

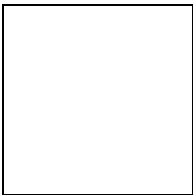
Session 12

MAKING DECISIONS – Giving informed consent

WHOSE FUTURE GOAL 7: You will learn how to give informed consent.



In past lessons you used the **DO IT!** process to make decisions about one part of your transition...where you will live. You first used **DO IT!** to figure out where you might want to live after school. Then, you used the **DO IT!** process to come up with some things you need to learn to live independently. But there is another kind of decision-making that you should be involved in during your transition planning.




Find your copy of the form that is used during your IEP meeting.



I'll wait.

OK. Now, take a look at that form.

Somewhere there is a place for a bunch of

people to sign.  Found it? If not, the place to sign is on your actual IEP form. That area probably has some tricky

language right before you have to sign. I'll give you an example.

One form I have says:

"We the undersigned have provided input for the development of this Transition Plan and agree to carry out the recommendations specified within."

See.... tricky language! Lawyer talk!

Sounds kind of like the Constitution:

"We the undersigned do solemnly swear
blah blah blah blah blah...."

What's the problem? Well, you should be



signing your name on your transition plan or IEP. By signing it, you are saying that you were part of the process and agree with the decisions.

How can you agree with something only lawyers can understand?

Well, first let's look at that sentence again. I have a friend who can translate for us as we go along.

"We the undersigned have provided input for the development of this Transition Plan and agree to carry out the recommendations specified within."

OK. So in plain English it says
"All the people who signed their name on the lines right below helped

write the transition plan and will do what is in the plan.”

See if you agree with this sentence:

“If am going to sign my name saying that I helped write my plan and will do what is in that plan, I should be involved in that process.”

Agree? I thought so.

By signing your name, you are doing a lot of things.

First, you are saying you were involved in the planning process.

Second, you are saying you will work to make the plan happen.

Third, you are giving the school permission to do these things to you!

You have given “informed consent.”

Ever heard that phrase? Probably not. To give consent means to give someone permission to do something. Informed consent means that you gave that permission knowing what would happen to you.

Remember when you had that inflamed appendix several lessons ago?



Remember how the doctor told you what she was going to do (operate on you to take out your appendix)?



When you said “YES DO IT NOW CAUSE IT REALLY HURTS!!!!” you were giving her informed consent to operate.

If you are going to sign legal documents, you need to know what you are signing, right? Let’s say you just won the lottery.



If someone comes up to you with a contract and asks you for your



autograph on the bottom line, you are not going to sign it, are you? I hope not. You might sign away all the



money you just won!

A contract is something that you sign that says that you will do something. You will have to sign a contract when you rent an apartment or buy a house. The contract says that you get to live in the house or apartment, but that you will pay some amount of money for some length of time.

IEPs are kinds of contracts. You agree to do something and other people agree to do something else. In this case, the school agrees to provide services and support to help you learn. You give informed consent that you knew what was in the plan and will work hard on it all year.

OK. Fine, you say. But, so what?

Well, I’m getting to the point. The point is, you need to know what you are signing. You need to make a decision about signing the forms!

AH HA! Finally. Make a decision.
That's where we were going in this lesson.

Yes. Giving informed consent is like making a decision. A decision about whether you agree with the transition plan that has been written for your educational program and that you will work on for the entire next year.

You have to make a decision about signing those forms. Guess what? You can use the **DO IT!** process to make that decision!

You shouldn't be surprised. I mean, it is just a decision.

OK. Let's think this through. Picture this:
You are sitting down in the meeting.



You look around the table.

Someone has pulled two tables together and your transition planning team is sitting around



those tables. There's your mom and dad. Next to them is your teacher and next to her is a person from the vocational rehabilitation office. On the other side of the table from you is the vice-principal, with the diagnostician sitting next to him. Just to your right is your job coach and next to her is the speech therapist.

You have been meeting for a couple of hours. You are tired of sitting. So is everyone else, because they are all shifting in their seats. But it looks like things are winding up. You are about done. The IEP form has gone all the way around the table and is now laid in front of you. Your mom slides a pen over across the table and it hits your job coach's lap. She picks it up and hands it to you. You have watched everyone

else. They signed some lines and passed it on. You look down, pick up the pen and....

Well, what do you do?

You have to make a decision. Lucky you know the **DO IT!** process!

So, you **D**efine your problem. Easy enough.

What's the problem?

Right...the problem is "Do I sign this form?"

Straight forward problem, right? I mean, sign or not sign, that can't be too hard to decide!

Wrong! Remember, nothing in life is ever simple! Signing really means, "Do I agree with this plan or not? Do I think it is a good plan for me?"

First, you need to know what you are signing. Now, chances are that the line above where you sign will be some language that only a lawyer can understand, like "***We the undersigned*** do solemnly swear blah blah blah..."

So, first of all, how do you figure out what you are signing?

Easy. Ask someone. So...

You turn to your job coach, who you really like, and you say, kind of quietly 'cause you are a little embarrassed 'cause no one else asked, "Hey, psst, Hey you, what does this line say?"

Your job coach very quietly leans over, pretends she is picking up something off the floor and whispers, "It says you were involved in planning the transition plan, you agree with everything in there and you agree to work to make it all happen."

OK. Now you know what it means. You still have to get more information before signing and moving on.

1. Were you involved in the decision-making process?
2. Do you agree with what's in there?
3. Do you agree to work on it all year?

OK. Let's say you were involved, you do agree and you want to work on these things because they are important for you to become more independent even if some are

a little **boring**.



On to step 2. **O**utline your options. What are your options?

Go ahead...list them:

Pretty easy this time, right?

Sign or don't sign the form!



OK. Step 3. **I**dentify the outcome of each option.

List some of the things that might happen if you sign: _____

What happens if you don't sign? List them here: _____

Basically, if you sign, you work on these goals all year and learn what you need to make you as independent as possible. If you don't sign, well, someone will have to convince you to sign or find out what it is you don't like and work to change that.

But, you already said you agree with what is in the plan, so on to Step 4.

Take action.

You look back down at the form, find the line that says "student" on it, and in your best handwriting

sign your name.



Good.

But, let's back up. Say you **D**efined your problem as "Do I sign this form?" and you find out from your job coach that the line says that you were involved in planning the plan, that you agree with what is in there and you agree to work on it all year. Then you ask yourself the three questions:

1. Were you involved in the decision-making process?
2. Do you agree on what's in there?
3. Do you agree to work on it all year?

And the answer to each could be.... **no**.

If you realize that nobody involved you in the process, that you don't think that what

is on the plan included your preferences and interests and you don't want to work all year on them.

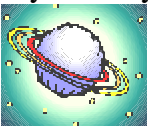
What do you do?

Well, you go to Step 2. **O**utline your options. Same options. Sign or don't sign

the form! 

OK. Now Step 3. **I**dentify the outcome of each option. If you sign, you are saying you will work on these goals all year and that you were involved in making decisions about the plan. You might get stuck with an educational program that you don't want, but you would have to live with all year.

What happens if you don't sign? Well, everyone will probably look at you like you

were from **Saturn** , and then look at each other wondering what to do next. You could take the easy way out and just sign it, but....

Time to **T**ake action!

You look up and say "I don't want to sign this. No one asked me what I preferred and what I thought was important to be in the plan. I really don't want to work on some of these things all next year. I have some other ideas."

Your dad looks like he's about to fall out of his chair. He probably thought he was going to get to go home. But then he says, "I agree". You can't believe it. You and your dad haven't agreed on anything since flattop haircuts. Your teacher looks embarrassed. She looks at you

and says "I didn't really think you'd be interested in setting goals. You never have been before!"

Well, now you're a little embarrassed because that is true...you haven't been too interested before. "But," she goes on, "what would you want to see in the plan?"

So, you are on your way. Now you have to be able to tell them what you prefer, how you would make decisions and show them that you are able to make decisions.

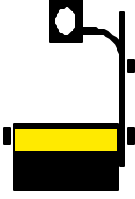
It could happen! Well, maybe. But in any case, you need to realize that by signing the forms you are giving consent to whatever is in there, good or bad!



Go back to your last transition plan. You should have a copy of it somewhere. If not, you may need to go back to wherever they keep those things. When you locate the form, spend the rest of the time looking at the goals and objectives that were written for you to work on this last year.



Think about some of the decisions you would make for each area if you were in charge of doing that. Decide whether you would have signed the transition plan or not. What do you like about the plan? What do you not like? How would you change it?







Okay. Let's look at what you've covered this session.

- ☒ You learned that you should be signing your **I** _ _ and **t**_____ plan forms.
- ☒ You found out that sometimes you have to get someone to tell you what some of the **l**_____ in the forms means.
- ☒ You learned that by signing your **n**_____ on a document, you are:
 1. saying you were involved in the process;
 2. saying you will **w**_____ to make the plan happen;
 3. giving the school **p**_____ to do what is in the plan.
- ☒ You learned that by signing a document you are giving “**i**_____ consent”, that giving consent means to give someone permission to do something and that informed means you gave that permission knowing what would happen to you.
- ☒ You used the **DO IT!** process to make decisions about giving informed **c**_____.



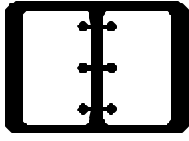
Before the next session, you should have:

-  Looked at your last transition plan and the goals and objectives that were written for you to work on this last year.
-  Thought about some of the decisions you would have made if you were in charge of doing that for each area.
-  Decided whether you would have signed the transition plan or not.
-  Identified what you like and did not like about the plan and what you would do to change it.

Okay. So that's it for now.



Later.



Session 12 Summary Sheet - Giving informed consent

WHOSE FUTURE GOAL 7: You will learn how to give informed consent.

- ☒ You learned that you should be signing your IEP and transition plan forms.
- ☒ You found out that sometimes you have to get someone to tell you what some of the language in the forms means.
- ☒ You learned that by signing your name on a document, you are:
 1. saying you were involved in the process;
 2. saying you will work to make the plan happen;
 3. giving the school permission to do what is in the plan.
- ☒ You learned that by signing a document you are giving “informed consent”, that giving consent means to give someone permission to do something and that informed means you gave that permission knowing what would happen to you.
- ☒ You used the **DO IT!** process to make decisions about giving informed consent.

