

**Administration on Development Disabilities
Technical Assistance Institute – Presentation Summary
Youth Service Practitioners – Growing a Profession
Wednesday, August 9, 2006, 10:45 a.m.**

Moderator: Melvenia Wright

Presenters: Curtis Richards, BA, Project Director, National Consortium on Leadership and Disability for Youth (NCLD-Youth)

What qualifies you to work with youth?

Everyone brings very different experiences and comes from different backgrounds, but in listening to the responses to the questions, no one really has specialized training to work with youth. We just do it!

Workforce Development System

Schools, community based programs, Protection and Advocacy Systems, youth development, PACER, and other centers in our study, we took a look at what was inside each of these worlds and asked what is it that you need to work with youth. In our research, we reviewed 70 different initiatives, the Council for Exceptional Children has a set of competencies for youth development, the Apprenticeship Program has a different set and we found that everyone had something different. After we reviewed all this information, we then looked for common elements and found there were many commonalities. Ten basic competencies came out of our findings.

We created a panel of experts from each of these systems to validate our findings. We conducted on-line surveys, attended conferences and gathered some feedback to see how everything worked. What we came up with was that there were a total of ten most common youth-centered things individuals that were going to work with youth should have.

Competency Area 1: Knowledge of the Field

Competency Area 2: Communication with Youth

Competency Area 3: Assessment and Individualized Planning

Competency Area 4: Relationship to Family and Community

Competency Area 5: Workforce Preparation

Competency Area 6: Career Exploration

Competency Area 7: Relationships with Employers & Between Employer and Employee

Competency Area 8: Connection to Resources

Competency Area 9: Program Design and Delivery

Competency Area 10: Administrative Skills

For the purpose of this workshop, we explored what each of you is doing in Competency Areas 4 and 7:

Group Responses for Competency Area 4: Relationship to Family and Community *Strengths and Weaknesses*

Involve families and advocates to work together.

Offering specific resources

Teaching self-determination to youth and their families

Connecting youth with mentors and Resource Mapping (find/use community resources)

Engage youth in community service and building relationships in families.

We have a lot of parent input on how they can connect to our youth activities – we have parents come to disability pride parades.

We ask people to ensure youth are on community boards and we have parents on the board as well.

We ask that people support self determination and control over their own lives.

We conduct parent trainings on fostering youth advocacy; focus on youth leadership roles in the community; and we have youth organize their own fairs.

Listen to the needs of families; attend family functions which helps build relationships.

Build relationships with employers and develop a professional development plan.

Connect with our area Family Support 360 grantees, to obtain information and resources for parents.

Group Responses for Competency Area 7: Relationships with Employers & Between Employer and Employee *Strengths and Weaknesses*

Strengths and Weaknesses

Teach youth to communicate effectively with employers.

Training youth to interact with employers, but this is still an area that we lack addressing

Support employers who would like to hire persons with disabilities.

We are for youth by youth – we have info sheets for youth written by youth, we have materials for employers on how to work with youth with disabilities.

We have trouble exploring employment issues, and have not worked on this area as much. We focus on the advocacy piece, and do not necessarily work with employers but we try to educate youth on their rights surrounding employment

This list helps us recognize that there are many things that you have done and still much needs to be done. We need to take action and that involves:

Having practitioners in the organization complete the *KSA Assessment for Practitioners* to identify training priorities,

Visit the *KSA Hot Topic* to gather organizational professional development strategies,

Read “*Why Professional Development*” *Info Brief 19* to learn how professional development benefits youth, practitioners, organizations, and the community, and share results with NCWD/Youth!

RESOURCES

National Collaborative On Workforce and Disability for Youth

1-877-871-0744 (toll free) / 1-877-871-0665 (TTY toll free)

contact@ncwd-youth.info / www.ncwd-youth.info

This entire presentation and supplemental handout materials can be found at the following links:

Professional Development Assessment - http://www.ent-s-t.com/ADD_0806/08-10-06%20-%20003%20-%20YSP%20Assess%20-%20C_Richards.pdf

Info-Brief # 19 - http://www.ent-s-t.com/ADD_0806/08-10-06%20-%20004%20-%20Infobrief%20-%20C_Richards.pdf

Knowledge, Skills and Abilities Assessment - http://www.ent-s-t.com/ADD_0806/08-10-06%20-%20005%20-%20%20YouthPractic%20-%20C_Richards.pdf