



IT'S OFFICIAL: THE UNABRIDGED 3/1/06 MEASURABLE DEFINITION OF A MEANINGFUL DAY

Measurable Definition of a Meaningful Day

Definition

Meaningful Day supports provide individualized access for individuals with developmental disabilities to support their participation in activities and functions of community life that are desired and chosen by the general population. The term “day” does not exclusively denote activities that happen between 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on weekdays. This includes: purposeful and meaningful work; substantial and sustained opportunity for optimal health, self empowerment and personalized relationships; skill development and/or maintenance; and social, educational and community inclusion activities that are directly linked to the vision, goals and desired personal outcomes documented in the individual’s Individual Service Plan. Successful Meaningful Day supports are measured by whether or not the individual achieves his/her desired outcomes as identified in the individual’s Individual Service Plan.

Criteria

Meaningful Day supports are measured by each individual’s achievement of his/her desired outcomes, as identified in the individual’s Individual Service Plan and as documented in daily schedules and progress notes. Each Meaningful Day activity should help move the individual closer to a specified outcome identified in his/her ISP.

1. Does the ISP action plan contain activities that are linked to the individual’s vision, goals, and desired outcomes and would lead to a meaningful day for the individual?
2. Are these activities being carried out in accordance with the plan and with the frequency specified in the plan, at least 75% of the time?
3. Are these activities resulting in self-empowerment, new relationships, work/volunteer experiences, memberships, valued roles, skill development and social, educational, and community inclusion, consistent with the individual’s desired outcomes?

Meaningful Day Considerations for Team Planning

What is a Meaningful Day

Meaningful Day activities support an individual to routinely explore, secure, maintain, and/or change memberships, valued roles, and/or personal relationships in the community. Meaningful Day supports are age appropriate and provide a wide variety of planned opportunities to facilitate and build relationships and natural supports in the community. Meaningful day includes substantial and sustained opportunity for optimal health, self empowerment and personalized relationships; skill development and/or maintenance; and social, educational and community inclusion activities that are directly linked to the vision, goals and desired personal outcomes documented in the individual's Individual Plan. Such planned activities may include opportunities to:

1. Explore, secure, maintain and/or change supported or competitive jobs;
2. Explore, secure, maintain and/or change post secondary educational activities;
3. Explore, secure, maintain, and/or change volunteer activities;
4. Experience and participate in community exploration, companionship with friends and peers;
5. Develop, maintain and regularly experience chosen hobbies;
6. Maintain family contacts;
7. Engage in community events, education experiences, and those activities and services where persons without disabilities are involved.
8. Learn and develop new skills to support purposeful participation and independence in the community.

All of these experiences would be planned, purposeful, and reflected in daily schedules. Experiences are not just "events" or time fillers.

Meaningful Day Activities – Examples

The following are examples of "meaningful day" activities, for use by IDTs in creating measurable ISP action plans related to the definition of meaningful day.

1. The individual is engaged in daily activities that lead toward his/her personal outcomes.
 - a. The individual is trying new things, which are intended to result in the attainment of an identified outcome in his/her ISP.
 - b. The individual is learning new and/or maintaining skills, which are intended to result in the attainment of an identified outcome in his/her ISP.

- c. The individual is doing things on his/her own in an effort to gain more confidence and skills.
 - d. The individual is choosing what he/she wants to do and is doing things in the community.
 - e. The individual is engaged in preventative health care activities/interventions as needed.
2. Support provided to an individual while he/she is engaged in work that is compensated under the Fair Labor Standards Act.
 3. Work exploration in the community in order to learn about jobs that might match the individual's interests and skills.
 4. Volunteer time in the community, as long as the individual can be observed to have regular significant personal interactions with non-disabled peers or recipients of the volunteer service.
 5. Instruction, when it can be demonstrated that learning objectives or skill development are linked directly to the individual's vision goals, and desired outcomes. (Includes instruction by direct care staff that is conducted under a structured plan developed by a therapist or time when the therapist with the active engagement of the individual, is modeling/instructing or consulting with direct care staff on therapeutic interventions.
 6. Time that the individual is engaged in exploring new interests and/or relationships or establishing meaningful social roles consistent with the DDSD policy.

Examples of activities that would not support this definition are:

1. Activities that the general population would not engage in on a regular basis for extended periods of time.
2. Sustained or extensive time spent in skill building, or frequent use of leisure activities, that isolate the individual from non-disabled peers, such as:
 - a. Sheltered work for longer than needed for specific skill development.
 - b. Window-shopping or mall walking with program staff/housemates as a time-filling activity.
 - c. Volunteer work in isolated or congregate settings intended for persons with developmental disabilities.
 - d. Instruction not linked to an individual's vision for life or ISP.
 - e. Activities that are not individualized or age appropriate, e.g. coloring in children's coloring books every morning at the day habilitation program.
 - f. Watching television alone or with staff/housemates regularly, for extended periods of time.

Additional Considerations for Retired Individuals

Retirement Planning for individuals with developmental disabilities should include the same considerations used by the broader culture and will be consistent with the DDSD

definition of meaningful day. Considerations should include adequacy of resources, implications of long term disabilities on the person, implications of the person's changing health status, identification of interests to pursue, implications for others who are significant in the person's life or impact on the person's self-esteem.

The individual and his/her IDT should incorporate the results of retirement planning into the ISP after exploring these, and any other, considerations that are important to the individual. The ISP should ensure support for an active and meaningful life in line with the individual's preferences and needs.

Service planning for retired persons should be individualized, and should take the following into consideration:

1. Services options will not be restricted based on the fact that an individual is retired. Retired individuals have access to all services and supports available to non-retired individuals.
2. Service planning will address the individual's need for continued growth and development and access to learning opportunities.
3. The individual will determine their daily schedule as part of ISP development and implementation. The pace and timing of a day's activities and events is consistent with the individual's wishes.
4. Daily activities will focus on preventing isolation and maintaining/increasing purposeful activity, including recreational opportunities, in the community.
5. Activities are sufficiently individualized to reflect the interests the individual wants to pursue.
6. Participation in groups, civic organizations and volunteer work reflects the interests the individual wants to pursue.
7. Exploration of new interests and opportunities to form new relationships are consistent with the individual's demonstrated or expressed desire to have new experiences.
8. Supports necessary for the individual to participate in and enjoy activities and events are available and use.