

Transition Matters:

**Meeting the Post-Secondary Needs
of Students with Autism**

Arizona Autism Coalition Conference

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Capabilities to Consider When Determining College/Career Readiness

- Academic Capabilities
 - Can the student complete the minimum level of college academic skills with basic accommodations and support?
- Social Capabilities
 - Can the student handle and adjust to a variety of social situations with assistance and support from family, friends, and educational institutions?
- Life Management Capabilities
 - Can the student manage basic life tasks? I.E. Paying Bills, Basic Money Management, Minor Household Repairs and Tasks, Cooking, Scheduling, Transportation?
- Executive Functioning Capabilities
 - Can the student manage a schedule, create a problem solving plan, or organize their notebook?

“Self-advocacy is the ability to communicate one’s talents, skills and needed accommodations to others....”

(Field, Martin, Miller, Ward, & Wehmeyer, 1998, p.2)

SELF-ADVOCACY



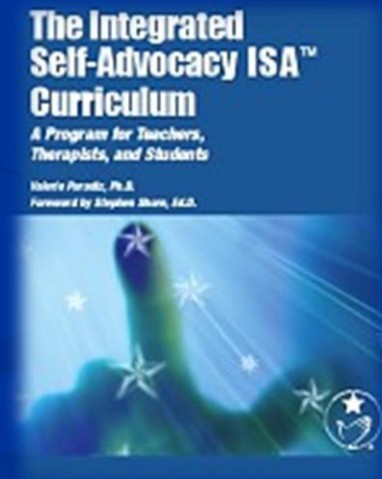
Self-Advocacy in Action

- Once the student graduates, the student is responsible for advocating for his or her own academic needs & services. The student needs to be able to:
 - Discuss their disability and how it affects their learning
 - Know their legal rights
 - Determine reasonable accommodations directly related to their disability
 - Identify effective study skills
 - Manage their time

(Simpson and Spencer, 2009)

Integrated Self-Advocacy Curriculum

- Integrated Self Advocacy helps us, as professionals and family members, to provide children and adults with ASD and other conditions with safe forums for self-discovery, structured learning activities and a cumulative understanding of the many facets of self-advocacy.
- <http://www.valerieparadiz.com>



The 5 Self-Advocacy Skills Areas

- 1) Sensory/Environmental
- 2) Social
- 3) Disclosure
- 4) Deep & Focused Interests
- 5) Civil Rights/Entitlements

(Paradiz, 2010)

Self-Determination

- ...choosing and enacting choices to control one's life - to the maximum extent possible - based on knowing and valuing oneself, and in the pursuit of one's own needs, interests, and values. (Campeau and Wolfman, *Research on self-determination in individuals with disabilities*. 1993, p. 2)



Promoting self-determination

- **Students who are self-determined tend to make things happen.** They need to be able to:
 - Set personal goals
 - Solve problems that act as barriers to achieving their goals
 - Make appropriate choices based on personal preferences & interests
 - Participate in decisions that impact the quality of life
 - Advocate for their own academic needs & services
 - Create action plans to achieve goals
 - Self-regulate & self-manage day-to-day actions

(Simpson and Spencer, 2009)

Motivating Students to Address Their Needs

1. Link needed training or services to meeting their own goals
2. Make training or services enjoyable
3. Use external rewards if intrinsic motivation is missing
4. Shore up assets and strengths before addressing challenges
5. Testimonials from successful individuals with ASD's
6. Helping to teach others

(Baker, 2005)

Post-Secondary Education



Action steps for the 8th grade student:

- Obtain a copy of HS course catalogue
- Develop HS course of study
- Review Websites of possible postsecondary colleges
- Develop study skills
- Get tutoring or remediation if necessary
- Start saving money
- Include transition plan in IEP
- Use a Transition Planning Worksheet to keep a record of the plan

(Simpson and Spencer, 2009)

Action steps for the 9th grade student:

- Visit the HS career center
- Develop skills for academic independence – time management, study skills, note-taking, etc.
- Explore assistive technology
- Update Transition Plan at IEP meeting
- Review 4-year course of study with counselor
- Discuss college entrance exams with counselor
- Explore & choose extracurricular activities
- Explore options for completing community service projects
- Continue to remediate/compensate for basic skills deficits
- Take advantage of tutorials

(Simpson and Spencer, 2009)

Action steps for the 10th grade student:

- Visit nearby college & talk with someone in the Disability Services Office
- Signup & take practice college entrance exams & preparatory courses
- Update Transition Plan at IEP meeting
- Review 4-year course of study with counselor
- Continue involvement in extracurricular activities and community service
- Continue academic preparation & remediation
- Continue developing good work habits

(Simpson and Spencer, 2009)

Action steps for the 11th grade student:

- Review 4-year course of study & Transition Plan with IEP team & counselor
- Take college entrance exams
- Attend college night at the HS
- Schedule college visits for spring/summer
- Check out
<http://www.commonapp.org> to see which colleges accept the Common Application
- Apply for scholarships
- Identify references: 2 teachers, 2 other individuals
- Begin visiting colleges
- Prepare transition packets for disability documentation that include:
 - Evaluation reports
 - Transcripts
 - Test scores, current IEP
 - Medical records
- Continue academic preparation & remediation, extracurricular activities, & community service

(Simpson and Spencer, 2009)

Action steps for the 12th grade student:

- Complete course of study
- Schedule college visits in early fall
- Work with English teacher to complete college essay
- Check out <http://www.commonapp.org> to see which colleges accept the Common Application
- Apply for scholarships
- Complete Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)
- Request letters of reference
- Re-take college entrance exams (if needed)
- Submit applications
- Prepare transition packets for disability documentation that include:
 - Evaluation reports
 - Transcripts
 - Test scores, current IEP
 - Medical records
- Continue academic preparation & remediation, extracurricular activities, & community service

(Simpson and Spencer, 2009)

Rights and Responsibilities

Secondary Education

- IDEA, ADA, Section 504
- School district: identification & evaluation
- Service delivery: Driven by IEP team
- Advocacy: Parents or guardians are the primary advocate.

Postsecondary Education

- ADA, Section 504
- Student: self-identify & provide documentation
- Service delivery: Student notifies DSS to set up services
- Advocacy: Student must advocate for their own academic needs & services.

(Simpson and Spencer, 2009)

What kind of documentation do colleges need?

- **A specific diagnostic statement** identifying the disability including severity and date of current diagnostic evaluation.
- **Specific findings which support this diagnosis** including relevant history, tests administered, test results, and interpretation of those test results.
- **Information concerning the impact of the disability on the educational setting** including a description of the functional limitations due to the disability.
- **The documentation must be on letterhead, typed, dated, signed,** and include the evaluator's name, address, telephone number, and professional credentials.
- The aforementioned points are general requirements for all documentation packets, however, additional information for different disabilities may be required. (See the documentation requirements below for specific disabilities.) Individual Educational Plans (IEP) are valuable resources of information but cannot be used as documentation of a disability.
- An FIE from a school district is usually the most widely accepted.
- Most prefer 3 Years or Earlier, but many don't require it anymore. (New)

Accommodations and Disclosure (College and the Workplace)

Modification vs Accommodation

- Modification is a reduction, change or limitation; a fundamental change in form or content of something. (Not offered by schools or workplaces)
- Accommodation is to adjust or adapt (Required by federal law in both school and the workplace)

Full Disclosure vs Partial Disclosure

- Full-I have _____ and this is what is how it affects me.
- Partial-I have a disability and need this reasonable accommodation to complete my job or complete the application process.
- Usually partial is enough, but each situation is different.

What accommodations or services do colleges offer?

- Personal and Crisis Counseling Services (SHSU)
- Specialized Group Programs (SHSU)
- Group Counseling Services (SHSU)
- Career Counseling & Testing
- Academic Content Tutoring and Study Skills Courses
- extended testing time,
- Interpreters
- note-taking,
- reader services
- scribe services
- audio books and other adaptive technology services

Roommate or No Roommate... that is the Question?

- Generally, no roommate is better!
- Most research suggests that adding the stress and pressure of a roommate can overload a college student with a disability.
- A quiet, private dorm room or apartment can be a safe haven for sensory de-escalation and relaxation.



Consider the idea of another student or friend serving as a liaison or mentor?

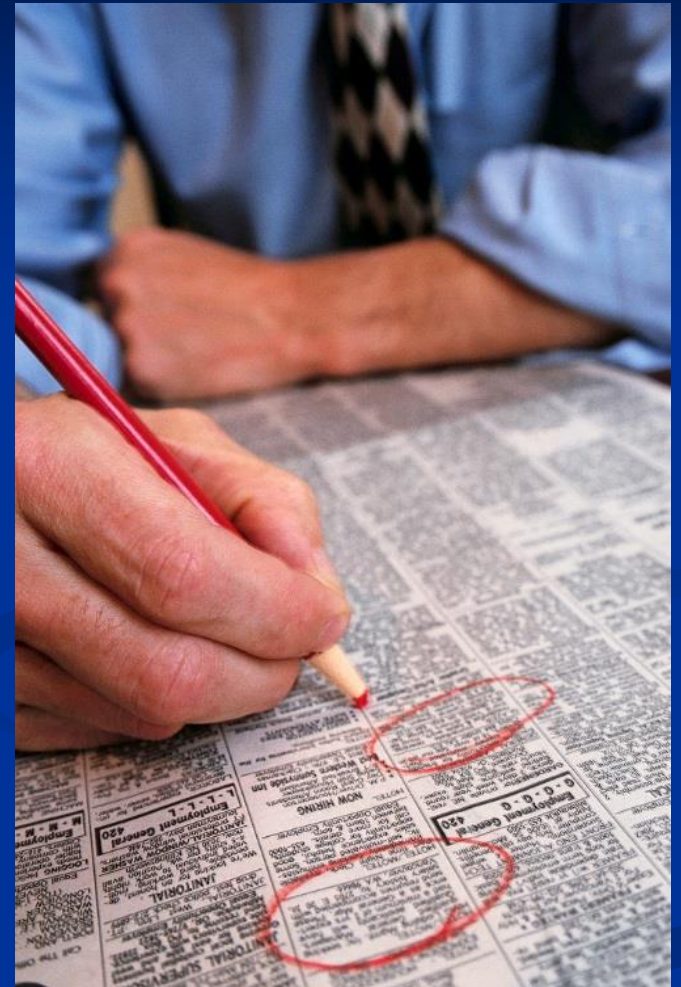
- They can help advocate for their needs.
- They can serve as a social, academic, and organizational role-model.
- They can help them with registration, navigation of the campus, and communication with parents and professors.



Common Questions about Post-Secondary Transition

- Can a school deny my child admission based on their disability, do they have to disclose it?
 - No , a school CANNOT deny your child admission based on a disability and you ALWAYS have the right to choose whether to tell the school at all. However, if you want services from them, you will have to disclose.
- Do high school accommodations/modifications affect college services ?
 - No, they are two INDEPENDENT processes. A student can and probably will receive different services in college than in high school. An IEP can be helpful to colleges, but keep in mind they carry NO LEGAL WEIGHT because IDEA does not apply.
- If the college requests an evaluation before they will provide services, who pays?
 - Neither the high school or college are responsible to pay for an evaluation, so it may be at your expense.
- Will my child's HS transcript be marked as “disabled” or modified?
 - Probably not, in fact, the state is changing some of the course titles and codes to make it less obvious that the student took special education classes. In truth, it's based on the individual entrance requirements for each school.

Employment



Facts about Adults with Disabilities in the US

- The Workforce Participation Rate of Adults with Disabilities
 - 32.1% versus 73.8% for Adults without Disabilities (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2014)
- Adults with Autism Spectrum Disorders
 - 9 out of 10 are either unemployed or underemployed, regardless of their IQ or education level. (Autism Speaks, 2014)
 - 500,000 children with Autism will become adults over the next decade (Autism Speaks, 2014)
 - Only 55.1 percent of young adults with autism held paying jobs during their first six years out of high school, the lowest percentage among the disability categories examined. (Shattuck, 2012)

What is the Job Market Like?

- Where do people really work in the US?
 - Elementary/Secondary Schools
 - Food Service Industry
 - Hospitals
 - Employment Services
 - Grocery Stores
- Myth-Everyone needs a bachelor's degree in our workforce! False-Only 1/3 of Jobs Require Post-Secondary Education for Entry (Trend is expected to continue)
- Apprenticeships are expected to be the fastest growing requirement!
- When are the best times to find jobs?



Job Development Options

■ Options

- Jobs Requiring High School Diploma Only
- College-Based Training (Degree)
- Technical School Training (Certificate)
- Registered Apprenticeship
- Self Employment (Service/Product)
- Volunteering

■ Identify Interests and Strengths

- Research Organizations Involved



Vocational Assessment

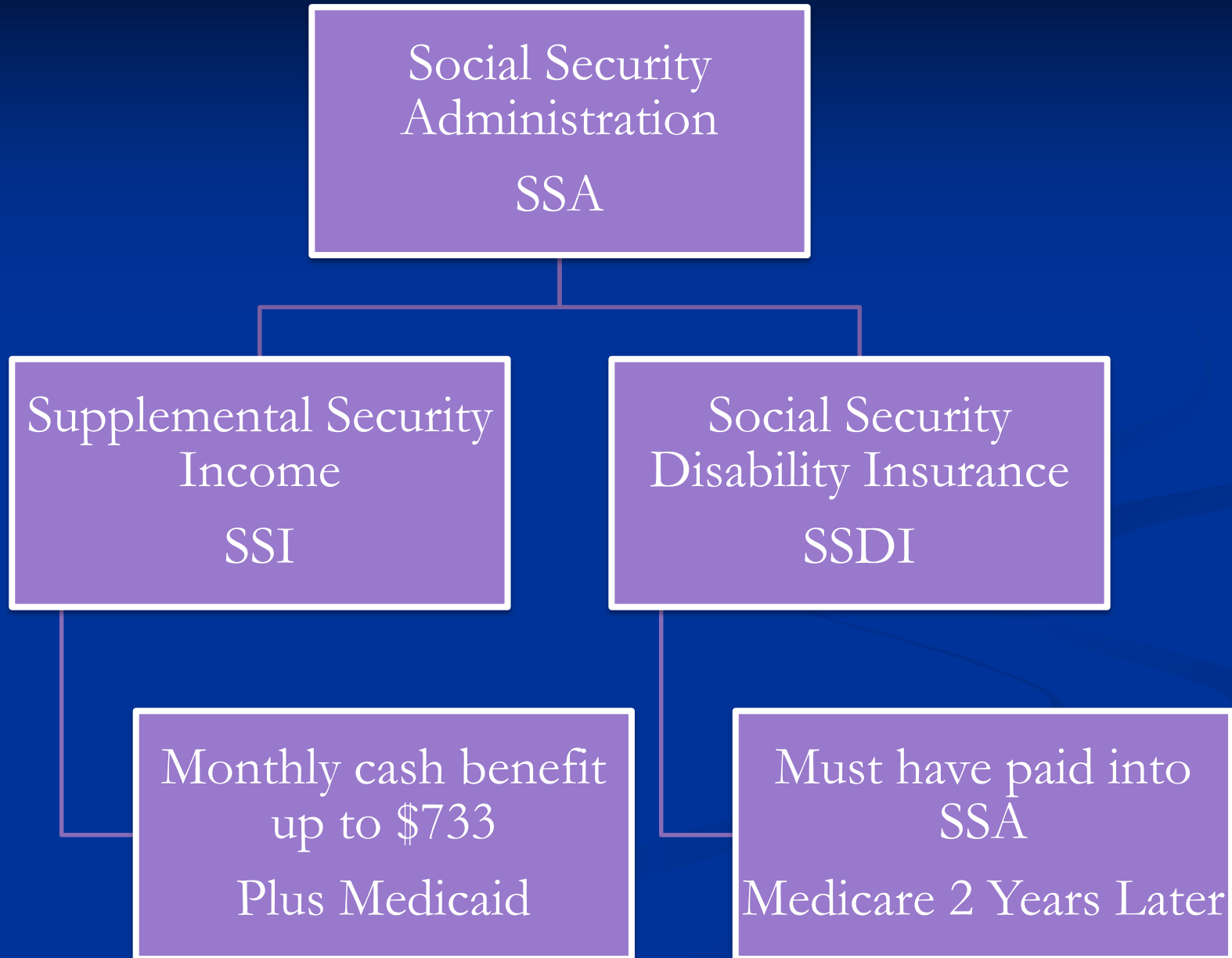
- COPS System-EdiTS (Online & Paper)
 - Measures interests, values, and abilities that are plotted onto a profile sheet and matched to 14 vocational areas.



Common Questions about Disability and Employment

- Do employers have to give a person with a disability preference in the application process?
 - No, all they are required to do is provide “reasonable” accommodations in the application process and in their completion of essential job functions. If the person cannot perform the basic job functions, even with accommodations, the employer is not required to hire or retain them.
- Are the accommodations automatic?
 - No, the person with a disability must identify themselves and request the needed accommodations, usually in writing.
- Why can't VR, the school, or the job coach just get them a job and why does it take so long?
 - Because the only person that can offer to hire is the employer and it is completely their choice regardless of the feelings, persuasion, or communication with parents, educators, or job coaches. In short, the person with a disability and any professionals working with them, like everyone else, are at the mercy of decisions of the hiring manager.

SSA Programs



SSA Work Incentives/Exclusions

- Plan to Achieve Self Support (PASS)
 - You put money in a separate bank account for a work-related need. Doesn't count against SSI
 - Must be approved by SSA Area Work Incentive Coordinator (AWIC).
 - Can use WIPA Coordinators to get help with applying
- Student Earned Income Exclusion
 - Under age 22 can get \$1730 per month forgiven from check, up to \$6960/year
 - Not automatic, you must request in writing to SSA.
- 1619(b) Medicaid
 - Even with no check, keep Medicaid until "Texas" threshold of \$32,387 in a year.
- Medicaid Buy-In
 - Those over the threshold can pay to keep it.
- Websites to Know
 - <http://www.chooseworkttw.net/>
 - <http://www.socialsecurity.gov/disabilityresearch/workincentives.htm>

My Favorite Resource Publishers

SocialThinking.com

- Social Thinking
- Perspective Taking
- Dealing with Change
- Hanging Out
- Appropriate Time/Place
- Social Memory
- Friendships
- Bullies and Jerks
- Problem Solving

JKP.com (Jessica Kingsley Publishers)

- Going to College
- Relationships
- Marriage
- Friendships
- Going to Work
- Life Skills
- Women and Men Issues
- Sexuality

Independent Living Experience

www.independentlivingexperience.com

■ Long-Term Services

- Individual support focusing on any skills related to the employment, independent living, or social skills domains

■ Short-Term Services

- Group sessions for 15 weeks, 2 hours per week
 - Focusing on Vocational Social Skills, Finance, or Relationships

■ DARS ASD Support Services (Texas Only)

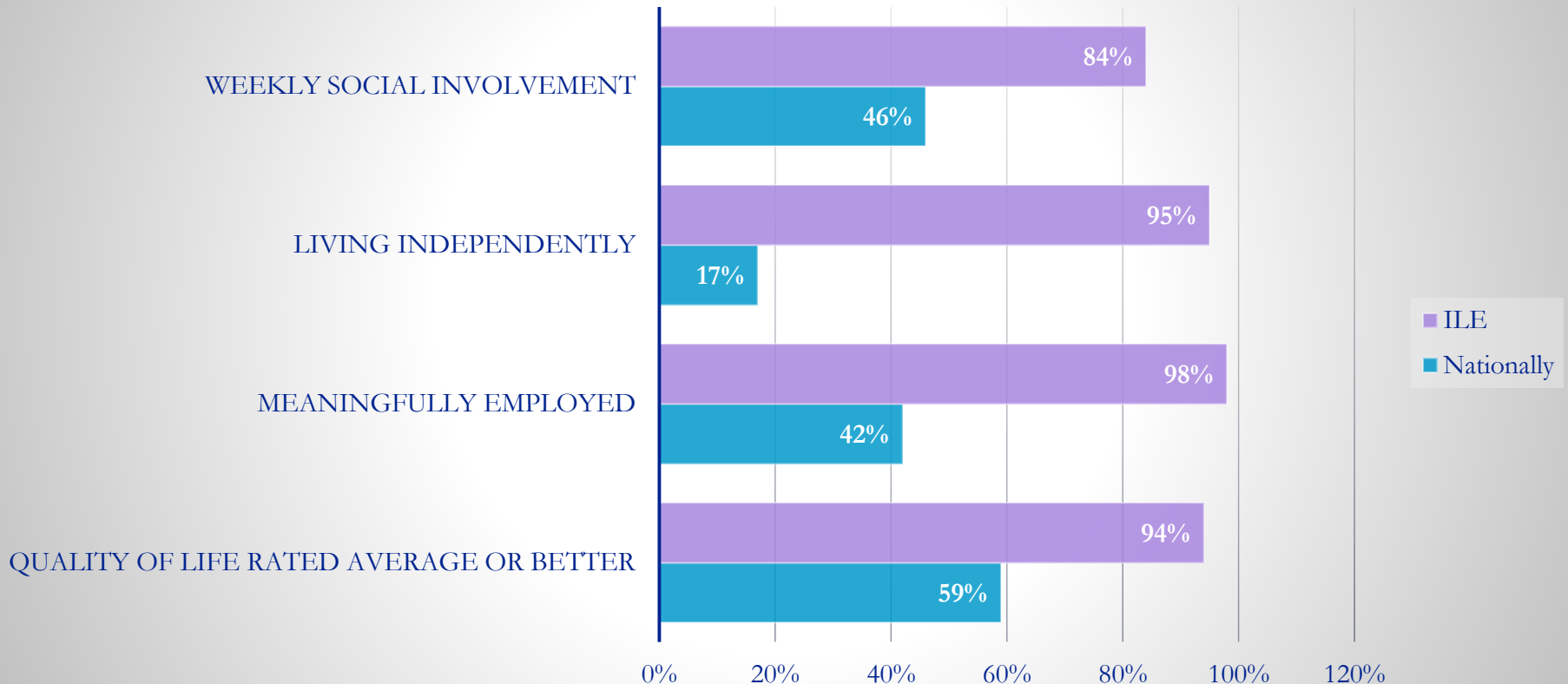
- With counselor approval, pays up to 50 hours of ILE Services in group sessions

■ Vocational Rehab Employment Services (Texas & Colorado)

- Available now in Denver
- Coming soon to Houston, Austin, & Dallas

What Makes ILE Unique?

Our Client's Success!



Questions/Comments

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MY WEBSITE: <http://www.transitionmatters.org/>

Resource Websites

- National Center on Secondary Education and Transition
 - <http://www.ncset.org>
- United States Department of Education-Office of Civil Rights
 - <http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/index.html>
- Transition Coalition-University of Kansas
 - <http://www.transitioncoalition.org>
- National Center for Learning Disabilities
 - <http://www.ncld.org>
- Association on Higher Education and Disability
 - <http://www.ahead.org>

Resource Websites

- Independent Living Experience
 - www.independentlivingexperience.com
- College Living Experience
 - www.experiencecle.com
- Parent Center Hub-Former NICHY Resources
 - <http://www.parentcenterhub.org/nichcy-resources/>
- PACER Center
 - <http://www.pacer.org>