

Quick Guide to Conversations to Identify Member Level of Interest in Competitive Integrated Employment: Using Enhanced Engagement Techniques

Before the Scheduled Conversation: Prepare in Advance

Preparation can involve doing some or all of the following:

- Inform the member ahead of time of the intent to talk about employment prior to the conversation
- Consider providing information to the member/legal decision maker in advance of the conversation if that would be useful and beneficial
- Plan to listen more than talk during the conversation and take good notes on what you hear
- Establish a plan for the flow of the conversation, including:
 - How to introduce the topic
 - Specific open-ended questions you plan to ask the member
 - Considering the use of videos, such as those watched today at start of our training or sharing video/written success stories from other members. *See Success Stories Video List at end of this guide.*
 - Including next steps at the end of the conversation which could include identifying follow-up activity(s) that will be done and/or IDTS getting answers to questions which could not be provided during the meeting.

Starting the Conversation: Introducing the Topic

- Set aside past experience where a member (and/or legal decision maker, if applicable) may have said “I am not interested in CIE”. The goal is not to reconfirm and document past denials of interest.
- Remember, simply asking “are you interested in CIE – yes, no or maybe?” is not sufficient to make a well-founded determination of interest.
- Don’t explore interest in a very “disinterested” way. In other words, don’t suggest the IDT and MCO do not care whether the member is interested in CIE or not. The goal is to encourage but not force interest.
- It is suggested that IDTs introduce the topic by:
 - Letting the member (and others present) know that your MCO (and all MCOs) is taking a new and different approach to talking with members about opportunities to explore and pursue CIE.
 - Acknowledging that a lot of members may assume they cannot work in CIE for various reasons (e.g. fear of losing benefits; support needs; employer attitudes; lack of transportation; etc.).
 - Explaining that your MCO already has a good number of members that are working in CIE with supports from the MCO. (See Common Myths-Facts Working and Disability Benefits Handout)
 - Letting the member know you think CIE might really make a positive impact in his/her life. For example, saying something like:

“I know you pretty well, and I think I understand what’s important to you and what your strengths and capabilities are. I really think we should talk more seriously about how CIE might be possible for you AND how it might be something you could really enjoy and get a lot of benefit from.”
[Listing some benefits you think align with the member’s preferences and goals could be helpful here.] “Do you mind if we talk a bit more about this now?”
 - Assuming the member is not opposed to talking more, following up by saying something like: “Great, I’m excited to talk more with you about this.”

Continue the Conversation: Engage to Encourage Genuine Consideration of CIE

- Continue the conversation to assist the member (and legal decision maker if applicable) to think about the member's strong interests, skills, knowledge, personality traits, etc. that could be very valuable for/transferable to employment, and valuable to an employer.
 - How does a member's interest connect with employment opportunities?
 - What skills does a member have or is the member likely to be able to learn that would be valuable for employment or a particular employer?
 - What knowledge does a member possess that might be valuable for employment or a particular employer?
 - What personality traits might really be valued by an employer (e.g. hard working, don't give up easily, good sense of humor, always friendly, good listener, high energy, very particular)?
 - What experience does a member have (recent or past) that could be valuable for employment?

Take Time to Listen, Acknowledge What You Hear, Address What You Hear

- Listen to what the member (and legal decision maker, if applicable) have to say about concerns, hesitations, fears, questions they want answers to. Acknowledge all of these as important. Address those you feel you have information/experience to address. Commit to ensuring the member (and legal decision maker, if applicable) are offered a way to get the remaining concerns, hesitations, fears, questions addressed.
- Use skills associated with motivational interviewing such as emphasizing autonomy, EPE, OARS skills, etc.) (See MI Conversation Employment Tip Sheet and MI Employment Scripts at end of this guide)
 - Tips to determine where a person is in relation to wanting to make this change – moving from not working in CIE to working in CIE.
 - Open questions instead of closed questions (closed questions are those that can be answered with “yes” or “no”)
 - Affirmations to acknowledge a person's strengths, efforts, and values using an objective statement
 - Reflect what you hear a person share so they feel understood and accepted
 - Summarize what a person says so you know you are on the same page and the person feels engaged with you
- Address and discuss why now might be good time for member to pursue CIE or take time to learn more about CIE as an option
 - Employers are looking for employees
 - Low unemployment rate
 - Members have skills needed in community workplaces
 - Contributing back to the local community economy by spending wages locally
 - Health and financial benefits
 - Never know when member is ready...need to explore opportunities to know if time is right
 - No time like the present
 - Now is always the right time

Accurately Identify Member's Level of Interest

- After you have been engaged in the conversation for a reasonable period of time and have worked through the above suggested areas of discussion, assess the level of interest you are hearing. For the purposes of this P4P, there are the four possible interest categories that a member can be placed in.