DEB LANGHAM: I'm going to talk to you today about effective interviewing and goal setting practices.

I think it's a real important job we do helping our consumers set goals for themselves, but more importantly, they may work with other folks or other providers and they may have goals for them, but what's different about us, what's different about the way that we go about that?

Self‑directed.

DEB LANGHAM: Yeah.

Good, California.

(laughter)

Yea!

DEB LANGHAM: We're self‑directed.

That's right.

So we're not going to write goals for them, are we?

No.

DEB LANGHAM: No.

What are we going to do?

Let them.

Write them with them.

DEB LANGHAM: Yes, we are, we're going to let our consumers determine their own goals.

Okay.

So I want to share with you today some of the things that I've learned through many, many years of experience, but I won't tell you how many years of experience and the things that I've learned recently and things I have learned from other folks that I've interacted with, but interviewing consumers and setting goals, and I've learned a lot from my staff as well, and I'm hoping that today you can share everything that you've learned too about working with your consumers, interviewing them, talking with them, and then setting goals and writing goals for your consumers, with your consumers.

Today we're going to learn about key elements of a successful interview, a strength‑based approach to interviewing.

How many of you have heard of that?

Good.

Some of you have.

I have to admit, it was kind of new to me, and when I read up on it, I thought, you know what? We do this.

You know, we really do it, but this way when we learn about it, we do it in a more deliberate way to really kind of get with our consumers and find out what their strengths are.

And then strategies to promote consumer control and direction.

How do we do that?

And how to assist consumers to identify and reach their IL and community integration goals.

There are lots of ways that we can do that.

What are goals and how to write them?

The little devils.

We're going to learn!

(laughter)

How to learn core services to achieve goals.

The boys, Roger and Darrel, talked about that this morning a little bit.

We're laughing about that, tried to skip over that.

We know better!

DEB LANGHAM: And determining what needs to be done,

who is going to do it,

who is responsible.

Okay.

And if you have questions, just raise your hand,

you might have to wave

it before I can see

that you're up.

Okay.

It's not working, Tim.

Oh, yes, it is.

You have to point it

toward the machine.

DEB LANGHAM: Okay.

You can tell that I'm not the IT expert at my center.

Okay.

First meeting with

a new consumer.

Some of the key elements we're going to talk about, what happens during that time.

When you're first meeting with the consumer,

you're all excited, right?

You're going to get to meet them and talk to them and

find out what is happening with this consumer.

Sometimes, we're full

of a little anxiety.

That was always what I was full of, I'll tell you.

And I always worried, will I ask the right questions?

Will I arrive on time?

I should have got that GPS so I know where I'm going.

And how on earth can I

talk about or discover

what my consumer needs?

I've thought

about this method.

(laughter)

That is using a crystal ball.

However, as much as I tried it, it doesn't work.

However, you will find answers in learning about

good interviewing

techniques and good communication skills.

Good communication

skills are important

to your consumer,

but they're important no matter what you do, right?

Yes.

DEB LANGHAM: Yes.

Yes, they are.

Show me that you're

awake after lunch.

(laughter)

DEB LANGHAM: Nod.

Okay.

Good.

Good.

So you're going to contact your consumer, give them a call, right?

Find out what time do they want to have an interview?

What time do they want to meet you?

You can decide then

or you can talk with your consumer and find out, hey,

do you need any accommodations so that you can access our services?

You might want to ask them that before you meet them.

Some of those accommodations are Braille, sign language,

oral or foreign language interpreter.

During your conversations, you might want to discuss the length of your visit with your consumer.

Why would the length of our visit with our consumer be important?

Are you going for the afternoon? Right?

So maybe you might want to say, you know, generally

I schedule 45 minutes to an hour, or one hour to two hours for our first meeting,

you know, maybe that's

too long for you.

Maybe you don't know

yet how long that is

for your consumer.

Talk to them and find out.

But have a time frame because you don't want

to be there for dinner.

You don't want your consumer, or if you're meeting in your office,

you don't want to be

walking your consumer out with the security crew or the cleaning crew.

So you just want to

have a time frame;

that will really help

you to set boundaries.

Depending upon where

you've decided to meet,

set the stage.

So let's say you're

meeting with your

consumer at your office.

What kind of things can you do to make sure that your consumer feels welcome,

safe, and knows that

they're coming into an accessible spot?

What can you do?

It's your turn.

Yes, Monica?

Offer them water or...

DEB LANGHAM: Absolutely.

Microphone.

DEB LANGHAM: Oh, microphone.

Sorry.

I could hear you,

so I didn't pay attention.

I said offer them water.

DEB LANGHAM: Offer them water.

Or a hot beverage.

What else?

Microphone.

I have a loud voice.

Not to make them wait 15,

20 minutes for you to come to the front to get them.

DEB LANGHAM: How annoying is that? Yeah.

This isn't the

doctor's office.

You've made an appointment.

What else?

Come on.

Don't let that red

velvet cake set in.

Ensure their privacy.

DEB LANGHAM: Yes, ensure privacy, absolutely.

Good lighting.

DEB LANGHAM: Good lighting, yeah.

Anybody else? Yes, California?

Meet them with a smile and a nice tone of voice as well.

DEB LANGHAM: Yeah.

Really.

Know that you want to see them, for goodness sakes.

Have notes there from your initial phone call.

DEB LANGHAM: Yes.

Okay.

Some of the things

that we do.

You might want to give

your consumer a tour of

your agency.

You know, I used to work

at a smaller agency,

now I work at a big one,

but no matter what,

generally it's important for folks to know where the exits are and where the bathrooms are.

Consumers want to

know these things.

Make sure that the room that you're meeting your consumer in is accessible and meets their needs.

And again, that was good with the lighting.

Reduce noise and clutter.

Why would I want to do that?

Because you tend to look unorganized if there's

a lot of clutter.

DEB LANGHAM: Yeah.

What else with a

lot of clutter?

It's not accessible.

DEB LANGHAM: It sometimes can be blocking.

What else?

What else about clutter?

If somebody already has

like sensory concerns,

it could be overwhelming

to take it all in.

DEB LANGHAM: Absolutely.

Absolutely.

Somebody could just become so overwhelmed that they're just focused on the pile

that you have on the floor rather than on what you're trying to talk about.

And avoid rooms with bright colors, pretty much primarily for the

same reason.

And if your center

doesn't have a fragrance‑free policy,

do what you can to make sure that you're fragrance‑free for when they come, so that they're more comfortable.

Anything else?

Placement in the

room can be crucial.

If you've got a room with lots of windows in it,

you might want to have your consumer facing, you know, with his back or her back

to the windows so that your consumer's attention is focused on you and yours

is on your consumer.

And there's less distractions.

And small office,

large office,

we've got things going on, don't we?

People are up and down

the hallway, the phones

are ringing, things

are happening,

so you just want to make sure that your consumers know they have your attention 100%.

It's not the time

to multitask.

I have a picture down here that shows a lady driving her car while she's texting.

Don't multitask.

Again,

your consumer is what?

The most important

person in the room.

Or the treasure.

This is the person

you're talking to,

you're focusing on,

because this is

your consumer.

Again, create that atmosphere of

undivided attention.

I have another

little picture.

Can you tell that I have learned of the wonders of Google and images and how to cut and paste them?

And before I did

this training,

I never did PowerPoints,

so my staff was very nice and was showing me and instructing me on how

to do it.

And one of the things they did is they said, hey,

do you want to learn how to attach pictures?

I said, yeah!

So we have lots of these.

Here is a picture of a big fat kitty‑cat with a professor background,

our cat has black glasses with a red bow tie,

and it says, we're going

to learn about mitosis,

so today I need your undivided attention.

If you're meeting with

a consumer in a

different location,

some of the things you have to consider, same things that we talked about before,

but make sure that whatever venue you're choosing is accessible.

And my little picture below there says, learn to love accessibility.

Some types of community locations that you might want to meet with your consumers at, if it's convenient for them and for you, perhaps the library, a coffee shop, Starbucks is a favorite of ours, a local restaurant, other social service agencies or government buildings.

Where else have you met with your consumers besides your office?

In their home.

DEB LANGHAM: In their home.

We'll talk about that.

Hold that thought.

Where else in the community?

(inaudible)

DEB LANGHAM: Absolutely.

Absolutely.

Where is the weirdest place you've met with your consumer?

The zoo.

DEB LANGHAM: The zoo.

Mine was at the lakefront.

You could go to your consumer's home.

Again, you want to make sure that if the TV is on or the radio is blaring their favorite country tunes, ask them to turn it down or turn it off.

You're there.

Explain to them why.

You know, you want to make sure that you're talking to your consumer, that you guys can have a conversation uninterrupted.

And unless the animal is a service animal, you probably don't want it around.

If they have family or friends coming over, you know, you might want to say, hey, this might be a time to, you know, you guys go into another room, we'll just be a little while, while we're meeting.

The reason I have the dog there jumping up and down in my picture grasping onto someone's hand is because we had a coordinator, IL specialist, her name is Julia, and she is a dog lover.

Quite the dog lover.

She went to a consumer's home for their first interview and they have a little dog, very similar to this little white dog, all of probably four or five pounds, jumping up and down who was very, very excited and happy to meet her.

And when she and the consumer sat down, the dog kind of went off into a corner, but after about 20 minutes, the dog was kind of growling at Julia, just grrrrr like this, so Julia was like, I'm a dog lover, I have dogs, this is fine for me.

So she's kind of telling the dog come here, come here, so the dog went and greeted her.

And that was okay.

So the next time Julia comes, the dog is pretty upset that Julia is there.

And I think the dog is jealous because somebody is taking up their master's attention, right? So the dog is kind of growling, so Julia says you know, maybe we need to put the dog in another room.

So the consumer says, oh, you know, I hate to do that because he gets so upset, you know, and Julia says, well, the dog really looks like he's going to lunge at me, I'm not real comfortable with this.

So the consumer says, well, I'll put him on a little leash.

So he puts the dog on a leash and sits the dog beside him and the dog is still kind of grrrrrrr the whole time.

So the next time Julia comes, she walks in the door, and the dog is not in the room, the dog ‑‑ I mean, the dog is in the room, not on the leash, and kind of comes towards Julia very excited and jumpy and happy to see her.

Julia thinks, oh, I've made a breakthrough, this dog will just be great! So the dog jumps up into Julia's arm and then bites her.

Boom.

Right in the arm.

So she had to have two stitches and a tetanus shot.

So again, you know, I can't tell you, I'm sure you'll have many experiences with animals, but we've had that one and you might just want to be careful when you're dealing with animals of the four‑legged variety.

If a face‑to‑face meeting isn't possible, then you might want to conduct your meeting over the phone.

Cell phones sometimes have iffy reception, so use a landline whenever possible.

Who knows what a landline is?

(laughter)

A few of you.

Okay.

My granddaughters don't know what a landline is.

So you also might want to use a headset or put your phone on a speaker so that you can write and take notes.

You also might want to use one of those little Bluetooth devices that fit in your ear that you talk and when you are visible to other people who don't know you're on the phone think you're talking to yourself, walking up and down the town.

Okay.

Creating your CSR, your consumer service record.

Regardless of where you meet your consumer, you're still going to develop your CSR, right? Yes.

Yes.

Yes.

DEB LANGHAM: Yes, you are.

Some information you might have already gotten by talking to your consumers.

Take notes.

If you know their ‑‑ you know you're going to get their name, probably their date of birth, their disability, jot all that down so that when you're meeting with your consumer, you don't waste time asking this stuff.

You can talk about what really matters, their goals, what they want to work on.

A CSR contains many things, and this will depend upon the center you work at and what documentation your center wants you to get.

But they should all contain an eligibility or ineligibility form, which will determine that your consumer is eligible, the services that your consumer requested, your IL plan or a waiver, and goals or objectives that are established with your consumer, whether or not it's a plan or a waiver.

What do I mean by that? Why do I have to write it down if they have a waiver?

To show you have one.

DEB LANGHAM: Use the microphone.

To show proof they've asked for it.

DEB LANGHAM: Right.

Right.

You have to do this.

You know, if your consumer wants a waiver, that's great, but what do you have to do? What's your responsibility if the consumer wants a waiver and you've talked about what their goals are going to be and all of that? Autumn? She's my little mole, I planted her.

Keep them on task and to keep track of ‑‑

Turn the microphone on.

Oh.

So that you keep them on task to whatever they want to work on and to keep track of progress.

DEB LANGHAM: Right.

Right.

We still write it down.

At our center, we still write down what the consumer's goals are, what the steps are to achieve their goals and we still keep track of it through documentation that we do.

Whether your center uses a database or another method for that, however it is, you need to be documenting the work that you do with your consumers for ‑‑

704 Report.

DEB LANGHAM: ‑‑ the 704 Report.

Absolutely.

The CSR, again, can be electronic or in written form.

The plan or waiver must be kept in writing.

Check out the ILRU RapidCourse of CSR documentation, consumer service records at www.ILRU.org.

At the bottom I have a very frantic guy in yellow saying document all things! This is an actual picture of me that was taken on September 30th of every year.

(laughter)

Why is that, Harvey?

(Inaudible) That doesn't need a microphone.

DEB LANGHAM: Because we really stress documentation.

Documentation is important for many, many things, but for our purposes here for goals, it's so that we document very carefully what our consumer's progress has been and what we need to do in the future to help them to meet their goals and how we can proceed.

Right?

Otherwise, we want to know, you know, how many goals did our consumers as a whole set? How many did they achieve? We want to know this.

This is a way for us to evaluate ourselves as a center of how well we are doing with our consumers.

As you're progressing with your interview, explain the intake process at your center.

You have to determine whether or not they're eligible for services.

We have a form, and it asks what is your disability and how does it limit your function, your ability to function independently.

Next, we review our accommodation form with our consumer to assure that information that they have received is readable, understandable and accessible.

Then we ask, is there anything else we can do to provide access to our services? Is communication in an alternate format effective? What other communication in an alternate format do I mean?

Alternate formats, all strange to you? California?

An interpreter perhaps.

DEB LANGHAM: Yes, absolutely an interpreter.

Sign language also.

DEB LANGHAM: Sign language.

Braille.

DEB LANGHAM: CART services.

What else? I'm sorry.

Braille.

DEB LANGHAM: Braille, absolutely.

Large print.

DEB LANGHAM: Absolutely.

Thank you, Harvey.

He's trying to get in a comment today.

Harvey and Autumn work with me.

What about in electronic format?

DEB LANGHAM: Yes, absolutely in electronic format.

We got it all.

Foreign language interpreter.

Video relay.

How many of you are familiar with video relay? Cool.

What is video relay? Back there, the gentleman in the black and the blue stripes.

Video relay is a way for someone who is fluent in sign language to make a phone call in their own language.

DEB LANGHAM: Yes, absolutely.

Everybody else pretty much know what VRS is? Video relay? Okay.

Then we ask if another reasonable accommodation is needed to allow equal access such as do you need help in filling out forms? Do you need to meet in another, alternate location? What works for you? What are some reasons why someone might not want to meet in their home, might not want to come to your office? Why would they want to meet outside your office?

Maybe for privacy.

If there's not enough privacy.

Lack of privacy.

Lack of privacy in the office.

DEB LANGHAM: Yeah.

Maybe they know somebody in your office.

Maybe they don't want somebody at home knowing what their business is.

Yeah.

Thank you.

Good.

Anybody else? Yes, sir?

Lack of accessible transportation getting to the office and perhaps if they're not the most tidy housekeeper, they might be uncomfortable, don't want anybody to know that they're hoarders.

DEB LANGHAM: I know there's a story there, we'll talk about that.

No, I don't mean you.

Have any of you worked with individuals in domestic violence situations? Okay.

They might not want to be in your office.

And for sure if their abuser is at home, they're not going to want to meet at home either.

So they may want to meet outside somewhere.

So what I'm telling you is be open and flexible on where your consumers want to meet.

And unless there's some big reason why you can't do that, you know, by all means, honor your consumer's requests.

Strength‑based approach to interviewing.

Again, I'm really excited about this, so I want to hear everything that you guys are doing if you have some suggestions.

But knowing what types of questions to ask your consumer during the interview is helpful.

One type of question is strengths‑based and built on the following concepts.

Everyone has unique strengths.

Do you believe that?

Yes.

DEB LANGHAM: Yeah, yeah.

These strengths can be used as a starting place to develop new strengths to assist our consumers with reaching their goals.

Yeah.

And again, the IL specialist has the opportunity to help their consumers to realize the strengths that they do have.

It's hard, though, sometimes, isn't it? Some tips.

Focus on the individual's strengths.

What's working well in your life? Instead of, well, what's the biggest problem you're facing? Oh, what's happening to you? Okay.

No.

You're asking them a different question.

What's working well in your life? They're not going to expect that, are they? They're going to be like, oh, well, I guess some things are positive in my life.

The shift in the language of the questions can help create a powerful change in the way a person perceives their current situation.

Helping individuals identify what worked well for them before can help them focus on the possibility of a positive change.

Again, language is key.

So you might want to say, what do you want to accomplish in your future? What's working well that you can build on? What are creative ways that you or someone you know has addressed this problem in the past?

Your microphone, switch it to the other side.

Sorry to interrupt.

DEB LANGHAM: No, it's okay.

When you turn towards the screen, we're having trouble hearing you.

DEB LANGHAM: Is this better?

Maybe up a little bit.

DEB LANGHAM: Okay.

Okay?

Great.

Thanks.

DEB LANGHAM: Thanks, Tim.

Do you think your consumers might have difficulty in telling you what some of their strengths are?

Yes.

DEB LANGHAM: Everybody is awake for this question, that's true, because they probably believe they don't have any strengths, right? Why is that?

They've been told that.

A lot of people have told them they can't do things.

DEB LANGHAM: Kind of a bummer.

Sort of that, oh, you can't do that, you know, let me do that for you.

And again, another way that IL services are very different from other services, because we're saying get up and do it, off that duff and move it.

Okay.

So we encourage individuals to verbally acknowledge what their strengths are.

We're influenced, all of us are influenced in our lives by the way that people interact and respond to us.

Again, people with disabilities aren't any different from us.

Too often, they're told of things they can't do, and this influences the way they think about themselves.

Has this happened to you? Are you influenced by the way people think about you? Yeah.

You know, a kind word, a knowing glance, someone treating you with respect and dignity in turn makes you feel what? Valued, important, that you matter.

Sometimes you could try a different tack.

You might want to ask the individual particularly stubborn, what do you think your friends would say about you, what do you think your friends would say your strengths are? What happens then? Well, my friend Judy says that I'm pretty good at planning a trip.

I don't see it.

But, you know, I guess I am kind of good at it, I make a lot of calls.

Yea, that's something there! So you learn that strength and build on it.

It might be something that is just a sliver of something positive that they say, that's why we have to be good listeners so that we can pick up on the stuff that our consumers are saying to us.

Don't assume that somebody has a weakness, but that they just haven't had the opportunity to build the strengths or learn the skills that they need to accomplish something.

After all, the purpose of the independent living planning process is to provide consumers with opportunities to learn and develop the skills that they need to achieve independence that they want, right? Is it kind of the reason that we're here? Yeah, this is when you nod, yes.

Right.

I was told by the first director I ever worked with at an Independent Living Center, and she said to me, your job is to make sure that you teach your consumers so well that they don't need you anymore.

And that's what we should do.

We should strive to do that every day.

Developing a strength‑based perspective takes practice.

It's going to take practice for us and our staff, but we're going to work on it.

Sharing your view of an individual's strengths with them for the first time can be challenging.

They will adamantly insist that they don't have any strengths, right? I don't have any strengths.

That's why I'm here! I need you to help me!

Right? Okay.

Another picture below, there's two folks in desks and they're opposing one another, looking at each other, and the caption below reads, you can agree with me or you can be wrong.

If your consumer insists, just absolutely is persistent that they don't have any strengths, compliment them on being so sure that they aren't, that they don't have any strengths.

You know, has your stubbornness been of use to you in the past? How has that helped you? You're nodding.

What do you think? Maybe when somebody is saying no, no, no, I can't do that, you're sitting there going, yes, yes, yes, you can.

Okay.

But this idea that consumers have strengths within them is just going to be mind blowing for them.

It's just such a profound and a different way of seeing things that it will take your consumers a while to get used to that.

So think of it as a work in progress.

Does your center or do any of you have strength‑based items on your interview forms? If not, you can create your own checklist to guide your questioning.

Better yet, work with your colleagues to incorporate strength‑based items into your center's forms.

And another picture below, two dogs, I think they might be labs, holding onto the same stick, and below it says: “Collaboration and sharing knowledge are highly prized skills.” If you have something that's great and is working for you, don't keep it to yourself.

Share.

Share with folks in the IL community who will appreciate and value your knowledge and skills.

So how do we support consumer control and direction in the interview? How do we do that? Don't look, don't peek.

How do you guys do that? What happens?

Ask open‑ended questions.

DEB LANGHAM: Yeah.

What's an open‑ended question? We're going to talk about that in a little bit.

But what's an open‑ended question? It's not a yes or no question, it's one that asks our consumer to expound on their answer.

Okay? So our consumer is always the person driving the bus, that's what we say at our center: You're not driving the bus, they're driving the bus.

And they should also drive the discussion.

Do you think this is an easy thing to do? Do you think when you first sit down with your consumer and you sit there silently waiting for them to direct the discussion and tell you everything you want to know, do you think that's going to happen right away? No.

What do we need to do? We need to ‑‑

Establish trust.

DEB LANGHAM: Engage our consumers, encourage them to talk to us, right.

And we want to listen to our consumer.

And don't be afraid of those awkward silences.

You know, if you need to be silent for a little bit while your consumer is mulling something over, that's okay.

Don't jump in and fill in the blanks or feel like you have to supply the answer.

Let your consumer think on it for a while.

And again, asking open‑ended questions to encourage your consumer to talk without feeling defensive for the purpose of exploration.

And also direct the flow of that conversation to your consumer.

Open‑ended questions usually begin with, what or how phrases, or tell me about that, although it's not really a question, it's a statement that tends to need a response.

Open‑ended questions are designed to encourage a meaningful answer using the consumer's own knowledge and feelings.

They're more objective and less leading than closed‑end questions.

Can you tell me a little bit about your current living situation? Just that little question, blah, blah, blah, blah, oh, this could be just the question that they needed, and they might not know it, you might have to ask a few before you hit on the one that really sparks your consumer into talking to you.

What do you like about your current living situation?

Oh, I don't like anything.

Why do you think I'm here? But there's something that they might like.

What do you not like or would you like to change about your current living situation? Or tell me about your relationship with...

That's another one that I have found to be an excellent, excellent question that definitely has sparked many conversations.

Just as important as open‑ended questions are the responses.

They would give encouragement and assistance in communicating and allow your consumer to determine the direction that the conversation is going.

Responses are general rather than specific and may be either complete or incomplete statements or questions that cannot be answered with a simple yes or no.

I kind of think about open‑ended responses as pulling teeth, pulling information out of your consumers to get them to open up and talk to you.

So would you like to say a little more about that? Do you want to talk about it? Could you explain a little bit more about what you said about the person you had a relationship with?

So whatever your consumer is saying, just kind of, you know, give them some feedback, positive feedback, and try to get more information.

And during those open‑ended responses, support your consumer's strengths.

Ask your consumer, you know, your consumer may not recognize their strengths, so use it as an opportunity to reinforce strengths that you see or hear.

For example, it seems to me that you showed a lot of strength in that situation.

I mean, again, sometimes consumers find themselves in horrible situations, but they have reacted in ways that have been beneficial for them or protects them in certain ways, so you're going to have to, again, listen really carefully to the answers and say, oh, yes, that, and you're taking notes, and you can jot things down so that you don't forget what they're saying to you, and you can hear it and give them feedback later.

Does anyone have any comments, a situation that they've used for strengths to try to point out to their consumers?

Look at what your consumer's resources and support systems are.

Your consumer will be stronger when they can allow themselves to get what they need from as many sources as necessary.

Asking for support and being dependent aren't the same things.

Is there one person in this room that can truly tell me that they are independent?

Be careful if you raise your hand.

(chuckling)

We're all dependent on something, someone, some service, something, so that we can live our lives the way that we do.

People with disabilities are the same.

It doesn't matter what supports they need.

If they need them, they need them.

It's a support.

It's not creating a dependence.

Just as important as what we say to our consumers, it's important to know what not to say.

Questions that are for information and clarity are vital, but questions that are loaded or excessive or moralizing aren't necessary.

You certainly don't want to stand over your consumer and just be, oh, you shouldn't do that.

I can't believe you did that! Well, as soon as you start doing that, what's going to happen with your relationship?

Goes down.

DEB LANGHAM: Yeah, nothing good.

Okay.

Offering advice or solutions.

I have so much good advice! I have so much experience! I can tell you just from talking to you for two minutes, I can tell you everything I know about that and I can write your goal for you, I can give you all the action steps that you need to be successful, if you just listen to what I say.

Right?

(laughter)

Wrong.

Okay.

We don't want to do that.

We want our consumers to use their own experiences.

And then point out pros and cons to various solutions.

Our consumers can pick.

It's their life.

They've been picking a lot or making their own decisions.

Making judgments or criticizing is demeaning.

Do you like it when somebody criticizes you or makes judgments about how you live or what you do? I don't think any of us like that.

Are you going to hang out with people who judge you? Criticize you? I'm not talking about your mother‑in‑law or your father‑in‑law.

I'm talking about are you going to hang out with people who do that? No.

Probably not.

We want to treat our consumers with respect.

When we empathize, be careful that we're not sympathizing.

Empathy implies yes, I understand, I can relate.

Yes.

But as soon as I come over here ‑‑ may I touch you?

You may.

DEB LANGHAM: Oh, oh, my goodness, I just don't know how you've made it all these years.

Then I'm really sympathizing, you know.

You don't want to do that.

But empathizing can definitely reinforce and let somebody know they're not alone, somebody knows how I feel, you're taking their feelings into consideration.

Your attitude and how you communicate that is important.

You know that saying attitude is everything? It's famous.

Yeah, it really is.

Why questions? Aye yai yai.

What's with the why questions? What happens when you ask, well, why? Why would you do that? Well, why would you do this? Well, I don't understand why you made that decision, why you would do that.

What if somebody said that to you? What do you do? I can tell you what I would do, right away my defenses go up, and I'm like, what do you mean why? Why are you asking me why?

Okay.

This is what consumers are thinking.

Okay? So you want to support your consumers and ask yourself, do you really need to know that why, or are you just curious? If you need to know something, rephrase.

Rephrase the question.

Don't put your consumers on the defensive.

It's not a good way to build rapport and trust.

Assisting consumers with goals.

It's our responsibility to support consumers in identifying and reaching their ultimate independent living and community integration goals, rather than simply providing them with services.

Although responding to the request for a service may seem appropriate, the specific service doesn't usually address the broader significant life areas and is only a limited part of what consumers need to increase their independence and reach their goals.

What do I mean by that? Somebody calls you up and wants a service.

Let's say you have a grant and you can build ramps.

You know, I need that ramp.

You need to come on out tomorrow and build that ramp for me.

What's going to be your response? What should be your response? Come on.

You know the answer.

What should be your response when somebody asks you that?

It's your turn.

DEB LANGHAM: Okay, go ahead, get the mic to her.

I better get a reward for this.

DEB LANGHAM: You are, you are, I've got a bunch of red velvet cupcakes hoarded in the back.

What was the question?

(laughter)

Remember, I'm not the listener, I'm the talker.

DEB LANGHAM: Listening skills.

Okay.

Someone calls you, a person with a disability calls you up and they say, hey, I see you build ramps for people.

That's what I want.

Come on out and build me a ramp.

I would probably say I need more information first and let them know we have a waiting list.

DEB LANGHAM: Okay, absolutely.

Absolutely.

Those are things you would say.

What else might you say?

We're out of money.

(laughter)

DEB LANGHAM: You might want to say, why? Oh, dear God! The why question.

Why do you want the ramp? What's the reasoning? What are you going to be able to do if you have a ramp that you couldn't do before? So what might some of those answers be?

Accessibility.

DEB LANGHAM: Accessibility.

How so?

To be able to have access to and from ‑‑

DEB LANGHAM: To and from ‑‑

To and from your home.

DEB LANGHAM: To and from your home, or to and from where?

Work.

DEB LANGHAM: Work.

Work.

Maybe this person isn't working right now.

So this person maybe wants to work, or what else? Maybe wants to have a social ‑‑

Social life.

DEB LANGHAM: Have a social life.

People with disabilities have social lives?

Yes.

DEB LANGHAM: Yeah.

Oh, yes, we do!

What else?

Continue their education, because not everybody has access to online classes.

DEB LANGHAM: Yeah.

So by asking and digging deeper a little bit, well, I guess the service would be great.

What will this allow you to do in your life? Right? Okay.

So what might that lead to?

Independence.

DEB LANGHAM: Well, yeah, absolutely.

But it might lead to independent living skills training, maybe some advocacy, referrals to the vocational rehabilitation maybe to develop a work plan, what else? Access to their local entertainment venues of choice, right? So it kind of opens up the door, right? And maybe your consumer is just thinking, well, you know, I like to move around occasionally, but it might open up a whole big world for them.

Assisting consumers with goals as far as that 704 Report.

Goals should relate to the significant life areas outlined in 704, Section B, Item 1.

I know you're all just riveted with that information there.

But they include self‑advocacy and self‑empowerment, communication, mobility and transportation, community‑based living, educational, vocational, self‑care, information access and technology, personal resource management, nursing home or other institutional relocation to community‑based living and community and social participation.

704 Report in Section B also mentions gaining access to previously unavailable transportation, appropriate healthcare services, and assistive technology, that Roger talked about earlier that he tracks with his I & R.

Our consumers may want goals in those areas, for sure.

Other areas some centers consider, attendant care, legal issues, healthcare and nutrition and housing.

Yeah.

We might want goals in housing.

Reviewing these areas with your consumers improve the likelihood of identifying and addressing broader and more meaningful goals that result in what? Come on, it's on the tip of your tongue.

Quality of life.

DEB LANGHAM: Yes.

Yes.

Who said that?

I did.

DEB LANGHAM: Oh.

Yes.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Quality of life.

Do you guys have goals in your lives? Do you think about goals? I have goals.

And not goals that I just set on January 1 every year.

I have goals.

And a lot of people do.

They might not be hard and fast, but you have them and you think about them as you move through your life and you do different things.

And this helps me to feel more independent, it helps me to feel more accomplished, it gives me a feeling of self‑worth.

Same thing is true for your fellow sisters and brothers with disabilities.

It's important to talk with your consumer about the range of possible goals that they're interested in, but it's also important to assist your consumer in prioritizing what they consider to be the most important goal.

Once your consumer gets going, you might have had a hard time getting it out of them, what goals they wanted to do, but once you do, what happens with some consumers? Oh, I got a million of them, I want to work on this goal, that goal, that goal.

All right.

I'm into goals now, I really want to do them.

What's the problem with that?

Too many goals.

DEB LANGHAM: Yeah, too many.

Not that you can't back burner, of course, but you're going to have to help prioritize, help your consumer prioritize depending upon the importance they are to them, because they can't work on everything at once.

Okay.

So what are goals? Here is the professor from Ferris Bueller's Day Off, saying: “Anyone, anyone? Bueller?”

What are goals? It's your turn.

Shout it out, just anything.

Anything you think about goals.

Self‑employment.

DEB LANGHAM: Self‑employment, that could be a goal, absolutely.

What else? What is your feeling about a goal?

Personal.

It's personal.

DEB LANGHAM: It's personal.

Yeah.

Yeah, it is.

Are all goals the same?

No.

DEB LANGHAM: No.

No.

Goals are as individual as the folks that we're working with, and no two goals are the same.

Right? This is one reason why I hesitate when I do goal training with my staff to give them a sample goal.

I really don't like doing that.

Why wouldn't I want to do that? Why wouldn't I want to provide my staff with a goal for housing and a goal for my management or a goal for relocation or a goal for housing? Why wouldn't I want to do that? All of a sudden when you're looking at that thing in front of you, oh, oh, I see the direction I should be going.

No, you don't.

Because your direction that you should be going is the direction that your consumer tells you you ought to be going.

That's the direction that you go.

And everybody is different.

So and so's housing goal is going to be different from this person's goal and different from that person's goal, and you can be working with two people on nursing home relocation and their goals are going to be different because their needs are different, their desires are different.

Okay.

So goals identify what the consumer hopes to achieve, and it's based on their needs and desires.

That's pretty much it.

That's what a goal is.

And they usually relate to those significant life areas or gaining access to services we talked about.

For example, your consumer may say I need more money or I really want to lose weight or I want to go to the rave every weekend.

We had a consumer come to us, the same person, with those goals.

They all might be her needs and desires, but I'm kind of like, huh, what does that mean? First thing I had to do was get up on Google and find out what a rave was because I really wasn't sure.

Who knew it was an all‑night dance party.

Didn't know.

You guys, the younger ones, are laughing at me.

Didn't know.

I'm in bed at 11:00.

So after working with this consumer for a little while, we find out that there's this cool dude that goes to the rave every weekend, she wants to go and dance with him, and she wants to be there with him and socialize, because this is pretty cool, and she felt like she needed money because she couldn't afford to go there every weekend.

So what do you think we did with her? She couldn't afford to do that.

She wanted to lose weight, she wanted to be cuter.

I mean, I brought up, you would be healthier, but no, would look better in that skirt.

I want to go to that rave every weekend.

She did.

So we worked with her on other goals too that helped her to do that, that helped her to do that and many, many more things.

We looked at employment goals with her, we looked at Weight Watchers and some other things.

And by the way, she didn't have a whole lot of weight to lose.

And she wanted to go to the rave every weekend, couldn't really help her with that.

I wasn't going to give her money to go to the rave every weekend, and neither were her parents, but when she found her part‑time job, can you imagine what else happened? She felt pretty good about herself, and not only was she going to the rave, she was going other places too, and pretty soon the rave kind of fell in the background a little bit.

I'm sure her parents went, yea!

So again, we have to dig deeper to look at what their true goals are.

Goals can include obtaining housing, finding a job, looking at higher education, managing a household, money, nursing home and other institutional transition and a host of other goals.

Goals assist consumers in becoming more independent and often in learning how to advocate for themselves.

Yea, that's what we want, right? We want to be...

out of a job.

So our goal is to encourage our consumers to take the lead and develop their goals while we provide them information, the necessary tools to make good choices.

These choices and decisions will empower our consumers and to make sure that their needs are being addressed.

Make sure that our consumers are calling the shots and that they experience ownership of what they're doing.

And again, if somebody says to you ‑‑ I'm going to use you again ‑‑ here are your goals and I would like you to take ownership in them and I would like you to do everything and also a note taker there, the time line that you should achieve them, for achieving your goal, what do you think she's going to do the second I walk away? Yeah, the circular file.

Trash can.

DEB LANGHAM: She should put those goals in the circular file, because she hasn't developed those goals, they aren't hers, they're mine, and as great as they are, they're still mine.

They're not hers.

So if your consumer is leading the process, they'll take ownership for it, and this is going to lead to success.

And again, it raises self‑confidence and competency, it helps to maintain motivation.

How to write goals.

Let's begin.

I've got another picture of a hand with a pen.

Goals should be specific and describe what your consumer wants in a precise way.

I want to find an apartment is pretty vague.

Somebody comes into your office, I need to get another apartment, I don't like that place I'm living in.

Well, that's great, but that really doesn't tell me a lot.

When you change it to, after you've done your strength‑based questions and your open‑ended questions, you're going to find out that this consumer wants a one‑bedroom accessible apartment in a secure building, close to the bus line on the south side for 300 to 400 a month, that's pretty clear.

We ask our consumers at our agency to begin their steps with: I will.

I will.

It's positive and it states what that consumer wants to do.

Not what you're going to do; what the consumer wants to do.

The action steps kind of write themselves, don't they? That's the cool part.

When the goal is more detailed, it's easier to measure and report on whether or not the action steps have been completed or whether your goal was successful.

Goals that are too narrow or too broad and not clearly documented may result in not being counted as successes by your center, and that would be bad.

I'll put my supervisor hat on, and I will say that we want consumers to have goals or whatever it is that they work on that are of their own design and that they can achieve, that they've worked on and directed themselves, that we can count as successes, things that they've felt, our consumers felt, were important to them.

Whenever possible, we ask that our consumers write their goals.

Here you go.

I want you to write that goal yourself.

She's happier now.

She's happy, because she gets to do that.

That's her gig, not my gig.

So we always use the consumer's own words.

Language used in the goal should be made in the present tense and stated in the positive way, very positive.

Goal statement.

I want to move out of my parents' basement.

Who doesn't want to move out of their parents' basement? Okay.

But positively stated: I will move out of my parents' basement in six months.

That's pretty positive.

Positive statements set the tone and lead to positive results.

Goals should focus on what your consumer does and not what somebody else does.

My boss needs to give me a raise because I need it.

Okay, we could all say that, right?

Yeah.

DEB LANGHAM: All you directors, listen up.

(chuckling)

Okay.

But a positive way to say that is, I'll work hard to become a better employee on being on time, finishing all my work, that focuses on what your consumer will do, and not what somebody else does, because we don't have any control over what someone else does, right? We can only control what we do.

And if your consumer has lots and lots and lots of goals, then you might want to divide those up into different goals.

So remember not to confuse a service with a goal.

While a consumer may request a ramp ‑‑ we talked about this before ‑‑ benefits counseling or assistive technology assessment, look deeper into the reasons behind these requests.

Again, you know, you're looking at this AT.

Oh, what's going to happen after you get this piece of adaptive equipment or assistive technology? Benefits counseling.

That's great! What's going to happen after that? Benefits counseling looks at, okay, the effects that earning a wage would have on your social security benefits.

So maybe this person wants to get a job or they want to see what would happen.

Maybe there's other things in their life they want to look at.

It's never just a service.

A service is a service, they're all great, it's all wonderful, but there's a reason why someone wants to have a service.

Action steps.

My favorite.

And Harvey's.

Once your consumer has decided upon a goal, the next step is to decide on what action steps are needed for the goal to be successful.

Action steps needed for the success of the goal should represent a logical sequence towards achieving the goal.

So the picture I have below shows a cart and a gentleman pulling the cart up a hill, the cart is kind of full, and behind the cart is the horse.

And the caption reads: “Ur doin it wrong.” Sometimes our consumers aren't able to identify action steps.

Again, depend on your open‑ended questions to facilitate writing them.

You could say, what needs to happen to accomplish this goal? Generally your consumers are going to know what they need to do.

Sometimes they might have it a little jumbled up, but you can help them.

Oh, you might want to try this, you might want to try that.

Go ahead.

Is there, typically when working with a consumer setting a goal, is there like a time line or time frame that they should accomplish or reach that goal?

DEB LANGHAM: There is, and I want you to just hold onto that thought because we're going to talk about it.

There's definitely a time line.

Next, you list the action steps that are listed along with the time line for completion and designate who is responsible for each step.

At our agency, the consumer is responsible for every step.

And we went to this several years ago after I attended the PART training, I was paying attention, Tim, and we talked about consumer responsibility, consumer's control, and I really got into that and took it to heart, and I thought, you know, even if this step on the goal is really something that a staff person is responsible for, who is really ultimately responsible for making sure that it happens? The consumer.

Yeah, the consumer.

So what do I say? I will follow up with my IL specialist to make sure that he printed out all that information that I asked him to from the Internet.

I will follow up with my IL specialist to make sure that...

what? That they print out everything, that they got this resource for me, that this happened or that happened.

But just that little change really is immensely different.

When you have a consumer saying, I have to follow up with you? Yeah, you have to make sure that I did that.

And they're kind of like, oh, oh, okay.

All of a sudden it kind of starts sinking in.

Hey, maybe this is my goal.

Okay.

Goals should be simple with a specific purpose.

Separate larger goals into multipart ‑‑ separate large goals ‑‑ gosh, I'll just read it.

Goals should be simple with a specific purpose.

Separate larger multipart goals into smaller ones.

I actually wrote it.

(laughter)

So, you know, if there's just like tons of things going on, you're going to look at that and go, oh, maybe we need to kind of divide this up a little bit, but it depends on your consumer, of course, because one consumer may have a goal, take five pretty clear steps, and wala, that's a pretty good deal for them, they can handle that.

Another consumer may need to take those action steps and handle that as a separate goal because that's what they can handle.

You just need to get to know your consumer and figure out how it is they operate and just start out small and just kind of say, okay, let's give this a try, or if you've written a goal and it seems to be overwhelming, redo it.

It's okay.

Consumers should make sure that their goals don't conflict with each other, for goodness sakes, goals should be obtainable, and consumers should want and believe in their goals, not just what sounds good or what they think makes you happy.

Consumers should be able to identify what they want to accomplish with each goal.

And goals should be outcome‑based, measurable, realistic and time‑framed.

Why would I put realistic in parentheses? Even though I happen to believe it's kind of true.

Anyone?

I would think because we don't really know what the consumer is capable of.

DEB LANGHAM: We don't know what they're capable of, but what's realistic to me and what's realistic to the consumer could be two different things.

Something that I forgot to put in this, I can't believe that I did, but consumers have the right to fail.

Tell me that you've learned more from your successes than your failures.

Can't do it, can you? Absolutely not.

You learned from when you make a mistake, you pick yourself back up and go again.

Why is it important on the 704 Report to make sure that most of the goals are successful?

That's the interesting part.

DEB LANGHAM: You need to let consumers fail because that's one goal they might fail at, but the next, however many that they develop, are going to be successful.

While I definitely feel it's important to show RSA that we're doing our jobs and we're helping our consumers become successful, it's also important to say, you know, we don't hit the home run every time.

You know, as much as we want to be, we're not everything and all of that to everybody with a disability.

We're not.

So let your consumers fail.

It's okay.

Action steps should incorporate one or more of the four IL core services.

Consumer determines the action steps.

Quality and quantity of results depend on the IL services and specific actions that are planned and completed.

Staff help their consumers to think about various steps needed for a successful outcome and help to generate ideas.

Generally, advocacy, I & R, life skills training, peer support are the avenue we use on the road to success.

And I have another great picture, I guess I kind of went crazy here, but there is a picture of a road down a nice country landscape with grass on either side and mountains in the background that says “your partner on the road to success” And we are partners with our consumers to help them reach their independence.

All relevant IL services, action steps, applicable time lines must be included in the CSR and ILP, if applicable.

Wherever possible, services should be expressed in terms of the IL service categories in Subpart III, Section A of the 704 Report.

The categories include advocacy, legal, AT, children's services, communication, counseling and related services, family, housing, home mods and shelter, IL skills training, excuse me, yes, IL skills training, I & R, mental restoration, mobility training, peer counseling, personal assistance services, physical restoration, preventive services, prosthesis, orthotics and other appliances.

Recreational services, rehab technology, therapeutic treatment, transportation, youth and transition and vocational services.

Troubleshooting.

The bane of sometimes staff's existence.

When you're working with your consumer and you're working and working and working towards a goal and you've been doing it for quite some time, your consumer can't quite get off the dime, you're thinking, oh, what's happening, why can't I help my consumer to move forward with their goal? This is just the beginning of where our work begins.

From time to time our consumers get sidetracked, so we need to look for some warning signs and behavior before our consumers get completely derailed.

If your consumer has missed several meetings, they're arriving late for meetings with you, they have other things to do besides working on their goals, and they seem to be in crisis on one thing or another and they can't focus, their attention is wandering, something is happening in their lives.

You might want to say, maybe you need to assist them with a crisis, or you may need to modify the goal if the consumer wants to.

Maybe it's too overwhelming for them.

You may need to determine if there's a medical reason or some kind of medication thing going on that you didn't know about before, or something that's happened that changed, in their life that's changed, maybe an act of violence, death, a change in their living status, marriage, you name it, loss of employment, maybe it happened to them, maybe it happened to a family member that's causing them stress, or if you think the consumer is sad for any reason, ask them about it.

Talk to them about it and see if you can help and be of assistance.

Troubleshooting is important because you want the experience at your center to be positive, so do it early, let your consumer know that you care about them and you're wondering what's happening to them.

To ensure that your consumer has the best possible chance of a successful outcome, meet with them, communicate often.

We're an urban center.

We can easily reach our consumers pretty reasonably.

Our staff tend to meet with their consumers twice a month at least minimally.

It's always face to face, almost always.

However, how often you're able to meet with your consumer will depend on your center location and number of counties that you serve.

You know, obviously if I'm in Milwaukee but the center that serves Superior and the northern part of our state serves 11 counties and they have 8 staff, they're probably not going to meet with all of their consumers twice a month face to face.

It could take them a day just to reach a consumer.

So again, it depends on what your center does.

Meetings can happen over the phone, video relay, e‑mail, Skype, whatever it is, but connecting with your consumers on a regular basis, whatever that is at your center, is the key to a positive and successful outcome.

You have to communicate, be in communication with your consumers to keep the ball rolling.

And you can always ask them, hey, what happened last week? How did it go? Did you make any progress towards your goals? How is it going? And when they're talking to you, always in the back of your mind, now that you're thinking about strengths, kind of keep in mind if they've shown you any strengths or anything that you can jot down.

And then address your next steps.

Hey, let's look at what happened.

Do we need to make any calls, send an e‑mail, write a letter, what do we need to do? Might any of these tasks involve skills training? Is there another goal on the horizon for you? Because sometimes one goal leads to another, into another.

These practices keep you and your consumer moving forward, and it helps you to troubleshoot problems quickly.

And don't forget to celebrate small victories.

I mean, I had a consumer who could not make a phone call by himself.

I mean, it was terrifying for him.

The very thought of it just sent chills down his spine.

So we started out, you know, I would make a call on his behalf and he would be in the room.

That's what he needed.

Then we got on the phone and he was sitting in the room with me.

Yeah, he's here, he's sitting here, say hi.

So he was there.

And then, okay, why don't you ask a question.

So the day that he asked a question by himself, woo‑hoo, you know, we got off the phone and I went, do you realize what you did? That you asked a question.

By yourself, you did that! And he was like, so? I said, oh, my gosh, that's a great big deal.

Look at what you did.

Do you realize that you wouldn't even be on the phone with me when I was having a conversation about you and now you're asking questions? So it's important to try to reinforce positive actions taken by our consumers.

We set the stage for consumer control by using good interview techniques, strength‑based and open‑ended questions, when we encourage our consumers and not lead, when your consumer takes the lead in meetings, by meeting and communicating often and troubleshooting potential problems.

Information contained in this PowerPoint is designed to help you guide your consumer to a successful outcome while promoting consumer control.

Okay.

Whew.

I'm sorry I had to race, I was timing myself.

We're going to, after our break, we're going to do two exercises.

The first one ‑‑ oh, they'll be fun, you'll like them.

The first one is practicing strength‑based and open‑ended questions.

So you're going to get some information that will be placed on your tables, and one of you will take the role of consumer, and the other, you can pair up, you can decide you want to observe, you can do this however you want, one person is the consumer, and you have a case study of who you are and the other person is the staff person and they will ask you questions.

AMINA DONNA KRUCK: Deb, this is Amina, I'm wondering if we can introduce this after the break, and remind people that they have those sticky pads, green if you like information, yellow if you want more information, red is something you disagree with or have an issue with, and take some questions before break.

Before break, if I can ask a question, you're going back to troubleshooting, and you do that in several of your slides.

There's a piece in the packet on safety guidelines, and the safety guidelines primarily address consumer safety, and troubleshooting as it relates both to consumer and staff safety especially in the light of some recent events that have made the news.

DEB LANGHAM: The safety guidelines are written for staff, they're not part of this presentation, but part of my presentation for tomorrow, but they relate to safety guidelines for our staff to use when they're visiting consumers or meeting with consumers outside the office, and we talk about that.

When I talk about troubleshooting, I mean sitting down and talking with your consumer about what might be happening to them.

Does that answer it?

It does answer the question as it relates to today's activities, but when you do go to the safety guidelines, will there be any discussion about staff safety?

DEB LANGHAM: Oh, yes, absolutely.

That is what we talk about.

Yes.

Yes.

Okay.

Yes?

I just wanted to mention that we all chuckled when the lady over here said something about making our 704 reports having lots of our successful goals, and we weren't laughing at the question, we were all laughing because we've all been there, we want to show our success and yet you've got your reality.

There isn't a magic ratio, and you have to document what really happens.

But don't we all wish those numbers looked really good?

(laughter)

DEB LANGHAM: But the numbers are what they are.

But they are what they are.