



Presenters

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Discovering My Life through the Discovery Process

"Self-Determination is acting as the primary causal agent in one's life and making choices and decisions regarding one's quality of life free from undue external influence."

~ Dr. Michael L. Wehmeyer

Self-Determination — a Tool for Life

- Transition may start by law at the age of 16, but Self-Determination should start on Day One!
- Self-determination is the foundation and precursor of transition.
- Self-determination should be woven into academics.
- Self-determination needs to be explicitly taught, requires a lot of practice but the rewards are worth it!
- As a parent, I see self-determination as a primary tool for my child to be equipped for life!

The Must in Developing the Student Voice

- Every IEP starting in Kindergarten should contain Self-determination goals.
- Developing the student voice and listening to the student is more critical than the required IEP invitation to a 14 year old.
- The power of hearing and seeing self-advocates shows you what is possible!
- Self-advocates make the invisible, very visible!

Transition and the Discovery Process

- Life is about transition! Transition is not an event, but a life-long process.
- Using multiple career assessments and synthesizing the information for the IEP is key!
- Transition is just not filling out worksheets. We need to translate data from career assessments, integrate student dreams from the Discovery Process into post-secondary goals and step into the student's world and make this data understandable and meaningful to them!
- Students should be educated on how to leverage social capital coupled with the information they learned about themselves through the discovery process, to further explore potential career opportunities.
- Whatever we do, do not write off student dreams! We should acknowledge those dreams and help the students realize the steps to reach them.
- Student dreams might change due to experience; but there are gains by creating and seizing all opportunities.



"I started college and an internship in the medical field like I had always hoped. Self-determination is electrifying!"
~ Chris Coulston

“Every person (the causal agent) in Every Decision in his or her life! We all need help making decisions. People with disabilities may need more or different help but they have the same rights as you and me!”

~ Jonathan Martinis

Paradigm Shift

- Shift focus from “I’m living a life with a disability” to “I’m living my life, my way, sky’s the limit!”
- When we empower students, they become excited about their future and not scared. They are receptive to constructive feedback, because they want to make things better for themselves.
- IEPs are based on challenges. Transition Goals are based on student strengths.

With our Magical Wands, We Believe

- Self-determined self-advocates lead the way for other self-advocates, their families and educators!
- Sharing the power means sharing creativity, problem solving and social capital to open the door of opportunity.
- George Washington University Graduate Special Education Transition Certificate Program is a gateway to learn about transition and self-determination!



“Being a self-advocate means speaking up for yourself and following your dreams based on what your strengths and abilities are. Pass it on!”

~ Kevin Fortunato



1. Choice making
2. Decision making
3. Problem solving
4. Independent living
5. Goal setting and attainment
6. Self-observation, evaluation and reinforcement
7. Self-instruction, self-understanding, self-advocacy and leadership
8. Internal locus of control
9. Self-awareness

Wehmeyer, Agran and Hughes (1998)



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