



TRANSITION TOOLKIT

Enhancing **Self Determination** for **Young Adults**
who are **Deaf-Blind**

Created by **The Southeast Regional Transition Institute Team**
May 1, 2013



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TRANSITION TOOLKIT

Enhancing **Self Determination** for **Young Adults**
who are **Deaf-Blind**

Planning & hosting a Transition Institute has never been easier! The Transition Toolkit contains all of the resources you need for putting on a spectacular event that will create a memorable, high quality learning experience for deaf-blind teens.

INTRODUCTION

This Transition Toolkit is a free repository of information, tools, resources, and information about a suggested model for hosting a workshop for deaf-blind teens ages 14-22 and their families. This model was devised after eight years of hosting Transition Institutes for this traditionally underserved population.

WHY THIS MODEL?

The young adults we serve need to build skills related to Self Determination and Leadership. We have found that we can help them to develop these skills by giving them opportunities to understand, practice and develop Self-Determination strategies. In this model, information is shared in a way that captures the youth, energy and vision of young adults. Traditionally this has been the greatest challenge for educators & professionals to provide high quality learning experiences for young adults who are deaf-blind. Equally as daunting is that the information that needs to be shared, must also include best practices which should be rooted in research.

Research has shown that young adult's most optimum opportunity for learning is through role models, peer influence and frequent and early exposure to different types of life experiences.

WHAT'S IN THE TOOLKIT?

- Pre-Institute Planning Materials- such as registration forms, volunteer applications, sample

- budget, youth-mentor communication profiles, interpreter and SSP application forms
- Best practices in Communication Accessibility for a deaf-blind audience
 - Institute Session Facilitator Guides, Transition Handout Resource List for Families, and a Developing Mentors Guide
 - Assessment and data collection protocols for follow-up with action planning.

VIEW A VIDEO THAT SHOWS AN OVERVIEW OF OUR TRANSITION TOOLKIT MODEL



QUALITY TRAINING

The Southeast Regional Transition Institutes have consistently produced teens that emerge from their weekend experiences with focused action plans and a renewed sense of self-confidence and direction. The families have especially remarked on the transformation that occurs from the exposure to deaf-blind role models and mentors.

People who are deaf-blind are not incidental learners as a result of this concurrent disability. Many young adults who are deaf-blind have reported having limited life experiences and most often depend on information that is shared through a secondary source. This adversely impacts on their ability to be in control of their own lives, acquire appropriate social skills and establish relationships. Gaining access to information is essential for these young adults to become successful in their adult lives. Young adults who are developing skills to be more self-directed and determined are now advocating for more opportunities to be independent. Young adults through technology are striving for more access to information and community integration. These young adults benefit from having someone cultivate their interests and talents and connect it with meaningful opportunities.

STEP-BY STEP GUIDANCE

As professional leaders in the field of sensory impairment, we all have a strong desire to make a difference. Offering this Institute can help provide a valuable training experience to deaf-blind teens and their families. The core feature of this training is the active involvement of the participants and the opportunities to increase social and self-determination skills. The Transition Toolkit provides a step-by-step guideline and a comprehensive set of materials to give your planning team a proven roadmap to hosting a worthwhile engaging event.

SECTION I

Pre Institute Planning

A successful Institute experience depends on a high level of detailed planning. Planning optimizes your efforts of achieving your goal of high quality training sessions. The time period for planning may span more than four months. This attention to detail will pay off in making your Institute a highly worthwhile endeavor.

EARLY STEPS FOR PLANNING

First, choose and **assemble a core team**. Team members may include deaf-blind project staff, personnel from vocational rehabilitation agencies, interpreters, SSPs, families from previous institutes, local school districts, family advocacy groups, university professors and students, and deaf-blind mentors. Second, discuss and **set the budget**. Third, **set the dates for the Institute**. It is recommended that a weekend or long weekend be chosen so that it is easier for family members and caregivers to participate in the training. Previously it was found that holding Institutes over a four-day holiday weekend such as Martin Luther King weekend in January was very helpful in enabling family members and students to attend the Institute.

GATHERING PARTNERS

A strategic plan for leveraging resources through the use of partners is essential. Many hands make lighter work! A major sponsor should be acquired from a national platform level. National partners can be used to contribute presenters or a keynote speaker. State partners can be used for supplying interpreters, deaf-blind field-specific professionals, and possible use of venue. It is also essential to gather support from local partners for food, volunteers or recreational activities.

COMMUNICATION PLANNING

Interpreters and SSPs are the cornerstone of the program. It is crucial that the communication needs of each student are determined and met so they can get full access to the training material. Therefore, it is essential that a significant amount of planning be invested in recruiting and scheduling SSPs, having access to highly qualified interpreters, training volunteers and gathering information about communication modalities of participants.

If possible, engage and collaborate with local and state resources such as Interpreter Training Programs. This

relationship can provide a “win-win” for everyone because students can obtain credit, training, an experience for their “volunteering”, and you strengthen your infrastructure for meeting future SSP and Interpreter needs.

VENUE SELECTION

The venue selection is a crucial decision to be made to ensure the site for the Institute is participant-friendly and that the training environment promotes accessibility. Some of the factors to consider include: meeting space, recreation space, dormitory space, and space for breakout sessions. An orientation and mobility assessment of the selected possible setting is best practice to work from towards planning travel paths and environmental adaptations that may be necessary.



SECTION I PRE-INSTITUTE TOOLS

1. Pre-Institute Planning Checklist
2. Site Evaluation Form
3. Sample Transition Institute Budget
4. Sample Brochure
5. Sample Letter to Partners
6. Sample Letter to Vendors for Technology Resources Fair
7. Volunteer Application and Opportunities
8. Registration Forms
9. Sample Recreation Agenda
10. Youth/Mentor Communication Profile
11. The Bandana Code Reference Sheet
12. Youth Nomination Form

WORKING DOCUMENT TEMPLATES

1. Pre-Institute Planning Checklist
2. Site Evaluation Form
5. Sample Letter to Partners
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10. Youth/Mentor Communication Profile
12. Youth Nomination Form

SECTION II

Communication Access

Communication access for individuals who are deaf-blind is critical and, without proper knowledge and planning, can be complicated to achieve. However, this can be more easily accomplished with accurate information on the various modes of communication, supports and modifications used by young adults who are deaf-blind. Pre-conferencing with the individual and team is also a critical component in facilitating seamless communication interactions.

BEST PRACTICES

Regardless of the mode of communication there are recognized best practices in relation to communicating with individuals who are deaf-blind. Consider the following five points during your interactions:

CULTURAL ETIQUETTE

As in any culture, there are also anticipated rituals and predictable behaviors that are associated with Deaf-Blind culture. Having an awareness of these cultural expectations will assist in the flow of interaction. Some examples are being aware of appropriate entrances and exits in conversations and attention-gaining behaviors. For example, if a young adult who is deaf-blind is sitting alone or engaged in a conversation it is acceptable to approach the person from the side and tap him/her lightly on the shoulder, keeping your hand in place to maintain physical contact, and wait for the individual to turn to you to begin the conversation. The person's reach or physical adjustment will give you insight as to how the person would prefer to communicate with you. If the person draws back and visually scans the environment that may tell you that the person intends to communicate with you visually. If the person reaches out with a hand this indicates that he/she will be communicating tactually. Once you have established the modality of communication, identify yourself and your role (i.e. "Hi this is Susie, the Interpreter Coordinator.") before you begin your interaction.

Upon ending a conversation, it is polite to let the person know that you are leaving and where you will be in the environment. We need to remember that the phrase "out of sight, out of mind" is directly applicable here. If you are no longer in the person's sight (or sense of touch) you are no longer present. However, providing additional information about your physical whereabouts will empower the young adult who is deaf-blind, thus leading to more self-determined behaviors.

RESPECTFUL TOUCH

Individuals who are deaf-blind, regardless of their degree of vision, are tactile communicators. The sense of touch is heavily relied upon in order to gain information about the world. We as communication partners must be critically aware of the use of our hands and those of the consumer's. Therefore, when you are first initiating communication, as described above, it is essential to make physical contact on the shoulder or upper arm of the individual. Do not initiate contact by reaching for the person's hand, as this may be very startling to the individual. Giving the person a tactile 'warning' that you are present in a more neutral location on his/her body will empower the person as to whether or not he/she would like to engage in communication. Then, during interactions, particularly for people who are tactile communicators, it is critical that the hands of the communication partner are under those of the young adult who is deaf-blind. Move your hands comfortably and do not tug or drag the hands of the person. As a tactile receiver, he/she will follow the tactile connection easily. Also, being under the hands of the young adult who is deaf-blind allows the individual to decide whether he/she wants to maintain communication, another empowering strategy.

VISUAL INFORMATION

Visual information about the environment is critical for young adults who are deaf-blind. Having knowledge of physical details of one's surroundings, including people and objects in a space, greatly assists the person in making informed decisions and connecting with others around them. Therefore, we should think about providing visual information in three ways: pre, concurrent, post.

Pre – to give information about the surroundings upon arrival, prior to the event starting (i.e. layout of the room, people who are present, where items are located, etc.).

Concurrent – to provide visual information as it is happening during the communication interaction (i.e. Interpreter: "FYI, the speaker is having difficulty with the technology, the slides are not showing on the screen, and a technician just came over to assist.").

Post – to give information after the fact about something that happened during an event but didn't seem as urgent at the time to interrupt the process (i.e. Interpreter: "During the break I noticed a few of your co-workers looking at a specific diagram and talking in a group about it." Consumer: "Oh, which diagram?" The interpreter shows which diagram and the consumer reviews it more closely realizing it is applicable to an assignment at her work.)

Providing this visual information will assist the individual in feeling connected to his/her environment, thus engaging in more self-determined behaviors.

HANDS DOWN RULE

Due to the physical demands and challenges associated with communication for Deaf-Blind people, it is wise to consider the need for a "communication break". This is being referred to now as the "Hands Down" rule. Allowing and being respectful of the person's need to disengage from the spoken or signed message for a short period of time to allow for physical rest and for the absorption of information. It is showing that disengaging for a short period of time allows for lengthened sustainability of communication.

DEAF-BLIND STANDARD TIME (DBST)

It is a known fact within the Deaf-Blind community that interactions, particularly in a group setting, will take longer than anticipated. This is due to the inherent nature of one-to-one or small group interactions. Since this

extended period of time is a given, it is important for communication partners to realize and plan for this time. There will need to be time to pre-conference with people who are deaf-blind in order to glean the necessary information, time to organize and arrange for optimal communication, time to describe visual information (explained above) and time for direct communication with various individuals. Knowing that DBST is an expected part of the interaction will assist with the overall flow of communication.

MODES OF COMMUNICATION

ORAL COMMUNICATORS

Many individuals who are deaf-blind communicate through spoken language. They may do so by relying on their residual hearing and with the amplification of various assistive listening devices, such as hearing aids, FM systems or cochlear implants. Meeting the needs of these individuals will require some knowledge about how these technologies work. For example, FM systems require a transmitter and receiver, both requiring batteries. There are also specific frequencies or channels that must be used in order to connect the listener(s) to the microphone. Having additional pieces of equipment and supplies is also wise.

A young adult or other person who is deaf-blind may need someone to sit in close proximity to him/her and to provide 'voice-over' interpreting. This would be repeating the voiced message either into the ear/hearing aid of the person or through the FM system. In order to meet the needs of the person it is wise to discuss the volume, physical proximity and what type of additional visual information the person is interested in prior to beginning the interaction.

Tips for Success – Oral Communicators

- ✓ If possible, pass the microphone to each speaker. If that cannot be done then one person will need to repeat what is being said in the microphone.
- ✓ Identify who is talking by using the person's name or identifying characteristics,
- ✓ Provide visual information through spoken description.

VIEW A VIDEO CLIP THAT SHOWS COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES FOR ORAL COMMUNICATION WITH TYPING AND REFRESHABLE BRAILLE

VIEW THE
VIDEO CLIP



SIGN LANGUAGE USERS

Many young adults who are deaf-blind use various sign language systems to communicate with American Sign Language (ASL) and Pidgin Signed English (PSE) being the most common. What is important to keep in mind is that regardless of the vision status of the individual, the sign language being used remains the same (i.e. there is no separate language called Tactile Sign Language). Instead, modifications to the consumer's preferred language is made in order to provide optimal communication access. It is helpful to categorize communication styles for sign language users in the following way:

COMMUNICATION STYLES

CLOSE VISION

Individuals who have Close Vision are those who prefer sign language interpreting within a closer proximity than typical sighted individuals. This could be anywhere from 1 – 6 feet. This category addresses people with acuity loss, which is the vision we use for distance and clarity of details. This is assessed in a measurement against 20/20, which is normal vision. As the bottom number increases the severity of loss increases, such as 20/80, 20/200, 20/400, etc. The bottom number represents the number of feet in which items can be seen at a distance. The higher the number the closer items must be in order to see them clearly. When the bottom number reaches 200 the individual is considered legally blind. Individuals with impaired acuities will experience blurred vision and will need font to be enlarged.

Tips for Success – Close Vision

- ✓ Reduce the pace of sign language production.
- ✓ Provide a backdrop that provides contrast and that is not visually complex.
- ✓ Incorporate visual information that is at a distance into the interpretation.

VIEW A VIDEO CLIP THAT SHOWS COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES FOR CLOSE VISION INTERPRETING

VIEW THE VIDEO CLIP



VIEW A VIDEO CLIP THAT SHOWS VISUAL COMMUNICATION FACILITATING



REDUCED PERIPHERAL FIELDS

Individuals with reduced peripheral fields have vision that is affected on the sides, top and/or bottom of their vision. There can be small blind spots called scotomas or significantly impacted fields with large gaps in vision. When newly developed scotomas are present the individual often still functions visually, often with 20/20 normal central vision. Then, as the vision loss progresses or if larger portions of the fields are affected limited central vision is available thus affecting visual reception of sign language. Peripheral vision is measured in degrees with 170-180 degrees being typical vision. When the remaining functional fields of vision are at 20 degrees the individual is considered to be legally blind.

VIEW A VIDEO CLIP THAT SHOWS COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES FOR REDUCED FIELDS



TACTILE SIGN LANGUAGE

Tactile sign language is a hand-under-hand mode of communication that can be accessed either through a one-handed or two-handed method. People who use tactile sign language may have used this as their main mode of communication throughout development or transitioned into using this mode at a later time due to a progressive eye condition. Regardless of the period of acquisition, particular techniques can be used by the communication partner to help facilitate seamless interactions. When establishing a connection (as described above) be sure to approach the person gently, in a neutral location, while being cognizant of your hand use. The tactile communicator will reach out to initiate communication. Be sure to produce your signs as you normally would for someone who is sighted. And be prepared that many tactile communicators switch between one and two hands for communication for a variety of reasons.

VIEW A VIDEO CLIP THAT SHOWS TACTILE SIGN LANGUAGE INTERPRETING



ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

There are many environmental considerations to assist in providing optimal communication access for individuals who are deaf-blind, including background, attire, lighting, and seating. Many individuals who are deaf-blind have residual vision and rely on that vision to access communication and the world around them. Therefore it is critical to be aware of the surroundings and ensure that there is a solid background that provides contrast to the signer's hands and body. In relation to this, the interpreter/signer needs to be cognizant of his/her attire when communicating with someone who is deaf-blind. It is critical to have clothing that is a solid, contrastive color allowing optimal access to the hands, arms and face of the signer. Good illumination and often, enhanced lighting is necessary. The type and angle of lighting is also important. The signer should not stand or sit in front of open windows. Instead, the lighting should be facing the signer over the shoulder of the deaf-blind individual. Lastly, seating is also a critical factor. Chairs that are adjustable that accommodate for height differences is optimal.

PRE-PLANNING & PRE-CONFERRING

In order to provide accurate communication supports to individuals who are deaf-blind, pre-planning and on-site pre-conferencing with the individual is critical. Various details need to be secured prior to the event, such as type and degree of vision loss, preferred mode of communication, preferred seating, lighting and print preferences. However, not every deaf-blind individual is able to articulate these needs independently, therefore, offering leading questions in these categories will be helpful. This can be done through the use of a

Communication Profile. This form is designed to glean critical information about the communicator. Then, upon arrival, time should be allocated before the event begins for pre-conferencing. This will allow time to establish a communication connection, identify the best location in the room, set lighting, background and other necessary details. On-site modifications, during the process should be expected.

The graphic below shows important factors to consider for High Quality Communication Support:



COMMUNICATION ACCESS SUMMARY

In summary, there are several components to consider when providing communication access for individuals who are deaf-blind. Working together with the individual and other team players, being flexible, planning extra time, and expecting the unexpected will facilitate communication for individuals who are deaf-blind.

For more information on communication strategies visit the website of the National Consortium on Deaf-Blindness (www.nationaldb.org) under Selected Topics, Interpreting for Deaf-Blind Individuals.



SECTION II COMMUNICATION ACCESS TOOLS

1. Interpreter or SSP or Volunteer Profile Application
2. Interpreter and SSP Sample Schedule
3. Multiple Modes of Communication Transcript
4. Multiple Modes of Communication Audio File

WORKING DOCUMENT TEMPLATES

1. Interpreter or SSP or Volunteer Profile Application
2. Interpreter and SSP Sample Schedule



SECTION III

Developing Mentors

LEARNING THROUGH ROLE MODELS

Mentors play a key role in this workshop model. A primary goal of the training is to develop mentors from young adults who have come to past events and are ready to guide, inspire, and motivate. The Transition Institute fosters the development of leaders and strong presenters by involving them in co-planning, co-presenting, and placing responsibility upon them to lead sessions and activities. They take an active role with new Institute participants even before the weekend Institute occurs, by contacting the new recruits prior to the training.

The Transition Institute provides opportunities for presenters who are deaf-blind to serve as positive role models for young adults. From the planning to the post-institute follow-up, mentors are involved in the process and very integral to the success of this model.

VIEW VIDEO CLIP OF MENTORS DESCRIBING THEIR GROWTH THROUGH THEIR ACTIVE PARTICIPATION IN THE TRANSITION INSTITUTE

**VIEW THE
VIDEO CLIP**



OPPORTUNITIES FOR EXPANDING SOCIAL CONNECTIONS

Because deaf-blindness is a low incidence disability and impacts a person's ability to communicate and interact with other, young adults greatly benefit from a chance to meet and interact with peers in settings where communication is facilitated.



“...We know from the Usher Syndrome literature that one of the most powerful experiences for feeling ok with oneself and developing self-determination is by meeting others with Deaf-blindness and developing connections and relationships.”

(Source: Miner and Cioffi: Usher Syndrome in the School Setting, 1997, HKNC TAC)



SECTION III DEVELOPING MENTOR TOOLS

1. Developing Mentors Guide 
2. Mentor Role and Guidelines 
3. Mentor Duties Outline 
4. Sample Mentor Meeting Invitation from Lead Mentor 
5. Tips for Giving a Presentation by Jason Corning 
6. Example of a Mentor Biography 

WORKING DOCUMENT TEMPLATES

4. Sample Mentor Meeting Invitation from Lead Mentor 
6. Example of a Mentor Biography 

SECTION IV

Institute Content

Think back to that moment when you decided to pursue your dream. Who or what influenced your decision? Was it a family member, mentor, a friend or a teacher? Were you inspired by a school activity or a work or volunteer experience?

OUR PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY- SELF DETERMINATION

We believe that it is important to give deaf-blind young adults an opportunity to identify and learn new skills for self-determination. For this reason, the Transition Institute model is based on providing many hands-on opportunities for role-play and conference activity interaction with the support of accessible communication & materials for all participants. Each participant leaves the conference with a focused action plan based on goals set from activities completed within the Transition Institute.

VIEW A VIDEO CLIP OF YOUNG ADULTS TALKING ABOUT THE VALUE OF SELF DETERMINATION

**VIEW THE
VIDEO CLIP**



YOUNG ADULT & FAMILY PROGRAMMING

There are always two strands of content at a Transition Institute – the young adult strand, and a family strand. Often, the strands overlap, but each group also receives information and activities targeted for their unique perspectives. We believe that family engagement is an important component of these institutes because it empowers parents and siblings to become more effective advocates and embrace a future that identifies the preferences, skills and opportunities of their family member.

Through facilitated conversations led by family leaders, professionals and deaf-blind adult mentors, families receive information about available services, financial planning and legal issues. Perhaps one of the most life-changing events for these families is the opportunity to hear the stories of deaf-blind people sharing their challenges and the valuable lessons learned. These lessons inspire families to be more engaged and to raise expectations for their sibling, daughter or son living with a disability. Families buttressed by peer interaction and information leave the Institute feeling empowered to be that driving influence in the young adult's school and community.

VIEW A VIDEO CLIP OF PARENTS DESCRIBING NEW PERSPECTIVES THAT THEY CAME AWAY WITH AFTER HAVING PARTICIPATED IN A TRANSITION INSTITUTE



PURPOSE OF THE TRANSITION INSTITUTE

To support young adults who are deaf-blind to:

- ✓ Plan for the future and clarify future goals
- ✓ Build networks of friends, mentors, resources
- ✓ Become strong self-advocates
- ✓ Interact with and learn from others who are deaf-blind the possibilities for leadership and involvement

To Support Families of young adults who are deaf-blind to:

- ✓ Promote self-determination in young adults through exposure to successful deaf-blind role models
- ✓ Expand their expectations for their future and clarify their own future goals for their young adult
- ✓ Learn the tools, strategies and contacts that can help navigate the transition process
- ✓ Develop action plans with their young adult toward a shared vision of the future



SECTION IV INSTITUTE CONTENT TOOLS

Young Adult Content:

1. Introduction on Self Determination 
2. Tips to Support Self Determination 
3. Facilitator Guide on Keynote Speaker 
4. Facilitator Guide for Round Robin Sessions 
5. Facilitator Guide for Social Skills 
6. Sample Icebreaker Activities 
7. Facilitator Guide Role Play 
8. Facilitator Guide for Action Planning 
9. Action Plan Forms 

Family Content:

1. Facilitator Guide for Self Advocacy & Self Determination Presentations to Parents 
2. Tips for Families for Success with Technology 
3. Tips for Families about Post-Secondary Options 
4. Tips for Parents and Educators to Support Self-Determination 
5. Suggested Topics/Speakers for Family Sessions 
6. Transition Resources for Handouts 

WORKING DOCUMENT TEMPLATES

Young Adult Content:

9. Action Plan Forms 

Family Content:

1. Facilitator Guide for Self Advocacy & Self Determination Presentations to Parents 

SECTION V

Post-Institute Review & Follow-Up

FEEDBACK IS A POWERFUL GUIDE

Feedback is an essential part of effective learning. Participant evaluations serve as a means to differentiate between the content/speakers that worked and didn't work. What are the perceptions of the participants about the quality of the training? Did the skill-building activities that we provided lead to increased confidence for participants as they transfer to environments that require greater levels of independence? It is important to measure the effectiveness of the training experience so that we can use the information to reach and help our target audience most effectively.

HOW DO WE MEASURE?

If one of our outcomes is expanded social networks, how will we measure this? Surveys and evaluation tools capture information that we can then analyze and use to make our delivery model better and better. It is important to measure our participant outcomes carefully, so that we can provide the necessary revisions to the content of our training. If we are systematic in our follow-up with our participants, we can ensure that our programming is offering the right type of support.

LESSONS LEARNED

Hosting any type of event can be rewarding but it goes without saying that it is hard work. The challenges in collaborating with other professionals, managing budgets and offering a quality product remains at the top of the list of any successful collaboration.

Here are some of the lessons we learned:

- High quality interpreting is the essential component to hosting a conference for deaf-blind individuals. There should always be an interpreter who coordinates the communication services
- High quality interpreting resources should be leveraged through the use of local interpreting programs when possible.

- Support service providers are essential to facilitating communication, orientation and mobility and youth networking. These volunteers must all be trained to serve the unique needs of the participants.
- Families are often encouraged to raise expectations of their children or sibling. It is essential that programs developed for families include successful deaf-blind adults and young adult mentors as presenters. Deaf-Blind presenters who engage families and share their stories inspire and empower them to raise expectations of their children or sibling.

A major driving force for putting the Toolkit material together was to share information and strategies for training so that others could benefit from past efforts and experiences. We hope that the Toolkit offers a model of delivery that can be expanded upon and continually improved to help better serve our young adults who are deaf-blind and their families.

TESTIMONIAL FROM A FAMILY PARTICIPANT



“Well we are home, I know Brandon had a great time, but I have to say i am still blown away with these kids and all the things they taught me this weekend. During the interview, the person asked me what I had hope to pass on to the kids, sorry to say I don’t think I could have given them anything, but I am telling you they gave and changed me!

Thank you all for this chance and I am here for anything you need.”

Stephen Head
1/17/2012



SECTION V

POST-INSTITUTE REVIEW TOOLS

1. SSP Evaluation Form 
2. Mentor Evaluation Form 
3. Family Evaluation Form 
4. Youth Evaluation Form 
5. Follow-up Survey on Action Plan Progress 
6. Best Practices for Following Up with Transition Institute Participants 
7. Conference Planning Team Debriefing Tool 

WORKING DOCUMENT TEMPLATES

1. SSP Evaluation Form 
2. Mentor Evaluation Form 
3. Family Evaluation Form 
4. Youth Evaluation Form 
5. Follow-up Survey on Action Plan Progress 
6. Best Practices for Following Up with Transition Institute Participants 
7. Conference Planning Team Debriefing Tool 

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MEET THE TEAM

The Southeast Regional Transition Team has dedicated their efforts to compile materials based on the past success of the Deaf-Blind Teen Institutes hosted annually since 2005. The rich resources available on this site were created by our expert staff in response to the needs of the population of deaf blind teens. Much of the material was created and assembled after considerable time was spent determining what is the best model of delivery for this type of workshop. Meet the collaborators of the project.



Michael Fagbemi is employed at the Helen Keller National Center. He works on the National Consortium on Deaf-Blindness as a National Network liaison in the NY office. Michael facilitates the strategic planning meetings, coordinates the recruitment and expansion of the southeast region collaborative network and contributes to the development of the content for the young adult strand. Michael also co- presents nationally with young adults to providers, educators and families and has written articles for the disability network to educate others about deaf-blind youth and their unique pathways to independence.



Martha Veto is the Project Coordinator for the Georgia Sensory Assistance Project in Atlanta GA where the idea to engage other projects in a multi collaborative initiative was hatched. Martha has played an integral role in embracing this vision and improving the quality of the product. Martha has had a lead role in the development and coordination of the content in the family strand. Martha has been the point person on providing accessible materials and assistive technology to all participants. Martha has been the person who has contributed significantly to the collection, organization and editing of all multimedia materials generated.



Emily Taylor-Snell is the Project Coordinator for the Florida Outreach Deaf-Blind Project located in Gainesville FL and also serves the Virgin Islands supplemental grant supporting child find and training activities. Emily has played an integral role in conceptualizing and planning a multistate collaborative activity to improve the educational and social outcomes for deaf-blind youth transitioning to adulthood. Emily has been a leader in the development of content for the youth strand , the cultivation of young adults to become mentors and frequently co -presents with young adults on the national as well as international stage.



Toni Hollingsworth is the Project Director of the Mississippi Deaf-Blind Project in Hattiesburg MS. Toni has played an integral role in the leveraging of resources through the forging of collaborative relationships with the business sector. Her efforts helped the network manage the budget and at the same time maintain a high quality product. Toni has contributed as one of the leaders in facilitating the development of action plans to promote family engagement. Toni also assisted in the collecting and organization of multimedia materials.



Divya Goel is a young adult mentor who has been an important member of our planning and coordination team. Divya while in high school attended the southeast regional institutes and emerged as a leader. Divya returned as a young adult in the midst of exploring her career and college options. She seems to have found her niche as a mentor to other deaf-blind youth and has become a mainstay as a national presenter to youth, families, providers and educators. Divya a founding member of Deaf-Blind Youth in Action continues to advocate nationally for changes in adult services, funding appropriations for organizations that educate deaf-blind children and community integration. Divya is currently attending Valencia community college in Orlando Florida.



Susanne Morgan Morrow is the Project Coordinator for the New York Deaf-Blind Project located in Queens NY. Susie coordinated interpreting supports, facilitated training of Support Service Providers (SSP) and is a sign language interpreter for the deaf and deaf-blind. Susanne recently joined the team and has contributed considerably to highlighting the importance of having accessible materials, quality interpreting and an environment that supports the various communication styles and modes.



Jenny Lace is a Texas Deafblind Outreach staff member of the Texas Deafblind Project located in Austin TX. Jenny played an integral role in the planning and coordination of the parent and sibling strands to empower and cultivate effective advocates. Jenny has also contributed content to the young adult strand with the purpose of cultivating organized and motivated youth to improve their transition planning to adulthood.

Appreciation to the mentors in their contributions and support for their leadership in the Transition Institute and the development of this toolkit.

- Jake McMahan – Georgia
- Kevin Roberts – Georgia
- Divya Goel - Florida
- Marisa Lucca - Florida
- Ashley Jackson –Tennessee
- Jason Corning - Wisconsin
- Virginia Jordan Maze - Georgia
- Enedina Velez – Georgia
- Tiffany Kohlen – Florida

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