

PIT – CASE STUDY 2

Discovery for a 17 year old student: Interagency Collaboration to Implement Discovery

Team members from a rural Florida county were inspired and highly motivated after attending a Partners in Transition Training and Technical Assistance Project (PIT-TA) workshop on Discovering Personal Genius (Discovery).

This team, which initially consisted of two representatives from Children’s Medical Services (CMS) and a representative from the Agency for Persons with Disabilities (APD), had the initial goal of recruiting more team members from other agencies. They specifically wanted to meet with the school district and Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) in order to collaborate with them to implement Discovery.

They quickly planned a “meeting of the minds” that was held at the local APD office. Representatives from CMS, APD, VR, and the Transition Supervisor for the school district attended. Together, the group decided to implement Discovery and proceeded to develop an action plan.

A critical activity in their action plan involved PIT-TA conducting another workshop on Discovery for the individuals who had not attended the previous workshop. They also included Johnny’s parents. Johnny is a 17 year-old student who was selected by the team as the first student to participate in the process. After the workshop, the Discovery team was off and running.

The team followed a model that involved large group gathering information, and a process of planning Hanging Out With Intent (HOWI) opportunities. They met regularly to debrief as a team and to schedule and plan additional HOWIs based on the information they learned. For instance, a HOWI is tied to a student’s preferred activities such as: if a student said that he likes fishing, a team member would schedule a time to hang out with him fishing at his favorite spot.

All the team members actively had enthusiastically participated in the Discovery process. The VR counselor was there during several HOWIs. A school-based paraprofessional engaged in HOWI experiences with Johnny in after school community activities. The APD team member took time to meet with Johnny in his home. The PIT TA staff member assisting the team was impressed throughout the process by facilitating the interagency collaboration and providing guidance with the implementation of the Discovery process and meetings.

All of the information discovered about was incorporated into his Vocational/Personal Profile which was profile was used to develop Johnny’s Customized Employment Plan. Then, both the profile and plan were presented to the Johnny’s IEP team. The majority of the IEP team members were not part of the Johnny’s Discovery team. As a result, they were initially hesitant to incorporate the Discovery information into the IEP. After their questions were answered and the process further explained, the IEP team was on board.

Today the IEP team is supporting Johnny in making progress toward his employment goals. He is a very talented artist and is planning on making and selling his products. Over the summer, a teacher

worked with Johnny on learning new skills such as invoicing, taking orders, creating office materials (i.e. business cards, order forms, etc.), and creating pictures on demand for custom orders.

The team learned about Johnny's love of pizza from the content of his profile. They decided to build on this interest, so in the coming school year Johnny will have a vocational experience working at the school café which will now have pizza on its menu for the first time.