

Onondaga Pathways to Careers Community of Practice Services to Support those with Significant Disabilities and Family Engagement December 15, 2016 - Transcript

Michael Morris: Ok, this is Michael Morris and with Meera Adya we with Burton Blatt Institute at Syracuse University are going to facilitate the discussion today. Let me – before we get going we have a wonderful list of presenters today. A lot of opportunity for interaction and discussion. This is, of course, the Pathways to Careers Community of Practice – Services to Support Those With Significant Disabilities and Family Engagement, that is bringing us all to this call today. Let's make sure we know who is with us so let me attempt a roll call. Let me start with the four vocational rehabilitation project that are being funded by RSA. Can you share with me who has joined from the Georgia project?

Rita Young: This is Rita Young. We have a team of about nine from the E3 unit that are all participating today.

Michael Morris: Ok, great, thank you. How about Kentucky?

Helga Gilbert: Hello, this is Helga Gilbert, and it's just me today.

Michael Morris: Ok, thank you, Helga. Nebraska? I guess, ok. And how about Virginia project? No, not yet, ok. We also have invited and have participation on the Paths from some of the Disability Employment Initiative TA team. That's a project funded by the Employment and Training Administration at the Department of Labor. Have any DEI TA folks joined us today?

David Mayer: David Mayer.

Michael Morris: Hi, David, how are you?

David Mayer: Good, Michael. Nice and warm

Michael Morris: Yeah that's what you get for where you live in California. Ok, and how about any DEI Project joining? No, ok. And, of course, I suspect we have a fairly robust team joining us with the Onondaga Community College Project? Anyone want to speak on behalf of the group? I'm sorry, can you repeat that?

Unknown Speaker: Nancy and Megan are here.

Michael Morris: Oh, Nancy and Megan, great. Thank you. And did anyone join from the other project funded by Office of Disability Employment Policy or the Department of Labor from the state of Tennessee by any chance? Did anyone come on?

Janet: Hi, this is Janet with ODEP. Pellissippi State Community College is not able to join us today.

Michael Morris: Ok. Anyone else from ODEP want to announce themselves if they have joined? No, ok.

Unknown Speaker: Virginia

Michael Morris: Oh Virginia, who joined?

Unknown Speaker: Do we have Virginia?

Michael Morris: Oh, do we have Virginia? I asked about Virginia.

Unknown Speaker: We do have Nebraska though, Zack is on the line.

Michael Morris: Ok, great. Alright. Ok, well we've got quite a lineup of presenters today. The first presenter is Rebecca Salon. And Celestia, are you going to move slides for us?

Celestia: Yes, I'd be happy to, just tell me next slide please and announce the slide number.

Michael Morris: Ok, next slide, yeah, next slide please. Nope, nothing moving for me. Are slides moving?

Celestia: We are on slide number five.

Michael Morris: They are?

Celestia: Does everyone see slide number five?

Unknown Speaker: Yes, we do.

Michael Morris: Ok. Well let me introduce you to Rebecca Salon. Rebecca has many years of experience in different federally funded projects. She is a recent appointee to the President's Committee for People with Intellectual Disabilities. She is currently the project director for the National Center on Leadership for employment and advancement for people with disabilities, called the LEAD Center. And she also works at the District of Columbia, DC's Department on Disability Services, where she is the lead for the DC Employment First Program Initiatives. Prior to all of this work, she was for quite a number of years the executive director of the Lieutenant Joseph Kennedy Institute. She earned her Doctoral degree in special ed with studies and research geared toward disability policy from Syracuse University. So I'm going to turn it over to Rebecca. We asked her to share a little bit with us about the LEAD Center, but then move on to talk about the questions that come up in our last call about working with people with more significant disabilities, could we provide any

tips and strategies. Rebecca is certainly an outstanding expert to share some of her knowledge from years of experience. So, Rebecca, let's turn to you.

Rebecca Salon: Thanks so much, I appreciate being invited. For those of you who don't know about the LEAD Center where the National Center on Leadership for the Employment and Economic Advancement of People with Disabilities and we're a collaborative of disability work force and economic empowerment organizations led by National Disability Institute and funded by the Office of Disability Employment Policy at the Department of Labor. And our mission is to advance both sustainable individual and systems level change that results in improved competitive integrated employment and economic self-sufficiency outcomes for people across the spectrum of disabilities. And if you're not on our mailing list, I would encourage you to leadcenter.org and sign up.

So I wanted to talk a little about some of the projects that LEAD Center has been doing that specifically focus on people with the most significant disabilities, but also have great promise for engaging families. One of the initiatives that we have been working on for the past several years has been to introduce customized employment into the workforce system as a universal design, and ODEP and the Department of Labor would like to see customized employment, which was really developed for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and has since been expanded to people with any disabilities. But they would like to see it really used as a universal design because it has such promise in the workforce in general for anyone who faces barriers to employment to be successful. And I assume that you all know what customized employment is, but it's a process that personalizes the employment relationship between a job candidate and an employer in a way that meets the needs of both. So, it matches people based on their strengths and the conditions of employment that would make them

most successful and their interests with the needs of the business. It creates a win-win situation for both the person and the employer.

I seem to have lost the slide. Is the slide still showing on your screens? Mine just went blank. Oh, there they are. Thanks. Can we just go back first? Just looking for the other slides.

But that's one of the things we have been doing, is to pilot something called guided group discovery in American job centers with partners. So, we've included community colleges, we've included vocational rehabilitation, DD agencies, living communities we have providers, the homeless service system. And what the process does is to enable people to really focus on what they bring to an employment situation, what unique contribution they could make to an employer, and looking very broadly into what their experiences have been, not just work experiences. And it's a great way to engage families. So the process happens over a number of weeks and enables people to engage with their families and people in their support network in identifying what their strengths are, when are they at their best, what are the things that they never tire of doing. And that translates into a job development plan where people can really look at what employer needs what they have to offer. We also have been piloting self-guided discovery, which is really a similar process, but designed for people who are a bit more capable of overseeing the discovery process themselves. So what happens in most disability systems is really one-on-one facilitated discovery. What we have designed are things that could happen in groups, or things that can happen in a self-guided way. But those really lend themselves to engaging families and making families part of the solution. As we all know, most people get their jobs through the people that they know. So finding ways to engage families in the process and their networks greatly enhances the ability for one to get a job.

On the next slide, I just did a screenshot of the LEAD Center website. If you're interested in more information about customized employment, there is a link on the homepage, and we worked with Mark Gold Associates, Griffin Hammis Associates, and Transcend to develop our materials. So we kind of took the best of what those three organizations have to offer, given that they're all leaders in customized employment. So we have their favorite resources there. They were instrumental in the design of our product, and over the next couple months we will be posting a facilitated manual both for guided group discovery and self-guided discovery so you will have access to that.

The other thing that I wanted to mention is University of Missouri, Kansas City, has developed a life course framework as part of a national supporting families community of practice that they are facilitating in a number of states. And they focus on supporting families rather than family supported program, that supporting families really engages at a different level. And the thing that I like about the life course framework is that it really does look much more broadly into the ways in which people can be supported to get a job and to have a good life. So I very briefly wanted to show you some of the tools and mention the ways that they're being used. So I'm going to talk about a trajectory they have developed to help people (unintelligible) for themselves. What they envision for a good life. And as a way to turn in employment goals, they use an integrated support star to identify supports beyond what can be available in the public system. And they all engaged their family and anyone in their support network in the process. So I hope that you all had a chance to see the links that Meera sent out because this is way too small for anyone to see. But this is a picture of the trajectory tool, and if you did open it up on your computer or print it out, what I sent was one that was for an individual and another that was for a family. But what this does is really let people identify what their vision is for a good life for themselves and for their family, and also what they want to make sure

doesn't happen as part of that process. But it gives people kind of a north star to be looking at as they're setting goals either for employment or independent living or for anything else in their life. So it's kind of simple and something that can be used across the lifespan, but very much useful for people who are in transition, young people, people who are engaged in their job search process. And it's linked to this integrated support star, and again I hope you were able to open up the link that Meera sent, but what the support star does is allow you to put the person in the middle, put their employment goals if one has, to put a family in the middle, and then to look at their situation in terms of their personal strengths and assets. In this case for employment it notes that they have a lot of responsibilities at home and at school, that they can use an alarm to get where they need to be on time, they know how to use public transportation, they've had summer jobs, they have a car, those kinds of things. So it looks to strengths and assets, it looks at relationship based support. So the kinds of things that could happen that could support an employment goal, like job shadowing the family member, engaging neighbors, being part of a carpool, those kinds of things. It looks at ways in which technology can support them, and for many people, that there are increasingly ways that readily available technology can help people get and keep jobs. So being really specific about that. Ways in which their community can support them. So, things like visiting the (unintelligible), attending colleges or technical schools, participating in career days. And only after you looked at all of those other things do you look at eligibility supports. I think for most people with disabilities and their families they immediately go to the public system and ask the question, what am I eligible for? And what this does is reframe the conversation so that the - nobody wants to have all their needs met by a public system. And there aren't enough resources for that to happen in many cases. So what this does is to reframe the conversation so that you have an opportunity to think of all of the other ways that someone's employment goal can be supported in addition to vocational rehabilitation. And the DD

system, and independent living centers, and those kinds of things. So it's kind of a simple, elegant way of thinking about it. And the links that Meera sent out, if you go to any of those links, there are enormous amounts of resources and training programs. I also sent attached to this, and it's another link, is their charting the frame - the life course chart that look at, again you can't see the print, but it looks at family life and employment, community living, someone's social and spiritual support, healthy living, security, safety, citizenship advocacy, and a whole bunch of areas. And again, it allows you to capture what in those areas are personal strengths and assets that someone brings. What relationship based supports might be available to support them in any of those life areas, how technology can support them, what community resources might be available, and what eligibility based supports can be available. All related to that trajectory so that people have identified their north star, what their vision is for their life. And they set goals based on that. And then this support it. And our experience in using it and the experience of the University of Missouri, Kansas City people are that it gets families involved in really positive ways. It enables them to set higher expectations to be engaged in the process, to open up their networks to support their son or daughter with a disability. So it puts them in the center of the conversation with their family member with a disability. And I think people ultimately are surprised at how much information they're able to contribute as they start thinking of all the ways that people can be supported and the integration of services and support. So it's just - I really like the fact that it's an integrated way of looking at things, and I know people have used it for many different types of planning processes. And the integrated support star you can put almost anything in the center there. This one was developed with an employment goal, but it can be almost anything that you might be planning for to enable you to look at these different domains and different ways to integrate support. So there is a lot more information on charting the life course and we have an extensive collection of information on customized employment and

ways we've been using discovery to support people in any one of the systems, including the workforce system. And all of the approaches that we use are done in partnership and that's appropriate with family support. So we just included a slide for all the ways you can connect with the the LEAD Center and I think that was all I had. Thank you again for inviting me.

Michael Morris: Rebecca, this is Michael, and let me open it up to the others from the other projects, whether you have a few minutes for questions.

Rebecca Salon: Sure.

Michael Morris: And I have one or two, but let me turn to the audience first. Anyone with a question for Rebecca in terms of how you might perhaps apply some of these tools related to your own project? Anyone with a question?

Janet: Hi Rebecca, this is Janet from ODEP, and it just looks like a really great tool. One of the things we're doing right now is revising the guideposts for success. And I'd like to include information on planning processes like this that are strength based and inclusive of the family of the individual networks and goals. Do you know if there's been any scholarly write-up on this or evidence based of this integrated services and support, if it is noted in the research literature? I know it's based on evidence, but I just was wondering if you could point me in a direction that you think might be a good article.

Rebecca Salon: Yeah, thanks Janet. And I do think aligns nicely with the guideposts. A lot of what the guideposts look at. And I see someone else asked a question about if there's any outcome data related to the process. I can find that out and I know that they've written extensively about the work that they're doing in six states and

I think they're in your three of providing technical assistance. They've been working in Missouri that much longer because that's where they developed it. So I know that they have been kind of capturing the process and especially being able to capture what - ways in which families have been engaged in. And because it's across the lifespan and services for their son or daughter at all ages, they're not only focused on employment. But, I can try and find that out. I know that they have written quite a bit, so I can see if I can connect you with someone who can give you a more definitive answer about that.

Janet: Great, thank you so much.

Rebecca Salon: Sure.

Michael Morris: Anybody else? Ok. Well let's leave Rebecca here at this point and let me turn next to Nancy and Megan to talk a little bit about some of the barriers to success, family engagement, and ongoing outreach through the OCC project. Nancy?

Nancy: We're here. So thank you for focusing on employment, but we wanted to remind folks that we're talking now about families and students as we engage them and they begin and continue their educational services in a two year community college setting. Megan?

Megan: Next slide please. So these are some strategies that we've used to sort of help to engage the families of our students we have them at the organization. We do have a recruiter that we work with who works a lot with our special education parents secure association, OPC scholars is for high school seniors who have disabilities and would like to have to some information about what it's like to go into college. They also, our parents of our students are receiving a family newsletter about the events and achievements of their student. And we've also had a family survey of some of our OPC students that unfortunately we don't have very much data on yet.

Nancy: Megan has done a nice job keeping parents informed by recently starting a family newsletter, and connected to that and our work with Janet and others on our team, we recently sent out a survey to parents as well as our students to gather data on their reaction to their young college student, their reaction to the transition to college, their reaction to the shift from special education K-12 system and the changes in the college support. So, we plan to keep that up and probably do it every semester as the student hopefully finishes and maybe enters employment. So, through the livelihood project we hope to have several bases of information that might add helpful information down the road. Next slide.

Megan: So these are the issues that we are most commonly seeing. And first, you can see on the left is access to basic needs. We see clothing, housing, food, even heat and hot water. And barriers to success for our students because obviously if they're hungry and they have no place to go, that's going to be first thing on their list and they're not necessarily worried about their classes. Actually, there was a study recently, beginning of December, that said approximately one-third of community college students experience the threat of homelessness and housing instability, and 12% face the threat of hunger. We don't have the statistics specifically for students with disabilities, but I can imagine that number would be a bit higher. Some other examples of issues that we encounter are mental health needs or complications, access to proper healthcare. In the Syracuse area we just have sort of a shortage of mental healthcare specialists. Some of our students have suicidal ideations. And then there's some sort of more common issues, family problems, that sort of runs the gamut. Issues of communication with professors, advising for classes, relationship issues, understanding the difference between high school and college, which that really is for both the parent and student. And also there are transportation issues.

Nancy: It is important to note that Syracuse has one of the highest poverty rates in the nation for people who are hispanic or black, and so it's not surprising to me that in the parents survey, especially for brand new first semester freshman students, the parents were used to receiving services like special transportation, PT, OT, and mental health services, and even some additional services beyond that through the IEP process, and that was all arranged for them in the K-12 environment. So, given the independence model of college, some of the families and our students are struggling to have these needed services, but somehow arrange them independently. It is a common issue that parents report feeling frustration with. Next slide.

Megan: So these are just some of the referrals that we have had to make. I see that somebody is saying that they can hear voices in the background, I don't think that's here. So we have a few different places here. Now these are just a few that have happened recently. So, first CPEP, which is the comprehensive emergency psychiatric program and those are sort of the - at St. Joseph's Hospital. Is everybody hearing this ok now?

Michael Morris: Try to speak up if you can even a little bit louder.

Megan: Every time I turn this mic up we get an echo so that's sort of the issue we're having right now. Let's see. Is that better? Ok. So just let us know if you hear any feedback or anything like that. So, again, comprehensive emergency psychiatric program at St. Joseph's. These were referrals that - this is Megan - that I made. I believe Nancy had to make some referrals to this program rather recently, I think one or two students.

Nancy: We have a care committee on campus that's the behavioral intervention team that many colleges use now as a way of learning early on about students who are struggling and that committee also meets every Tuesday and gets many referrals from the entire campus,

and then they're assigned a case manager individually to follow up and manage some of these referrals as well.

Megan: So we also - we work with Access VR, which is New York's vocational rehab services. And they're a partner to our project. So, we refer all of our students at usually more than one point until they have a case worker. So four referrals were given out halfway through the semester so then it's ongoing need. We do have a food pantry on campus that we are really lucky to have, and we had three referrals given to two students. And I believe that there are likely more students out there who perhaps didn't share the fact that they didn't have any food at home or that they were hungry. So there could slightly be more. Advocates Incorporated is a service that we work with to help find and aid when it's appropriate. Luckily we had no referrals in our last quarter, but that is something we partner with them very closely. I just see a question, how many students are in your program? Does your program have a limited capacity? Right now we have somewhere around 50 students that we're working with. We are - we're working towards a higher number. So we have not reached any kind of capacity right now. But I hope I can answer a little bit later on too. Centro is our bus system here. We offer bus passes to our students. They were given out to eleven students. Unfortunately, we have actually just recently been working with our financial aid department here and we may not even be able to give those out anymore. So that could be an issue. The learning center on campus, that is where students can get tutoring, and there's quite a few referrals that you can see made to them. And all students are referred to them multiple times throughout the semester.

Nancy: So as you see Megan's role has had to expand beyond her originally envisioned job responsibilities as educational coordinator. It's sort of (unintelligible) a hierarchy of needs, if you recall that before she can even deal with the educational issues our students face, she must deal with these very common foundational issues or

we won't be able to retain the student. So, it seems that food and housing scarcity issues are becoming more common in the community college campuses, and Celestia was able to add on the website later under the resource list two recent studies; one about food and housing scarcity and another one about a new service that we have just started using that we hope is going to help us with this issue, single stop. So, if you have time later and you click on the resources from this Community of Practice, you will see there's a free downloadable e-text on single stop. So, Megan's role now is dealing with our food pantry, is referring students for housing, the single stop is just getting up and running here. That's going to be a way for students to check their eligibility for such resources such as food stamps, Medicaid, housing, Title VIII housing and other resources beyond the scope of OCC. And then we have a brand new federally funded community care hub that also links students with some local not-for-profits, that will be having a presence right here at OCC. Again, to hopefully to reaching the student at the point they're struggling with a barrier, either on or off campus. And then just this week we made a wonderful contact with a landlord in Syracuse that owns 56 properties and wants to rent his fully furnished apartments to college students. So, we're feeling like our outreach efforts are going to be improved with this spring, but nevertheless, this has somewhat changed Megan's role in terms of her focus with students. Next slide please.

Megan: So we have been keeping track of what we're calling advisement meetings so this is something that is - that newly gained tract. So the meetings themselves can range from 30 minutes to over an hour. It really is dependent upon the student issue. And most often what happens is there's a discussion of available resources, an outline of how to handle challenges, and planning needing a next step. I think it's important to note that a lot of our students have an intersection of issues which always includes disability, but there are many others, such as poverty, being a member of a minority group,

hunger, etcetera. And I'll actually go into this a little bit more on the next slide. This is something that we see sort of overall over the college, so our students have a combination of disabilities and other challenges, which we've already discussed quite a bit. Homelessness and hunger, poverty. So, like Nancy said, Syracuse is one of the poorest places in the nation. So, it's often also combined with other inequalities that are based in identity, like gender, race, and ethnicity. Next slide please. These are some other statistics that we've found that are specific to students with disabilities. It's interesting to note that the enrollment has increased significantly over the last few decades. However, the completion rate is at 16% which is actually quite low. The National Center for Education Statistics, again, they completed a survey in 2002 with a lot of high school sophomores and 13 years later, they also followed up with them. And I think that they wanted to know that the students in the lower quartile who had parents with the lowest income, education, and worked unskilled jobs. They showed that of the 58% that wanted to originally get a bachelor's degree, only 14% did so. Is the audio better? I am trying to play with it a little bit.

Michael Morris: You're getting softer and softer.

Megan: Ok, well hopefully - I think we're just going to try and wrap up our piece for you quick here, because I'm not sure exactly what the problem is.

Michael Morris: You're much clearer now.

Megan: So we'll just get through the rest of this here, and then we can hopefully answer just a few questions. So, next slide please. So, these are just some questions that we generally have in trying to figure out what sort of resources and what sort of help we can provide. So with our students, they have a disability plus other challenges, how are we able to remove the barriers and best help

them prepare for their life after college. And while they're facing these hardships at OCC, if they're unable to rectify these barriers, how can we prepare them for employment and careers.

Nancy: This is Nancy. We do have two students who are slated to graduate in May of 17, and both of them will be taking internships this coming so-called spring semester, which begins in January. And we're finding that interesting as well because neither of these two students drive. So, even though we were able to set transportation for them to get to college, now some of the barriers that existed are raising themselves as we face employment phase as well. So, this will be a first effort moving our students out on to the workforce on projects and so we'll start to keep some of the same pieces of information that we have while they've been here pursuing their degree. Next slide please.

Megan: Some other questions our students face very serious challenges in college and beyond. We've thought through what they can be, we're here as an active resource for our students, but what can we do to prepare them for life after OCC. And essentially, what happens with referrals aren't enough. This is a difficult job to have, and a lot of the time we do feel a sort of responsibility for our students. So if we can help a student remove barriers, but they're not entirely prepared for a career when they leave OCC, we've thought, can we consider our program successful and in what ways? Next slide please. So these next few slides are really sort of testimonials. Pieces from students, things that they've shared with me and things that we've discovered about some of our students. So, this first student, who we'll call John, he used public transportation, he is a bit older, I believe 22. He's a first-generation college student. He has made quite a connection with me and he likes to come in and say hello, he likes come in and talk about classes, tutoring, jobs. Really it's a lot of different things. He's constantly looking for jobs, and I say that meaning not as in careers. He lives with his parents. His father doesn't

work and his mother works a part-time job. He is struggling because he's constantly worried that, according to him, his lights will get turned off. And he spends really all of his free time looking for jobs to help pay for basic needs. And that often can affect getting his homework done and doing things that he needs to do for school.

Next slide please. Another student that we work closely with, we'll call him Steve, he missed quite a few meetings due to transportation issues, court dates, other issues. He has a criminal record and he has a very real concern that he won't be able to find a job after completing his degree. So, a lot of the time he has these very strong feelings that he would like to drop out and just go back and get a job, again, not a career. He began the semester with no transportation and he was living in a shelter. He was able to, through some of our resources and referrals, get a one-bedroom apartment and help with a car. But that has required him to take out loans to get those, and he's also worried that he won't be able to pay them back, which is also a very sort of real thing for him to deal with on a daily basis. So, he also has mental health issues, so that can affect him coming to class. His transportation problems, although they've been fixed now, he has come in and shared that he can have issues with his car that he doesn't have the money to fix. So, there are still the issues even though he has improved over the course of the semester.

Next slide please. This is our last student, and this one is somebody that I work with almost on a daily basis. So he has a number of challenges, extreme poverty, mental illness within the family. As I said, he comes to see me almost every day with just information about how he is doing. He often wears the same clothes for days or more at a time and he has extremely poor personal hygiene. I think probably everybody knows it's one of those really hard conversations to have a conversation about hygiene. But after having that conversation with him multiple times it still hasn't improved. He often shares that he has no food, he's visited the food pantry a few times. He sent an email to his teachers in the past that he passed out and couldn't attend class. It was likely due to hunger. And one of the last times we spoke, he

shared that he was allowed one sandwich to eat over the weekend and that was it. So this student also said that - I'm sorry for the feedback here - the student also said that in his home he couldn't sleep because he was being bitten by fleas. So, there are just an overwhelming - there are overwhelming things that are working against him being successful in school. And that really did show this semester, because I know of his four classes he had to drop one. And I know for a fact that he's failed two of them. Next slide please. So, this is essentially what I just said. His family has severe financial trouble as well, and he's very exhausted because of that. Next slide please. So now we're going to be open to questions, and hopefully our mics will cooperate.

Michael Morris: Yeah, let me break in and in the interests of time, you've laid out such a wonderful set of personal profiles, you know, individual examples of this range of issues that are outside the skills development focus. And, let's just hold on this so we can get some time in for the Georgia project and I would suggest that on our next call we can take back up some of the challenges that you've raised. So let me thank you for presenting and really opening up a whole range of issues for discussion, but let's go to the Georgia project and Laurie, are you going to lead? Is Laurie there?

Rita Young: Laurie is unavailable - she's not available today. She had a scheduling conflict. This is Rita Young.

Michael Morris: Oh, ok. Rita, are you going to take the lead then?

Rita Young: If that's fine, sure.

Michael Morris: Ok. So, we'll move slides for you.

Rita Young: Ok, you can move the slide. There's a bit of an echo, so it's a little distracting. I may move off to the side. I'm in a room of

about ten folks. I'm still here. Can everyone hear me? Can you here me?

Unknown Speaker: Yes

Rita Young: Ok, great. So, E3, we have a unique approach to family engagement. One of our strategic partners is Parent to Parent of Georgia. And we've hired transition partners that actually work in the school districts in collaboration with the school districts, with the local VR counselors, and with our career pathway specialists to reach families. We currently have a parent engagement plan that we just approved and each district will have their own parent engagement plan. We'll give them a list of activities and they'll select those activities as a part of what will be most useful to their community. So our transition partners will work to build relationships and improve the transition process. Again, we'll work collaboratively with the school personnel and practice effective listening skills and provide responses and options that are family centered. You can move to the next slide. In terms of outreach, we've had several and we anticipate having several events in each district, specifically around the open houses that each school district has as one point of contact. We really want the parent transition partners to provide that one-on-one consultation and assistance. So that will be something again that's quite unique. Then we'll actually sit down and talk to the family about their particular situation and provide resources depending upon the needs of the family. Already in several of our districts the transition partners are partnering with the districts on their existing events. So we have promotional information, or materials rather, from Parent to Parent and also from E3 and GVRA. We also are looking at a series of three trainings that the transition partner will put on starting in January. Examples of those trainings would be transition from pediatric healthcare to adult healthcare, that is certainly a large - a huge jump and leap for our individuals who have medical concerns. We also will be providing training on Medicaid waivers. We're hearing

that that is an emerging need, or an existing need in each of the districts. We also, if you'll look on the Parent to Parent of Georgia website, there they have a special area specifically for employment. So what you can do is actually search their database for potential providers. So it's a very valuable resource for families. Next slide. Talks a little about the database, the Parent to Parent database. Their roadmap of services. There are also, again, the last point in terms of real time (unintelligible) advice, technical assistance, we're looking at ways to partner with local VR offices to provide consultation time on site for parents who need it. You can go to the next slide. Another feature of the parent engagement plan is supporting parents who can share experiences, specifically around transition. So, Parent to Parent will recruit volunteers in each of our districts as another way support those parents. They'll start local or topical support groups, either in person or online, and in Georgia we have what's called parent mentors that are employees of each school district, or most of the school districts in Georgia that are the liaison between the school and families and they work - our parent transition partners work in collaboration with the parent mentors. This is a part of our parent engagement plan. So, as you see I mentioned earlier about the transitions in healthcare. Now in comp waivers, webinars on benefits navigation. We find that that is another obstacle for parents, is education on the benefits once their children begin employment, they have great concerns that they will lose benefits and insurance. Go to the next slide. We can move to the next slide.

Michael Morris: Ok, we're - thank you Rita. We're almost out of time here. I think you're presentation and the presentation from OCC really expand the scope of really what's essentially a circle of support. Family, other resources, community resources, relationships with other community organizations, and other public agency that it's not just the skills. If we only focus on the skills, the student participation is eventually going to erode because of these other barriers to success. And I think it would be extraordinary to take - I know we have always

kind of come back to, well let's consider a new topic. I think there's a lot here worth discussing on our next call. Which, the meeting is scheduled every two months, the fourth Thursday of the month from 12-1, which would place our next call being February 23rd, 2016 noon eastern standard time. And my opinion would be is we should stay with this topic and come back to discuss some of the individual examples that Onondaga Community College has shared with us. And I bet each of you might be - could also think of very specific examples of this array of needs that unless we address them, whether it's family engagement or it's other types of supports that are going to make this individual student succeed, we're all not going to succeed. But I'm interested, I think we have two more minutes roughly, anyone with your own thoughts? Did you feel like I do that there's a lot that has just been presented to think about and to keep that focus going for the next meeting?

Helga Gilbert: This is Helga. I totally agree, I think it's those intensive support services that is - well for voc rehab and Office for the Blind, where we need to make sure that we're focusing on whenever we enroll someone in training or education. Something I think about a lot, so I would love to keep talking about it.

Michael Morris: Yeah, stay with it. Thank you. Anybody else?

Janet: I just wanted to comment. I really enjoyed the discussion today. This is Janet at ODEP. And I think that those with the models talked about sort of the family strength or our use of family centric approach. And then as we discussed, next time looking really carefully at strengths and how we use strengths in our networks to address ongoing needs as perhaps a strategy. As well as working with, as Nancy mentioned, the one-stop and different programs.

Michael Morris: Yeah. And this requires coordination at the highest level because it's - at a first level it's identifying where might some of

these support needs be provided, but then the coordination of that and the coordination between the educational institution, other types of community resources, the one-stop, that's a lot of work. And, both Georgia and OCC have really broadened the framework here far beyond what I think I had been thinking about. It certainly sums up some of these issues. But, for example, the individual who - he doesn't have enough food to make it through the weekend, let alone how is he going to have any energy to continue his studies. So, pretty significant. Ok, I think we've hit overtime. Gosh, that went fast. Let me thank all our presenters. Rebecca, presenters from OCC, and Rita from Georgia. I think this is a lot of really strong material presented, and we will do a follow up. But we will be meeting again on February 23, and I think we will put forward some questions in the interim about really how to focus this discussion, which really I would say dedicate the next hour in February to discussion. Because we really stepped this up with the presentations today. So thanks everyone, and happy holidays, and we will be with you on February 23, 2016. Thanks so much, take care.