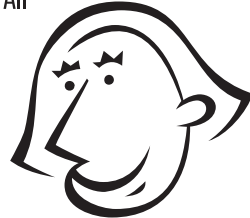


Open and frequent communication

The Lanterman Act, the California law which governs services to individuals with developmental disabilities, states: "All public and private agencies receiving state funds for the purpose of serving persons with developmental disabilities... shall respect the choices made by service recipients." It can be easy to lose sight of this ultimate goal if the different players working toward the goal are not working as a team.

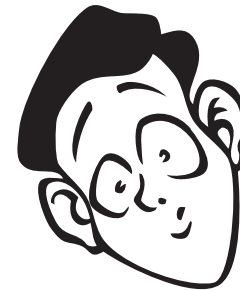
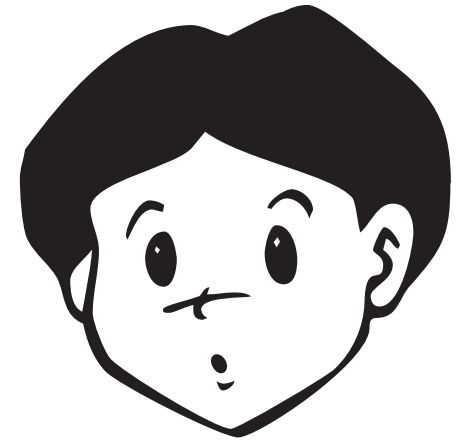
To work together effectively as a team, try to keep the following tips in mind:

- Communicate openly, honestly, and frequently, either in person or on the phone.
- Express your concerns.
- Provide helpful information.
- Be positive, nothing is gained by negativity.
- Focus on abilities and strengths.
- Brainstorm positive changes to fix the negatives.
- Be respectful and non-judgmental.
- Trust the other team members.
- Avoid finger-pointing, instead take a collaborative approach.
- Remember that things will go wrong, but by working together any problem can be resolved.



Doing It Right

Successful
Planning Team
Collaborations
for Transitions to
Community Living



COMMUNITY INTERFACE SERVICES

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COMMUNITY INTERFACE SERVICES

For a person with a developmental disability, moving from a licensed facility or family home to his or her own home in the community is an exciting challenge.

The stress and excitement of the transition is shared by all the members of the planning team. While the planning team's purpose is to support the service recipient in meeting his or her chosen goals, the process does not always go smoothly.

If the team does not think and work cohesively, the team itself can become an obstacle to success. If each player only focuses on his or her perspective, without sufficient knowledge or appreciation of the other players' roles and responsibilities, it is easy to lose sight of the team's overall purpose.



Cast of characters

Typically, a planning team assisting a transition to community living is comprised of many individuals.

The service recipient

is the most important member of the team. All services are planned with the service recipient's goals and needs in mind.



The family members

may be included on the service recipient's planning team at his or her request.



The service coordinator

is the Regional Center staff person that finds services and supports, authorizes payment for services, and writes up the Individual Program Plan (IPP) specifying what services will be provided.



The service providers

are the agencies and people that provide direct services to individuals with developmental disabilities. Service providers assist service recipients in achieving the greatest self-sufficiency possible and in exercising personal choice. During a transition to community living, there are usually at least two primary service providers involved: the agency that currently provides residential support to an individual (such as a group home or nursing home), and the agency that will be providing support in the community. If the service recipient is employed or looking for employment in the community, there may also be a vocational service provider involved.



Remember the different perspectives people are coming from

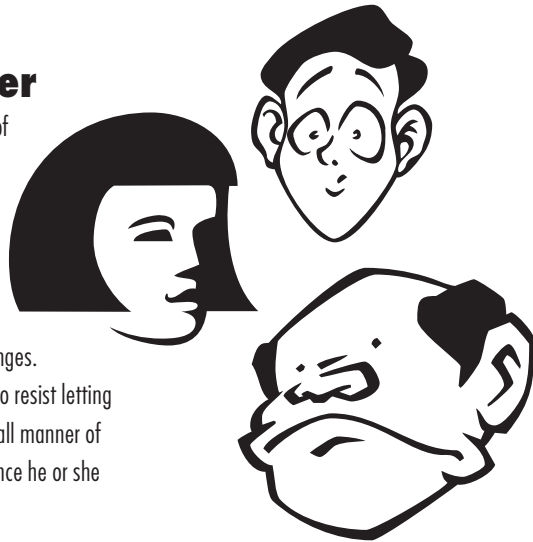
The service recipient

typically is pretty excited (and possibly a little nervous) about the prospect of moving out into his or her own place in the community. The service recipient may have never lived in the community before, so he or she may not even be fully aware of all the challenges and hurdles.



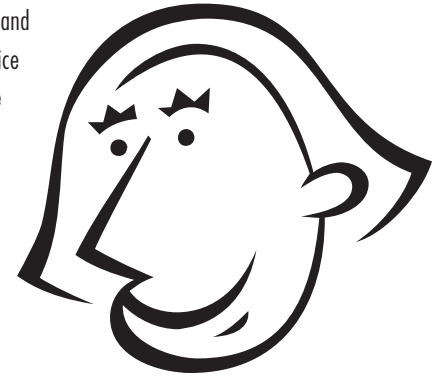
The family member

may be a parent, sibling, or other member of the extended family. Their current degree of involvement in the service recipient's life can vary greatly, but typically they share all the same anxieties and concerns that any parent has when a child ventures off to new challenges. There may be an understandable tendency to resist letting go, to feel that "it can't be done" and that all manner of terrible tragedies will befall the individual once he or she begins to stretch the family ties.



The service coordinator

has a couple different perspectives to work from. First and foremost is the needs, wants, and desires of the service recipient. The service coordinator must ensure that the services being provided meet the individual's needs and are of the highest quality. Additionally, the service coordinator must follow state regulations and consider the cost-effectiveness of the services in order to work within the constraints of a limited budget.



The current service provider

probably has a great deal of experience working with the individual if the individual has been living in a facility, and may have a good feel for what his or her needs and abilities are. Although they may have spent much time preparing the individual for greater independence, there may be a feeling of "not just yet"—he or she is not quite ready yet.



The new service provider

shares many of the feelings of the other players. Like the service recipient, they are eager to get out there and make it work. Like the family member, they have concerns about safety and welfare. Like the service coordinator, they must work within regulatory and fiscal constraints. While very experienced in the field, the new service provider may have little experience with the particular service recipient, and will be highly dependent upon the input and support of the other team members to make the situation work. Typically, they are the newest member of the team, as preparations to get to this point may have been well under way for some time with the other team members.

