

Positive Behavior Support
Training Topic
Self-Determination

(Information provided by Disability Rights Iowa – 9/2014)

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:

- 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

(taken from the Natural Resource Center on Supported Living and Choice)

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

(taken from the Natural Resource Center on Supported Living and Choice)

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