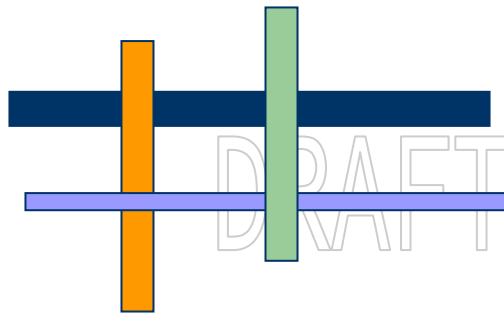




# Discovery: Realizing Potential



Tennessee Division of Mental  
Retardation Services

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There is Nothing  
More Tragic Than:

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Unrealized **POTENTIAL**



# *DMRS Believes That Every Person Has Potential*

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DMRS believes it is imperative that the service delivery system is grounded in a fundamental respect for the potential of every person – no matter how significant their disabilities, how challenging their behaviors, nor the number of successes or failures in one's past.



# Our Profound Obligation

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To ensure that *every* individual has the opportunity to discover their own potential on their own timetable demands the very best of our perseverance and imagination.



# Our Mutual Responsibility

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By providing day services to people, we are in effect, taking responsibility for influencing one of the most critical parts of their lives – their day.

# Evolution of Services

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# The Three Pillars of Day Services

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- Productivity
- Inclusion
- Independence

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# What is Discovery?

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The principle around which day services revolves  
– thoughtfully and deliberately structuring time to  
help people discover their skills, interests and  
abilities.



# Providing Context

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Disability is often an isolating condition that, at its very least, leads even the most optimistic person with a disability to feel different and separate at times.



# Why Discovery is Vital:

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Inclusion in the community, not separation, develops a person's potential for productivity (work or volunteering); inclusion (establishing relationships/assuming valued roles); and independence (having positive control over your life).



# Discovery

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It is not just important but indeed, critical to note that Discovery is ongoing.



# Worth Repeating

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Discovery is ongoing – in other words, each provider has an obligation to structure services in a way that allows people to discover their interests, skills, abilities and the world around them – this never stops – services must revolve around this principle.



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# The Premise of Discovery

Every person is capable of learning.

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# How Learning Happens

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- Seizing “teachable moments”
- Instead of doing things for someone – teach them  
– do things *with* the person
- Recognize non-traditional ways of accomplishing tasks



# The Outcome of Discovery

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A life that is rich in purpose and meaning.



# Our Guiding Principle

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Our obligation is to help people discover what they are good at. When you find that, you also find a sense of belonging – a sense that many people with disabilities have seldom experienced in the community.



# Good Decisions Are Made:

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With solid information. People must understand what they are choosing. We are obligated to ensure that the people we are so privileged to serve recognize and understand their options.



# Discovery

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Allows people the opportunity to find out what they  
**SHINE** at.



# How Do We Feel When We Do Something That We're Not Good At?

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Not Good! This can effect the way we feel not only about our work but about ourselves and every area of our lives.



# Common Sense Approaches

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Be thoughtful in the opportunities that people have. Setting up activities that demand fine motor skills for someone who has limited or no dexterity is not just bad practice – it can serve to say to the person that they just do not have the abilities to succeed in the community.



# Balance

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Discovery is a demanding because just as you want to avoid setting people up for failure you also need to be cautious of making assumptions about someone's abilities, needs or desires – you'll need to walk a fine line – the person and common sense will be your guide.



# The Credo of Discovery:

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“Exposure precedes interest.”



# The Principle of Ambassadorship

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An immense part of our responsibility is to find thoughtful ways to be ambassadors to everyday life in the community for the people we serve.



# The Principle of Ambassadorship

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Where do you take visitors the first time they come to your home town?



# Discovery Applies to Everyone

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Our shared aspirations demand that we infuse our work with the imagination and determination of Anne Sullivan – who was relentless in her attempts to unlock the world for Helen Keller.



# Exposure Precedes Interest

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- This is especially important for people who are non-verbal.
- This is also critical for people who have been labeled as having challenging behaviors – they are trying to tell us that something is not working.

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# How It Happens:

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Day Services are built on the tenets of productivity, inclusion and independence – these tenets are integral to the development and delivery of day services.



# Discovery

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Is the premise of the Individual Support Plan (ISP) Process – with the person guiding the process and with the involvement of the COS, the provider and the ISC. Outcomes must reflect how time and activities will be structured to promote learning, skill development and opportunities for valued roles and relationships.



# It is Critical That:

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Discovery is grounded in the principles of self-determination and person-centered planning. This requires a thoughtful approach to planning and implementing activities that will provide a person with genuine opportunities to explore the possibilities.



# Indicators That The Activity Is Not Meaningful To The Person:\*

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- A “real” purpose cannot be identified
- Any activity that is only done to kill time
- Any activity that is done because we cannot think of anything else to do

\* We extend our gratitude to Developmental Services of Dickson County for allowing us to use their criteria for this slide and the next slide.



# How Do I Know if Something is a Good Use of Time?

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If you can answer “yes” to at least one of the following:

- Is it something the person wants, chooses or needs to do?
- Is it something useful to themselves or others?
- Is it a learning or skill building experience?
- Is it challenging to the person?
- Is it fulfilling a civic, religious or family obligation?
- Is it of significant exercise or health value?
- Is it building a relationship?



# Discovery as it Relates to Employment

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*Employment First!* – employment is the first day  
service of consideration for each person.



# Discovery as it Relates to Employment

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*Discovery as it Pertains to Employment* is just what it sounds like – thoughtfully structuring time to discover if someone is interested in working – and, if so, what jobs they are interested in pursuing.



# What Job Do You Want?

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- The WC
- The CT
- The CGT

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# Need

More Information???

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# What Job Do You Want?

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- The Wrinkle Chaser
- The Chocolate Taster
- The Commissioner of Good Taste

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# Two of Them Sound Promising

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What about the Wrinkle Chaser?  
(yes, it is a real job)



# The Initial Stages:

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The initial stages do not happen in any particular order. The components presented here are presented as tools and resources that providers can use and adapt based on the needs of each individual.



# The Initial Stages: Conducting Exploration in the Community

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All day activities should be conducted to promote opportunities for productivity, independence and inclusion. With the philosophy that “exposure precedes interest,” community-based activities should be re-structured to place a special emphasis on exploring employment-related activities and concepts. Examples include activities such as volunteering and job shadowing.



# The Initial Stages: Job Exploration

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Recognizing that a person's idea about a particular job may be quite different from the actual job, providers should seek opportunities for people to experience work in the community. This may occur either through volunteering or through brief, paid work experiences. These experiences must be customized to the person's interests.



# The Initial Stages: Job Site Assessments

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Can happen either through DMRS  
Community-Based Services or DRS or both.



# The Initial Stages: Discovering The Potential Interest in Employment

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In the past, this has been determined to a large extent by asking, “Do you want to work?”

Sample questions that may facilitate this discussion can be found in *Discovery as it Relates to Employment*.



# Action Required

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Mere conversations are *not* to be used as the sole factor in determining someone's interest or non-interest in work.



# The How & The When

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If the initial stages resulted in a determination that the person wants to pursue community-based employment and with a consensus of the person's Circle of Support (COS), the provider needs to make a referral to the Division of Rehabilitation Services.



# Special Thanks to:

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Julie Davis of Spectrum

Crystal Groover of ACT

Donna Palmer of SRVS

David Shoemaker of DCDS



# Remember . . .

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*No pessimist ever discovered the secret of the stars, or sailed to an uncharted land, or opened a new doorway for the human spirit.*

*-Helen Keller*