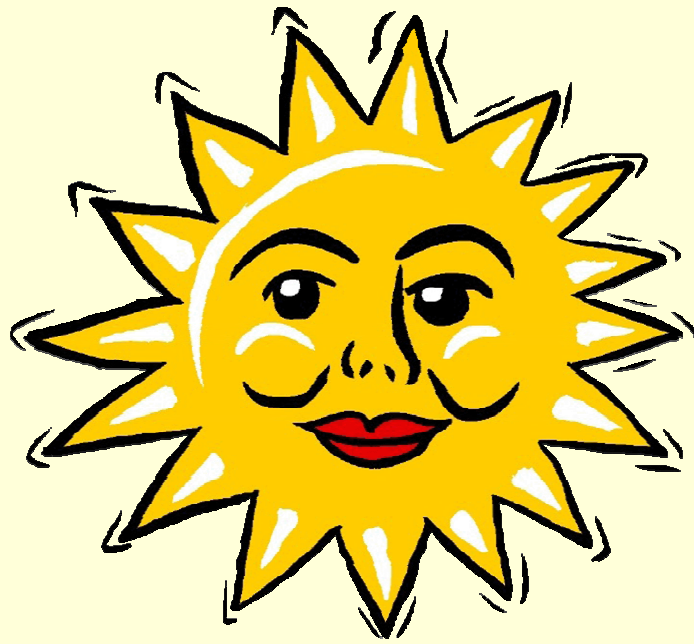
Module 1 (Part A)

SELF DIRECTION:

Dreaming

Introduction to Self-Direction

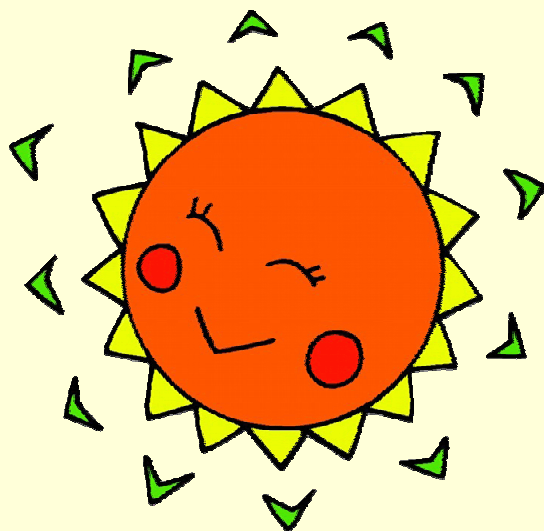
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Module 1 (Part B)
SELF-DIRECTION:
Making Choices and Planning

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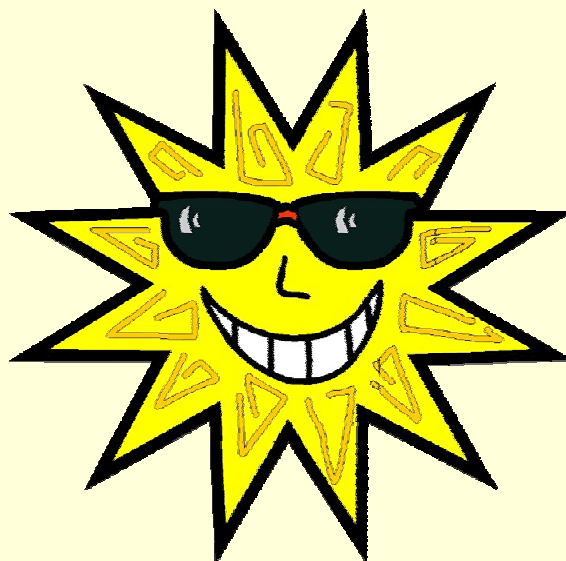
Module 2

SELF-DIRECTION:

Dreaming, Making Choices, and Planning

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Module 3
SELF-DIRECTION:
An Introduction for
Families and Professionals

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