NTACT THE COLLABORATIVE
Improving Opportunities & Outcomes

Instruction in Self-Advocacy

Pre-Employment Transition Services

Guiding Questions | Activities | Progress & Outcome Indicators

Instruction in Self-Advocacy is one of the five required pre-employment transition services designed to:

- Help students learn about their rights and responsibilities; how to communicate their thoughts, concerns, and needs; speak up for themselves; make decisions about their own life; and
- Assist students in learning how to access information so they can gain a better understanding of things that are of interest to them; how to express information about their disability and how it impacts them; and how to request accommodations, services, supports, and assistive technology that may be needed in the workplace or a post-secondary educational training program.
- These services may include instruction in person-centered planning, and peer mentoring, including peer mentoring from individuals with disabilities working in competitive integrated employment.

Self-Advocacy Skills

- Self-awareness, self-determination, self-reflection
- Disability understanding and disclosure
- Ability to request & utilize modifications and/or accommodations
- Knowing your rights & responsibilities, how to request and accept help
- Leadership skills, assertiveness, self-efficacy
- Decision-making, goal setting, evaluate options
- Peer mentoring

Guiding Questions

1. ***Knowing Yourself***: Is the student able to express an understanding of their strengths, abilities, disabilities, challenges, and career interests, utilizing their preferred method of communication?
2. ***Knowing Your Needs*****:** Does the student have a working knowledge of the type of supports, services and accommodations they need to be successful at work, in a training program, in the community, and living independently?
3. ***Knowing How to Get What You Need***: Is the student able to set goals/develop a plan for achieving those goals; advocate for their rights and responsibilities at work, in a training program or socially; and know where to go for assistance?

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Examples of Activities

1. Have the student establish relevant personal self-advocacy goals for the year (for example, keeping a calendar, making medical appointments, ordering books in alternate formats).
2. Provide opportunities for students to practice discussing their individual strengths and challenges and how their disability may impact work performance.
3. Connect students with peer mentors to talk about their experiences with self-advocacy in employment and/or post-secondary training.

Key Considerations

- VR is the only entity that can provide or arrange for the provision of Instruction in Self-Advocacy as a pre-employment transition service to students with disabilities.
- Since local education agencies (LEAs) are obligated to provide transition services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), VR must collaborate with the LEA to ensure there is no duplication of services.
- Ensure students are engaged and build in opportunities for student self-reflection.

4. Offer lessons on disability disclosure, how to advocate for their rights and responsibilities, and use role playing activities to allow students to practice. Engage peer mentors to share their own experiences.
5. Encourage and support students to lead their own IEP meeting. Identify existing resources to teach students how to prepare for (e.g. ppt presentations, video clips, etc.), and lead the meeting.
6. Offer lessons on decision-making (including supported decision-making), and opportunities for students to learn goal-setting and attainment, and practice problem-solving.
7. Instruct students on how to identify support needs, explore websites such as the Job Accommodation Network (JAN), and request and utilize accommodations and/or modifications in a variety of settings.
8. Provide opportunities for students to participate in youth leadership groups and/or activities in educational or community settings to help them learn and demonstrate independence, leadership skills, assertiveness, listen to other's opinions, and evaluate options.
9. Assist students in finding opportunities to learn about selective service, voting, and other civic duties and privileges.

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Person-Centered Planning

Instruction in self-advocacy, including person-centered planning include activities that build on the student's strengths and interests; help the student feel empowered and understand they are an equal partner in the planning of services and supports they need in order to reach their goals; and that their opinions are important, valued, and respected.

Student Progress & Outcome Indicators

Identify how student participation, progress, and outcomes for instruction in self-advocacy will be tracked, reported, measured, and shared. Consider the following:

- Identify learning objectives and/or outcome indicators in order to:
  - *evaluate and document student progress*
  - *determine additional self-advocacy or peer mentoring opportunities that are needed*
  - *identify and/or solidify career interests, goals, and needed accommodations/supports*
  - *determine if no further instruction in self-advocacy is needed at this time*
- Conduct Pre-Post Surveys.
- Identify curricula/activities that are interactive and keep students engaged.
- Implement activities/events that incorporate student voice and decision-making.
- Incorporate opportunities after each activity for student self-reflection.
- Share student progress and outcomes with the student, IEP team, school contacts, internal VR team members, and parent/family, as appropriate.

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Examples of Learning Objectives/Outcome Indicators

Instruction in Self-Advocacy

1. Identifies goals, hopes and dreams, and can problem-solve ways to access available supports and resources to help them achieve their goals.
2. Communicates strengths and challenges in relation to their disability
3. Identifies necessary assistive technology, accommodations, and needed supports
4. Access the needed assistive technology, appropriate accommodations, modifications or supports
5. Identifies how to request and accept help in the workplace or post-secondary educational programs
6. Describes what is important to them in a work environment, work setting, and/or work culture.
7. Identifies employment goal on IPE, and post-secondary transition goals in the area of employment and independent living on IEP if applicable
8. Is able to actively participate and/or lead their own IEP meeting
9. Demonstrates an understanding of their legal rights and responsibilities in a workplace setting, post-secondary educational programs, and community.
10. Participates in youth leadership groups and/or activities in educational or community settings to learn independence, leadership skills, assertiveness, listen to others opinions, and evaluate options.

Curriculum options and more resources can be found at the link below:
NTACT:C Pre-Employment Transition Services Instruction in Self-Advocacy

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