

QUALITY OF LIFE: MEANINGFUL DAYS

BQIS/Outreach Fact Sheets provide a general overview on topics important to supporting an individual's health and safety and to improving their quality of life.

Objectives

The reader will understand why having meaningful day activities is important for the well being of a person with developmental delays (DD) and/or intellectual disabilities (ID) is important for the person's well being.

The reader will learn ways to implement meaningful days that will lead to positive meaningful lives for persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Definitions

Meaningful Day: An individualized approach to providing each individual a full life; full of choices, respectful, full of competence, purposeful, full of community, and which provides value to the dreams and aspirations of the individual. (Held & Tijerina, 2008)

Facts

- Meaningful Day increases stability.
- Persons participating in meaningful day are more likely to have a positive identity. (Harvey, 2009)
- Participation and interactions in the community decrease negative behaviors.

Recommended Actions and Prevention Strategies

1. Create a Meaningful Day for the individual by actively engaging them in:
 - Presence in the community: The person should be involved in the community they live in. The person should be seen in the community participating in the same activities that others living in that community engage in.

- Choice: Allowing the person to make as many choices about their day as possible. This includes smaller choices (examples in some cases could be what they might like to wear), and bigger choices (examples in some cases could be where they would like to volunteer).
 - Community participation: The person is involved in a growing network of a community; this is a community outside of paid staff.
 - Respect: The person is respected and valued by others persons in the community, not just paid staff.
 - Competence: Helping the person to understand his or her own gifts, talents, knowledge, and abilities. Assisting the individual in being able to give back to others. (O'Brien, 1989)
2. Use the goals of a meaningful day to decrease behaviors.
- The goals of the meaningful day are the goals of the person. Remind individuals about their goals and how behaviors could impact their goal outcomes. **Used not as punishment, but as reflection. Example: if you get angry and throw things the restaurant might not want you to have coffee here every day.**
 - Continue to listen and change the meaningful day goals with the individual.
 - Allow the person to redefine themselves by their relationships with others in the community and what they are able to give back to those around them.
 - When a person feels the impact of respect, community participation, competence, values, and has choices they will develop a positive identity about themselves which will increase their positive behaviors in the their life. (Harvey, 2009; O'Brien, 1989)

Learning Assessment

Questions that can be used to verify a person's competency in the material contained in this Fact Sheet:

1. True or False: Having a person participate in a sheltered workshop daily meets the criterion for a meaningful day.
2. True or False: Withholding the meaningful day activities from the person is a way to decrease unwanted behaviors.

References

- Harvey, K. (2009). Positive Identity Development. NADD, New York.
- Held, M., & Tijerina, J. (2008). Living Life to the Fullest: How to Create and Implement Meaningful Lifestyles. (handout). Bloomington, IN.
- O'Brien, J. (1989). What's Worth Working For? Leadership for Better Quality Human Services. Responsive System Associates. Lithonia, Georgia. Retrieved on February 24, 2010 from thechp.syr.edu/whatsw.pdf

Learning Assessment Answers

1. False
2. False

Outreach Services

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As a service for persons supporting individuals with intellectual/developmental disabilities, BQIS/ Outreach developed the Outreach Fact Sheet Library. The information provided is designed to enhance the understanding of the topic and does not replace other professional or medical instructions or individually developed plans. For more fact sheets and information, please visit DDRSOutreach.IN.gov.



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