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Youth in Action! – Leading your Transition Planning

March 27, 2013 **Guides Tip Sheets**

Do you...

- Have your own ideas of what you want your future to look like?
- Want to have a say in what your future will be like?

If so, you can make it happen by participating in your transition planning!

*If you come across an unfamiliar word as you read this, don't just skip over it, look it up!
This will help you get the information you need AND build a strong vocabulary.*

What is a “Transition”?

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A “**transition**” is a process of change – a process or period in which something undergoes a change and passes from one stage, form, or activity to another. Right now, you are in transition. The time between age 14 and 25 is when young people become adults. It’s worth thinking about your own youth transition because if you take the right steps during this time you’ll be able to lay the foundation to be as independent as possible when you’re an adult and to build the future you’ve always dreamed of.

What is Transition Planning?

Transition planning is planning that can help you take charge of your future. This can include figuring out what your skills and interests are; matching those with college majors and careers; setting specific college and career goals for yourself; and choosing classes and activities that will help you reach those goals. Transition planning connects what you’re doing now with what you want to do in the future, like graduating from college or getting a job. Usually, you start this planning in middle school or 9th grade and keep working on it every year until you reach the transition goals that you set for yourself

Why Should I Lead My Transition Planning?

Sometimes it seems easier to let adults plan your transition for you or to just do the same thing that your friends or classmates are doing. However, they can’t always make the best choices for you. You know what you want for your future, and since it’s up to you to make it happen, you should be involved in planning for it!

If you have a disability, it is even more important that you participate in your transition planning. To go to college and get a job you will have to plan out your own unique system of supports (like transportation or personal assistance services), and no one knows what you need better than you.

4 Steps for Leading Your Transition Planning

1. Start now! Being an adult may seem far away, but there are things– like taking a foreign language class, developing your **soft skills**, and learning how to manage money– that you must do NOW to be ready to *graduate from high school, go to college or receive technical education, get a job, and live as independently as possible*. The sooner you begin participating in your transition planning, the better!

2. Decide how you want to do your planning. One way to do transition planning is to use a planning process that has been created for you, such as:

- A **4-Year Plan** or **Individualized Learning Plan (ILP)**
- An **Individualized Education Program (IEP)**, if you have a disability.
- A transition plan created as part of a mentoring or leadership program.

If you aren't currently participating in a transition planning process, don't worry. You can make your own! You can get ideas on how to do this from people around you, and from the following website:

<http://ruralinstitute.umt.edu/transition/Articles/PlanningWorkbook.pdf>

3. Make a team. Transition planning isn't something that you have to do alone. Think about inviting people you trust and respect to be on your planning team. Some of these could people could be your:

- Friends and **peer mentors**
- Family members
- Teachers and tutors
- Employers and **adult mentors**
- Academic advisors
- Counselors or case managers

4. Start planning! Begin transition planning with the end in mind. First, think about what type of future you want to have as an adult, and set long-term goals. Then, figure out what you can do now, during your transition, to reach those goals. Here are some things to think about:

- What are you good at and what do you like doing?
- What careers relate to this?
- What types of education, skills, and experience are needed for these careers?
- How can you get these types of education, skills, and experiences?

Things to Think About

It's not just about work and school. In planning for your transition into adult life, you will also need to learn a wide variety of skills, such as how to:

- Manage money and find housing
- Cook and eat healthy
- Exercise and relieve stress

- Obtain accommodations or supports at school, work, and home
- Use transportation in your community
- Participate in civic engagement.

Think big, but start small. Some goals, like starting a career, may seem so big that you don't know where to even start. However, if you break these big goals up into a series of bite-size pieces, it's easier to plan for them and to see your progress along the way.

Change is okay. Plans change from time to time, including transition plans. For example, halfway through high school, you might discover a new career-field that interests you. That's okay! Just make sure to update your plan regularly so that it's lined up with your current goals.

Keep records. An important part of transition planning is keeping track of everything you do. This will help you figure out which goals you are meeting, and which ones you need help with. Also remember to save important documents such as transcripts, certificates, letters of recommendation, etc. You will need these in the future!

Taking action!

Now that you know:

- What transition planning is,
 - Why it's important to participate in, and
 - The 4 steps you can take to lead you transition planning...
- ... **Start participating in your transition planning today!**

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