

Positive Behavior Support

Training Topic

Self-Determination

(Information provided by Disability Rights Iowa)

What is Self-Determination?

“Self-determination is a ten-dollar word for choice – it is another word for freedom – a life filled with rising expectations, dignity, responsibility, and opportunity – a chance to live the American Dream”

- (Bob Williams – Former Commissioner, Administration on Developmental Disabilities, U.S. Department of Human Services)

Self-determination essentially means that a person is able to make both routine and major choices in everyday life.

- Participate in service plans
- Live and work in the community of your choice
- Make your own decisions
- Decide and write your own goals
- Have your strengths recognized
- Celebrate your cultural rituals, customs and religion

The principles of self-determination (taken from the Natural Resource Center on Supported Living):

- Freedom – the ability to freely choose supports based on one’s needs
- Authority – the ability to control the funding and planning of one’s own supports
- Autonomy - the ability to organize resources in a way that best fits one’s needs
- Responsibility – accountability for the spending of public funds

The values supported by self-determination:

- Respect – Respect involves recognition that people with disabilities are valuable and capable.
- Choice – people with disabilities must have access to the same options enjoyed by most people.
- Ownership – more than just routine decision making, ownership implies that the person has complete authority over the supports received and the lifestyle lived.
- Support – all people need some supports to help them make decisions in life; people with disabilities are no different
- Opportunity – opportunity requires the expansion of experiences as well as the ability to take risks and make mistakes

What are you doing to support individuals in self-determination?