

It's Your Life: Building Connections Through Work

Project Summary Report



**Muskie School of Public Service
University of Southern Maine**

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Maine Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Adults with Cognitive and Physical Disabilities
Speaking Up for Us Maine
Maine Developmental Disabilities Council
Muskie School of Public Service, University of Southern Maine
Peer Trainers

We would also like to thank the agency management, direct support staff and individuals served at participating agencies for their willingness to learn and collaborate with us on this project.

Introduction

Federal and state policies have emphasized a shift in focus for adults with cognitive disabilities from sheltered employment programs to employment in integrated community settings. Maine's Public Law, Chapter 101 "Resolve, An Act to Create Improved Employment Opportunities for People with Disabilities," mandated the creation of a new MaineCare program, Section 29, Home and Community Based Waiver ("Support Waiver"), which promotes increased supported employment opportunities for adults with cognitive disabilities. State funding for sheltered workshops was reduced and by the summer of 2009, those services are no longer funded through state dollars.

In April 2008, the Muskie School of Public Service, University of Southern Maine partnered with Maine Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Adults with Cognitive and Physical Disabilities to provide training, outreach, and support to sheltered workshop participants effected through these changes. This innovative program partnered with adults with cognitive disabilities who were competitively employed in their communities to design and deliver training to their peers who were also interested in working. This program, called *It's Your Life: Building Connections Through Work*, was an exciting initiative and opportunity for the Muskie School of Public Service, University of Southern Maine to design, implement, and evaluate learning opportunities for sheltered workshop participants who want competitive work.

This report gives a detailed description of *It's Your Life: Building Connections Through Work* project from design, to implementation and evaluation of the workshop sessions. It is our hope that you enjoy learning about this project and that professionals working in the rehabilitation field continue to seek out opportunities to provide co-training models, partnering with adults with disabilities to train their peers.

Project Overview:

In 2008, the *It's Your Life: Building Connections Through Work* project was developed through a partnership between Muskie School of Public Service, University of Southern Maine; Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Adults with Cognitive and Physical Disabilities (OACPD); Maine Developmental Disabilities Council; and Speaking Up for Us (SUFU). This project was developed in response to a statewide mandate (Public Law, Chapter 101) to execute a new MaineCare program, Section 29, Home and Community Based Waiver ("Support Waiver") intended to expand supported employment in Maine. The *It's Your Life: Building Connections Through Work* project was conceived by the partners as one strategy to support the change from sheltered to integrated work settings.

This MaineCare "Support Waiver" program resulted from efforts of the Department of Labor, the Department of Health and Human Services, and other pertinent stakeholders focused on the development of a support network that would offer people with disabilities a "pathway to employment" (Fortman and Harvey, 2008). Along with the MaineCare Support Waiver, efforts included outreach to consumers, families, and staff in order to facilitate a greater understanding of the support that is available to assist people who would like to seek employment opportunities in integrated settings.

The *It's Your Life: Building Connections Through Work* program was offered to seven agencies in the state of Maine who were losing state funds for sheltered workshop services. Five agencies chose to participate in this program, and one agency hosted the sessions at two of their sites.

The project consisted of three goals:

1. Design and deliver supported employment workshops to participants in sheltered workshops. Specifically, the aim of this project entailed implementing efforts in partnership with SUFU peer trainers with an emphasis on sharing stories about finding and maintaining employment, providing an overview of supported employment, and identifying personal networks that may serve to support participants in their exploration of jobs in the community.
2. Provide support and mentoring to SUFU peer trainers as they offered presentations and engaged in group discussions with their peers in sheltered workshop settings.
3. Document and evaluate the effectiveness of the initiative.

USM staff at Muskie School of Public Service had a primary role in the recruitment of peer trainers, providing ongoing support, mentorship, and technical assistance, as well as co-designing the training and co-facilitating the workshop modules with them. This work included creating presentation scripts for the peer trainers, assisting peer trainers to map out their personal stories, helping them to sharpen their presentation skills, and providing them with transportation to and from some of the planning meetings and training sessions. There

were also opportunities for staff and peer trainers to work collaboratively in the process of designing the agendas, hand-outs, evaluations, games, and activities for the training program. The Maine Developmental Disabilities Council partnered in this project by paying stipends to peer trainers for their preparation and delivery of the training.

Partners designed the project with the overall purpose of providing critical learning opportunities for both the peer trainers and sheltered workshop participants. Partners also focused on creating opportunities to enhance the skills of peer trainers with cognitive disabilities so that they could effectively co-facilitate the delivery of supported employment training to participants in sheltered workshops.

It is important to note that many of the participants in the supported employment training had never been employed or exposed to the workplace in their communities. As a result, partners designed the project model with a significant focus on early stages of supported employment. Specifically, partners paid particular attention to creating opportunities for participants to engage in informed decision-making in regards to finding and succeeding in employment.

Recruitment and Selection of Trainers:

The process of recruiting qualified peer trainers was multifaceted and wide-ranging. A trainer description developed by project partners included a depiction of job role, functions, and desired qualifications, so that potential peer trainers knew what would be expected of them. Some of these preferred prerequisites for peer trainers were as follows:

1. Personal experience with disability, as well as experience working in a sheltered workshop; willingness to share a personal employment story with collaborators, workshop participants, and other stakeholders
2. Currently employed in a competitive employment position
3. Ability to work both independently and in a team environment
4. Ability to have reliable transportation to and from workshop sites and train-the-trainer sessions (travel reimbursement was provided)
5. Demonstrates excitement in sharing personal stories in employment

DHHS Regional Casework supervisors and SUFU recommended candidates who seemed best suited for the trainer role. Muskie staff followed up on these recommendations by contacting potential trainers and explaining the project and time commitment. In addition to these initial contacts, project staff held a meeting to assist potential peer trainers to become familiar with the program expectations and learning objectives. The total number of recruitments for peer trainers was nine.

Potential peer trainers were given consent forms to aid them in understanding the objectives of the program. After sharing the consent forms with potential peer trainers, Muskie staff

followed up with them by telephone to determine if they were still interested in participating in the program.

Once the recruitment phase was complete, partners in the *It's Your Life: Building Connections Through Work* project chose five individuals with cognitive disabilities, who were currently employed and demonstrating success in their workplaces, to become peer trainers.

Trainer Development and Preparation Work:

The Muskie staff worked closely with peer trainers to enhance their presentation skills through the use of videotapes, pictures, powerpoint, and general training delivery. Muskie staff offered coaching and feedback to the peer trainers about how to improve their presentation style and delivery. Project staff also worked with peer trainers to develop action plans so that they could incorporate feedback.

Practice sessions and action plans were designed by project staff to help prepare peer trainers to facilitate the training, provide them with opportunities to enhance their skills, and increase their comfort level at workshop delivery in group settings. Another purpose of practice sessions and action plans was to create opportunities for peer trainers to engage in reflection on their experiences, and to increase their skills and creativity in being able to articulate what they have learned about themselves by succeeding in the workplace

Muskie staff co-wrote a script with the peer trainers in order to provide them with clear direction on how to deliver the introduction and overall session content, ask probing questions, use icebreakers and activities, as well as present a review of the material. Project staff also worked with peer trainers to assist them in the critical task of mapping their employment stories. Guided questions were asked of peer trainers so that they would be able to envision their story and begin to map it out. Some examples of these guiding questions were as follows:

1. *What is my job? Where is it located? What are my job responsibilities and job title?*
2. *What are the things that I like about my job? What are the things that I don't like about my job?*
3. *What are my hopes, fears, and dreams as they relate to employment? What are the ingredients that have made this job a success?*

(See additional information about guiding questions for mapping stories in Appendix III)

Once peer trainers mapped out their stories, they practiced presenting them to the partners and stakeholders of the project. Muskie staff also met individually between sessions with each trainer and their support person (if applicable) to decide on a medium for presenting

his/her story, such as use of collages, videos at an employment site, or DVDs outlining employment history.

The peer trainers utilized the framework of the guiding questions listed previously to write a script for their employment story. Peer trainers collected photographs which depicted portions of their lives shared through an audio component. Once the peer trainers gained confidence, project staff audio recorded trainers' voices as they read the script. After photographs and audio materials were gathered, project staff worked with peer trainers to create the DVDs. One trainer requested that project staff video tape her directly so that she would be able to creatively explain her job duties. The outcome of this process was that three employment stories were collected from the 5 peer trainers.

Significant insights came from peer trainers during practice sessions. During one particular session, those peer trainers who had a background in sheltered workshops were asked to share their perspectives on differences between sheltered workshop and competitive work experiences. One key statement made by a peer trainer regarding working at a sheltered workshop was:

"I was fast so I got paid more than other people because the faster you made things, the more you got paid. I always felt bad at the shop because some people were slower because of their physical disability and didn't get paid as much but worked just as hard...didn't seem right to me."

Content Development:

Before content delivery, project staff met with providers in the sheltered workshop settings to become familiar with their culture, expectations, and overall approach to providing services. Specifically, Muskie staff met with each agency director and employment specialist prior to implementing each workshop session to better understand the scope of support they were offering to participants, the level of understanding of participants, and to discuss logistics for the workshop presentations.

Aside from the scripts and employment stories that were mapped out by peer trainers, there were many other aspects of workshop content that had to be developed. Along with sharing and practicing their stories and presentation skills, peer trainers were invited to provide input on the development and design of the curriculum. This aspect of the process involved brainstorming and reflecting on the purpose of icebreakers, as well as generating ideas regarding appropriate learning activities to present in the first sessions.

Hand-outs with graphics were designed in ways that were easy and clear to follow. Activities and discussions were designed with some of the following considerations:

- *Are the activities aligned with the goals of the session?*
- *Do the session plans promote inclusion of all individuals regardless of differences in developmental levels? Are learning activities designed and delivered in ways*

that are sensitive to the varying ranges of processing and understanding information?

- *Are the activities meaningful and do they provide participants with opportunities to enhance their learning about supported employment?*
- *Do the activities provide opportunities for participants to share their voices, and invite them to participate in all aspects of the process?*
- *Do the activities promote active engagement and do they incorporate the additional adult learning practices and principles that have not been previously addressed?*

Project Implementation: Workshop Delivery:

Overview of Session 1: “Sharing Stories”

The program was delivered in three sessions and was designed to build on content presented earlier. Partners designed the first session so that peer trainers could share personal anecdotes related to their employment experiences. The overall purpose of this session was to provide workshop participants with opportunities to identify themes in the employment experiences of the peer trainers so that they could expand their understanding of what may be possible in their own employment experiences. Another objective of this session was to increase participants’ recognition that people in sheltered workshops can find and maintain successful work in their communities.

In the first session, peer trainers discussed differences between sheltered workshops and competitive employment with participants. As part of this experience, peer trainers utilized a group game format. Participants were asked to divide into two teams, and choose pre-written statements that described experiences in sheltered workshop and competitive employment settings. Teams were asked to decide whether each statement matched experiences most typical to sheltered workshop settings or competitive employment. The game included some of the following statements placed on a felt board:

- ✓ I like that I get paid hourly.
- ✓ I used to get paid piece rate.
- ✓ I get vacation time and sick days.

At the end of the session, there were opportunities for open dialogue that encouraged participants to reflect upon and share their hopes and fears about leaving the sheltered workshop environment. These sessions were documented and shared with agency providers, in order to ensure that they followed up on the fears that were identified. The initial “Sharing Stories” session was held six times at four agencies. A total of 85 individuals with disabilities and 18 staff attending.

Overview of Session 2: “Finding the Right Fit for Me”

Partners and peer trainers designed the second session of the training module with a focus on assisting participants to identify their interests, skills, strengths, and abilities related to working in their communities. The trainer’s goal was that by the end of the session, participants could identify at least one job of interest, as well as the skills required to successfully perform tasks within that job.

In the second session, peer trainers introduced an icebreaker to the group in order to generate creative thinking among participants regarding what possible jobs exist for which they would like to be paid. The peer trainers distributed a visual tool to assist participants to think about important aspects of potential jobs, such as ideal work schedules and environments. A tic/tac/toe game was facilitated by the peer trainers in order to offer a fun and engaging activity that would help participants to better understand their work skills and interests.

Peer trainers also shared their own employment experiences through the DVDs created for this project. After viewing the DVDs, peer trainers led participants in a discussion about the skills and interests necessary for the trainers to successfully perform their jobs.

Session 2 was held five times at four agencies participating in the program. A total of 70 individuals with disabilities and 18 staff attending.

Overview of Session 3: “Building Connections Through Work: Networking and Putting it All Together”

Partners and peer trainers designed the third session of the training module with an icebreaker and brainstorming activities that would serve to enhance participants’ understanding of what a network is. This included designing activities that would invite participants to identify who they perceive as being part of their networks, and to envision how these networks could be expanded.

Resources for this session were provided by the Institute for Community Inclusion through the University of Massachusetts. With permission, project staff adapted and revised these tools. Peer trainers distributed visual handouts to aid in a discussion about where participants could look for jobs. Sample resume formats were shared by peer trainers, and they led an activity to assist participants in practicing interviewing skills.

The third session included small group work that was designed to encourage participants to connect what they had learned from their peer trainers with their own insights about themselves. Peer trainers facilitated a writing activity that requested participants to identify their skills and interests that would match what an employer looks for in workers, as well as identification of person(s) from their network who may be able to assist them in their quest for employment. In addition, peer trainers shared resources that could be used to prepare participants while waiting for vocational rehabilitation services, such as developing a job readiness assessment checklist and a vocational profile.

In Session 3, a total of 44 individuals with disabilities and 8 staff attended. The number of participants in Session 3 significantly decreased, as agency staff prioritized class participants who were waiting for VR to attend these sessions. This session was held five times at four agencies.

Overall, an unduplicated total of 122 participants attended one or more of the three sessions. An unduplicated total of 25 staff attended one or more of the three sessions.

Post Implementation and Evaluation Results:

Each session involved an evaluative component. Specifically, at the end of each session, visual evaluations were distributed to and collected from participants to identify their perceptions of the experience and to assess their learning progress. Plain language guidelines were incorporated into the evaluations to ensure that participants understood the questions that were asked of them.

Evaluation results are as follows:

In combined results for Session 1 and 2, 96% of participants reported that after listening to the trainers' stories, they learned more about the skills that they need to be successful in their jobs. Eighty-nine percent reported that they were able to identify at least one skill that they could use on the job. Eighty-three percent shared that they could identify at least one area of interest that they have and where they might look for a job to match that interest.

Eighty-eight percent of participants in the third session reported that the trainer stories helped them to learn about their personal networks and to understand why they were important. One hundred percent of participants shared that they were able to identify at least one person in their network, and 75% reported that they could identify at least one person to talk with over the next month about a job in which they might be interested in.

When asked what they perceived as being most helpful in the workshop sessions, some of the responses were:

- ✓ Being out in the community and being active
- ✓ Learning about people with disabilities
- ✓ Watching videos
- ✓ People's stories
- ✓ Good information to get a job
- ✓ Knowing different skills for different jobs

- ✓ Communication skills

After each session, Muskie staff followed up with each agency to discuss evaluation results. These conversations focused on future direction for employment specialists or direct support staff working with individuals on their path to employment.

Feedback from Peer Trainers:

Overall, six peer trainers participated in some part of the *It's Your Life: Building Connections Through Work* project. Below is feedback from the six peer trainers who participated at various stages.

- *I liked making my story to DVD. I am happy about my life now. I didn't feel happy when I was at the shop. I get to meet lots of people now.*
- *I like traveling around the state and meeting more friends. I'm glad that more people are getting jobs in the community.*
- *I liked teaching people and sharing my story with others.*
- *I liked telling other people about where I work and what I do.*
- *I liked sharing my collage and story about my life with my staff. I got a new job and had to stop this project, but liked being part of it.*

Overall Lessons Learned:

There were many valuable lessons learned in both working with the peer trainers and implementing the training with identified sheltered workshops throughout Maine. Below are lessons learned from recruitment, design, and implementation stages of the *It's Your Life: Building Connections Through Work* program:

1. Recruitment of Peer Trainers

- Selection Process of Trainers: Part of the process during this project was for DHHS caseworkers to refer individuals who are competitively employed to be co-trainers. This was a time consuming process. Case workers did not have a consistent or shared understanding of how “competitive employment” was defined and as a result, project staff spent time interviewing prospective peer trainers, to sometimes find out that they weren’t always competitively employed and therefore not qualified to serve as peer trainers. This was an important learning experience that informed our partners about the importance of shared language and common definitions.

2. Designing the Program with Peer Trainers

- Collaboration with Partners: A very successful component of this program was identifying partners early in the process, so that everyone collaborated on the initiative from the inception. All of these partners demonstrated a core belief that everyone with a disability can work. Partners for this project included DHHS’s Office of Adults with Cognitive and Physical Disabilities, Speaking Up for Us, Maine Developmental Disabilities Council (paid trainer stipends), individuals with disabilities who are competitively employed, and Muskie School of Public Service, University of Southern Maine.
- Model of the program: The model for this program was to prepare successfully employed people with cognitive disabilities to co-train at the sheltered workshops. These trainers were all working between 15-35 hours per week and over the course of this project had extremely limited availability to provide training. Three trainers had to discontinue working on the project because they felt that the preparation time was too “time intensive” for them while they were already balancing a work schedule and community support schedule. While it should have been obvious from the start, trainers’ work schedules often conflicted with available training opportunities.
- Time Intensive Process with Co-Trainers: For Session 1 (Sharing Stories), Muskie staff spent time individually with each co-trainer, mapping out their stories. In addition, project staff spent time with the peer trainer group through five preparatory sessions to assist co-trainers to develop materials and practice. This time intensive work also involved assisting peer trainers with public speaking presentation skills. Muskie staff spent a great amount of time on logistics

including transportation to and from practice and training sessions. Project staff spent a great amount of time calling trainers and reminding them of upcoming trainings. Staff also spent time debriefing the training and the use of materials with co-trainers.

3. Implementing the Program at Participating Sheltered Workshop Sites

- Organizational Restructuring: Each sheltered workshop provider was at a different phase of involving their staff, families, and consumers in the conversion process. Each organization has a different approach to this process. As a result, the individuals who are served by sheltered workshop providers have a varied level of understanding regarding community supported employment. This meant that training content had to be modified in some ways to better match the participants understanding.
- Peer Trainers: One hundred percent of participants reported that they enjoyed hearing from their peers. Making DVDs and using other venues for sharing stories was a crucial part of the success of the project.
- Availability of sheltered workshop for sessions: Sheltered workshop providers had very limited availability for training. Specifically, they were usually not available between 10-2 during weekday hours. As a result, it was at times difficult to foster peer trainer participation during the day.
- Training Background of Direct Support Professionals: Staff at these sheltered workshops had varied backgrounds but all reported that they are expected to provide support to individuals at their respective day programs “while they are waiting for VR services.” The staff, however, typically has no formal background in supported employment, making it difficult for them to meet this expectation.
- Amount of Time for Training: Session 1 started out with 2 hours of training for participants. By Session 3, the time for training was 90 minutes. The project team learned that this was a more appropriate amount of time for training. Session 3 had too much on the agenda and, therefore, not enough time for processing or reviewing material covered. In addition, there was not enough time allotted to debrief with participants.
- Varying Range of Disabilities: The participants varied in cognitive abilities ranging from very low functioning to very high functioning. Subsequently, the content continued to be modified depending upon the background of the group. Pictorial worksheets, agendas, DVDs, interactive games and role playing were most successful at generating interest and participation, as well as fostering understanding of the material.
- Technical assistance with agencies: There was quite a bit of follow-up with agencies regarding the sessions’ materials and support provided to staff persons.

Some sheltered workshop providers reported that they did not have the internal support from their agency supervisors and, as a result, they had no awareness of the community resources available to assist individuals with cognitive disabilities to pursue employment, such as Career Centers.

Things to Consider When Designing and Implementing a Similar Project

- Create a team with a solid, shared understanding of roles and partnership responsibilities, including roles in recruitment efforts and implementation support.
- Plan for intensive staff time, logistical support, and technical assistance before implementing similar projects.
- Meet with sheltered workshop providers in order to learn about their knowledge and familiarity with supported employment models. Create and conduct supported employment training to community support staff that work with individuals waiting for Vocational Rehabilitation services.
- Prepare for creativity in scheduling in order to accommodate the work demands of co-trainers, as well as sheltered workshop providers.
- Plan training, activities, and materials targeted toward an audience with a wide range of disabilities. Incorporate adult learning practices and principles for individuals with cognitive disabilities.
- Allot 90 minutes of training per session that includes a review of the material and a debrief with participants.
- Expand the *Its Your Life: Building Connections Through Work* project by developing a 4th module on informational interviewing and overall interviewing skill development.
- Enhance job club services by using *It's Your Life: Building Connections Through Work* materials to support their efforts.

Appendices

Appendix A: Peer Trainer Learning Objectives and Position Description

Peer Trainers will assist with designing and implementing three training sessions for adults with cognitive disabilities who are currently participating at identified sheltered workshops. Peer Trainers will meet with Muskie School staff for a series of planning sessions.

By the end of these planning sessions, Peer Trainers will:

- Be prepared to serve as a leader, trainer, and mentor to workshop participants;
- Gain a sense of confidence in their ability to present in small and large groups;
- Be committed to collaborating and working for change in competitive employment;
- Have increased knowledge and awareness of supported employment options available for peers;
- Enhance their training capacity around supported employment and building networks.

Appendix B: Peer Trainer Description

Position Title: “It’s Your Life” Peer Trainer

Statement of the Job:

The primary purpose of the trainer is to work in collaboration with Maine DHHS Developmental Services, Maine Developmental Disabilities Council, Speaking Up for Us, and USM Muskie School Center for Learning to provide guidance, mentoring, and training to identified workshop participants in the areas of: sharing personal stories regarding obtaining and maintaining employment, providing an overview of supported employment services available, and building personal networks in order to explore jobs/careers in the community.

Additionally, the trainer will be responsible to attend planning sessions to learn about designing workshops on building personal networks and supported employment. Peer Trainers will also provide education and outreach to sheltered workshop participants.

Essential Functions:

1. Attendance and active participation at planning sessions
2. Participation and collaboration with other identified Peer Trainers and USM Muskie staff
3. Willingness to learn and co-train with USM Muskie staff in small and large settings

Desired Qualifications:

1. Personal experience with disability as well as working in a sheltered workshop (preferred, not required) and willingness to share a personal employment story with collaborators, workshop participants, and other stakeholders.
2. For pilot project through June 30, 2008, must be living in Region 2 area.
3. Currently employed in a competitive employment position
4. Ability to work independently and in a team environment
5. Ability to get transportation to and from workshop sites and planning sessions (travel reimbursement will be given).
6. Demonstrates excitement in sharing their story around employment.



Possible Questions to Answer When Sharing Your Story with Others:

- How did I get my job? What is my job? Where is it located? What are my job responsibilities and job title? What type of pay do I get? How many hours am I working?
- What type of benefits do I receive? (Paid holidays, insurance, paid sick/vacation), direct deposit, uniforms, free/reduced meals, retirement options, other)
- How do I get to work? (Walk, drive, public transportation, other)
- Do I know my co-workers, and what friendships do I have through my job or prior jobs?
- Things I like and dislike about my job
- What supports did I receive and what was helpful or not so helpful? (VR, caseworker, staff, community member, etc.)
- Have I had jobs prior to this one? If yes, how did I get them? Have I lost a job and why?
- If I worked with a job developer, what was helpful and what wasn't.
- What supports do I need today? Do I have a job coach and what would you like to share about these supports.
- What ingredients made/make this job a success?
- What areas of your life were improved while working?
- What are my work dreams for the future?
- What are other things you would like to share about your life?

Appendix D: Overview of Sessions 1-3 and Learning Objectives

Overview of Training Series:

Supported employment allows persons with disabilities to obtain and maintain meaningful, competitive work within their communities. Through interactive presentations by people with disabilities who are competitively employed, sheltered workshop participants will attend three sessions. Peer trainers provide accurate information, encouragement, and motivation during a time of change for sheltered workshop participants. Participants will have the opportunity to discuss and ask questions of a panel of trainers that are employed. Below are learning objectives for sheltered workshop participants for each session.

Session 1: Sharing Stories

Attendees from this session will be able to:

- Describe the differences between sheltered work and competitive employment.
- Identify themes from the presenter's employment stories and learn strategies to map out their own personal stories.
- Recognize that individuals with disabilities who have come from sheltered workshops are able to gain successful employment outcomes in the community.
- Acknowledge and express their hopes and fears regarding leaving the sheltered workshop.

Session 2: Finding the Right Fit for Me:

Attendees from this session will be able to:

- Identify the interests, skills and abilities shared by the trainer's employment stories.
- Describe and identify vocational interest that are important to them.
- Identify strengths and skills for working in the community.
- Identify at least one job in the community of interest and the skills that are required to perform that job.






Session 3: Networking and Putting It All Together:

Attendees from this session will be able to:

- Define personal networks and benefits of having personal networks in the community.
- Identify who is in their current personal network.
- Describe some strategies and methods for using personal networks as a resource to competitive employment.
- Identify one action step they can take while waiting for Vocational Rehabilitation services.

Appendix E: Sample Agenda



<p>15 min.</p> 	<p>Introductions and Ice Breaker Activity</p>
<p>30 min.</p> 	<p>What is community employment?</p> <p>Group Brainstorm</p> <p>Which is it? Sheltered work or community employment...</p>
<p>45 min.</p> 	<p>Sharing Employment Stories and Questions (Trainers)</p>
<p>10 min.</p> 	<p>What did you learn that made you feel excited about working in the community?</p>
<p>10 min.</p> 	<p>What makes you worried or fearful of leaving the workshop?</p>
<p>10 min.</p> 	<p>Pass in evaluation, pick up certificate and end session</p>

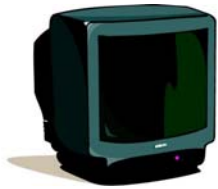
Appendix F: Sample Training Evaluation for Workshop Participants



1) Did you understand what the trainers were talking about in this workshop?

YES 

NO 



2) Did you like hearing other people's employment stories through video and pictures?

YES 

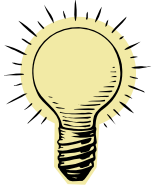
NO 



3) Were you able to ask questions?

YES 

NO 



4) After this training, do you understand how a job in the community is different than your workshop job?

YES



NO



5) After this training, do you understand what types of jobs are available in the community?

YES



NO



6) The amount of information in this workshop was...



Too Much



OK



Too Little

7) What was most helpful about this workshop was...

8) What was least helpful about this workshop was...

Appendix G: Data On Employment For People With Cognitive Disabilities In Maine

Background: In 2007, the Maine Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Adults with Cognitive and Physical Disabilities (OACPD), collected statewide data on supported employment services funded by OACPD's Comprehensive Waiver and State Grants. The goal of this effort was to assess the current state of employment for people with cognitive and physical disabilities who were receiving supported employment services with state funding. Working with OACPD throughout the process, CHOICES CEO project staff provided critical technical assistance with the development of the data collection tool, the data collection procedure, and the analysis plan.

Employment and Employers

- These data identify 675 people who are working (this number does not include people working in sheltered workshops), with 57 working two or more jobs.
- Employment occurs in a myriad of settings with 212 different employers.²
- The top three employers include: Hannaford Bros., which employs 50 people, Wal-Mart, which employs 16 people, and Tom's of Maine, which employs 14 people.

Earnings and Hours Worked

- During the week of 8/13/07, hourly wages ranged from \$0.19 to \$25.00 per hour, with an average wage of \$6.62 per hour.
- During the same week, the number of hours worked ranged from 0 to 40 hours, with an average of 10.51 hours worked in that week.

Supported Employment Services

- During the month of August 2007, the number of hours authorized for supported employment services funded by OACPD ranged from 0 to 135 hours per person, with an average of 30.72 hours.
- During the same period, people used fewer than the authorized hours of supported employment services. On average, people used 25.97 hours of supported employment services.

Employment for ME. (2008, 2009). CHOICES CEO activities are staffed out of the Muskie School of Public Service at the University of Southern Maine. This document was taken from a web site that is part of the CHOICES CEO project, funded by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services through a grant to Maine's Department of Health and Human Services (grant #1QAMAC030316). Views expressed do not represent official policy of the Maine Department of Health and Human Services, or the University of Southern Maine.

Appendix H: References

Employment for ME. (2008, 2009). CHOICES CEO project, funded by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services through a grant to Maine's Department of Health and Human Services (grant #1QAMAC030316).

Fortman, L.A. and Harvey, B.M. (2008). A Report on Public Law Chapter 101 Resolve, To Create Improved Employment Opportunities for People with Disabilities. Maine Department of Labor and Maine Department of Health and Human Services.