

WORKING WITH FAMILY, CULTURE AND DISABILITY

PACER Center • Building Program Capacity to Serve Youth with Disabilities • **Session 5**

1) Workshop Preparation Suggestions

When conducting a training workshop, there are several basic planning considerations that need to be made. Most of the trainers who use this curriculum will already have their procedures for workshop planning in place. Information is included in **Session # 1** for those who may need additional suggestions.

2) Introduction of Presenters and Attendees: 12 minutes

To foster an atmosphere where participants are both comfortable talking and have the opportunity to do so, we recommend no more than 35 participants attend the session. Depending on the size of the audience, you will want to limit the amount of time for introductions. We suggest having each attendee state their name, the name of the organization they represent, and if time allows, briefly state their relevant professional or personal experience with people with disabilities. Speakers should role model presenting this information in roughly thirty seconds. (If the size of the group is too large, there will not be enough time to allow for this type of introduction.)

3) Agenda: 2 minutes

**(Refer to the Agenda overhead transparency – slide 1)*

- Welcome and Introductions
- Family Involvement and Teens
- “First Jobs”
- Family Contributions to Employment
- Beyond the Nuclear Family
- Surrogate Parenting
- Cultural Differences and Disability Perspectives
- Large Group Exercise: Scenarios
- Resources
- Questions and Evaluations

-Give brief overview of the agenda and a few sentences about each topic that will be covered.

-Also talk about housekeeping information, break-time, etc.

-Ask group: Q: Any questions?

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4) Goal of this Session: 2 minutes

The objective of this session is to discuss:

- the impact and importance of the role of family in the lives of youth with disabilities,
- various cultural aspects of and beliefs around disability and
- how these issues relate to the work you do with youth with disabilities.

-Ask group: Q: Any questions about we are to cover today?

5) Disability & Family Involvement: 20 minutes

Explain there are specific issues that families of children with disabilities face. Taking the time to examine some of these perspectives can allow you to better understand issues faced by youth with disabilities and their families and help you work with them more effectively.

**(Refer to the Disability and Family overhead transparency – slide2)*

Having a relative with a disability may have a:

- positive
- negative
- neutral
- effect on the family's quality of life, and in turn influence a youth's self concept and attitude towards disability.

Family perceptions of disability vary and are shaped by their individual experiences, cultural values, personalities and family dynamics. For example, parents may develop negative **self-esteem** if they feel that an action of their own or their genetic contribution caused their child's disability. On the other hand, other families may view disability or thrive on the challenge. In any case, the impact of disability on a family is significant and has many ramifications.

**(Refer to the Disability and Family Economics overhead transparency – slide 3)*

There are various stresses on the family with a child with a disability.

- Extra costs may arise from special diets, transportation, vehicle modification, recreation, adapted clothing, medical care, special services, wheelchairs, architectural modifications and other needs.
- Another cost is the reduced opportunity for families to earn more money because of the impact of their child's disability on their ability to work.

Research shows:

- Families spend more money on their children with disabilities than on their other children.

- Over half of families of children with the most severe disabilities (those with both intellectual disabilities and developmental disabilities) made substantial vocational accommodations and/or economic sacrifices in order to meet the needs of their child.
- Often families give up better job opportunities because they don't want to leave their present service system, or because they work part-time; they may change jobs or give up advancing their own educations to care for their children.

To care for their sons and daughters with disabilities, parents often:

- Do not take a job due to their child's disability
- Change work hours
- Work fewer hours
- Change jobs
- Quit a job
- Turn down a better job
- Change sleep habits

Recent studies report that children with disabilities living in households with income *below* the poverty level are more likely to be:

- anxious and depressed
- withdrawn
- hostile

**(Refer to the Daily Care overhead transparency – slide 4)*

- In some families, the care needs of the individual with a disability are no different from other family members.
- However, children with more severe disabilities usually do require more assistance and more supervision of their daily needs. (I.e. a young person with complex medical needs) The reality is that this type of attention can take a toll on care givers.

**(Refer to the Research Shows... overhead transparency – slide 5)*

Parents of children with developmental disabilities and chronic medical conditions report:

- Approximately 50 percent gave their child extensive assistance with grooming and medical monitoring.
- One-fourth said their child needed 24-hour daily monitoring.
- A little more than half said they had a crisis requiring extraordinary intervention within the last month.

**(Refer to the Additional Parent Responsibilities overhead transparency – slide 6)*

Many parents of children with disabilities take on additional responsibilities:

- Help teach their children
- Make sure their children get services
- Work toward their children's inclusion into the school and community

- Facilitate social relationships
- Create opportunities for recreation

**(Refer to the “What You Should Know About the Impact of Exceptionality on the Family” handout for additional information.)*

Youth with disabilities often require levels and types of care and support beyond that needed by young people without disabilities at the same age. These extra efforts need to be balanced with efforts to promote autonomy, self-worth, and self-determination to avoid a “fix-it” approach-- where well-meaning friends, family, and teachers focus more on fixing the child’s disability, rather than the child’s full range of strengths and potential. Adults who grow up with disabilities report that continually focusing on “fixing” the disability can create feelings of inadequacy in youth, and strain family relationships.

-Ask Group: Q: Does anyone have any questions so far?

Despite the economic, psychological and physical challenges faced by families of youth with disabilities, family involvement can be crucial to positive outcomes for youth. **Positive family involvement** is a greater predictor of successful outcomes for youth than income or social status.

**(Refer to the Family Involvement and Teens overhead transparency – slide 7)*

- Positive parent involvement increases the likelihood of successful post school outcomes for youth with disabilities.
- Family involvement leads to better academic outcomes, reduced school problems, reduced high-risk behaviors and increased after school involvement for youth *with and without disabilities*.
- Parenting roles change --*not end*-- when a young person graduates from high school and reaches the age of legal adulthood.

**(Refer to the Families Prepare Students for Life after High School overhead transparency – slide 8)*

Families help youth:

- Foster decision-making and self-determination skills.
- Promote self-knowledge and understanding of:
 - their disability
 - their accommodation needs
 - their strengths
- Help students set goals.
- Guide students towards skills needed to achieve their goals. (i.e. academic skills needed for post-secondary education)
- Promote experiences and skills needed for work.

6) First Jobs Exercise: 15 minutes

At this point in the presentation introduce the following exercise: ask the participants to think about their own first job experience. Use the following overhead transparency to focus the discussion.

**(Refer to the First Jobs Exercise overhead transparency – slide 9)*

- What were your own “first job” experiences?
- What role did your family play in those experiences?

Ask them to write down a few things that come quickly to mind with thinking of their first job. Give them 3 minutes to individually write down their thoughts. The point is to elicit examples of how families help youth get their first jobs. Note how many participants had family help in getting their first jobs. Often this is a majority of participants.

Facilitate a large group discussion of participant answers, emphasizing the lack of, or the power of, family involvement in their first employment experiences. (You may want to write down the participant’s answers on a flipchart.)

7) Family Contributions to Successful Employment: 20 minutes

Experts on human development consider late adolescence a ‘*launching period*’. This can be a time for parents to assist their youth in developing the skills they will need as adults, including employment skills.

**(Refer to the Family Contributions to Successful Employment Outcomes overhead transparency – slide 10)*

Introduce 3 areas where families often help launch youth towards successful employment.

- Job Assessment/Exploration
- Finding Employment
- Job Retention

Family members can assist youth with disabilities in exploring areas of interest, understanding their strengths and weaknesses, identifying employment opportunities and coach them on how to keep a job.

**(Refer to the Job Assessment/Exploration overhead transparency – slide 11)*

Families:

- Identify interests and strengths of youth
- Collaborate in creative problem solving
- Identify paid and unpaid work experiences
- Streamline the vocational assessment process by providing existing documentation

**(Refer to the Finding Employment overhead transparency – slide 12)*

To help youth find work, many families:

- Use personal networks to identify job opportunities
- Support an individual in their job search
- Improve quality of placement and job satisfaction by helping to identify a good match between youth and job
- Help family member prepare for job interview

Family members and/or parents can and do play a large part in helping youth with disabilities get and maintain a job.

Compare this list with information shared by participants in the large group “First Jobs” exercise. (If written on flipchart, refer participants to their list to compare their answers to the “Finding Employment” overhead slide.) Families can play the same roles for youth with, as well as without disabilities. In some cases, however, much more effort is required to address disability issues in finding employment.

**(Refer to the Job Retention overhead transparencies – slide 13 & 14)*

Helping a family member prepare for work each day can include:

- Backup for personal assistance staff
- Maintain assistive technology
- Provide transportation
- Foster natural supports in the community
- Talk about everyday job-related frustrations
- Problem solve challenging workplace situations
- Identify early signs of serious problems at work

**(Refer to “Family-Professional Partnerships” and “Principals of Family Involvement” handouts for further information on effectively working with families)*

-Ask the group: Q: Any questions or comments about any of the concepts we’ve covered so far?

One of the most basic things professionals can do to promote family involvement is to create a welcoming nonjudgmental atmosphere. Though this next transparency uses the word “mother”, it can easily be substituted with parent, father or family member(s) of a youth with a disability. It is included to demonstrate how easy it is for professionals to pass judgment on personal family decisions.

**(Refer to the Why Mothers Have a Tough Time overhead transparency –slide 15)*

- If we are concerned, we are overprotective; if we are unconcerned, we are neglectful.
- If we are involved, we are demanding; if we are not, we are detached.

- If we have high expectations we are unrealistic; if we have simple aspirations, we set our sights too low.
- If we nurture generously, we are smothering; if we nurture less, we are withholding.
- If we offer advice, we are controlling; if we refrain, we are disinterested.
- If we phone, write or visit often, we are pests; if we don't, we are uncaring.
- If we help with tasks or give or loan money, we cultivate dependency; if we don't, we are unsupportive.

-Ask Group: Q: Any reactions or comments?

8) Family Involvement and Surrogate Parents: 10 minutes

Research shows that typically, as the average child grows and matures:

- The youth develops more self-help skills
- Parent responsibilities decrease as youth can assist with more personal and household responsibilities. (*Unfortunately, this may not be the case for many parents of youth with disabilities.*)

The challenge here is that although family involvement generally declines for older youth, it may still be needed to a greater degree by *some* youth with disabilities in adolescence and young adulthood, depending on the disability. Research also suggests that a decline in family involvement may be most severe for parents from racial, ethnic and cultural minorities who, for a variety of reasons (which will be discussed later in the session), often are reluctant or unable to participate in school-based transition planning.

The following are principles and strategies that may be useful for your organization to promote family involvement within your programs.

**(Refer to the Family Involvement Principles and Strategies overhead transparency – slide 16)*

- Relationship building
- Communication – importance of genuineness & empathy
- Welcoming atmosphere
- Respect – refrain from judging and labeling "challenging" families too quickly
- Person centered programs

**(Refer also to handout on "Principles of Family Involvement" to cover these issues in more depth and detail.)*

How can you encourage family involvement for older youth? Here are some strategies:

- Emphasize the family's contribution
- Develop a plan for identifying a diverse, representative group of families to participate
- Provide *family-identified* supports to assist the family's participation
- Provide formal orientation for families and provide information for involving them
- Be ready to hear what families say

- Celebrate the partnership of working together for a positive change

-Ask the group: Q: Any questions?

An issue that some youth face is that they do not have a traditional family setting or support system. A youth's biological family may not be available, or relatives by blood or marriage may not be the ones actually providing "family support." Because the nature of American families is increasingly diverse it is necessary to discuss what the term "family" can mean in our present society.

**(Refer to the Beyond the Nuclear Family... overhead transparency – slide 17)*

Changing Definitions of Family:

- Parents, children, siblings, and spouses
- Include blended and non-traditional families
- Grandparents, distantly related individuals, friends, neighbors, foster parents, or other significant adults in a young person's life may assume "parental" roles

Many systems that work with at-risk youth face the challenge of serving clients who may not have parents actively involved in their lives, or no one appointed to make decisions concerning education. Special education laws grant a significant decision-making role to parents of children with disabilities. When children do not have parents available to represent them at school, federal law directs states to name surrogate (substitute) parents. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) directs local education agencies to establish a surrogate parent program to ensure that students with disabilities who are otherwise unrepresented by family have someone to articulate their individual needs.

**(Refer to the Which Children Need Surrogate Parents? overhead transparency – slide 18)*

Students who either already receive special education services or who are thought to need such services are entitled to a free, appropriate public education (FAPE) and may be served by surrogate parents. This could include youth with disabilities or at-risk youth with suspected disabilities served under such systems as WIA. Consider seeking a surrogate parent if a youth meets the following criteria:

- Must be special education student or in need of special education
- Wards of state
- Parents unavailable
- Parents unknown
- Parent requests a surrogate be named

**(Refer to the Definition of Parent in Federal Regulations overhead transparency – slide 19)*

The surrogate parent program is governed by federal regulations which define what a "parent" is:

- Parent
- Guardian
- Someone acting as Parent

- Surrogate parent

**(Refer to the What is the Role of a Surrogate Parent? overhead transparency – slide 20)*

The role of a surrogate parent is to represent the youth when decisions about special education are made. Keep in mind that each state can also provide guidelines as to the extent of a surrogate parent's responsibilities. A surrogate parent:

- Acts in the role of a parent
- Represents the interest of the child with a disability in educational matters

**(Refer to the Responsibility of School overhead transparency – slide 21)*

School districts are given a great deal of responsibility in the surrogate parent process. They are responsible for:

- Identifying eligible children
- Recruiting potential surrogates
- Providing for training
- Appointing surrogates

**(Refer to the Who Can be a Surrogate Parent? overhead transparency – slide 22)*

Can be:

- Foster parent
- Community volunteer

Cannot be:

- Employee of public agency involved in education or care of child
- Person with conflict of interest

Most often a surrogate parent is either a foster parent or a volunteer from the local community. A surrogate parent is usually assigned to an eligible child through a letter from the local school district serving the child. This appointment can be for a year or open-ended with an annual review.

**(Refer to the What must a surrogate know? overhead transparency – slide 23)*

- Federal and state regulations
- District structure and procedures
- The nature of the pupil's disability and needs
- Ability to effectively advocate for an appropriate educational program for the pupil

Often, surrogate parents are expected to be familiar with state and federal requirements (special education law), school district procedures, and the nature of the youth's disabilities and needs. If needed, the school district will provide training so the surrogate parent can acquire this information. Although not a legal requirement, it may be best if the surrogate parent and child share a similar background, such as race or culture.

If you are working with a youth who you feel could benefit from the involvement of a surrogate parent please contact the youth's servicing school district or your state's governing education agency. Your state's Parent Training and Information Center can also be a resource. Visit PACER Center's website (www.pacer.org) for a listing of Parent Centers around the country.

-Ask group: *Q: Any questions about what we've covered so far?*

9) Multi-Cultural Perspectives: *20 minutes*

WORKSHOP CONTENT OPTION

At this point, the focus of the workshop turns to how various cultural traditions affect family perceptions of disability. One approach to sharing cultural differences is to invite staff or community members (no more than five) who are professionals in the disability field and represent other cultures to be part of the discussion. If you do not have internal experts, we suggest contacting local or state organizations that represent various cultures: Native American, African American, Asian-American, Hispanic or Hmong councils, etc.

Have each invited guest take two–three minutes to introduce themselves. Have them identify their background, the agency or organization they represent, and make one or two comments about their community. Explain that later, the participants will be breaking up into small groups with a representative sitting in for discussion purposes.

Reinforce the fact that these individuals do not represent ALL members of the particular community they are from, but bring their general perspective and an individual interpretation to the discussion with the participants. Encourage participants to introduce themselves to the invited guests during the break.

BREAK: *10 minutes*

10) Cultural Differences & Disability Perspectives: *10 minutes*

**(Refer to the Family, Culture and Disability overhead transparency – slide 24)*

Cultural differences and the role of parents and family in the lives of youth with disabilities is the focus of the final segment of this workshop.

First, let's look at the impact of culture on youth with disabilities and their families.

- Western culture adopts definitions of disability established by our legal or professional institutions
- Other cultures may define disability differently

Here in the U.S., our society tends to define disability by legal definitions and by our professional institutions. For example, there is the definition of disability under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) that we examined in an earlier session. Also there exists classifications and distinctions used by our various vocational rehabilitation, medical and social service agencies.

In contrast, many other cultures approach disability quite differently. Within some cultures certain conditions or disabilities carry more stigma than others; some cultures have particular religious or spiritual beliefs around disability; and yet others may perceive disability as a group experience, one in which the person with a disability is supported by the community, not just their family.

**(Refer to the Medical-Western Model/Cultural Model overhead transparency – slide 25)*

Assumptions

Disability is:

<u>Western Model</u>	vs.	<u>Cultural Model</u>
1. a physical condition		a spiritual condition
2. an individual condition		a group condition
3. a chronic condition		a time-limited condition
4. requires a cure or “fixing”		must be accepted

In this transparency, we contrast the Western-Medical model with various other cultural perspectives. For example, if a family believes that their youth’s disability is a physical condition and can be fixed, they may be focused on the cure and nothing else. You, on the other hand, may not be focusing on fixing the medical condition, but on advocating for the youth to obtain particular accommodations that would make their employment experience easier and more successful.

It’s important to be aware that cultural and societal beliefs can be a factor *at times*, when dealing with a youth with disabilities. The impact and support (or non-support) of families can assist you in your work or perhaps make it much more difficult. For example, if a family believes that disabilities need to remain hidden they may be less likely to support their child using assistive technology or even working outside the home. Being aware that these different types of cultural perspectives exist can assist you in how you choose to approach and discuss employment issues with youth and their families.

**(Refer to the Disability as a spiritual condition overhead transparency – slide 26)*

Examples:

When dealing with cultural differences as it pertains to disability, there are various perspectives to consider. These might include:

- Disability is a punishment for past sins
- A child with a disability is a gift from God
- A child with a disability is an ancestor who has come back in the family

Thinking about how cultural beliefs could impact the youth with a disability that you're working with can be important added information to consider as you work to develop the confidence and skills of youth with disabilities.

**(Refer to the Disability as a 'group' condition overhead transparency – slide 27)*

Another cultural perspective on disability:

- The youth is not solely responsible for its occurrence
- Family members share responsibility for the occurrence of the disability

For example, one Native American tribe (Navajo) believes that although a spirit may choose to inhabit the body of the person with a disability for some purpose that the spirit and the Supreme Creator have determined, “the causes of a body’s being handicapped may lie in the parents (as in the case of fetal alcohol syndrome), and consequently the blame for [disability] (prenatal) mutilation of a body falls on the parents” (Locust, C. (1998). Wounding the spirit: Discrimination and traditional American Indian belief systems. *Harvard Educational Review*, 58, 315-330.)

**(Refer to the Disability must be accepted overhead transparency – slide 28)*

- For some non-western cultured families, a child’s impairment is an act of God and is beyond human comprehension and ability to cure.

With this belief, a child’s disability is a fact of life that must be accepted. An extreme manifestation of this perspective could mean the family is not comfortable even thinking about seeking an intervention or receiving support. These are just a few examples of cultural perspectives on disability that could be playing a part in interacting with youth with disabilities.

**(Refer to “Helpful Resources for Working with Multicultural Communities” handout)*

-Ask the group: Q: Has anyone had first-hand experience with these issues in your work with youth with disabilities who are from another culture?

If participant(s) answer yes, ask the following:

Q: How did you handle it?

Q: How did it impact the youth you were working with in the employment process?

11) Video and Q&A: 20 minutes

At this point in the workshop, it is recommended to show a video exploring disability and differences in culture. After the viewing, allow for a few minutes to process the film with the

group. It would also be helpful to have a handout sheet with a synopsis of the film, the learning points and questions that can be used for accessing what they learned from the video. Our pilot training used, “*Our Family...Our Child*”, produced by PACER Center. It is 20 minutes in length and is subtitled for Deaf or hard of hearing viewers (contact PACER Center at 952-838-9000 or www.Pacer.org for further information on using or purchasing a copy of this video.) This video was developed for professionals and features Southeast Asian parents who have children with disabilities speaking about their experiences with special education and other services. It explores family traditions and attitudes toward education, authority, and disabilities.

12) Large Group Exercise: 30 minutes

Scenarios

(Refer to the “Family, Culture and Disability: Scenarios” handout for this exercise.)

(Note to Facilitator: The following scenarios can be used as a large group activity to wrap-up this session. Split the group into as many as 6 smaller groups and have each group answer one of the scenarios. If you are joined by multi-cultural representatives, have them pick a group to help process scenarios. You may wish to write their answers on a large sheet of paper. The answers provided below are merely examples offered by previous workshop participants. They should not be considered definitive or all inclusive.)

Case Study #1

Juan Carlos is a 17 year-old whose family recently moved into the area. His family migrated from their native Mexico to the United States 5 years ago. Juan Carlos heard about your agency through a friend and is interested in some of your programs. Juan Carlos also tells you that he has a 19 year-old brother with a severe physical disability, and that his parents, who still have difficulty reading and writing English, work different shifts so someone can always be at home with his brother. Repeated attempts to have his parents sign the appropriate paperwork fail.

Q1: What could be some reasons why the family has not completed the proper intake paperwork?

Possible Answers (suggested in pilot discussion groups):

- The family is having a hard time juggling schedules and responsibilities.
- Family may be wary of or unaware of how “public” services can help.
- Many immigrant families may not be comfortable or used to disclosing information on formal documents.
- Parents may not be able to read or understand forms.
- Other?

Q2: How can you work with his family to make sure Juan Carlos gets the opportunity to take advantage of your program?

Possible Answers (suggested in pilot discussion groups):

- Access an advocate familiar working with Latino families (through the parent center or another community based organization.)

- Find out if they need an interpreter.
- Offer to hold meetings at their home and at times that fit their schedule.
- Assure them that your only intention is to help Juan Carlos be successful.
- Other?

Q3: Why do you think Juan Carlos' parents are keeping his brother with a disability at home?

Possible Answers (suggested in pilot discussion groups):

- It is common for youth in Latino cultures stay at home until they are married, and sometimes afterwards, until they are ready to start their own home.
- Parents may be unaware that services exist that could assist them with Juan Carlos' brother.
- Parents are using their personal family network to care for the brother.
- Parents are protecting their son from the outside world.
- Other?

Case Study#2

Josh is a 15 year-old who is being referred to your program by his Probation Officer. His crimes are minor, but due to a turbulent home life he needs a smaller, more structured environment. Josh's father is currently serving time in the Workhouse for battery and his mother has been maintaining little contact with Josh. Josh's Aunt is allowing him to stay with her, but she works nights and seems unwilling to make any formal decisions about Josh's future. Josh has poor reading and writing skills but has never been identified as having a disability. You recognize Josh's strengths and have a few program options that require parental consent.

Q1: What strategies could you use to secure permission for Josh to participate in your program?

Possible Answers (suggested in pilot discussion groups):

- The incarcerated parent still has parental rights, unless those rights have been stripped by the court. Working with father would be a way to keep him in the loop once he is released.
- Probation Officer or Social Worker could give permission if parental rights have been taken away.
- Other?

Q2: Other than employment, what types of things would you try to work with Josh on?

Possible Answers (suggested in pilot discussion groups):

- Work on getting Josh an accurate diagnosis for his apparent disability.
- Work on literacy skills through a literacy program.
- Access a surrogate parent through the school district who could make educational decisions on Josh's behalf.
- Structure an environment of success so he does not progress deeper into criminal behavior to get his needs met.
- Address independent living skills if his support at home is not adequate.
- Other?

Q3: On a long-term basis, how could you insure that Josh has somebody to advocate for his needs?

Possible Answers (suggested in pilot discussion groups):

- Once again, secure a surrogate parent for educational decisions.
- Access a mentor for Josh to serve as a role model and possible advocate.
- Teach Josh self-advocacy and self-determination skills so he can advocate for himself.
- Other?

Case Study #3

Stella is an 18 year-old Native American woman who is just starting employment you helped to secure. After her third day she arrives at your program and tells you that her boss yelled at her for being disrespectful. You are very concerned because Stella has a learning disability, her confidence level is low, and she is insecure about working. Stella's mother has also called and expressed her displeasure with the employer. You call Stella's workplace, a large discount retailer, and her boss tells you that Stella refuses to make eye-contact with customers and is slow behind the cash register. When confronted by her boss Stella claimed her culture was being disrespected and left work.

Q1: What factors may be causing the problems between Stella and her employer?

Possible Answers (suggested in pilot discussion groups):

- Many youth in certain Native American cultures are taught that making direct eye contact is disrespectful. This could be simply a misunderstanding between Stella and the employer.
- Stella may not feel confident with the job tasks she has been given.
- Stella may require more preparation before being able to work with customers on the cash register.
- Stella may require a job accommodation to handle essential functions.
- Other?

Q2: How can you use your positive relationship with Stella's family to work with the employer?

Possible Answers (suggested in pilot discussion groups):

- Diffuse the situation by assuring both parties that this is a minor setback.
- You may want to facilitate a meeting between Stella, her mother, and the employer to address concerns.
- Assure family that you will not allow Stella to stay at a place that is not being respectful to her, but that quitting without first trying to solve the problem is not a good habit.
- Other?

Q3: How can you coach Stella about her culture and interacting with others?

Possible Answers (suggested in pilot discussion groups):

- Access a Native American advocate or mentor to help Stella balance what she believes about eye contact and what is expected in the world of work.
- Use role-playing to help Stella practice how she will interact with customers.
- Teach her how to talk with her employer about these issues as they arise.
- Other?

Case Study #4

Marcus is a 17 year-old African American student who is interested in securing employment. He is very intelligent, yet has a habit of using a lot of swear words when he speaks. In the school setting, his teachers seem to tolerate his colorful vocabulary because of his otherwise satisfactory academic performance. You are worried, however, that it may hinder his ability to get or keep a job. During a scheduled meeting at Marcus' home you notice that all the adult males in the family frequently use swear words while his grandmother, who cares for Marcus, is well-respected and doesn't use such words. You have recently set up a job interview for Marcus with an employer you have a great relationship with and had success working with in the past.

Q1: What strategies can you use to help Marcus use appropriate speech during the job interview?

Possible Answers (suggested in pilot discussion groups):

- Run a mock interview in class or in your office with a co-worker acting as the employer.
- Give Marcus a list of words to use instead of swear words.
- Prepare your employer friend ahead of time, asking him to gently deflect any slip ups should they occur.
- Other?

Q2: How can you use Marcus' relationship with his grandmother to insure a positive outcome?

Possible Answers (suggested in pilot discussion groups):

- Have a meeting with Grandma and Marcus to discuss your concerns about his language. Make sure to stress positives as well as potential trouble areas.
- Ask Grandma to positively reinforce appropriate language in the home.
- Keep Grandma involved in all aspects of the job hunt.
- Other?

Q3: What misconceptions might you have had about Marcus prior to meeting his family?

Possible Answers (suggested in pilot discussion groups):

- It would have been easy to stereotype Marcus as foul mouthed, unintelligent, behaviorally difficult, and hard to employ.
- Tell Marcus that he in danger of being viewed this way if he continues to swear as much as he does.
- Other?

Case Study #5

Bao is a 19 year-old Asian American student with severe learning and behavioral disabilities. Her performance in work skills classes and in school has been falling off as of late. You once thought her ready to find employment, but now you want to meet with the family to see if her program needs have changed. Upon meeting with the family you are surprised to find that the family is not worried about her performance. They tell you that they do not expect Bao to be able to work because of her disability and are planning for her to stay at home and care for younger siblings. This is contradictory to your belief that Bao can be successfully employed if given the

right supports. You also learn that they have had some negative experiences with the school in the past.

Q1: How can you advocate for Bao's employment future without being disrespectful to her family's values or wishes?

Possible Answers (suggested in pilot discussion groups):

- It is important to be clear about what Bao's own wishes are. Although she may still honor what her parents have planned for her, as a 19 year-old she has legal right to make her own decisions. Do your expectations for Bao's future match up with hers?
- Access a multi-cultural advocate familiar in working with Asian families to help you strategize or act as an intermediary.
- Remember that Bao's parents can be an important resource so it is important to respect their concerns.

Q2: How can you work through the family's negative experiences with school and build a collaborative partnership with them?

Possible Answers (suggested in pilot discussion groups):

- Their experiences may stem from a lack of understanding different cultural expectations. Make sure an advocate or translator is available to attend meeting to ensure that they understand the proceedings.
- Offer to hold meetings in their home and at times that suit their schedule.
- Use a person centered planning model for Bao that incorporates the concerns of the parents in the service plan.
- Understand that the parents may assume that since you are the "professional", you will take care of any problems that arise. Working in cooperation with services providers may be a new concept to them.
- Other?

Q3: How can you persuade the family that Bao is able to work despite their concerns?

Possible Answers (suggested in pilot discussion groups):

- You may want to point out the benefits of Bao being employed, but keep in mind that they have already mapped out a plan for her in the home.
- Introduce family to successful people with disabilities from their community.
- Remember that there is often shame associated with disability and the family might have a difficult time working through that.
- If Bao's performance has been suffering as of late you will want to investigate possible causes for that. Is there stress in the family? Why does the family feel Bao does not need outside employment?
- Other?

Case Study #6

Bee is a 16 year-old Asian American student who is getting in trouble with the law. His parents have remained traditional despite being in the country for 12 years and have developed only rudimentary English language skills. Bee has been fully acculturated and is as far more sophisticated regarding mainstream American culture than his parents, who feel that Bee uses

this to manipulate them. You suspect that Bee has a disability that is keeping him from reaching his full academic potential, but his parents are unwilling to agree to an assessment because Bee is not doing “what is expected of a child”. They have also assumed that since you are working with their son, you are taking responsibility for his progress. You fear that Bee will end up in jail, with no work skills if you don't get his parents to be more supportive.

Q1: How can you work together with Bee's parents to help get and keep Bee on the right track?

Possible Answers (suggested in pilot discussion groups):

- Use an advocate and a translator in meetings with hopes of showing the parents that Bee's success depends on cooperation from everyone.
- Explain how a disability can affect Bee's ability to learn and contribute to his behavior.
- Is there an older sibling that can act as a spokesperson for the family?
- Actively involve Bee's parents in structuring his program plan.
- Discuss possibility of involving a surrogate parent to assess Bee for a disability.
- Other?

Q2: How do you operate in a situation where the child is more proficient in English and sophisticated about American society than his parents?

Possible Answers (suggested in pilot discussion groups):

- Access a mentor, ideally one who shares the same culture, who can help Bee see the benefits of what his parents wish and what is available to him in the American culture.
- Give parents resources such as ESL classes if they wish.
- Point out to Bee that even though he is more sophisticated in the American way of life than his parents, all he has done with that is get into trouble. Brainstorm ways he can use his competencies to help himself and his family.
- Other?

13) Resources:

Handouts: 1) “What You Should Know About the Impact of Exceptionality on the Family”
2) “Family-Professional Partnerships”
3) “Principles of Family Involvement”
4) “Family, Culture and Disability: Scenarios”

Resources: 1) Refer to the “Building Program Capacity to Serve Youth with Disabilities: Resource List”
2) Refer to “Helpful Resources for Working with Multicultural Communities”

Highlight various organizations and websites explaining what they offer.

14) Evaluation: *5 minutes*

Ask the participants to take the last few minutes to fill out the evaluation form.

15) Close:

Thank them for their presence, involvement and interest in this workshop.