



2016 SWOMA Conference: Moving On

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Transition to Work and Adult Life: How an O&M
Specialist Facilitates in the Process

Presented by

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Table of Contents

Power Point Presentation	1
Karen's Brainstorm: How Orientation & Mobility Relates to Employment Success.....	5
Comparing Transportation Costs	6
Orientation & Mobility Skills Checklist.....	7
Notes	9

Power Point Presentation

Slide One

Transition to Work and Adult Life: How O&M Specialists Facilitate in the Transition Process

Slide Two

Session Objectives

Participants will...

- Learn how to support young adults in their career exploration efforts while engaged in O&M training.
- Gain insights into how their work on O&M skills are critical to young adults' efforts in seeking and securing employment.

Slide Three

O&M support at different stages of the transition process

Slide Four

Career Exploration (middle & high school students)

- Teach youngsters how to travel in their neighborhoods.
- Help them analyze what career opportunities are available within walking distance (targeted exploring).
- Talk with them about the businesses they discover close to home – what services or products the companies offer and what the student could do for the owners.

Slide Five

- Talk with youngsters about who they know that works in or for the businesses they find – think networking.
- Talk with them about what other areas of their community they'd like to explore and how to get to those other places (buses, trains, car services, etc.).
- Provide them with an objective tool to evaluate potential rides beyond walking distance in hardcopy!

Slide Six

Job Seeking (high school students)

- Travel with young adults to businesses they've identified where they'd like to work.
- Help them analyze the environment in which they want to work and have them problem solve issues (think routes to/from location, mobility challenges such as keyed entrances or unmarked room numbers, for instance).

Slide Seven

- Orient them to the office/location where they will be interviewed and explain the set up (whether there is a receptionist or a check-in kiosk, for example).
- Ask them questions about the pending interview:
 - How will you demonstrate competence with mobility?
 - How will you allay the employer's concerns for your safety?
 - What tools will you use while in the building? (Think: cane, telescope, electronic notetaker, etc.)

Slide Eight

- How will you respond to an employer's interest in how you'll get to and from work or navigate indoors?
- What will you do if an employer doesn't ask you about your mobility skills or transportation challenges?
- How will you negotiate assistance, if you get the job, to learn the work environment and how to exit safely and efficiently in case of an emergency?
- What are your greatest concerns related to O&M on the job?
- What help will you need from me moving forward?

Slide Nine

Job Maintenance (high school & postsecondary)

- Make yourself available to assist with mobility challenges.
- Help young adults consider their needs beyond school, including how to assess communities of interest for when they leave home or campus life. Discuss:
 - Transportation options in a variety of communities.
 - Diversity of housing and work opportunities – implications for traveling without good eyesight.

Slide Ten

- How they will secure O&M assistance when they are no longer eligible for education and rehabilitation services.
- What's reasonable to ask of employers, coworkers, family, and friends with regard to O&M and transportation to/from work.
- How to compensate others for their assistance with meeting travel needs.
- How to ensure that one's O&M skills are appropriate to the level of independence one wishes to demonstrate.
- How to problem solve mobility challenges (long distance travel).

Slide Eleven

Strategies for collaborating with students, families, teachers, and rehabilitation personnel

Slide Twelve

Students

- Be a good listener – listen to what’s actually said, listen for the feeling shared in the message, try to read between the lines and guess what the student is actually saying...
- Respond to students with caring messages – “I believe you can be a competent traveler.” “I trust you to make good decisions!” “I know you want to demonstrate your abilities or competencies.” “I care about you and want to see you be successful.”

Slide Thirteen

- Chat with students about what’s happening in the environment and how that may impact them – what you see or know of in the way of businesses, offices, etc.
- Encourage students to talk about how what they are learning in school is related to life beyond the classroom and encourage them to use the skills they have learned or are learning on their lessons. (Think: managing time and money, planning routes and recording their efforts, problem solving challenges, etc.)

Slide Fourteen

Families

- Again, be a good listener – listen to what’s actually said, listen for the feeling shared in the message, try to read between the lines and guess what the parent or other family member is actually saying...
- Respond with caring messages – “I know you love your child (or sibling) and believe he/she can be a competent traveler.” “I trust you to allow him/her to demonstrate his/her travel skills.” “I believe you will encourage him/her to use his/her mobility tools to be successful.”

Slide Fifteen

- Chat with family members about what’s happening in the environment and how that may impact the with student – what they see or know of in the way of businesses, offices, etc.
- Encourage family members to talk about how what the student is learning in school is related to life beyond the classroom and ask them to have the student use learned or emerging skills at home or when out with the family. (Think: managing time and money, planning routes and recording their efforts, problem solving challenges, etc.)

Slide Sixteen

Professionals

- Always listen to other professionals and acknowledge their input concerning your students.
- Share what you are working on in O&M and how that may impact your students in other classes or situations.
- Inform your colleagues when your students have mastered skills or tools and encourage them to reinforce those skills and ask students to apply what they’ve learned from you in other environments.

Slide Seventeen

- Find out from your colleagues whether your students are applying what they've learned with you in other areas.
- Find out what motivates your students in other classes and activities to brainstorm whether those interests and abilities used could be parlayed into career/life opportunities.
- Advocate with your colleagues and administrators for infusion of O&M goals and objectives on students' IEP transition plans and ensure that those goals and objectives are related to the "next environment."

Slide Eighteen

Resources

- Transition Issues Related to Students with Visual Disabilities includes a chapter devoted to transportation issues.
- ECC Essentials chapters on O&M, Career Education, Self-Determination, and other areas of importance.
- Skills for Success: A Career Education Handbook for Children and Adolescents with Visual Impairments has a number of activities and ideas for infusing O&M and preparation for next environment.

Slide Nineteen

Resources

Websites of interest:

- AFB's CareerConnect: <http://www.afb.org/info/living-with-vision-loss/for-job-seekers/12>
- NAPVI & AFB's FamilyConnect: <http://www.familyconnect.org/parentsitewhome.aspx>
- WBU's Project Aspiro: www.projectaspiro.com
- Perkins, TSBVI, WSSB...

Slide Twenty

Thank you for joining me today!

Dr. Karen Wolffe

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End

Karen's Brainstorm: How Orientation & Mobility Relates to Employment Success

Successful job candidates with visual impairment:

- Are well oriented in space...they know where they are, how to get to where they need to be, and can adjust to the environment in which they find themselves (that is, they use their remaining senses to analyze the environment and adjust accordingly; if they need assistance, they understand how to solicit aid and use the information that they glean to make appropriate adjustments).
- Understand typical architectural configurations (where restrooms are typically placed near elevator shafts and water fountains are often between men's and women's restrooms, where the information or welcome desk, directory, or kiosk is typically within easy access of the front door, etc.).
- Demonstrate the proper use of mobility aids: long cane, dog guide, telescope, GPS device or app, and show evidence of a comfortable gait and posture when using their mobility tools of choice.
- Understand the impact of their behavior on others; for example, if a person trips or hits someone inadvertently with his/her cane, there is a social obligation to say, "Please excuse me." Or, "I beg your pardon."
- Demonstrate the appropriate use of protective techniques, particularly in unfamiliar environments.
- Will work with O&M instructors to learn routes to and from where they live and where they want to work and then travel those routes to pick up and submit applications, if necessary; visit with prospective employers and/or employees; "scope out" businesses or agencies of interest; and so forth.
- Are able to inform strangers of their mobility needs (for example, if they would like to travel in an unknown environment via sighted guide, they are able to describe to the prospective guide how to appropriately lead someone without vision).
- Are able to graciously reject unsolicited or unwanted assistance from strangers.
- Know how to negotiate assistance with mobility challenges during the job search process (rides to interviews, orientation to interviewing environments, navigation within a potential worksite, etc.).
- Know how to allay employers' concerns about mobility demands (how the candidate will handle emergency situations in terms of exiting or seeking shelter, how the candidate will gain orientation to a new work environment, how the employee will "manage" her mobility tools – park a dog or cane so that it is out of the way of others, for example, and how to maneuver safely in the work environment – handle stairs or uneven surfaces, navigate around potted plants or trashcans, and the like).
- Can travel independently to and from the locations where they would like to live and work; if they can't travel independently, they have the ability to negotiate appropriate assistance (from cab drivers, paratransit workers, bus drivers, family members or volunteers, etc.).

Comparing Transportation Costs

List all of the ways you can get to one place for an activity in the left column.

Score each method according to cost, time, and independence.

1. This option is an advantage.
2. This option is neither an advantage nor a disadvantage.
3. This option is a disadvantage.

Add the scores together and write the total in the right column.

Choose the type of transportation that has the lowest score.

Example:

Activity: Joining friends for trip to the mall				
	Cost	Time	Independence	TOTAL
Ride with a friend	1	1	2	4
Take a cab	3	2	1	6
Ask parents for a ride	1	1	3	5
Take the bus	1	3	1	5

Modified from: Erin, J. & Wolffe, K. (1999). *Transition issues related to students with visual disabilities*. Austin, TX: PRO-Ed.

Orientation & Mobility Skills Checklist

This orientation and mobility checklist is a tool designed for you to consider or complete by yourself. Its aim is to help you figure out your strengths and weaknesses in this area.

Once you know your strengths and weaknesses, you can determine what you need to work on to prepare for your career and successfully search for a job. You can use this checklist to help you decide what goals you'd like to establish in the orientation and mobility areas. Remember as you review the Checklist that there are no right or wrong answers - only what is true for you.

You can print off the checklist and complete it off-line or simply read through the items and consider whether you have the skills to perform the tasks or will require training or assistance to be able to accomplish them.

I use the following orientation and mobility skills or techniques routinely:

- Mental maps of my home, neighborhood, and community
- Landmarks (furniture, doorways, driveways etc.) to find my way
- Trail safely (following a wall or other stationary object with your hand) to move through an environment
- Protect my head and body from bumping into open doors or other obstacles
- Locate dropped objects
- Locate or detect doorways, driveways, streets and curbs, using touch
- Locate doorways, driveways, streets, curbs, etc., using auditory (sound) cues
- Locate doorways, driveways, streets, curbs, and such, using visual cues
- Locate doorways, driveways, streets, curbs, and such, using olfactory (smell) cues
- Walk comfortably with a human guide (also known as a sighted guide)
- Walk comfortably using a long cane
- Walk comfortably using optical devices to read signage and see obstacles
- Walk comfortably using a dog guide
- Use echolocation to gather information about my environment
- Travel safely and efficiently in my home
- Travel safely and efficiently in my neighborhood

- Travel safely and efficiently in my community
- Travel safely and efficiently outside of my community (train or plane trips, for example)
- Travel safely and efficiently to and from work
- Use maps (paper, tactual, and virtual, such as, Google Maps, MapQuest, GPS)
- Capture information related to my travel needs (bus, train, or plane schedules; contact information for ride services, carpools, or paratransit services)

Notes

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Figure 1 Region 11 ESC logo.

Texas School for the Blind & Visually Impaired Outreach Programs, Austin, TX



Figure 2 TSBVI logo.



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Figure 3 Two images: IDEAs that Work logo and OSEP disclaimer.