

People with developmental disabilities want to live their life in the community. They also want to control their own lives. Based in great measure on these demands, the changes that are emerging in systems of support for people with developmental disabilities are part of a continuing evolution that began decades ago. Over this time, inhumane conditions associated with institutions were exposed, community support systems gained prominence, and significant federal and state legislation supporting the civil rights of people with disabilities was passed. Along the way, words like *normalization*, *dignity of risk*, *inclusion*, *participation* and *natural supports* served as rallying points to push along further change.

Most recently, the concept of *self-determination* has taken root, carrying enormous implications for reforming how developmental disability systems are run and to what ends. There is no single definition of self-determination since the concept is evolving as individuals with disabilities and others gain experience. In fact, as the concept is put to practice it may be referred to in any number of ways (e.g., participant-driven supports, self-directed supports or simply “self-determination”).

To help develop a service system that is consistent with this theme, the Idaho Council on Developmental Disabilities established the **Idaho Task Force on Self-Determination**. This Task Force is composed of key stakeholders in the state including self-advocates and their family members, service providers and state agency staff. Their charge is to describe a consensus vision of self determination in Idaho, including guiding principles, and set out parameters for establishing a training project that is consistent with these principles.

Following, the Idaho Task Force on Self Determination is pleased to present its vision and associated guiding principles for self determination.

We Believe ...

- ◆ ALL individuals shall be treated with dignity and honor.
- ◆ ALL individuals shall have authority and control over their life decisions.
- ◆ ALL individuals shall have the right to make and be responsible for their choices.

Mission Statement

Given these core beliefs, the **Idaho Self-Determination Initiative** for transition-aged youth and adults with developmental disabilities, referred to as “individuals,” is designed and operated in ways that are consistent with the principles of self-determination. This participant-driven, efficient and cost-effective system will assure that individuals have the...

- ◆ **FREEDOM** to plan their own lives,
- ◆ **AUTHORITY** to control the resources allocated to them to acquire needed services and supports.
- ◆ Opportunity to choose their own **SUPPORTS**,
- ◆ **RESPONSIBILITY** for their fiscal choices and the consequences of those choices, and the
- ◆ **RECIPROCAL RESPONSIBILITY** to participate and become contributing members of the community.



Complimenting Principles

While these “self-determination principles” will serve as cornerstones to the Initiative, there are a number of other principles that must guide the effort. These “complimenting principles” pertain to: (a) a commitment to community integration, (b) dignity, (c) informed choice, (d) rights, and (e) systems management.

Commitment to Community Integration ...

All individuals live, work, play and retire as valued members of their community.

- ◆ All individuals belong in and bring value to communities.
- ◆ All individuals have the same opportunity, as citizens, to:
 - Have support and live in homes of their own with their family, by themselves or with friends of their choice;
 - Find and hold competitive jobs and/or otherwise contribute to the community;
 - Access and participate in community events, organizational and educational programs, and recreational activities;
 - Participate in identifying and developing supports and resources to build capacity within their community.

Dignity...

Asking for and receiving support is a hard thing to do, as is the act of giving support. In relationships built around giving and receiving supports and services, all individuals will be treated with acceptance, dignity and respect.

- ◆ Individuals, when seeking help, will be made welcomed and heard.

- ◆ Their preferences in life will be honored.
- ◆ Their cultural beliefs will be respected.
- ◆ Likewise, those offering support will be treated with courtesy and respect.

Informed Choice...

is fundamental to a service system where the support workers actively listen to what individuals say, and act to support and inform their decisions.

- ◆ Information will be shared in an easy to understand format.
- ◆ Individuals shall be informed of their options, and of the potential benefits and risks of their decisions.
- ◆ Individuals will recognize and accept responsibility for any positive or negative outcomes resulting from their decisions.

Rights...

Individuals will be afforded the same rights as everybody else. Individuals have the right to have control over the elements of their private life, including but not limited to, the right to:

- ◆ Live interdependently.
- ◆ Live, work, play, vote, marry, have children, worship, learn and spend personal time as they choose.
- ◆ Be free from abuse. Have individual well-being and security.
- ◆ Control resources allocated to them.
- ◆ Receive services and supports from well-trained and competent staff.
- ◆ Say "NO," and tell individuals to change the way they provide services. File grievances and complaints.
- ◆ Have privacy.

System Management...

Policy makers will set financing and operational rules that are consistent with self-determination principles. Individuals will be active partners in promoting the effective utilization of resources and enhancing the quality of all services and supports.

- ◆ All individuals are valued partners in policy making pertaining to services and supports.
- ◆ In setting policy, the opinions of other valued stakeholders, such as family members and other concerned advocates, will be sought out.
- ◆ Services and supports will be designed in ways that honor ethnic, cultural and family values.
- ◆ Services and supports will fit individual needs, be accessible and easy to use.
- ◆ The service system supports and values choice by providing accurate information about choices.
- ◆ The service system should provide consistent appeals and grievance procedures that are simple to use and readily understood by individuals.
- ◆ The services system shall provide community education, training, and access to education which results in (a) increased awareness in the community of the needs and assets of individuals, (b) informed decision-making by individuals and their families, and (c) development of provider capacities and the skills of direct support professionals.
- ◆ The system supports cost-effectiveness and savings are re-invested in services and supports.
- ◆ The system supports collaboration among all stakeholders.

If you would like more information about Self-Determination and possible future training opportunities for yourself or your family, please call or write to the Idaho Council on Developmental Disabilities at: (208) 334-2178
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Idaho Task Force on Self-Determination



There is another way
to think about delivering
services for adults with
developmental disabilities.

We invite you to join us
in our work for positive
change in Idaho.

"People with disabilities should control a limited amount of public dollars to access the services they want and need.

They should have the support to plan an individualized budget to access the community in the manner they choose."