Discovering Personal Genius

MNTAT Webcast
February 14, 2013
2-4pm CT

Patty Cassidy
Senior Associate
Griffin-Hammis Associates, LLC

Griffin Hammis Associates
Discovery Directs *All* Planning

- Discovery begins with the premise that everyone can work.
- Discovery is the basis of employment planning.
- Discovery and the Employment Plan is driven by applicant’s strengths, needs, interests, and conditions of employment.
Discovery Directs **All** Job Development

• Individualization required: must be one person at a time

• Requires negotiation of job duties and/or employer expectations

• Employment development is determined by the individual, not openings or market demand
Customized Employment

“May include employment developed through job carving, self-employment or entrepreneurial initiatives, or other job development or restructuring strategies that result in job responsibilities being customized and individually negotiated to fit the needs of individuals with a disability.”

Discovery is a community of possibility ...

Customized employment means individualizing the employment relationship between employees and employers in ways that meet the needs of both.

-- The United States Department of Labor, Office of Disability and Employment Policy
Discovery

The first step is the process of Discovery, not testing or evaluation.

Discovery is a process of getting to know an individual that enables a picture of the person to emerge.

Discovery does not ask “What type of job is best for this person” but rather seeks to answer “Who is this person?”
Discovery

- Vocational Evaluation is not functional
- Data taken in Segregated settings is not helpful
- Checklists do not offer a diversity of choice
- Unpaid Work Experiences and CBT’s are often Stereotypical
- Are you at your best when being tested, or rather when you are exploring familiar and/or new places, people & things?
Discovering Personal Genius:  
*Going Where the Career Makes Sense*

Discovering Personal Genius (DPG) is one form of the Discovery process promoted by Griffin-Hammis and Associates.

DPG is an active and robust series of activities, observations, and clarifications in getting to know a job seeker with disabilities.
Use Discovery, Not the “Dream Job” ...

- Dream Jobs are very unique & rare
- Dream Jobs assume very little vocational interests
- Dream Jobs suggest one-time career placement
- The experience & talents of professionals limit Dream Jobs
- There are Unlimited ways to make a living
- Dream Jobs reinforce the idea that people with significant disabilities are one-dimensional

Griffin-Hammis Associates
Discovering Personal Genius:

Going Where the Career Makes Sense

Icebergs: People and Jobs

Griffin Hammis Associates
Discovering Personal Genius:
*Going Where the Career Makes Sense*

- Assistance *NOT* Assessment
- Activity in Real Environments
- Do Not rely on data from Segregated Environments
- One Place leads to Another; One Person Leads to Another (Social Capital)
- There are Unlimited ways to make a living in this world....
Discovering Personal Genius:  
*Going Where the Career Makes Sense*

- Discovery is a structured Process
- We are not here to ask “What job or business would be best?”
- The more folks involved, the more diversity of activities & locations
- The more activities & locations, the more diversity of thought
- The best way to get a great idea is to get lots of ideas

Griffin Hammis Associates
Discovering Personal Genius

An Information Gathering Process

- Who is this person?
- What are their ideal conditions of employment?
- What themes will drive the job development?
Process

• Seven basic stages
• 20-65 hours
• 6-8 weeks
• Formulate descriptive paragraphs
• Answers the basic question: “Who is this individual?”
• 3 Solid Vocational Themes
Stages of DPG

• Home & Neighborhood Visits (*Smooth Listening*)
• Interviewing Others
• Skill & Task Observation in Multiple Environments
• Informational Interviews used in DPG
• “Divining” the Vocational Themes
• Discovery Staging Record (DSR) incl. Voc Profile
• Career Plan Development with the Lists of 20
The Home Visit

Engage individual and their family with an introductory phone call and a letter explaining with basic talking points that:

- Discovery is about employment;

- Please invite others (siblings, relatives, neighbors, if desired by the individual);

- Interested in hearing family recommendations, connections, schedules/routines, concerns, impact of earnings.
The Home Visit, cont.

- Typically no more than 2 team members;
- Keep note taking to a minimum – record information afterward;
- Practice smooth listening (vs. smooth talking!);
- Plan on 1-2 hours for the initial visit with a scheduled follow-up to observe activities and explore neighborhood;
- Evenings and weekends typically best.
Smooth Listening vs. Smooth Talking

- Listener is in control!
- Use silence, let people continue talking;
- Use open-ended questions ("Tell me about yourself ...")
Framing the conversation

- Who is this person right now?

- Typical skills and talents they exhibit (find out when to observe).

- Motivational interests, people and activities.

- Where the individual spends time and money (bedroom visit?)
Framing the Conversation, cont.

- Family employment and community connections (where people work, specialized skills and interests they have, friends and family who might be helpful.)

- Daily routines and chores that detail skills, talents, and interests;

- Supports needed to perform routines and chores (who assists?)
Framing the Conversation, cont.

- Methods the family and others use to teach new skills;

- Friends and neighbor engagement that may provide information;

- Determine if there’s a typical day and what that includes;

- Determine what occupies the individual’s time (favorite pastimes, activities, people, places)
Synthesizing the Conversation

- Everything is not learned on the first visit;
- Setting expectations and gathering clues for the DPG is the goal.
Double check that you have information that reveals:

- Best means of communicating and teaching;
- Environments to be cautious about;
- Skills that exist or can be developed;
- Interests to explore;
- Potential use of PASS or other resources/ work incentives;
- Like and dislikes;
- Necessary supports;
- Safety and medical concerns;
- Experiences desired by the individual and family.
John’s Story about Eric
Discovering Personal Genius:

*Going Where the Career Makes Sense*

Discovery should lead to a solid Profile that captures the essence of the individual:

- What Works & What Doesn’t
- Best Settings; Support Needs; Talents
- What Home is like; Demonstrations of chores & hobby tasks, revealed Interests, the impact of disability....
- What other things we need to observe or investigate both formally & informally
The Crux of DPG

- When & Where you are *In Flow*
- When & Where your support needs are highest
- The people who know you best
- Interests & Tasks that engage you
- Resident and Emerging Skills
- How you learn new Skills
- Where best to observe these Skills & Tasks being performed
Next Steps: Discovery Activities

The Heart of Discovery

- Schedule activities that reveal skills and talents;
- Schedule further interviews with people mentioned during home visit;
- Explore surrounding neighborhood;
- Describe what happens during activities; what further activities are needed to discern Three Vocational Themes;
- Frame actions to determine ideal conditions of employment.
Observe Tasks and Activities

- Within and outside usual or familiar environments
- Discovery digs deeper!
- Goal is to observe skill while meeting people who know about the area of interest and who are people “outside” the usual settings!
- Combines interests, skills, talents, tasks … not just based on an expressed interest!
BILL

• Lives in a group home
• Staff know him well, but in the home and through the services they offer
• His interests include:

Professional Wrestling
Playing music on CD, radio
Gadgets, like flashlights, all-in-one tools, clip on mini-lamps, mini voice
recorders

• Work in pairs or small groups.
• Brainstorm activities where you might observe Bill;
• Identify nine creative activities to explore those interests.
• Make sure you identify activities that Bill can *actively* participate in.
• Make sure to identify some activities “outside of the usual”
Discovering Personal Genius:  
*Going Where the Career Makes Sense*

**INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEWS:**
Visiting others who have the same interests is often a valuable step in collecting possible career information.

We use Informational Interviews in 2 ways:

1. To Identify & Refine Vocational Themes
2. To “inform” Job Development

Griffin Hammis Associates
Discovering Personal Genius:

Going Where the Career Makes Sense

• Info Interviews should happen with a Manager, Owner, Key Person
• Avoid HR
• Small Businesses – Avoid Big Box Stores
• Look for Opportunities to Help the Business
• Look for Tasks that Match the Individual
• Look for Skills that Match the Individual
• Look for Resource Ownership & Small Business Options

Griffin Hammis Associates
The Transition from DPG to Job Development

Final Vocational Themes Formulation
Informational Interviews...

Discovering Personal Genius

Formal Job Development

Work Trials
Unsolicited Employment Offers...

Griffin-Hammis Associates
Vocational Themes...

Griffin-Hammis Associates:
Elemental Flow Chart for Developing Vocational Themes
Next Step: Divining Vocational Themes

- Themes are NOT Job Descriptions
- Themes are Big and Hold Many, Many Jobs
- Themes Open up the Possibilities in even the Smallest Communities
Divining Vocational Themes: Activities

- Discovery Activities Confirm & Investigate Skills & Tasks
- Many can be done around the home or community
- An Activity is ACTIVE. The person must be Engaged; A Picture can likely be Taken (Take pics for the Portfolio!)
- For Work Trials Use Non-Profits instead of For-Profits if possible...
- Try an Activity or two in unfamiliar locations; performing unfamiliar (but related) tasks...
Divining Vocational Themes

➡ Why Three? One isn’t Enough. If we have Two and Throw one Out, we’re back to One....

➡ Themes are Imprecise but provide Guidance for DPG activities & career development

➡ Themes are **Not The Sum Total** of Skills, Tasks, Attributes, or Interests...but they make the Theme Stronger
Name Those Jobs

- A person likes Dogs
- A person enjoys Music
- A person is interested in Cars
- A person likes working on the Janitor Crew
- The person is regularly seen studying a basic Math Workbook
- How many jobs can we think of?

Griffin-Hammis Associates
Name Those Places Where the Theme Makes Sense

- Theme: Animals
- Theme: Entertainment or Music
- Theme: Transportation
- Theme: Cleanliness
- Theme: Mathematics

- How many places can we think of?
- Mix a Person’s Themes and What do you Get?
The transition from DPG to Job Development

Discovering Personal Genius

Final Vocational Themes Formulation
Informational Interviews...

Formal Job Development

Work Trials
Unsolicited Employment Offers...

Griffin-Hammis Associates
Thank you!

Patty Cassidy
Senior Associate
Griffin-Hammis Associates, LLC
pcassidy@griffinhammis.com
502-681-4881