

# Introduction

## Keeping It Real: How to Get the Support You Need For the Life You Want

### What will this workbook help me learn?

**Supports  
are the  
people and  
things that  
help you do  
what you  
want to do.**

Now is the time to start planning for your life after high school. That means there are a lot of different things to think about. What kind of job do I want? Do I want to go to college? Where do I want to live? What will I do for fun? These are the kinds of questions that every high school student should ask themselves, but if you are a person with a disability, it might feel like the questions are harder to answer. This workbook was written to help you find answers that make sense for you. It was also written to show you that with the right supports (that means help), it's possible to dream big and make those dreams come true.

### How should I use this workbook?

There's a lot of information (things to learn) in this workbook, but it's not a workbook that has to be done all at once.

- Chapter 3, "So what's all this talk about "transition?" will tell you what "transition" is, and some of the things you will need to think about for the transition planning you do in high school.
- Chapter 4, "Understanding Myself," will help you figure out the things you like and don't like, and what's easy and hard for you to do.
- Chapter 5, "Understanding Supports," will teach you what kinds of supports there are, and when you might want to use those different supports.

It's important that you understand what's in Chapters 3, 4 and 5 before going on to the rest of the workbook.

Once you finish those three chapters, however, it's okay to choose what you want to do next. For example, you might decide to start with Chapter 9, "Recreation and Leisure," and then do Chapter 6, "Employment and Careers." You can also choose to do a part of a chapter, instead of doing the whole thing at once.

Another important thing this workbook will help you to do is start putting together something called a "portfolio."

## What is a portfolio?

**A portfolio is used to show people the important things you have done.**

A portfolio shows people what you have done and learned. A portfolio can be written work, art work, photographs of you doing an activity, video tapes, audio tapes, computer discs, or some of all of these things.

The portfolio you will be creating for this workbook will have two parts. One part will be for "Official Information." These are the things you'll show other people so that you can get the supports you need. The other part is for "Personal Information." These are things that help you understand yourself better, but it will be up to you to decide whether or not you want to show this information to anyone else. The portfolio activities in this workbook are marked like this: **PORTFOLIO**

Remember that this portfolio is yours. It will be up to you to add to it over time so that people know about the new things you do and learn.

## Is the workbook something I should do by myself or with other people?

Most of the activities in this book can be done either on your own or with your classmates. Your teacher will help you decide what makes the most sense for you and for your class.

You will also find that some parts of the book are easy for you to do on your own, and other parts you will need help with. This help might be your teacher reading parts out loud, or it might be your parent helping you find things for your portfolio. Each student is different, so a part that might seem easy for you might be harder for someone else, or the other way around. That's okay! The important thing is that everyone learns how to get the supports they need.

## **What's in the workbook?**

This workbook has lots of activities. Some of them you will do on your own, and some you will do with other people. At the end of each chapter is a section called "Additional Activities." These activities include things like using the internet and visiting places in person to find out information. Again, there are many activities listed, and you don't have to do all of them. With the help of your teacher and parents, you can decide which activities would be most helpful to you.

In this book we will talk about some high school students who are thinking about their futures, making plans, and directing their supports. In their stories you'll see people sometimes doing things the right way and sometimes making mistakes. When you read the stories, think about how you might do things the same or do them differently.

Not long ago, if you were a person with a disability, most people did not think that you could have a good job, or live in a home of your own. Now most people understand that *everyone* has the right to live, work and play in their own communities. We'd like you to know about some people that have been leaders in making these changes happen, so throughout this book we'll share their stories with you. Those sections are called "Learning from Leaders."

Being able to get the supports you need is what will help you live the life that's right for you. It's one of the most important skills you will ever learn. And though it may seem hard at first, you'll find that the more you practice the easier it becomes.