

Recreation and Leisure

The Big Ideas:

Recreation and Leisure

Behaviors show people a lot about what we're feeling.

Looking at pictures can be a good way to find out what activities someone likes.

Talking with the people who provide you with supports is the best way to solve any problems that come up.

Thanking people when they help you is an important part of managing your supports.

What do the words "Recreation and Leisure" mean?

Recreation and leisure time is for relaxing, having fun, and taking care of yourself.

Recreation and leisure are two big words that basically mean what you do to relax and have fun. Do you like to play sports? Take dance lessons? Go to concerts? Go shopping? Do you like to spend time at a place of worship? Do you like to go to the library? To the gym? Do you like being outdoors or indoors? Do you like to do things with family? With friends? On your own? Hopefully by now you know there aren't any right or wrong answers to

these questions. Like the other areas of transition, it's just a matter of knowing what you like to do... and then figuring out how to get the supports you need to do it.

Activity:

- **Either on your own, or with your classmates, look at the Self assessment you did (the part about your likes and dislikes). What are some of your recreation and leisure interests?**

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Kristen's story continued:

When Kristen comes home from school, she usually spends her time watching T.V. and playing computer games. Sometimes on weekends she goes shopping with her mother or her sister, Alison. This is something she likes to do, and wishes she could do more, but her mother and Alison are often too busy to take her. When Kristen isn't out with her mother or sister, she spends her time on the weekends doing what she does when she gets home from school – watching T.V. and playing computer games.

Lately, Kristen has been going into Alison's room and looking through Alison's things. She tries on Alison's clothes and jewelry. She puts on Alison's new makeup, even though Kristen has some of her own. She plays Alison's CDs. Usually she doesn't bother putting things away, so that when Alison comes home her room is a mess. Alison gets mad at Kristen each time this happens. This makes Kristen sad, but she keeps getting into Alison's things anyway.

Activity:

- Either on your own, or with your classmates, think about Kristen's story and answer the following questions:

List some reasons why Kristen might get into Alison's things, even though she knows it makes Alison mad. _____

Can you think of some solutions to this problem?

"When you don't have a plan, you have a lot of empty hours. Empty hours are a big problem. Then you start seeing behaviors come out. Whether it's depression or an anxiety, it's still behaviors coming out and they complicate things a whole lot." Parent

How can Kristen's Circle of Support know what the problem is if she can't tell them?

Behaviors are how we act. Words *tell* people how we feel, and behaviors *show* people how we feel.

Sometimes our behaviors show people a lot about what we feel. Remember how we said that people are always changing, and that our needs change, too? Kristen's never gotten into Alison's things before. But she's growing up, and maybe Kristen is bored doing the same old things. Maybe she needs something to do with her free time besides watch T.V. and play computer games.

Kristen's Circle of Support starts by thinking about what natural supports would be the most helpful to Kristen. Alison offers to bring Kristen with her when she goes out with her friends. Everyone thinks this sounds like a good idea. Kristen smiles a lot and says "Yes!" like she means it, when Alison asks her if she'd like to come out with her sometimes.

On Friday, Alison takes Kristen to play laser tag. Kristen seems excited when they get in the car, but when they walk inside the laser tag place, she shakes her head and says, "No!" Then she covers her ears and starts repeating, "Go home." Finally, Alison drives Kristen back home. Both of them feel sad that their time together didn't work out the way they'd planned.

Activity:

- Either on your own, or with your classmates, think about Kristen's story and answer the following questions:

Do you think going out with Alison is a good solution to Kristen's problem? Why or why not? _____

Why do you think Kristen wanted to go home? _____

Was there something different Kristen's Circle of Support could have done? _____

How can her Circle of Support know what Kristen likes to do if she can't tell them?

No one really took the time to figure out what kinds of things Kristen likes or doesn't like to do. When Kristen said she wanted to go out with Alison, that wasn't the same thing as saying she wanted to play laser tag. It turns out that the laser tag place also had lots of loud video games, and Kristen did not like the noise. Again, Kristen's behavior's showed people a lot about how she was feeling.

Looking at pictures is one way to find out how someone feels about things. This can be a helpful support for someone who has a hard time using words.

Looking at pictures can be a good way to find out what someone likes. Kristen and her mother look through lots of different pictures together. Some of the pictures have Kristen in them. Kristen seems most excited when she sees pictures of herself swimming. Her mother remembers that playing in the pool with other campers has always been Kristen's favorite part of summer camp.

It turns out that there is a swim teacher at the YWCA (a community support) who has taught other students who have disabilities like Kristen's. Now the only problem is figuring out how to get Kristen to her lessons.

What other supports can Kristen use?

If there aren't natural or community supports that can help meet a need, the next thing to think about are formal supports. The Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD), a formal support, pays a woman named Pat to come to Kristen's house for a few hours each week. Pat spends time with Kristen, so that Kristen's mother has a chance to do other things she needs to do.

Pat might be a good person to take Kristen to swim lessons, but there is a problem. Pat and Kristen used to do things together, like take long walks in the park, but for the past couple of months all they've done is sit around the house and watch T.V. Kristen's mother is frustrated because Pat isn't doing the job she was hired to do. Kristen's mother wants to find someone else to help out, but Kristen has always liked Pat and doesn't want her to leave.

Activity:

- Either on your own, or with your classmates, think about Kristen's story and answer the following questions:

Do you think Kristen's mother should try to find someone else to help out? Why or why not?

What are some things you can do when a person who is providing you with the supports you need isn't doing their job?

How can Kristen's mother handle this situation with Pat?

Let's talk about how to handle problems that come up with someone who is supposed to be providing you with the supports you need.

First of all, keep in mind that if you ignore the problem, it usually does not go away. In fact, it often gets worse. In Kristen's case, she would probably just get more and more bored, and her mother would just feel more and more angry with Pat.

Talking honestly with someone, and listening carefully to what they have to say, is usually the best way to help someone do their job better.

If people aren't doing their job well, it's because they need someone to help them figure out how to do it better. The best way to help someone do their job better is to talk honestly with them about what you think the problem is. Make sure you also listen carefully to what they have to say. Try working together to come up with a solution to the problem. (You can use the worksheet "Evaluating and Managing My Supports" to help you do this.)

When Kristen's mother finally decides to talk with Pat, she is surprised to hear Pat say that she's bored, too. It turns out that Kristen has been saying "No," whenever Pat asks her if she'd like to take a walk. Pat really likes Kristen, but needs help figuring out what to do with her. She'd be happy to take Kristen to the YWCA for lessons. She even suggests that Kristen might enjoy learning Tai Chi, and offers to take Kristen to observe a class next time they're at the Y.

Thanking the people who provide you with supports is an important part of building good working relationships.

Kristen's mother makes sure she thanks Pat for all her help. She knows one of the most important parts of managing supports is thanking the people that help you.

Learning from Leaders

Samuel Jenkins graduated from Passaic County Vocational Technical High School in 1978. As someone with a learning disability in the 1960's and 70's, Jenkins spent most of his time in separate special education classes. After leaving school, he worked in different restaurants and hotels. It was not until many years later that Jenkins attended a Partners in Policymaking training and learned how to advocate at the local, state and national level for the rights of people with disabilities. Twenty years after graduating from high school, Jenkins decided to change career paths. He now works as a field coordinator for the New Jersey Self Advocacy Project, and helps to train other people to become effective self advocates.

Jenkins has received many awards, including the Jane Miller Leadership award, and the Colleen Fraser Leadership award.

Questions to think about:

1. If you met Sam Jenkins, what questions would you want to ask him about his life and work?
2. Do you know anyone who started off doing one kind of work, and ended up doing something completely different?
3. Go to this website for the Council on Developmental Disabilities, and read about their Partners in Policymaking training:
<http://www.njddc.org/>

Let's Review:

- Recreation and leisure is what you do for fun and relaxation.
- Behaviors show people a lot about what we're feeling. Even if someone can't use words, how they act tells other people if they're feeling happy, sad, bored, etc.
- Looking at pictures can be a good way to find out what someone likes to do, and how they feel about things.
- Problems usually don't just go away when they're ignored. Often the best way to help someone do their job better is to talk honestly with them, listen carefully, and then try to come up with a solution together.
- One of the most important parts of managing your supports is thanking the people that help you!

Additional Activities:

- Read “Signs of a healthy/unhealthy work relationship” at the end of this chapter. Either with your classmates, or with an adult, talk about the signs that are listed.
 - Do they make sense to you?
 - When you are happy and unhappy in your work, how do you show it?
 - What might be other signs of healthy or unhealthy work relationship?

Using What You've Learned

1. Take out the worksheet, "What Kind of Support Would Be Most Helpful?" Write down a recreation and leisure goal you'd like to work on or a problem you'd like to solve.
2. Write down one or more things you have to do to reach that goal or solve that problem.
3. Are these things you can do on your own, or do you think you need some help?
4. If there's something you can do on your own, fill out the worksheet called, "My To Do List."
5. If there's something you need help with, write down who or what might be most helpful to you on the "What Kind of Support Would Be Most Helpful?" worksheet.
6. Depending on which kind of support you decide to try first, fill out the worksheet for getting natural, community or formal supports. Also, don't forget to think about what kind of assistive technology and environmental adaptations might be helpful.
7. Once you've gotten the supports you need, fill out the worksheet for "Evaluating and Managing My Supports."
8. Remember to thank the people who support you!
9. If a problem comes up that you cannot seem to find a solution to, go back to the "What Kind of Support Would Be Most Helpful?" worksheet to see if there is someone or something else that would be more helpful.

Signs of a healthy work relationship

It is easy to spot workers who are happy with their jobs. They show this healthy relationship with work in the following ways:

- By arriving to work on time.
- By behaving in a friendly way.
- By showing interest in how you are doing.
- By showing interest and pride in their work.
- By asking how you prefer tasks to be done.
- By being neat and clean in appearance.
- By finishing jobs they start.
- By speaking clearly and making good eye contact with you. .
- By asking whether there is anything else they can do for you.
- By showing that they look forward to seeing you next time.
- By calling you as much in advance as possible when they know they will be late or won't be able to come to work.
- By *never* arriving under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

Signs of an unhealthy work relationship

A person working for you might be unhappy because they don't like their job, or because of a personal problem that has nothing to do with the job. Either way, you will have an unhealthy work relationship if the person shows their unhappiness by behaving in the following ways:

- By often arriving late, calling in sick, or just not showing up for work.
- By behaving in a rude or unfriendly way.
- By not showing any interest in how you are doing.
- By not showing any interest or pride in their work.
- By not asking or caring how you prefer to have tasks done.
- By having a sloppy appearance.
- By working slowly and not finishing jobs they start.
- By make lots of personal phone calls instead of paying attention to you.
- By rushing to finish work so they can leave early.
- By mumbling when they talk and avoiding eye contact.
- By not calling when they are going to be late or won't be able to come to work.
- By arriving under the influence of drugs or alcohol. (This is *never* acceptable.)

Note: DeGraft, A. (2002). Caregivers and Personal Assistants: How to Find, Hire and Manage the People Who Help You (or Your Loved One!), 3rd ed. Saratoga Access Publications, Inc.: Fort Collins, CO.