

Find Meaning in the Work

Ten Exercises to Encourage Reflection on Direct Support



We believe that ...

... direct support workers make an essential contribution to the lives of people with developmental disabilities and their families when they are committed, competent, and caring. These exercises **look at what makes for good work.**

... opportunities to reflect on what is meaningful in direct service work are one important source of the learning that underpins good work and the effective leadership of service organizations. These exercises **structure time for reflection.**

... a sense of meaning cannot be poured into people. People construct meaning for themselves in focused conversation about important questions. These exercises **focus reflection.**

... people who do direct support work can benefit from reflection on its meaning; so can people who manage or coordinate services; so can people with disabilities and their families who are interested in hiring and directing their own staff. This set of ten exercises assists anyone who wants the chance to **think more deeply about supporting people with developmental disabilities to live well connected lives of their own choosing.**

The Exercises

Each exercise defines a structure for reflection on one of these questions:

- Why should society support the work we do?
- Who among us best realizes the calling of direct support and why?
- Am I becoming a worthy ancestor for those who will enter the work in the future?
- What makes it easier for us to do what it takes to create good outcomes?
- How much can we influence working conditions?
- Why do many people place so little value on direct support work and how do we resist?
- What has my work life-line been and what has lifted me when I have lost the meaning?
- What dilemma's and difficulties go with the job and how can we cope with them effectively?
- What are the important themes in direct support work and how would we express them in a quilt?
- What are the positive contributions that people with disabilities make to direct support workers?

Each of these structured exercises can be done in one to two hours. A single exercise can be done in a staff or team meeting. Exercises can be sequenced for staff development days or for agency retreats.

The set includes...

- A guide for facilitators
- Powerpoint files for each exercise
- Printable handouts
- Printable resources

John O'Brien & Connie Lyle O'Brien learn about building more just and inclusive communities from people with disabilities, their families, and their allies. They developed and tested these exercises in cooperation with more than fifty agencies in Wisconsin.

INTRODUCTORY SPECIAL PRICE

**Call Cathy Hollands 416.658.5363
or cathy@inclusion.com for
details.**

I've been doing job coaching for several years and keep saying to myself, 'someday I better start a career'. These exercises made me realize I had a career and I could help build the status of my profession."

—Job Coach

I've always really liked what I do but having a chance to think about my work has renewed my commitment to it.

—Residential direct support worker

These exercises made us reflect on great questions and re-energized our staff.

—Agency director