

Quality of Life (QoL) Considerations for Individuals with Intellectual & Developmental Disabilities (IDD)



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Background

Stacie Rulison, MS, M.Ed, BCBA, LBA

- Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA) and Licensed Behavior Analyst in Michigan; UCLA PEERS® Certified
- Consultant with MI Dept of Education (MDE), Office of Special Education (OSE), Michigan Alliance for Families, Statewide Autism Resources and Training Project (START); MI Autism Council 8 years; development team for the MI ASD State Plan; Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) chair; school district and ISD board member; numerous state level committees; state and national presentations on ASD, IDD, behavioral intervention, literacy, safety, sexuality, person centered planning, supported decision making, college readiness, disability-specific, other
- Clinical practitioner working with IDD and ASD since 2008; co-owner of organization ([Balance MI-Skills, Inc](#)) providing behavioral and evidence-based social communication and soft skills training and interventions for teens and adults with IDD and ASD since 2016; provide full range of employment services
- Parent of young adult with ASD now attending college



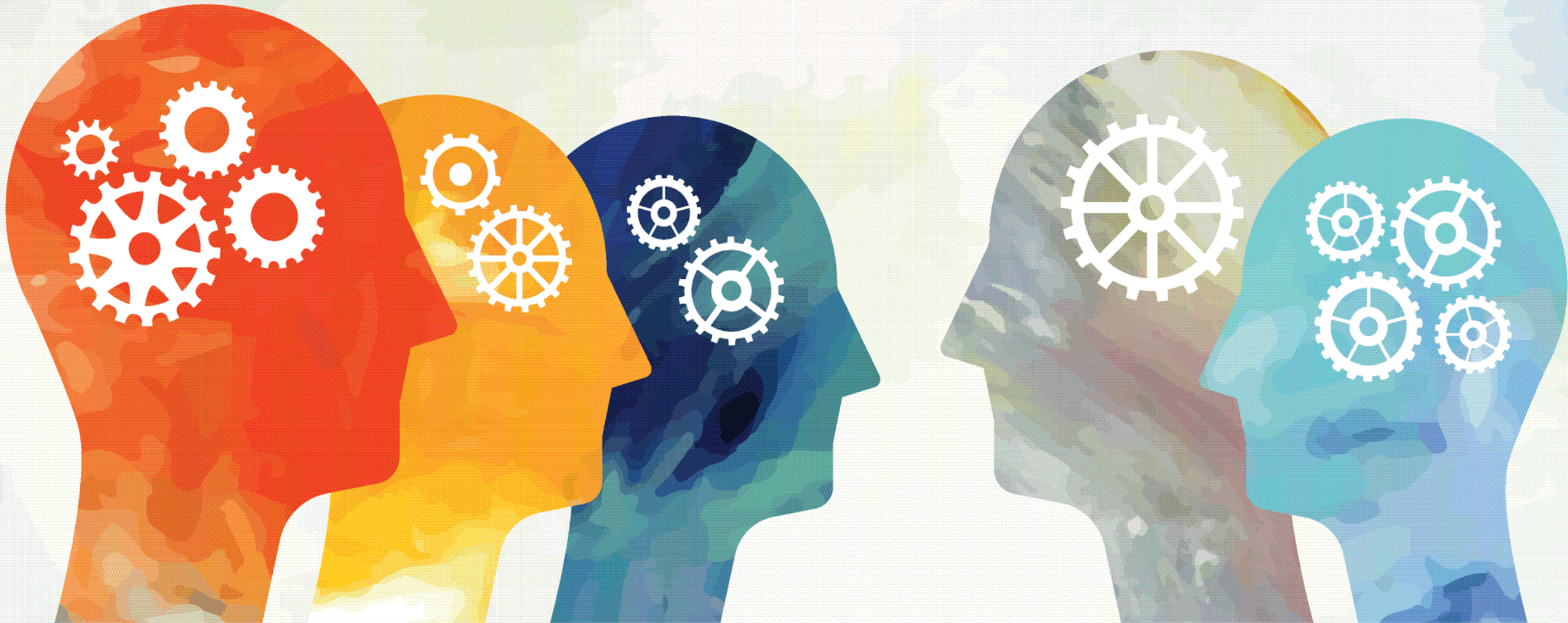
Objectives



Acquire greater understanding of Quality of Life (QoL) for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD), including:

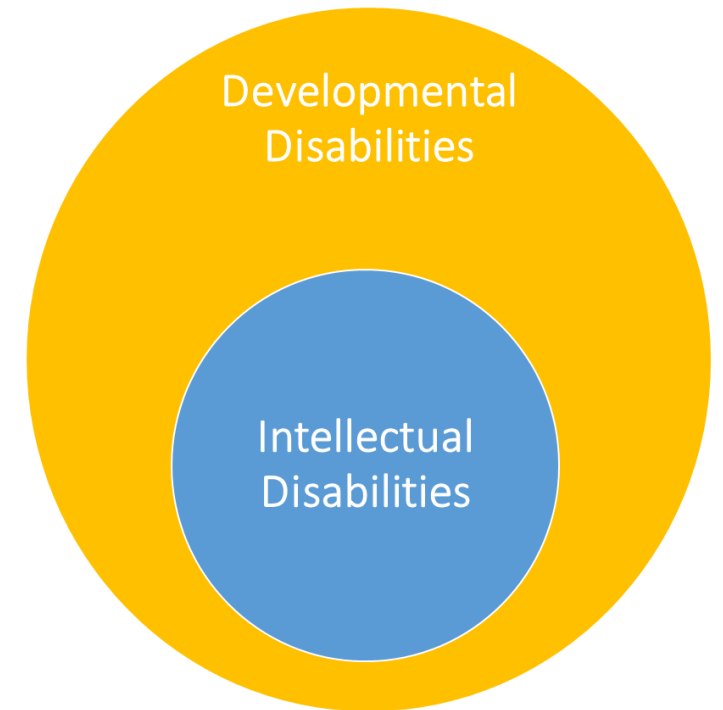
- Definition and elements of QoL
- Data and research on IDD and QoL
- Frameworks for QoL
- Barriers in attaining QoL
- Improving QoL for individuals with IDD
- Role of self-determination in attaining QoL
- Resources for promoting QoL

Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IDD)



IDD

- Group of conditions: neurodevelopmental, genetic, communication disorders
 - IDs, ASD, ADHD, cerebral palsy, vision loss, others
- Physical, learning, language, behavior, cognitive
 - Self-care, socializing, communicating, reasoning, problem solving, planning and organizing, thinking, comprehending complex ideas, experiential learning
- Lifelong with onset before 22 years
- 8.6% (2021) and increasing in children 3-17y
- Significant rate of co-morbidity 30-50% (up to 18y)
- Autism is the fastest growing developmental disability in the US



ASD Prevalence Data

1994

1:2,000

(DSM-IV)



2023

1:36

(CDC)

2013

16,730

(MDE)



2023

25,147

(MDE)

Comorbidity and ASD

- Overall comorbidity (75%-80%)
- ASD-mental illness/psychiatric diagnosis= up to 75% (Buck et al., 2014; Hofvander et al., 2009; Joshi et al., 2013; Vohra et al., 2016)
- Common comorbidities ([World Journal of Pediatrics, 2021](#))
 - ADHD=50-70%
 - Depression=26% (versus 10% general population)
 - Anxiety=30% (versus 10% of general population)
 - Bi-Polar=11% (versus 2% of general population)
 - Schizophrenia=7% (versus .5% of general population)
 - Down's Syndrome=40% (versus .125% of general population)
 - Epilepsy=30% (versus 6-7% of general population)
 - Sleep disorders=50%-80%
 - Gastrointestinal and feeding disorders=46%-84%
 - Immune deficiency=25%
 - Cardiovascular issues=37% (versus 23% of general population)
 - Obesity 30% (versus 13% of general population)
 - Others: skin conditions, asthma, allergies, frequent ear infections, pica, chronic pain



Misconceptions about Learning & IDD

Learning outcomes
cannot be improved
through education

Cannot learn
anything complex
such as reading

- Majority have mild IDD
- 70% develop functional reading
- Learning process slower
- Underestimated in cognitive abilities (receptive vs. expressive)
- Can learn new skills/gain knowledge
- Brain forms new connections throughout the lifespan
- Uneven cognitive profile (splintered skills)

Quality of Life



Context

For today...

- Individuals with IDD can learn and attain a QoL
- Maintain high expectations (presume competence)
- Supports and services are key for improving QoL
- Continued supports for maintaining QoL



Premise of QoL

How people feel about
their lives!



Fulfillment



A Meaningful Life...

What is a meaningful life...for you?

Join at menti.com | use code 1337 3920

 Mentimeter

QoL - you decide...

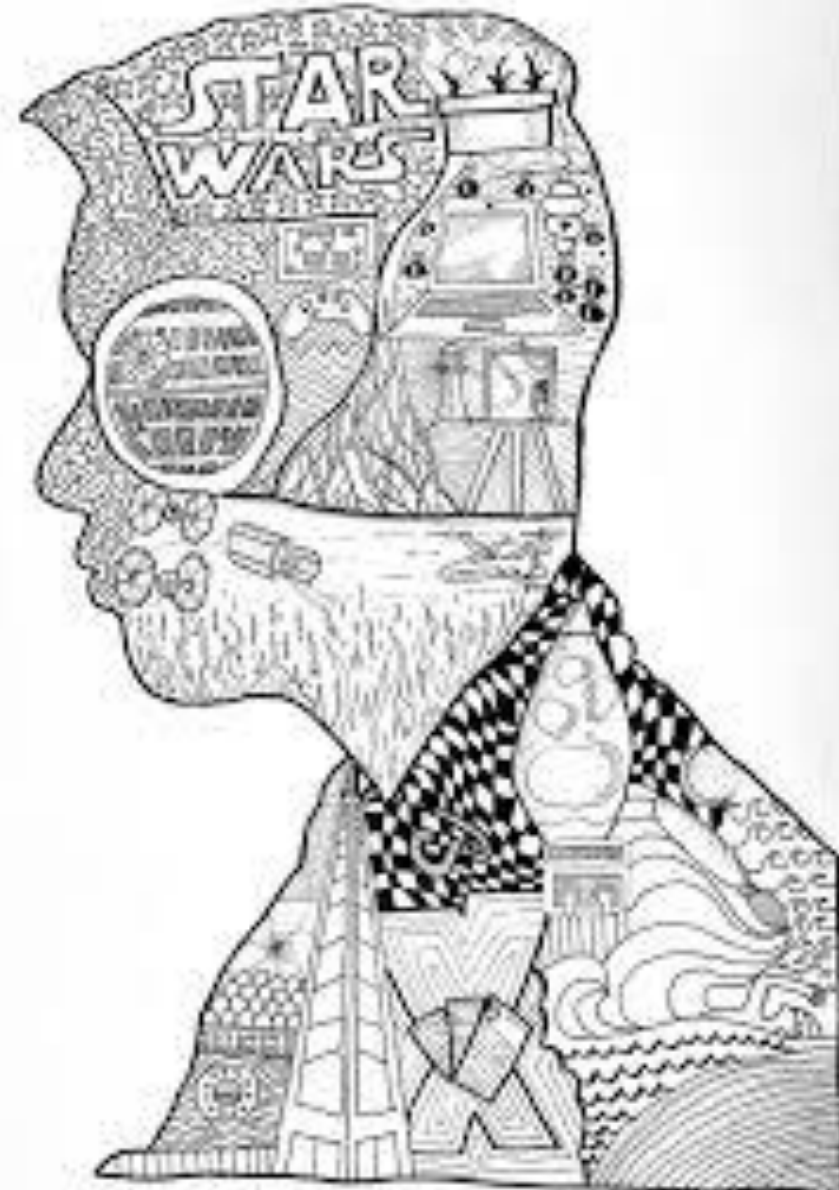
(There are NO wrong answers!)

Access the QR Code or the [link in Chat](#)
Responses are anonymous



QoL is a Social Construct

- Personal
- Is not a “thing”
- Intangible
- Common to all
- Heterogenous and unique to the person
- Continued research
- Subjective-objective measures
- Increased person-centered outcome evaluation strategies
- Fluid-depending on context and individual



QoL Tenants



All individuals with IDD should:

- Maintain choices and access to services, supports, living arrangements
- Have reasonable wait times for services
- Direct own services and supports
- Lead a life enriched by friends, family, relationships
- Experience life-long learning
- Develop decision-making and problem-solving skills
- Work in a meaningful job
- Enjoy the same rights and respect for their dignity and privacy, as do people without disabilities
- Informed about and understand options and risks

QoL Domains

*International consensus of
Schalock & Verdugo's QoL
Conceptual Framework-the
domains defined in 2002 of
personal well-being for
individuals with IDD*

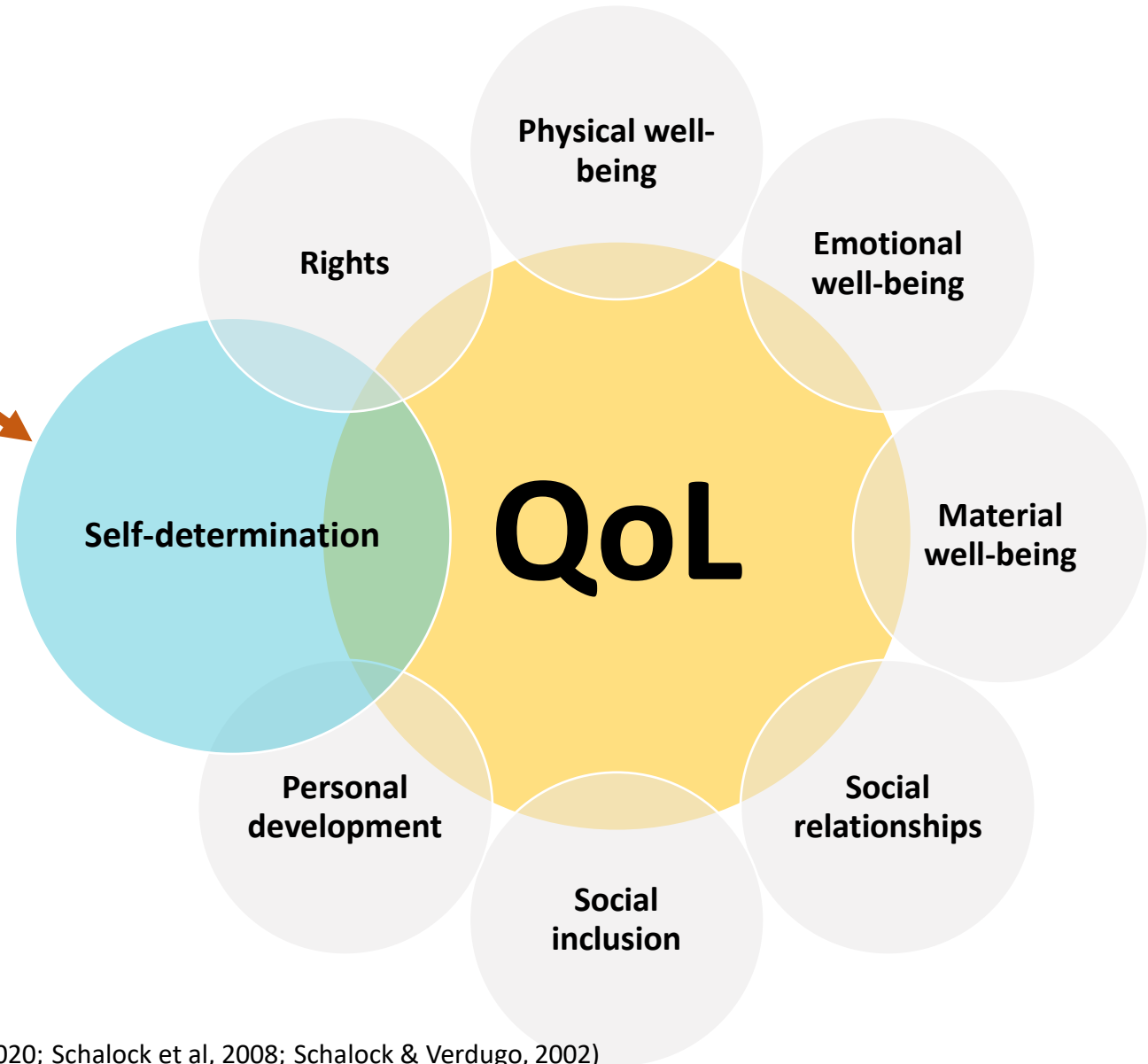


QoL Conceptual Domains

Domain	QoL Indicators (Examples)
Physical well-being	About your health and lifestyle. Examples: maintaining mental health, weight, exercise; managing health concerns such as diabetes, GI disorders, hypertension; dental care; getting medical help if needed
Emotional well-being	About how you feel about things in your life. Examples: happiness; freedom from abandonment, abuse, neglect, segregation, exclusion, bullying, violence; treated with respect, empathy, patience, trust; feel understood, self-awareness and acceptance
Material well-being	About issues related to finances and things you own and pay for and are important to you. Examples: discretionary income; a job you are happy with; discloses and requests accommodations as needed; aware of strengths and needs; positive attitude; individualized training; socially connected through work
Social relationships	About relationships with other people and time you spend with them. Opportunities to meet people; having friends; having a partner; choice of sexual orientation; co-workers; support people; things you do with family and friends
Social inclusion	About the kinds of activities in your community and who you do them. Examples: promoting own rights and equality, awareness and disclosure; leisure activities, health facilities, community centers, education, workplace; public transportation; freedom to move about; living independently in the community; receive needed supports; voting; places you go
Personal development	About doing and learning new skills and information; doing things important to you. Examples: inclusive education, individualized supports, maximized social and academic development; professionals involved; training in sexuality, independent living, vocational guidance, training getting a job, friends
Self-determination	About goals, decisions and choices and realizing your dreams. Examples: person-centered planning; supported decision-making; choices about what to cook, where to live, who to live with, health, not overprotected or underestimated by family, control over life; how to spend free time; makes sexual decision and decides whether to marry or have children
Rights	About how other people respect you and your right to do the same things as other adults. Examples: right to privacy, using insurance for health care; right to freely express views; asked views and preferences during legal proceedings; maintain safety; promotes various decision-making options such as supported decision making

QoL Framework

Self-Determination: as well as being a core dimension of QoL, it is also considered its own construct in much of the literature and acknowledged by Schalock & Verdugo (2002) as a value on which services are based, and an essential supporting concept in overall QoL



Self-Determination

Self-determination is exercising final decisions about you, your choices, and your environment- on your terms.



Self-Determination

Self-determination has evolved from a dimension of QoL to its own inherent construct, and noted in recent advances in research and theory related to QoL paradigms



Self-Determination

Research clearly demonstrates the impact of **self-determination** on **quality-of-life** and achieving desired educational and adulthood related **outcomes**

(Vincente et al., 2020)



Research & Data



Summary of Research Findings

- QoL is a fluid construct and inherent to the individual's preferences and feelings
- QoL can be shaped, planned, and monitored starting with transition planning and programs in high school through service systems into adulthood
- QoL barriers are related to services, supports, service systems, policy, relationships, limited opportunities, and choices
- People with disabilities need to be increasingly involved in research on QoL
- Research needs to include both objective and subjective measures for QoL
- QoL findings are similar in studies across the U.S. Europe, Asia, and Australia
- Self-determination has a direct impact on overall QoL

Summary of Research Findings

Key QoL outcome indicators:

- Employment
- Education
- Social inclusion
- Social participation
- Living arrangements
- Recreation
- Systems of Support
- Independence
- Control (of choices)
- Physical and mental health
- Safety



QoL is Personal



Each person determines what is important to them in their quest for quality of life based on their personal experiences, interests, preferences, opinions, and choices...

Research: General

- Individuals with IDD often do not achieve a full life (**QoL**) they desire due to lack of services, supports, and personal relationships and typically meet barriers with public policy, service systems, attitudes toward people with disabilities, and other issues which limit opportunities in the community and choices of where to live and work (AAIDD, 2023).
- Importance of life dimensions collectively differ for people with and without disabilities; interventions should be measured in ways to promote **QoL** based on preferences of people with disabilities (Shogren et al., 2021).
- Individuals with ID maintain higher importance to all aspects of their lives which are linked to their aspirations, preferences, and choices than individuals without disabilities (Hensel et al, 2002).
- Individuals with disabilities tend to rate broad dimensions of **QoL** (control, independence, self-care, dignity) higher than health-based QoL dimensions (Crocker, 2021).
- It is vital to obtain self-report (subjective measures) of individuals with ID when considering internal thoughts and feelings related to **QoL**, and including individuals who are being measured for QoL (Scott et al., 2018; Davidson et al., 2017).
- Individuals living in in apartments or independently have indicated a significantly higher **QoL** than those in supervised settings (Randall et al., 2023).

Research: Transition

- There is a body of evidence in teaching skills related to **self-determination** leads to increased achievement of school-based transition goals in adolescents with IDD (Shogren et al., 2018).
- Students who have stronger self-determination skills are more inclined to be involved in their educational planning, and getting students involved in their planning nurtures self-determination (Vicente et al., 2020).
- Promoting stronger **self-determination skills** for students with IDD as been linked to more positive postsecondary outcomes including academics, employment, recreation, and independent living, and greater **quality of life** (Wehmeyer et al., 2012).
- Ongoing and recent research have emphasized self-determination as a key construct due to its impact on **QoL** and taught through specific strategies with opportunities to practice new skills (Vicente et al., 2020).
- Creating opportunities, providing needed supports, and maintaining high expectations are needed to reach more greater **QoL** while focusing on the elements of self-determination which most significantly impact outcomes; choice-making and self-advocacy are most closely associated with employment and postsecondary outcomes (Shogren et al., 2016).

Research: Transition

- Promoting stronger **self-determination skills** for students with IDD as been linked to more positive postsecondary outcomes including academics, employment, recreation, and independent living, and greater **quality of life** (Wehmeyer et al., 2012).
- There is a critical need to implement evidence-based practice **transition** practices to enhance post high school employment outcomes of youth with intellectual disabilities; stronger **self-determination skills** when exiting high school is shown to be a predictor of improved **QoL outcomes** in employment and community participation 1-2 years post high school (Shogren et al., 2019).
- Difficulties individuals with IDD experience when moving from school to employment, to higher education and active participation in the community after leaving school, is a major contributor to isolation and exclusion, and decreased **QoL** (Beadle-Brown et al., 2023)
- Programming to support a smooth transition from high school to postsecondary education may prove critical in helping students succeed in the postsecondary environment, as well as preventing a host of adverse outcomes (i.e., skill loss, symptom exacerbation, and poor **QoL**, in adulthood (White et al, 2017).

QoL and Transition

Study by Beadle-Brown et al., 2023:

4 countries (US, UK, Czech Republic, Australia)

74 studies included in study

- Successful transition leads to greater QoL
- Maps to QoL Conceptual Framework
- Transition success includes outcome indicators:
 - Obtaining a job and/or financial independence
 - Independent living (moving out of the family home)
 - Higher level education
 - Growing social networks and being part of the community
 - Physical and mental health and well-being



Research: Transition & Vocational Rehabilitation

- Utilizing in-school predictors of postschool success can aid teachers, administrators, vocational rehabilitation counselors with information to improve transition programs (Mazzotti et al., 2021).
- Students receiving postsecondary education program (PSE) services as part of their vocational rehabilitation IPE had 51% greater employment rates than those who did not receive the services (Spencer et al., 2021).
- A systematic review of literature cited outcomes for vocation-focused interventions for young adults with ASD may have positive effects on employment outcomes (Fong et al., 2021).
- Educational policies and improved training practices are needed for improved vocational services for students with IDD to enhanced QoL (Georgidaou et al., 2022).
- It is imperative vocational rehabilitation include persons with disabilities in discussions for advances in policy and advocacy related to supported employment (Desmond, 2017).
- Vocational considerations and employment supports are needed to promote employment and QoL for individuals with TBI (Ditchman et al., 2022).
- VR services promoting employment-based self-determination and independent living skills and encourage people with IDD to make their own decisions maintain higher salary in jobs and are more independent (Martinis et al., 2015).
- Systematic review noted there is a lack of rigorous studies on vocational interventions and their impact on QoL and outcomes (Ma et al., 2022).

Research: ASD

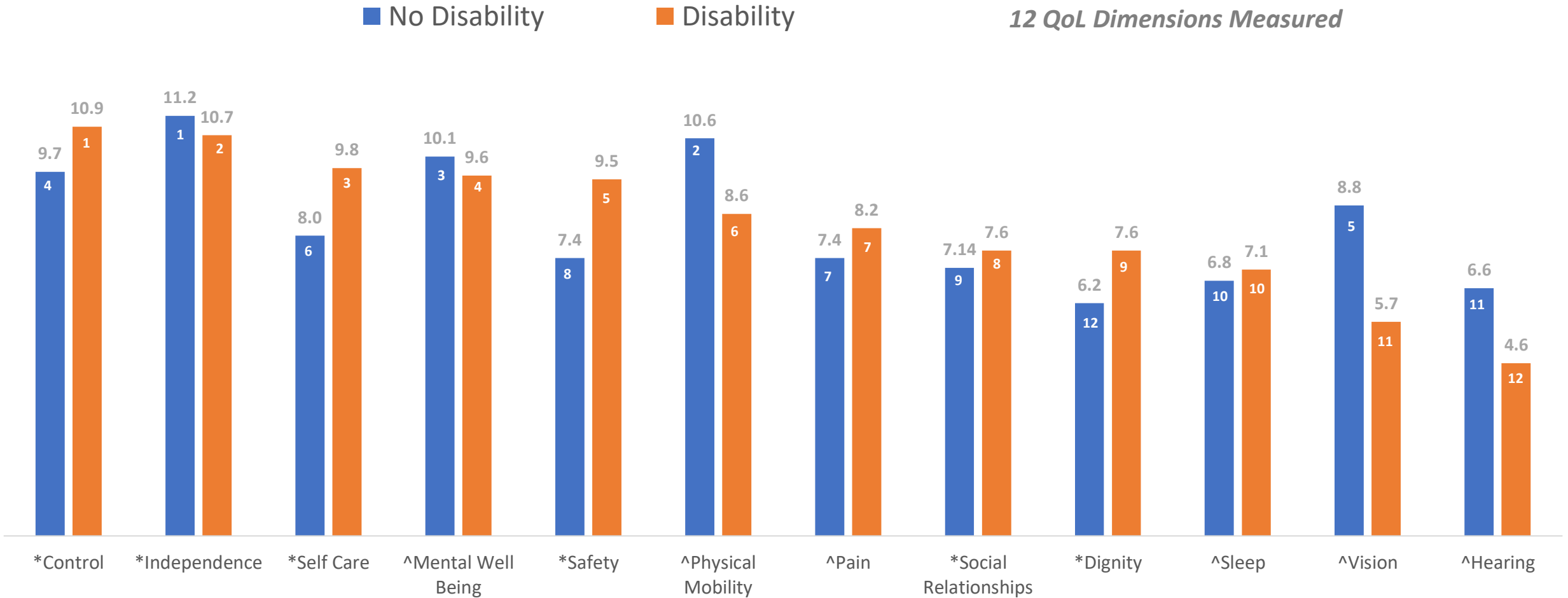
- Individuals with ASD and attaining QoL are complex with the disability being extremely heterogeneous, influence of co-morbidities, need for multi-disciplinary and individualized interventions and support; and unique challenges; enhancing social skills, communication, self-regulation will promote better outcomes while increasing acceptance and reducing the stigmatism and negative attitudes toward ASD will improve overall QoL (Syriopoulou-Delli, 2023).
- Outcomes of individuals with high functioning autism are typically poor relative to their intellectual or language level (Kamio et al, 2012).
- Based on self-report, early diagnosis and parental support were associated with improved QoL; aggressive behaviors into adulthood were related to poorer QoL (Kamio et al., 2012).
- Generally, quality of life is relatively poor across the lifespan for autistic individuals (van Heijst & Geurts, 2015) and social inclusion remains limited in adulthood even with reduced ASD symptoms (Howlin et al, 2013).
- Unemployment of youth with significant impact from ASD major societal issue and is most likely group to exit school and not gain competitive employment (Wehman, 2020).

Definition of Preferences in Study

SLEEP Being able to sleep without difficulty most of the time
INDEPENDENCE Being able to spend your time as you want, doing things you value and enjoy
PHYSICAL MOBILITY Being able to get around your home and community by yourself without any difficulty
MENTAL WELL-BEING Not feeling anxious, worried or depressed
CONTROL Having as much control over your daily life as you would want
SELF-CARE Feeling clean and being able to present yourself in the way you like
PAIN Having no pain or discomfort
VISION Being able to see normally
HEARING Being able to hear normally
SAFETY Feeling as safe as you want
SOCIAL-RELATIONSHIPS Having as much social contact as you want with people you like
DIGNITY Having help which makes you think and feel better about yourself

QoL Dimensions and Preferences

Number of individuals without a disability: 443
Number of individuals with a disability: 410
12 QoL Dimensions Measured

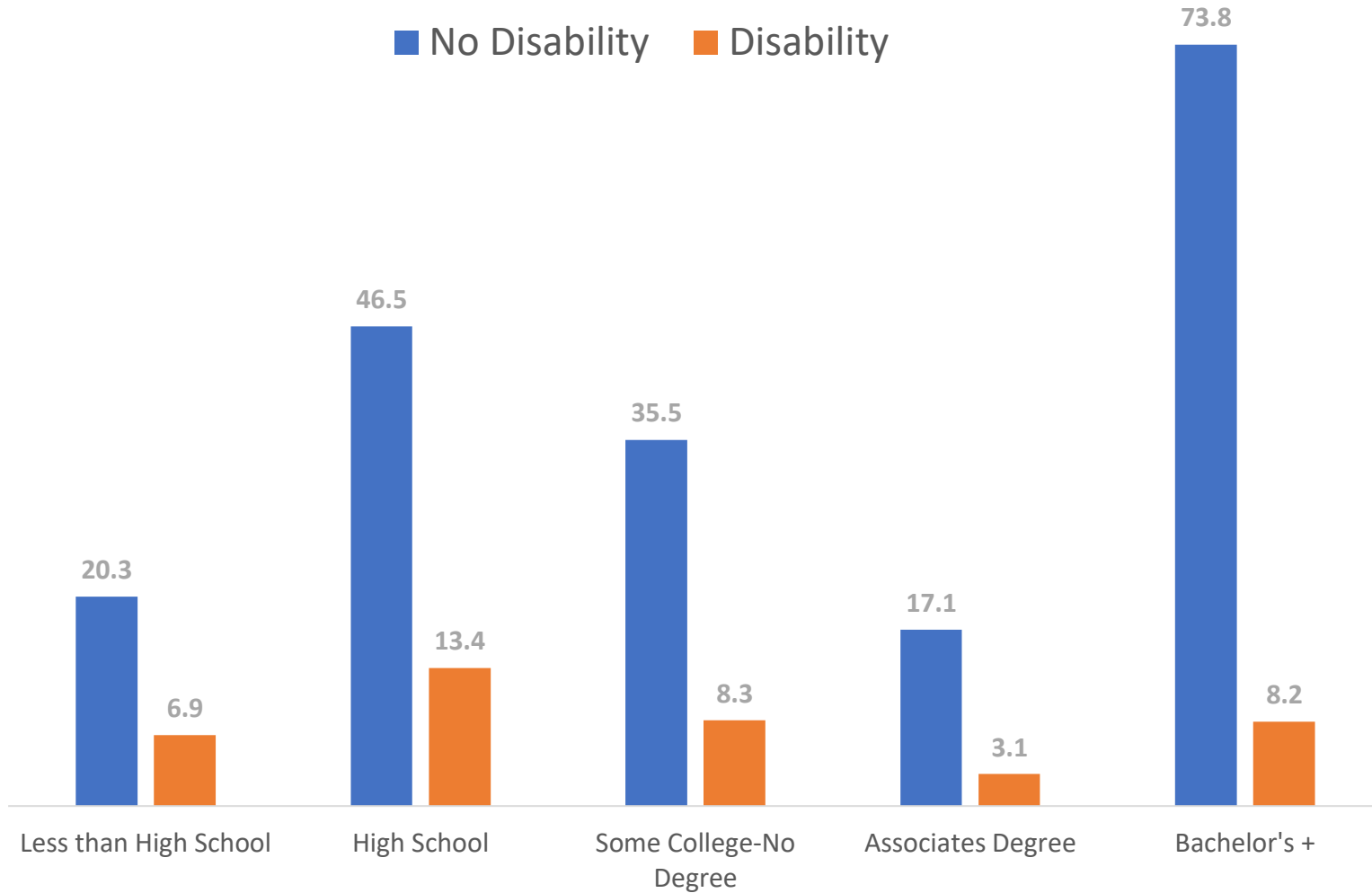


**Broader QoL Dimensions*
^Health Status QoL Dimensions

Based on response percentages

(Jacinto et al., 2023; Crocker et al, 2021; Ratcliffe et al, 2017)

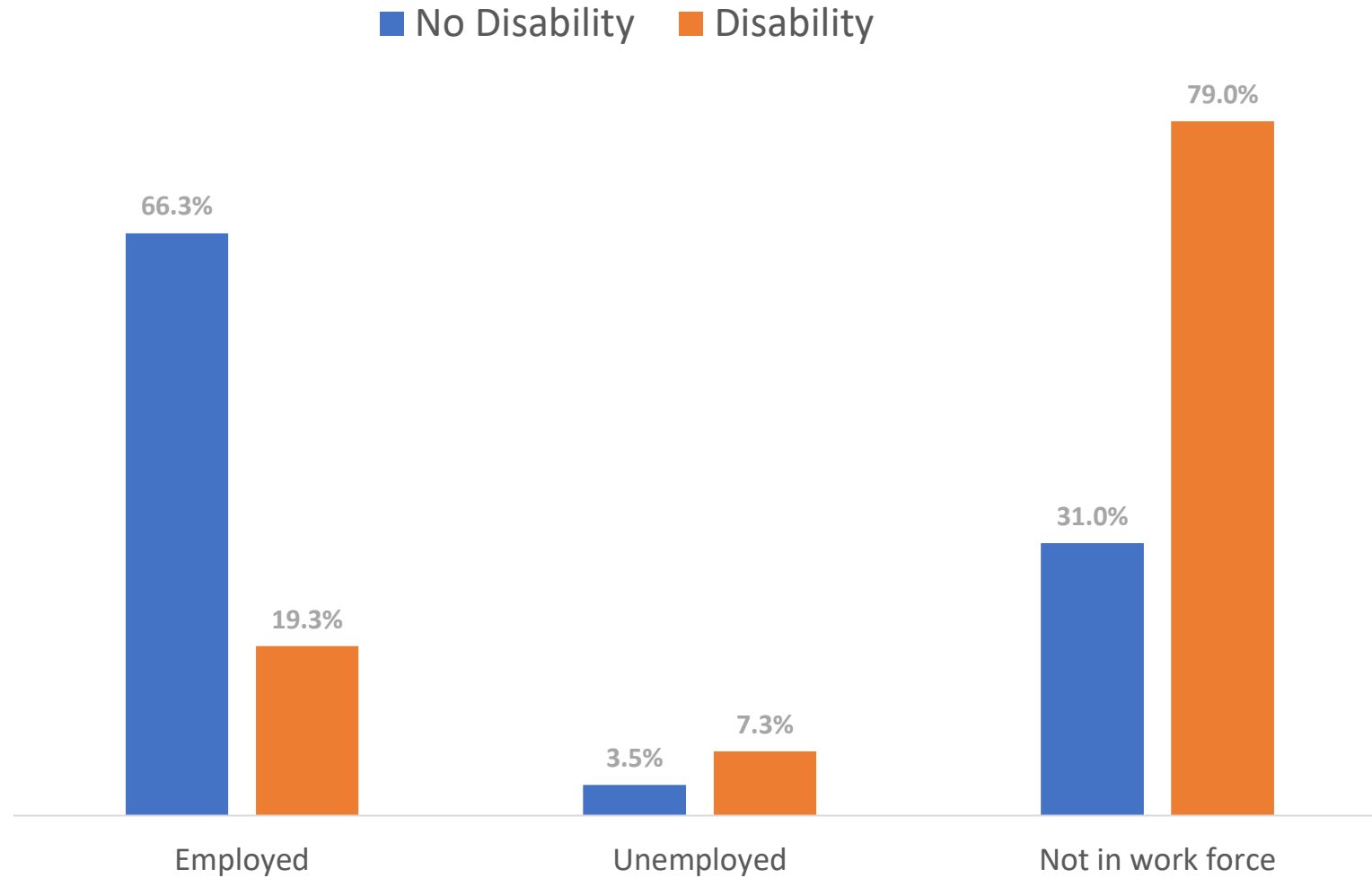
Disability Postsecondary Education Data



Numbers in millions

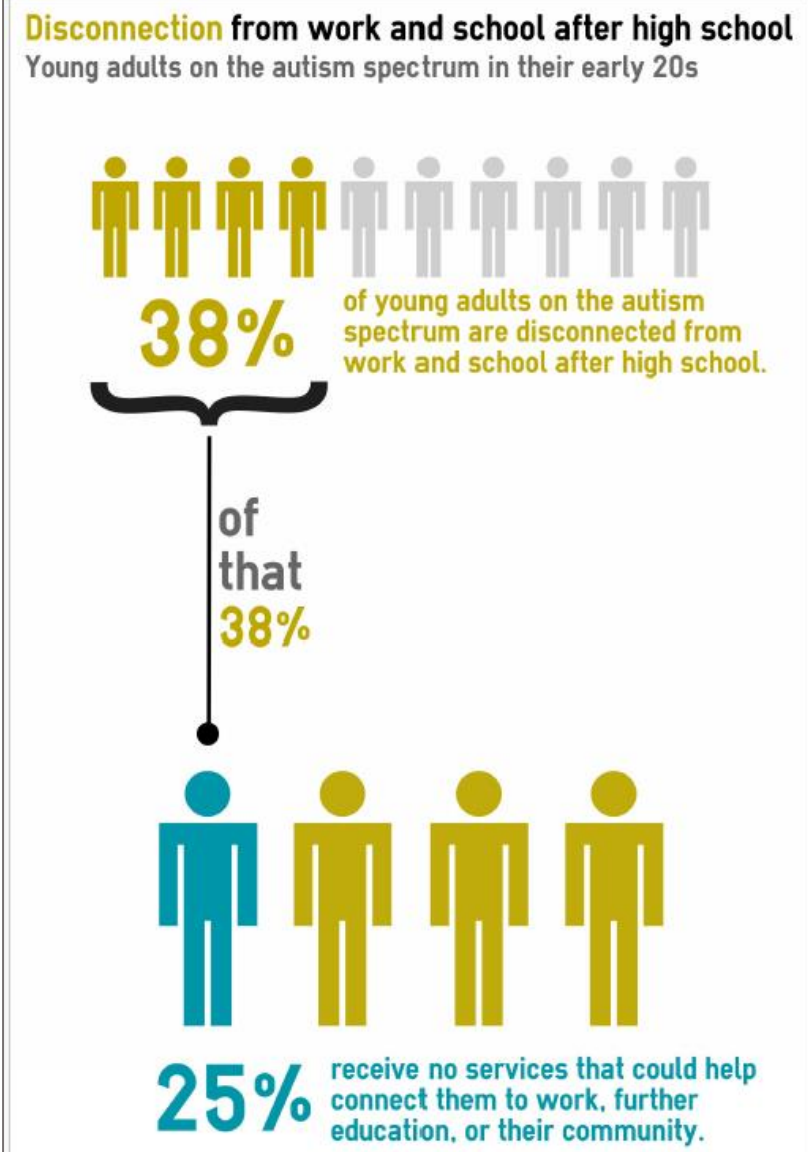
**US Population Educational Levels
Ages 25 and Older
(2022)**

U.S. Employment Data



**US Civilian Population
Employment Data
Ages 16 Years and Older
(2022)**

Research: ASD



Individuals with Autism Life After High School

Roux et al., 2017

Research: Employment and Education

- Research has found individuals with IDD who were competitively employed reported a higher **QoL**, belonging to a community, and financial independence than others who worked in more restrictive settings, but results showed increases in overall QoL scores for participants regardless of employment setting (Randall et al., 2022).
- Status of employment, living arrangements, supports availability, and level of ID are significantly impact **QoL** (Clas et al., 2012).
- Individuals with disabilities are less likely to experience positive outcomes than their peers without disabilities and years of duplicated research indicates in school experiences impact postsecondary outcomes in the areas of education, employment, and independent living (Mazzotti et al., 2021).
- Students with IDD are less likely to stay in college and be accepted by peers at their college, and often are socially isolated (Haber et al., 2016).
- Students with IDD and ASD lack of understanding of disabilities and cognitive issues with IDD, lack of acceptance, and overall lack of mental health supports at universities and colleges (Cage et al., 2020).
- Programming to support a smooth transition from high school to postsecondary education may prove critical in helping autistic students succeed in the postsecondary environment, as well as preventing a host of adverse outcomes (i.e., skill loss, symptom exacerbation, and poor **QoL**, in adulthood) (White et al., 2016).
- College allows individuals with ID to expand their social networks beyond family and caregivers (Spencer et al., 2021).

Barriers to QoL



Current State

“People with IDD often do not have the services, supports and personal relationships they want and need to lead a full life in the community. They may encounter attitudinal, public policy, service system, and other barriers that keep them from choosing where they live and work. Moreover, they often lack opportunities to participate in and contribute to their communities.”

Barriers

- Absence or substandard:
 - Service systems
 - Needed supports
 - Personal relationships
 - Opportunities to participate in the community
- Attitudes toward disabilities
- Policy inconsistencies



Barriers

Transition & Education

- Teachers report barriers to promoting self-determination include:
 - Personal beliefs about whether the student will benefit
 - Insufficient time to facilitate explicit instruction in self-determination
 - Lack of training in promoting self-determination
 - Insufficient time to teach during the instructional day
- Segregated settings
- Low expectations
- If efforts to promote self-determination are in place there is rarely follow-through to systematically assess the effect of those interventions



Barriers

Recent studies convey goals addressing self-determination are not included on many student's IEPs and educators report believing self-determination is an **important part of transition** but have limited or no training in it

(Wehmeyer, 2020)



Prioritizing & Promoting QoL



Self-Determination Outcomes

Research demonstrates **self-determination** characteristics of autonomy, self-realization, and psychological empowerment were **predictors of QoL outcomes**, and signaled improved financial independence, employment, social relationships, independent living, and postsecondary education.

(Shogren et al., 2016)



Misconceptions about Self-Determination

- Completely self-sufficient
- Just making a choice
- Is about controlling all aspects of life
- Not possible for students with more complex needs
- Does not apply to younger children



Transition

QoL

**Increasing self-
determination skills
through transition
programming for
improved outcomes and
greater quality of life**

Transition Programs and Vocational Rehabilitation



- Transition requires educators, services providers, and policy makers to collaborate to ensure students successfully transition through the use of research-based practices and predictors (Mazzotti et al., 2021)
- Opportunities with Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS) and Bureau of Services for Blind Persons (BSBP)
 - Pre-employment Transition Services (pre-ETS)
 - Workplace readiness, work-based learning, job shadows, etc.
 - Partnering on needs
 - Connecting families
 - Preparation for work can impact QoL

Current Initiatives Related to Self-Determination

- Person-centered planning (PCP)
- Alternatives to guardianship
- Supported decision-making
- Community Mental Health (PCP)
- School (IEPs)
- Vocational Rehabilitation (IPE)



Predictors of Postschool Success

National Technical Assistance Center for Transition-The Collaborative ([NTACT-C](#))

- Research base pertaining to improved outcomes in education, employment, and independent living
- Elements of self-determination: autonomy, psychological empowerment, self-realization, self-regulation
- Paid work experiences while in school are the number one predictor of improved postsecondary outcomes

Predictors/Outcomes	Education	Employment	Independent Living
• Career Awareness	Promising	Promising	
• Career Technical Education (was Vocational Education)	Research-based	Evidence-based	
• Community Experiences		Promising	
• Exit Exam Requirements/High School Diploma Status		Promising	
• Goal-Setting	Research-based	Research-based	Research-based
• Inclusion in General Education	Research-based	Research-based	Research-based
• Interagency Collaboration	Promising	Promising	
• Occupational Courses	Promising	Promising	
• Paid Employment/Work Experience	Research-based	Research-based	Promising
• Parent Expectations	Promising	Research-based	
• Parental Involvement		Promising	
• Program of Study	Research-based	Research-based	
• Psychological Empowerment (new)	Promising	Promising	Promising
• Self-Advocacy/Self-Determination	Research-based	Research-based	Promising
• Self-Care/Independent Living	Promising	Promising	Research-based
• Self-Realization (new)		Promising	Promising
• Social Skills	Promising	Promising	
• Student Support	Promising	Research-based	Promising
• Technology Skills (new)		Promising	
• Transition Program	Research-based	Promising	
• Travel Skills		Promising	
• Work Study		Research-based	
• Youth Autonomy/Decision-Making	Research-based	Research-based	Promising

Transition Programs and Predictors

Focus on predictors related to self-determination to increase QoL:

- **Autonomy:** person freely acts based on their own preferences, interests, and ability without undue influence
 - Outcomes: increased financial independence, social relationships, employment, independent living, postsecondary education
- **Psychological empowerment:** you understand the connection between how you act and the subsequent outcomes from your actions
 - Outcomes: increased financial independence, employment, emotional well-being, postsecondary education

Transition Programs and Predictors

Focus on predictors related to self-determination to increase QoL:

- **Self-realization:** understanding strengths and needs
 - Outcomes: greater financial independence, employment, emotional well-being, postsecondary education, self-advocacy
- **Self-regulation:** decide what skills to use in a situation and recognize and use strategies to reach and monitor the desired behavior
 - Outcomes: recognize thoughts and emotions and change when needed; understanding what you are doing versus should be doing

Self-Determination Elements

Choice Making

The skill of selecting a path forward between two known options.

Cm

Decision Making

The skill of selecting a path forward based on various solutions that have each been thoughtfully considered.

Dm

Problem Solving

The skill of finding solutions to difficult or complex issues.

Ps

Goal Setting & Attainment

The ability to develop a goal, plan for implementation, and measure success.

Gs

Self-Regulation

The ability to monitor and control one's own behaviors, actions, and skills in various situations.

Re

Self-Advocacy

The skills necessary to speak up and/or defend a cause or a person.

Ad

Internal Locus of Control

The belief that one has control over outcomes that are important to his or her own life.

Lc

Self-Efficacy

Belief in one's own ability to succeed in specific situations or accomplish specific tasks.

Ef

Self-Awareness

Basic understanding of one's own strengths, needs, and abilities.

Aw


I'm Determined

Aligns with 4 Self-Determination Predictors of Post High School Success (NTACT-C): autonomy, psychological empowerment, self-realization, self-regulation

Process for Implementing Self-Determination Supports

1. Student Self-Determination Skills Assessment (school, agency, family)
 - Identify areas of need-map to Elements of Self-Determination
 - Self-advocacy (communication) and self-awareness (modifying behavior)

**Self-Determination Checklist
Student Self-Assessment**



Student Name: _____ Date: _____


Self-Determination skills help you to know

- yourself
- your goals
- supports you need to reach your goals

Use the following scale to rate the statements below:
 3 = almost always/most of the time
 2 = sometimes
 1 = rarely or never

Rating			
3	2	1	I set goals to get what I want or need.
3	2	1	I make plans for reaching my goals.
3	2	1	I check my progress on how I am doing toward my goals.
3	2	1	I attend my IEP Meetings.
3	2	1	I participate in my IEP Meetings.
3	2	1	I know the goals listed in my IEP.
3	2	1	At school, educators listen to me when I talk about what I want or need.
3	2	1	At home, my parents listen to me when I talk about what I want or need.
3	2	1	I have others in my life who help me to accomplish my goals.
3	2	1	I ask for help when I need it.
3	2	1	I know what I need, what I like and what I enjoy doing.
3	2	1	I tell others what I need, what I like and what I enjoy doing.
3	2	1	I help to make choices about the supports (educational services) and accommodations that I need in school.
3	2	1	I can describe my learning difficulties to others.
3	2	1	I believe I have control to direct my life.
3	2	1	I take care of my personal needs (clothes, chores, meals, grooming).
3	2	1	I make friends with others my age.
3	2	1	I make good choices.
3	2	1	I believe that working hard in school will help me to get a good job.

**Self-Determination Checklist
Student Self-Assessment**



1. What is one (1) goal that you have for yourself?

2. List three (3) things you can do to reach this goal.

3. How can people around you (teachers, family, friends, etc.) help you to build your self-determination skills?

4. List three (3) of your rights under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).


Student should evaluate themselves; coach or differentiate as needed for the individual

Process for Implementing Self-Determination Supports

4. Educator/School Self-Determination Needs Assessment (school, agency)

- Identify evidence if providing learning opportunities
- Identify areas of need and create a plan to implement
- Identify curriculum or tools for teaching and assuring outcomes

Needs Assessment Self-Determination



Use the following scale to respond to the statements below:

0 = We have few or no practices in place for any students with disabilities.
 1 = We have some practices in place for some students with disabilities.
 2 = We have many practices in place for some students with disabilities.
 3 = We have many practices in place for all students with disabilities.

Rating	Area.	Evidence
0 1 2 3	We educate students about their rights as students with disabilities.	
0 1 2 3	We expect students to attend their IEP meetings.	
0 1 2 3	We expect students to know their IEP goals.	
0 1 2 3	We expect students to know the accommodations included in their IEP.	
0 1 2 3	We support students in attending their IEP Meetings.	
0 1 2 3	We teach students how to identify their own accommodations.	
0 1 2 3	We teach students how to develop their IEP goals.	
0 1 2 3	We teach students how to assist in writing their own Present Level of Performance.	
0 1 2 3	We support students in participating in the development of their transition plans.	
0 1 2 3	We encourage students to lead their IEP Meetings.	

Use the following scale to respond to the statements below:

0 = We have few or no practices in place for any students with disabilities.
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 3 = We have many practices in place for all students with disabilities.

Rating	Area.	Evidence
0 1 2 3	We encourage students to lead their IEP Meetings.	
0 1 2 3	We teach students the social and communication skills they need to participate in their IEP Meetings.	
0 1 2 3	We support students in developing self-advocacy skills.	
0 1 2 3	We teach students choice and decision making skills.	
0 1 2 3	We teach students problem-solving skills.	
0 1 2 3	We assist students with disabilities in understanding their abilities and disabilities.	
0 1 2 3	We teach/support disability awareness with teachers and students without disabilities.	
0 1 2 3	We support self-determination skills for all grade levels within our school.	
0 1 2 3	We support the development of leadership skills for students with disabilities.	
0 1 2 3	We educate parents about self-determination skills.	
0 1 2 3	We use person-centered planning tools for students with disabilities.	


Schools/teachers and professionals can assess themselves to assure they are prepared to educate students about self-determination

Process for Implementing Self-Determination Supports

5. Set and track self-determination goals with student (and parent/caregiver) (example: [Goal Plan](#) from I'm Determined)
- Consider goals which might be easiest to meet initially (for more immediate success)
 - Teach skills, model, practice, give feedback, measure outputs
 - Once met, establish new goals
 - Schedule check-ins; let student become more involved in leading meetings (using skills)


I'm Determined

Name: _____ Date: _____

 **Goal Plan**


Answer each of the four parts in this Goal Plan. Your answers will help you think of a goal, what will happen after you reach your goal, the steps needed to complete that goal, and people who can help you along the way.

My Goal	Outcomes	Next Steps	People Who Can Support

 **I'M DETERMINED**

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Scan code for more guidance, videos, and examples.
For additional resources visit www.imdetermined.org/resources.



Example Goal Plan

Name: Max

Date: 12.13.23



Goal Plan

Answer each of the four parts in this Goal Plan. Your answers will help you think of a goal, what will happen after you reach your goal, the steps needed to complete that goal, and people who can help you along the way.

My Goal	Outcomes	Next Steps	People Who Can Support
Self-determination goal: take part in my IEP	I take part in my IEP in February 2024 and talk about my strengths and needs	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Make a list of 3 of my strength- and I am good at2. Make a list of 2 preferences3. Make a list of 2-3 things I'm interested in4. Make a list of 2 needs I have (by Jan 20, 2024)	My mom and dad My teacher My sister






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Scan code for more guidance, videos, and examples.
For additional resources visit www.imdetermined.org/resources.



IEP Rubric

Area	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
 Abilities and Disabilities Awareness	I am not sure of what my disability is and how it affects me.	I have knowledge of my abilities and disabilities, but I do not share it with others.	I can describe my abilities and disabilities to others in my IEP meeting.	I describe my abilities and disabilities, as well as how my disability impacts me to others outside of my IEP meeting.
 Knowledge of Rights and Responsibilities	I don't know my rights under IDEA.	I have knowledge of my rights.	I know my rights and can negotiate with others who I know to ensure that I receive those rights.	I know my rights and can negotiate with others who I don't know to ensure that I receive those rights.
 Social and Communication Skills	I don't know how to interact with others in my IEP meeting.	I know the social and communication skills I need to use in an IEP meeting, but I do not use them at this time.	I know and practice social and communication skills in my IEP meeting.	I use social and communication skills to get my needs met in meetings and interactions other than IEP meetings.

IEP Awareness Score:

Abilities and Disabilities Awareness Score:

IEP Participation Score:

Knowledge of Rights and Responsibilities Score:

Knowledge of IEP Content Score:

Social and Communication Skills Score:

Score Total:

Added Score Results:

6-11 Points:

- What is one area you will focus on?
- Who can help you improve in this area?
- Set one goal for yourself.
- How can we help you achieve your goal?

12-18 points:

- What is one area you need to improve on?
- Who can help you improve in that area?
- Set one goal for yourself.
- How can we help you achieve your goal?

19-24 points:

- Set two goals for yourself based on your progress.
- How can you achieve your goals?
- How can we help you achieve your goals?

I'm Determined

Educator Pathway to Success

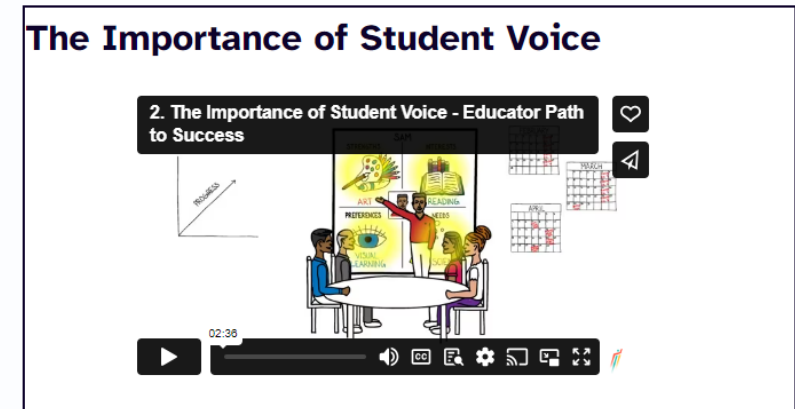


Educator Pathway to Success

Educators often ask our team, “Where do I start?” While every educator may introduce self-determination in different ways, the Educator Pathway to Success gives you ten bite-sized videos that were created in a way to help answer that question.

If you are new to self-determination, we suggest that you view them in the order laid out below. However, if you want to skip around, it will still make sense, so feel free to go through this resource in whatever way suits you!

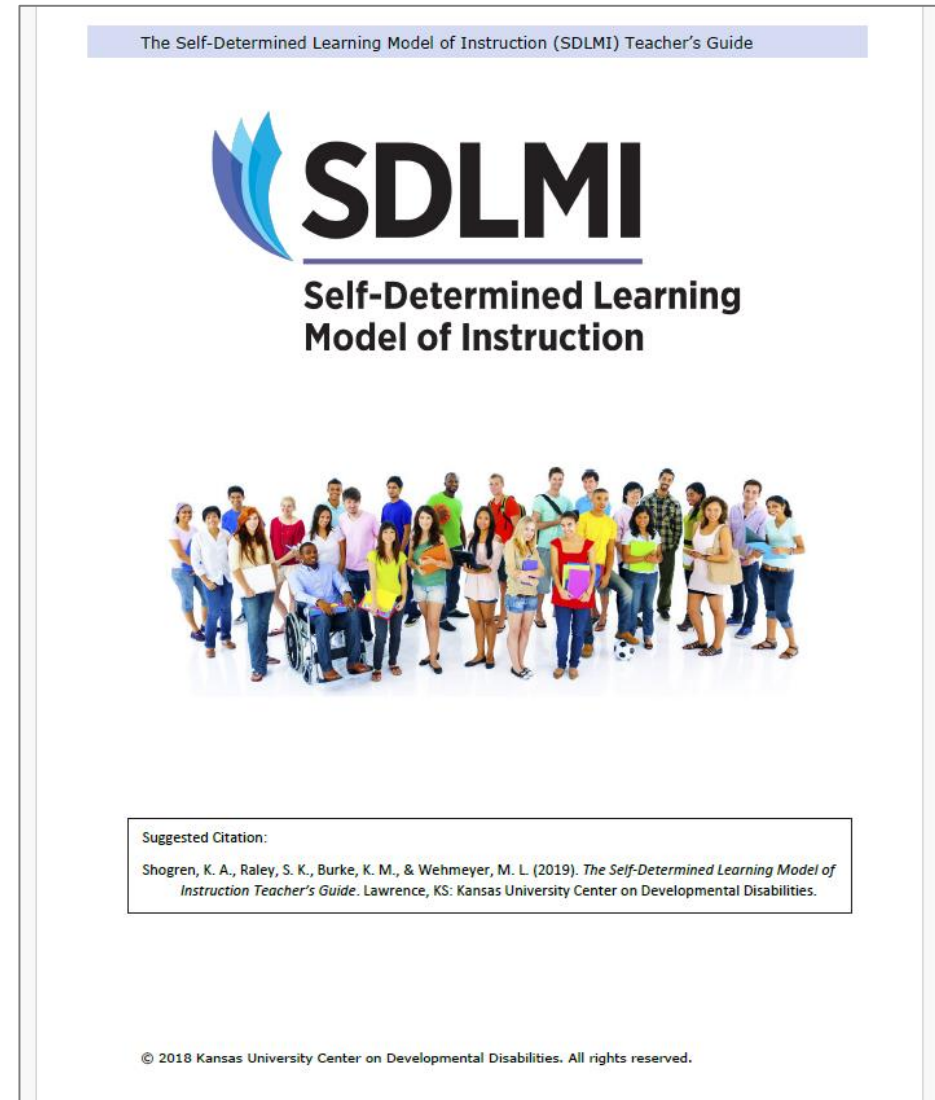
- **Series 1–2-minute videos**
- **Easy to follow site for professionals or families**
- **Tools and resources are current and engaging**



Self-Determination

Self-Determined Learning Model of Instruction (SDLMI), University of Kansas, Beach Center on Disability

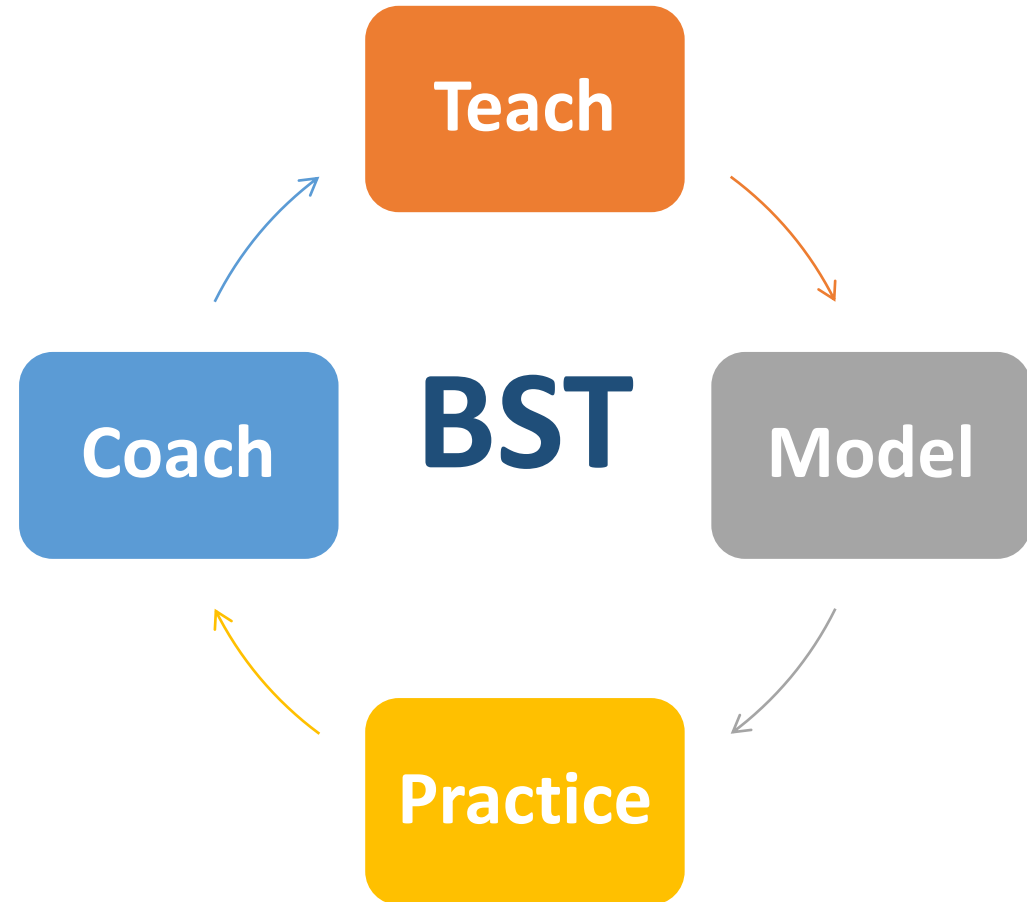
- Free assessments and curriculum
- Aligns with I'm Determined resources
- Framework supported by research
- Further individualization may be needed
- Full curriculum
- SD Assessments for students, parents/guardians, adults
- Online dashboard



Best Practice Learning Model

Behavior Skills Training (BST) Model-EBP for Teaching Skills

- **Teach** (explain what needs to be done)
- **Model** (show them how to do it)
- **Practice** (have them do it)
- **Coach** (provide feedback and guidance through prompts and reinforcement)
- I'm Determined uses similar approach



Self-Determination Interventions & Supports



- Strength-based
- Focus on self-determination
- Meet the person where they are versus “fixing”
- Differentiate teaching
- Presume competence
- Keep expectations high
- Dignity of risk
- Best and research-based practice

Getting Started...

1. Learn about and teach self-determination skills (see participant guide)
2. Start with what's doable
 - Select 1-2 students
 - Use tools from I'm Determined to assess self-determination
 - Select 1-2 reachable self-determination goals
 - Monitor the goals and recognize achievement
 - Set new goals
3. Involve ALL students in their IEPs
 - May look different for each student
 - Increase participation
 - Focus on strengths
4. Work with families on the importance of self-determination
 - Share resources and provide coaching



Take-Aways

- QoL is determined by the individual
- QoL is a reality for ANY person, regardless of disability
- QoL research supports a focus on independence and control of choices
- QoL can be enhanced through teaching self-determination skills
- Transition programs, supports, and services need to target self-determination skills for improved outcomes across settings and enhancing QoL
- Self-determination skills=lifetime skills
- Start now!



Other Featured Resources

START iQuest

- Promotes self-advocacy
- Set home and school independence goals
- Customize to areas of interest
- Promotes collaboration with home and school
- Can be used with all students (with or without ASD)

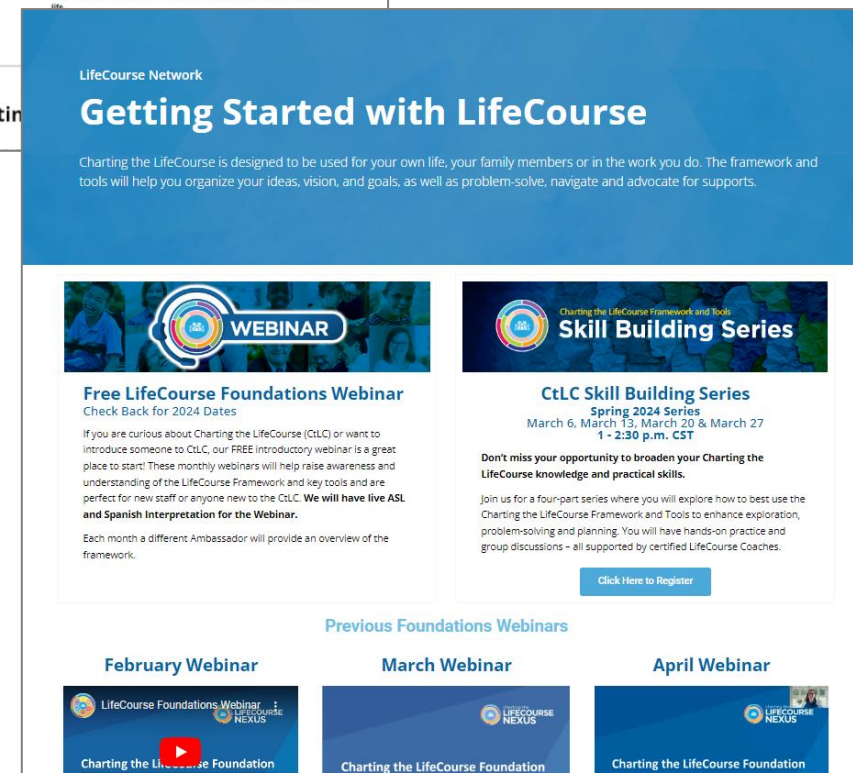
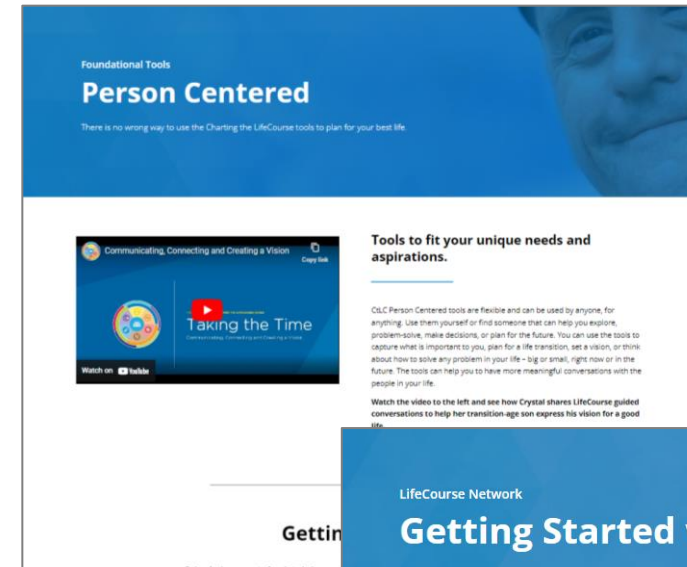
The screenshot displays the START iQuest interface. At the top, the logo "iQuest" is centered with a "Begin Your Journey" button below it. The background features a blue sky with clouds and green trees. On the right, a "User Profile" section shows fields for "Name: Juan", "Grade: 10th", and "Date: 9/28". Below this, there are three panels: "My Picture" (with a photo of a young man), "Things and Activities I Like" (listing "Computer games", "Countries and maps", "Electronics", and "Going to McDonalds"), and "Hopes and Dreams for My Future" (listing "Video game programmer", "I want to travel to 30 countries", and "I want to create my own app"). A "Menu" is visible on the right side of the profile section, listing "Tutorial", "User Profile", "Home Independence Goals", "Home Goal Progress", "School Independence Goals", and "School Goal Progress".

The bottom section of the screenshot shows "School Independence Goals" with a button "Explore School Goal Ideas". It features two goal cards: "Goal 1" under the category "Independence" with the text "I want to get hot lunch on my own.", and "Goal 2" under the category "Self-advocacy" with the text "I want to get a summer job that I choose, not just one that someone tells me to do." A "Menu" is also visible on the left side of this section, listing "Tutorial", "User Profile", "Home Independence Goals", "Home Goal Progress", "School Independence Goals", and "School Goal Progress".

Other Featured Resources

Charting the Life Course (CtLC)

- Framework supported by research
- Trajectory across the lifespan
- Can be used as transition curriculum
- Person-centered
- Tools to consider strengths, interests, preferences, and needs; goal setting, mapping relationships, life domain vision tool, more
- Numerous 1-2 minute videos for professionals, individuals, families
- Training available
- Getting Started with LifeCourse



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