| BENCHMARKS ON A PERSON'S PATHWAY |
| TO EMPLOYMENT AND COMMUNITY INTEGRATION/INCLUSION |

What are possible benchmarks to indicate that a person is on a Pathway to Employment and Community Integration/Inclusion?

KEY CONSIDERATIONS
- o Think of these benchmarks as leading to a goal of employment and community integration. They are next steps, objectives to be accomplished, or activities leading to work, relationships, integration, and valued roles.
- o The benchmarks below are divided into two Sections. The first section includes benchmarks that can be stepping stones to the achievement of goals in any area as it relates to employment, career or community exploration, development of relationship, someone's ability to make choices, community membership or contribution, etc. The second section has benchmarks that are specific to employment and relationship-building, which is the cornerstone for community integration/inclusion.
- o These benchmarks can become goals themselves but should always be thought of as activities and achievements on the path to employment and/or community integration/inclusion.
- o This listing is not exhaustive but instead is meant to be used as a guide and to provide you with starting points and ideas on which you, the person and his/her team can build or insert your own logical next steps.
- o COMMUNICATION is ranked first among the thing that employers look for in a job candidate AND is required for relationships, effective self-advocacy, self-determination and choice-making. Therefore, Communication leads both sections. It is important to focus on assisting people in strengthening or developing better communication skills, with support and technology as appropriate.
- o If the person with whom you are working does not communication through traditional means, is hard to understand, or interacts with people who are unsure or his/her likes, dislikes, preferences, interests, etc., one or more goals MUST be focused on enhancing that person's ability to communicate and/or our ability to understand him/her.
- o High-tech and low-tech assistive technology should be considered for people whose team has difficult understanding their choices, preferences, interests, likes and dislikes.

OTHER EXPECTATIONS RELATED TO CREATING AND ACCOMPLISHING BENCHMARKS

1. Document discussions that explore the kinds of jobs people observe and discuss in different community settings, including the person's interest in learning more, exploring that type of employment or negative reactions.
2. Document feedback, guidance and accomplishments related to "soft skills" required for successful employment (e.g., politeness, customer service, being on time, asking for assistance, dressing appropriately, etc.). As much as possible, engage in these activities and discussions while in integrated community settings.
3. Remember that these benchmarks below are not the major goals themselves but a means to an end. They are benchmarks, skills and stepping stones to enable people to develop and maintain relationships, explore possible careers, actively participate in community activities and with other community members, get and keep a job, contribute to their communities and neighborhoods, etc. For example, benchmarks that might lead to the larger goals include:
   - Making eye contact with people when meeting and interacting with others
   - Introducing yourself
   - Entering a conversation appropriately
   - Making conversation/Asking questions/Replying to questions or statements/Making "small talk"
   - Communicating needs/desires/preferences
   - Making choices and decisions
   - Asserting yourself
   - Developing an awareness of body language and non-verbal communication (e.g., appropriate or acceptable facial expressions, posture, personal space, touch, etc.)
   - Making increasingly complex choices and decisions
   - Working with someone else on a common activity or goal (i.e., engaging in teamwork)
   - Learning and practicing a new skills
   - Developing effective communication skills (with or without assistive technology or assistance from others)
   - Developing work habits (e.g., arriving on time, asking for clarification, caring for personal needs, completing tasks, solving problems, working as part of a team, etc.)
   - Handling money, budgeting and learning about earnings
   - Dressing appropriately – clothing, accessories, hygiene
   - Developing a network of acquaintances and contacts

4. Document how you/your organization learned about and knows each person's interests for work and/or the efforts being made to learn what he/she would like to do. Document how you/your team provides him/her with access to varied job experiences and options

5. Document how you/your team provides support to him/her to address any identified barriers in achieving employment outcomes, relationships or other community experiences.

6. Note that, at any point in time, choices may be limited for a number of reasons. In those situations, explore options that are available, learn about a person's preferences and assist them in choosing from the options available at that time, with the understanding that this will be revisited periodically if and when more options are available. (For example, for health reasons, someone may not be able to work full-time or work in a job that requires a lot of standing. Therefore, they may get a part-time job that is more sedentary for now, acknowledging that they are interested in more hours and activities when their health improves.)

7. Document each person's preferences for interactions with others (e.g., how often, under what circumstances, with how many people, etc.) and/or the efforts being made to learn about each person's preferences for community integration, work and relationships.

8. Document the types of social roles each person currently fills (with family, friends, community and neighborhood groups, etc.)

9. Document the supports staff may provide or may need to provide to assist him/her in performing their chosen social roles, if supports are needed and requested?

10. Document any community members and other people in the workplace or community setting that can provide him/her with support.

SECTION 1 – Possible Benchmarks
  A. Communication
   A.1. Can effectively make choices between 2 or more options in a way that is universally understood.
   A.2. Can express needs, desires, likes and dislikes in a way that is universally understood.
   A.3. Can use an assistive or augmentative device, communication board or book, sign language, etc. to aid in communication of choices, preferences and ideas. (Be specific as to what communication he/she may be focusing on. For example, he/she will choose food from a menu using an iPad or restaurant menu with pictures.)
   A.4. Responds to greetings appropriately.
   A.5. Introduces him/herself appropriately for the setting and situation.

A.6. Uses a telephone effectively to connect with others.
A.7. Can follow directions and respond to verbal requests appropriately for the setting and situation.
A.8. Can effectively communicate that he/she needs help, does not understand or requires assistance in a way that is universally understood.

NOTE: The PCT Communication Chart will be useful in this area, so that if someone does not communicate well with words, people will know that, in a certain situation, when certain things happen, the way a person expresses him/herself typically has a meaning and, from the Communication Chart, there is guidance for what supporters should or can do to support that person in communicating and/or participating.
NOTE: Be as specific as possible with what you are assisting the person in accomplishing in any of the communication areas above, since acceptable communication will vary in different settings and situations.
NOTE: All of these activities will be best learned and internalized in the setting in which they will be used. People who have difficulty communicating also often have difficulty generalizing what they learn from one setting to another.

SECTION 2

A. Communication and activities related to employment, community participation and maintaining relationships (all with or without assistive technology and/or assistance)

A.1. Identifies relevant signs and symbols in the employment and community settings in which s/he interacts or frequents.
A.2. Introduces him/herself to new acquaintances appropriately (e.g., only sharing information that is relevant, waiting for a break in a conversation to introduce him/herself)
A.3. Initiates or maintains conversation, including ability to appropriately enter a conversation
A.4. Uses appropriate language (addressing others, tone of voice, facial expressions, posture, distance from others while interacting, etc.)
A.5. Asks for help or explanation when needed.
A.6. Uses a cell phone.
A.7. Sends a text message.
A.8. Uses email and/or social media to connect to family, friends, community and neighborhood groups, and people at work.

A.9. Updates (with support from staff and others as needed) career and vocational assessment information as well as information about community preferences and interests, using Discovery assessment and Person-Centered Thinking Tools as a result of new experiences, to continue to identify interests, abilities, marketable skills.

A.10. Uses the community as a learning environment, exploring (with support from staff and others) the community to assess and map that which the community has to offer based on known and emerging interests and preferences.

A.11. Engages in several work, job training or other activities that match his/her interests, desires and preferences.

A.12. Practices and/or engages in activities that strengthen his/her ability to achieve outcomes, with or without support, related to:

1. Choice
2. Community Contribution
3. Self-Determination and Self-Advocacy
   a. Knowing his/her rights and how to exercise them in the workplace or other community settings
4. Building Relationships
5. Employment or Supported Integrated Retirement
6. Community Exploration and Preference Identification
7. Career Exploration and Preference Identification
8. Communication
9. Social, Interpersonal & Soft Skills
10. Specific vocational skills
11. Daily living skills
    a. Managing their finances
    b. Caring for personal needs
    c. Purchasing and caring for clothing, selecting clothing appropriate for work and community participation
    d. Traveling

A.13. Identifies and demonstrates skills, talents and interests using Discovery and PCT assessments that focus on those activities he/she does even when not asked, that he/she never tires of doing, and/or that draw his/her attention.

B. Initiating and/or maintaining relationships

B.1. Says hello to or otherwise appropriately greets new people

B.2. Makes eye contact and smiles

B.3. Expresses or otherwise indicates that he/she wants to make friends

B.4. Becomes a "regular" at one or more places where he/she is comfortable and accepted

B.5. Joins an activity or event (e.g., volunteers, participates or joins an activity)

B.6. Hosts an activity by inviting one or two community members to join him/her

B.7. Invites one or more community members to a community activity (e.g., going for a walk, exercising, going to a music or cultural event, visiting a museum exhibition)

B.8. Accepts an invitation to a community event for from a community member.

B.9. Practices and rehearses what he/she might want to say ahead of time in a specific situation.

B.10 Joins or affiliates with a local faith community.

B.11. Participates in social or community activities with a local faith community or neighborhood association.

B.12. Involves family and/or friends in coming up with ideas for expanding his/her network.

B.13. Meets one or more neighbors and gets to know them.

B.14. Keeps a contact book or list of people he/she is getting to know with information about each of his/her relationships.

B.15. Supports a local professional, amateur, college or youth sports team with someone else who likes the same sport or team.

B.16. Organizes an open house or another event and invite neighbors or new acquaintances to join.

B.17. Reviews local/community newspapers and websites to identify community activities in which there are community members to meet.

B.18. Goes to a community gym.

B.19. Teaches someone else a skill that he/she is good at.

B.20. Takes pictures to show people, as conversation starters, so that he/she can talk about them, with or without assistance.

B.21. Practices talking about local or current events to make conversation.

B.22. Goes to a sports bar or community center to watch a sporting event with others.

B.23. Takes a community cooking or craft class.

B.24. Volunteers to be a "greeter" or someone who hands things out at a community event or plays some other role through which he/she can meet people.

B.25. Sets a goal to create a personal support network, with support from staff, friends and/or family.

B.26. Creates a Facebook account to connect with people from the past and to build a network of former and new relationships, learn about upcoming events and communicate with others.

B.27. Practices asking others for their contact information.

B.28. Has a phone number and a pre-made card to share his/her contact information with new friends/acquaintances.

B.29. Shops locally to get to be known in neighborhood and in neighborhood stores and restaurants.

B.30. Develops a hobby or has/starts a collection that opens the door to activities that can be shared with others.

B.31. Joins an advocacy group and engages in advocacy activities with others.

B.32. Invites people over for holiday or other activities.

B.33. Gets a pet and/or offers to care for the pet of a neighbor.

B.34. Helps others.

B.35. Practices complimenting people and recognizing things they do well.

B.36. Bakes something to share, perhaps for a holiday or community event.

B.37. Keeps track of the birthdays and anniversaries of families, friends and acquaintances.

C.   Valued social roles

C.1. Explores a broad array of valued roles he/she can play, with support to assist in learning skills and/or behaviors required to fulfill that role (e.g., joining a neighborhood or community group, neighborhood watch, tenant's association, social club, civic group, place of worship, Advisory Neighborhood Commission, Board, work group or task force, advisor board, etc.).

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