

Transition Planning Involvement Using *Take Charge for the Future*

Objective: to promote **student involvement in transition planning.**

Setting and Materials

Setting: In school, community, and home settings.

Materials: TAKE CHARGE for the Future model that has as its' centerpiece student-directed participation in personally-relevant transition planning and preparation activities

Content Taught

1. Students learn that they are responsible for promoting their own transition success: they are exposed to specific strategies to identify, communicate and achieve their transition goals, and they are provided with the information and support necessary to ensure their success.
2. Students complete a self-help focused curriculum, and they received coaching and support to identify their transition goals, participate in their transition planning meetings, formulate systematic plans for goal attainment, and perform activities to achieve their goals.
3. Information and support are concurrently provided to school staff and families to expand their capacities to assist youth.
4. Peer support and mentorship opportunities are organized to bolster youth transition knowledge, confidence, and support networks.

Strategies in TAKE CHARGE for the Future

ACHIEVEMENT	PARTNERSHIP	SELF-REGULATION
Dream	Schmooze	Think positive
Set goals	Be assertive	Focus on your accomplishments
Organize your planning meeting	Build allies	Deal with other people's discouragement
Problem-solve	Negotiate	Arm yourself against stress
Prepare		Manage help
Keep it going		Track and reward your progress

Teaching Procedures

Students participate in four months of the Take Charge for the Future_Curriculum.

1. Individual 50 minute bi-weekly coaching sessions for youth

2. Youth are coached to (a) dream about their futures, (b) identify short-term, activity based transition goals that are important to them, (c) develop draft transition plans that include a transition statement and detail what they and others would need to do to accomplish each transition goal, (d) plan and actively participate in transition planning meetings, (e) problem-solve methods to overcome obstacles to goal achievement, and (f) monitor their and others' performance of transition activities.
3. In conjunction with coaching in these achievement strategies, youth learn strategies to build partnerships with other people who could assist them to achieve their goals as well as self-regulation strategies.
4. Students help organize and participate in transition planning meeting with their teachers, parents, and other invited guests during which they presented their transition plans and solicited encouragement and needed assistance.
5. Students select their level of participation in meetings and have the option of either leading a particular part of the meeting or making arrangements for support or co-leadership with another participant.
6. Each of the strategies students learn is presented as a series of simple steps. For example, the steps for problem solve are (a) identify the parts of an activity, (b) decide which parts may be hard for you, and (c) pick the easiest way to do each hard part.

Adolescents are also introduced to adult mentors with similar disabilities who lived independently, had an active vocation and presented a positive view of disability as demonstrated through structured interview and reference checks.

1. Mentors are recruited from the local independent living center and area colleges and universities, and matched to adolescents based on gender, interests, and similarity of challenge.
2. All mentors participate in a 4-hour training during which the components of TAKE CHARGE For the Future, role of mentors, and study procedures were detailed.
3. Mentors are coached to anticipate and take advantage of “mentoring moments” or opportunities that would naturally arise during their interactions with youth in which they could demonstrate a behavior or provide some information. For example, during a visit to the mentor's place of employment, the mentor could talk with the youth about job accommodation strategies.

Monthly, 2-hour long workshops are conducted for youth, parents and mentors.

1. The workshop topics are selected by the youth and their parents and may include: (a) surviving high school, (b) support services in college, (c) jobs and careers, (d) managing money, and (e) living on your own.

2. Each workshop is structured to enable youth, parents, and mentors to discuss a specific topic together, then to break into small groups of parents, and mentors and youth, to further discuss the topic and related issues.
3. The workshops conclude with all participants coming back together to de-brief on the quality of the workshop and what they had learned.

Youth and their mentors are also invited to participate in independent community activities.

1. Activities selected include applying for vocational rehabilitation services, visiting the mentor's college or place of employment, participating in a novel recreational activity like skiing or skating, and visiting the mentor's home.
2. Written parental permission should be obtained for all community activities performed by youth and mentors.
3. The teacher assists youth and mentors to plan the logistics of their activities and provide pre-activity coaching to mentors to assist them to prepare for each activity, anticipate "mentoring moments" and troubleshoot problems that might arise.

Besides participating in monthly workshops, parents are provided with additional information and support.

1. A guide is given to each parent that describes the TAKE CHARGE For the Future approach and presents some strategies that parents report to be helpful in supporting the self-determination of their sons and daughters.
2. Three phone call informational updates are provided to parents by the coaches who are working with their children at school.
3. Each teacher reviews the youth's progress, talks with the parent about any progress he or she observed at home, solicits the parent's idea regarding strategies to support the youth, and assists the parent to problem-solve solutions to barriers in promoting his or her child's transition planning.
4. The final form of parental contact is individualized family support provided by the Parent Support Coordinator.
5. Individualized parent support included phone calls and home visits to provide information about community resources, to encourage parents to think about their own futures and what they want for and from their children, and to offer emotional support during difficult times.
6. Three 50-minute inservice training sessions were also conducted for educators and transition staff at each school.

7. Participation is voluntary and open to any school staff that is interested in discussing student involvement in transition planning.
8. During the first session, the participants develop a vision for student involvement at their school and discuss the responsibilities of students, parents and educators to carry out the vision.
9. The second session focuses on specific strategies to promote student involvement in preparing for and conducting transition planning meetings.
10. The third session focuses on strategies to support student, educator and parent follow-through on transition planning activities.

Method of Evaluation

1. Educational/Planning Assessment – Pre and Post test, researcher-developed Likert scales, with parent and student versions. Measures awareness of student participation in transition planning.
2. Transition Awareness Survey - measures awareness of transition planning requirements and resources. Parent and student versions.
3. Family Empowerment Scale - A 34-item measure of youth empowerment. Parent and adolescent versions.
4. Student participation in transition planning-measured via observational coding system.
5. GPA

Lesson Plan Based on:

Powers, L.E., Turner, A, Westwood, D., Matuszewski, S., Wilson, R. & Phillips, A. (2001). TAKE CHARGE for the Future: A controlled field-test of a model to promote student involvement in transition planning. *Career Development for Exceptional Individuals*, 24, 89-104.

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