



Defining a Good Life: Work Is Possible

DC Learners and Earners

Family Webinar Series Session 1

Presenters: Sean Roy and Dale Verstegen – YES! Center

Today's Agenda

- What is a “good life”?
- Setting a vision
- Understanding expectations
- Why is work important?
- How families can help
- Addressing concerns



Question and answer session

Today, People with Disabilities.....



What Does a Good Life Look Like?



It's Important to Have a Vision

- Families are the champion for their youth
- Help your youth have a voice
- Formal “services” not always a long-term option



How do We Define Expectations?

- **“Expectations”** are a belief that someone will or should achieve something; that something will happen or is likely to happen in the future.
- **“High Expectations”** are the belief that a person with a disability (or other barrier) can achieve the same life and have the same life choices as everyone else.

Where Do Low Expectations Come From?

- Society's perceptions about the impact of disability
- Feelings about having a son or daughter with a disability
- What we are told by others

The secret is seeing that people with disabilities can do great things, and not letting other people's ideas impact your son or daughter's ability to make lives for themselves.

The Importance of Having High Expectations

Families set the bar for how the rest of the world sees their son or daughter.

- Use positive language with your son or daughter
- Use positive language with school and service providers
- Helps to avoid a lack of confidence
- Helps to avoid restrictive programs

Is employment part of your vision for your son or daughter's future?

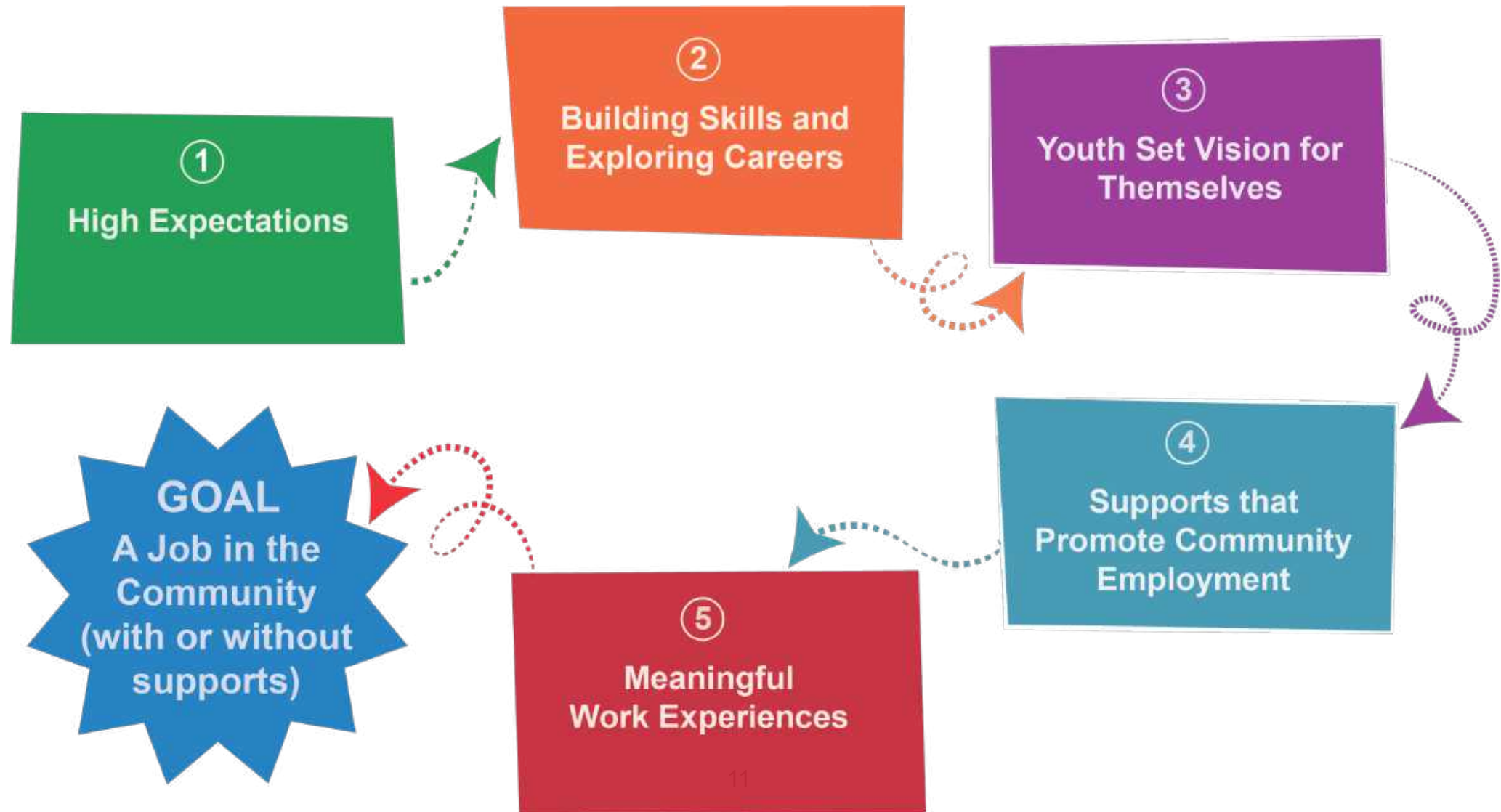


Employment: Core Concepts

1. Everyone can work!
2. Work looks differently for everybody.
3. Employment should be rooted in what your son or daughter wants to do



A New Path to Employment



Why Should Your Son or Daughter Work?

- It is what is expected of adults
- Socialization
- Self-worth (dignity)
- Purpose
- Money
- Promotes mental health
- **Because they can!**

How Families Support Employment

- Set the expectation (a job in the community)
- Teach soft skills
 - Manners
 - Taking directions
 - Time management
- Teach real things
- Chores in the home
- Be a partner with school and employment services

Having Questions or Concerns is Normal

When thinking about a real job in the community for your son or daughter, is there anything that makes you worried or concerned?

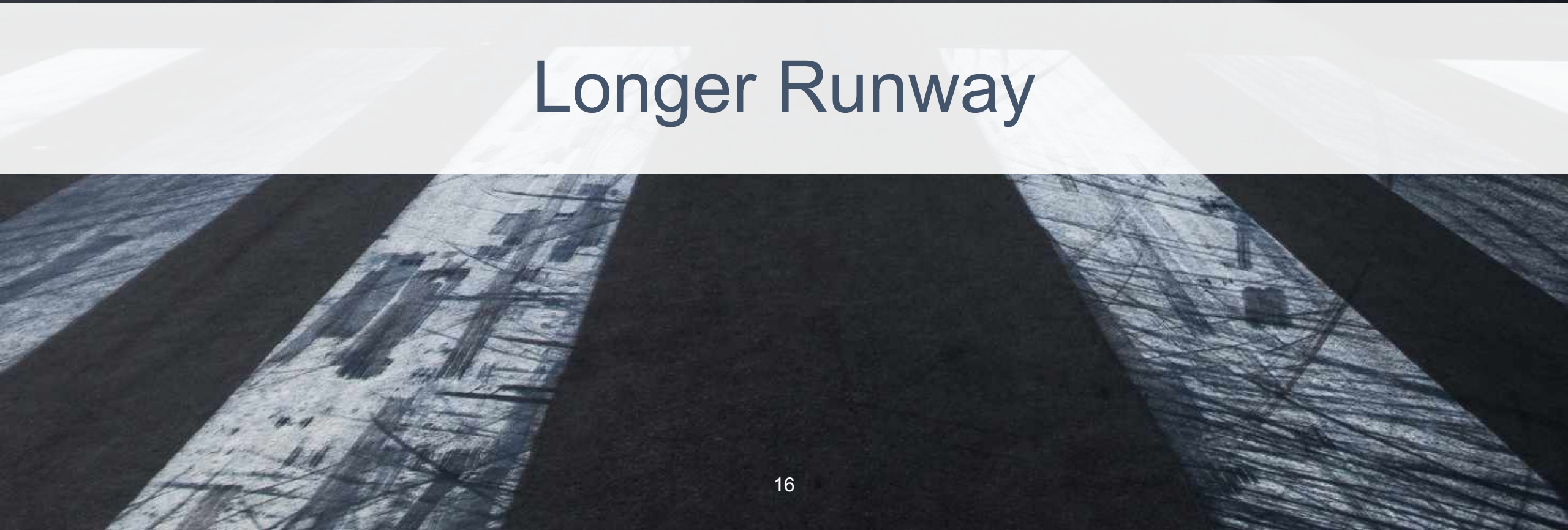
- Vulnerability
- Safety
- Can they do the job?
- Who will hire them?
- Will they lose benefits?



The Balancing Act



Longer Runway



What is Success?

Think of a couple things that you would not be successful at on your first try.

Success in employment is an ongoing process and will look different for everyone.

- Hours worked
- Tasks
- Tolerance
- Recognize and celebrate progress!!



Myths about Employment

Misinformation and misunderstanding can hold us back from considering employment.

- People with disabilities don't work fast enough (MYTH)
- Employees with disabilities won't be accepted by co-workers (MYTH)
- Sheltered work is safer than community jobs (MYTH)
- People who leave workshops lose their friends (MYTH)
- People with significant disabilities don't need to work (MYTH)

Don Lavin – Strengths at Work

Myths about Working & Social Security Benefits

- Getting students on SSI will take care of everything
- People who choose work will lose disability and healthcare benefits
- People can live independently in the community on what SSI provides

Families and caregivers should seek accurate information about the impact of working on benefits.

- Centers for Independent Living
- WIPA or CWIC projects
- VR Counselor
- Advocacy Orgs

Takeaways

1. **Everyone can work**
2. Set a vision and have high expectations
3. Work is important and families can help
4. Questions and concerns are normal
5. Don't make bad decisions based on inaccurate information
6. Join us for the whole series!!

Other Webinars in This Series

Webinar 2: Exploring Career Options: Where Do They Want to Work? (June 16)

Webinar 3: Preparing to Work: Building Skills and Matching Job Tasks (June 23)

Webinar 4: The Power of Family: Finding the Right Employment Opportunity (June 30)

Questions



Thank You!!

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