

Us and Them: Understanding the Family Experience and Making them Your Most Valuable Partner

Sean Roy – TransCen Inc.

2018 Michigan Employment First Conference



MEANINGFUL
WORK
+
COMMUNITY
INCLUSION



Having a Child with a Significant Disability

Initial Emotions

- Denial
- Anger
- Guilt
- Fear/Uncertainty
- Strength



Having a Child with a Significant Disability

Real World Impacts

- Marriage
- Employment
- Finding healthcare
- Finding Supports
- Social Relationships



Large Group Question

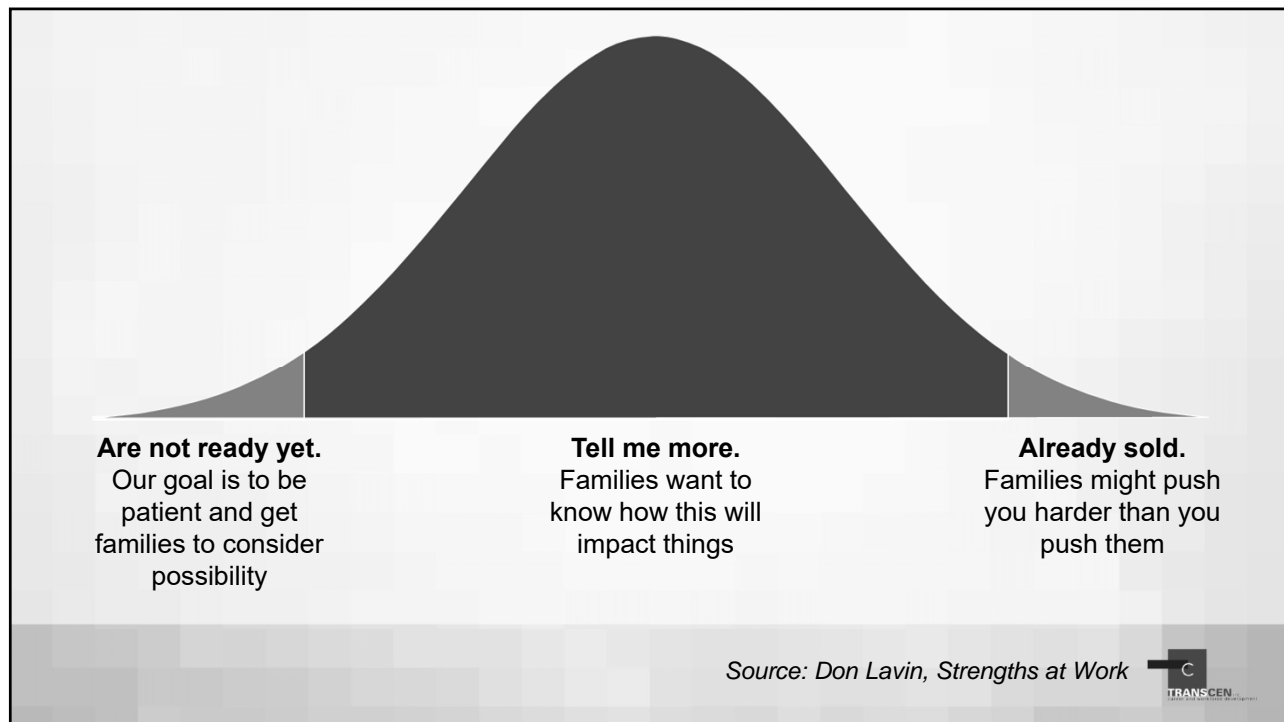
What do you currently do that helps families be a partner in the employment process?



Reasons for Resistance to Employment

- Fear of disruption
- Mistrust of system
- Wariness of professionals
- Concerns over vulnerability and safety
- Lack of belief in ability to work
- Myths about benefits
- What others have you heard?





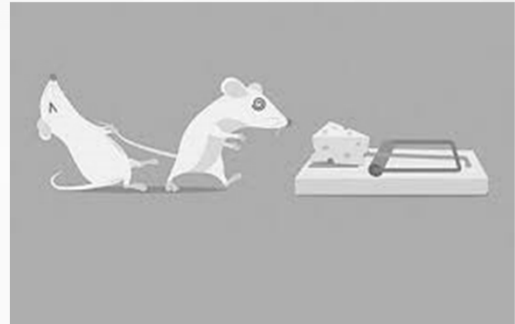
Large Group Question

What do you think families of youth, young adults and adults with significant disabilities wish for their sons and daughters?



Common Pitfalls

- The myth of “letting go”
- Lack of communication
- Cross purposes
- Now Now Now!!
- Not caring or being invested
- Not understanding the impact of disruption



Strategy 1: Root Yourself in High Expectations

A two-way street

1. Helping families see that employment is possible for people with all types of disabilities
2. Helping professionals believe the same thing and convey positive messages

It's not always easy.



Strategy 2: Relationships

Building honest, two-way relationships is the most crucial element of effective family engagement

- Parents want to know that you know their son/daughter
- No relationship = Defaulting to "I have to do this myself"
- Takes time and effort



By Frits Ahlefeldt

Strategy 3: Seeing Youth in a Different Way

Can you help move parents from low expectations to seeing possibilities?

- Positive Personal Profile
- Positive Picture (WI)
- Be patient - it's a big leap for some
- Generational or cultural considerations



Strategy 4: Create a Family Support Plan

What needs to happen to make CIE work for families?

- Acknowledge fears of potential impact
- Negotiate risk taking
- Explore braiding of services to fill holes in the day
- Have solid plan: “What will happen if something goes wrong?”



Strategy 5: Benefits Counseling

Fear of losing benefits, or a family reliance on the benefit check continues to be a big barrier.

- Working improves quality of life
- Working tends to lead to more \$\$\$
- Acknowledge that SSI is hard to navigate
- Partner with or become a CWIC



Strategy 6: Staff Training

Your staff needs training on how to effectively engage families.

- Does not always come naturally
- Build into staff performance expectations
- Engage partners to help



Lessons For the Future

(Butterworth et al – T-TAP Mentor Guide)

Consider these strategies that employment providers and agencies can implement.

Lesson 1

Establish *clear and uncompromising* goals



Lesson 2

Communicate expectations to everyone, and communicate often.

- Staff
- Board
- Administration
- Partners
- Community





You are invited to WorkLink's

Whine-n-Cheese Night

We need your input to help us to make our program services better.
Please come- bring your thinking caps. Refreshments will be provided.

Monday, March 9th, 2016, 6:00-7:30
WorkLink office, 785 Market Street, Suite 670
San Francisco, CA 94103
(415)979-9520
Call Sara for more information.



Lesson 3

Reallocate and restructure resources

“You can look at an agency’s budget and know what they really prioritize.”



Lesson 4

Just do it! Find jobs one person at time,
one business at a time.

- One of the best ways to build better partnerships with families is to be good at what you do.



Lesson 5

Develop partnerships – internal and external.

- Assign parent lead
- Partner with advocacy orgs for training
- National technical assistance



Final Large Group Question

Now that you have heard the information, what is one or two action steps you or your organization can take immediately to help improve partnerships with families?



Thank you!!!

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