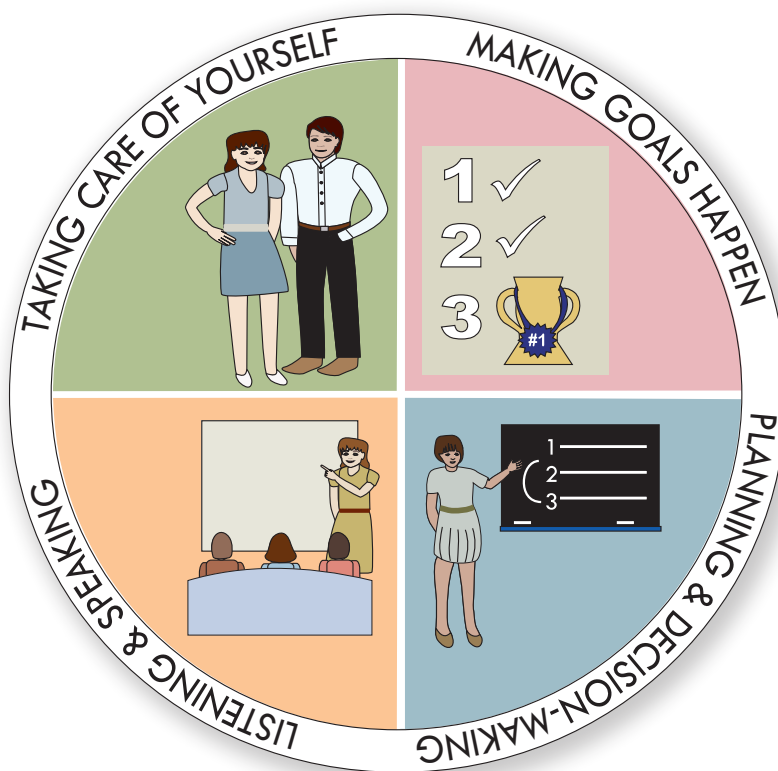




The Board Resource Center
Making Complex Ideas Simple™

Leadership Through Personal Change

Making Transition Effective



Education — Jobs — Empowerment — Community Inclusion



California Department of Developmental Services
Consumer Advisory Committee
Office of Human Rights & Advocacy Services
1600 9th Street, Room 240, Sacramento, CA 95814

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The Board Resource Center
Making Complex Ideas SimpleSM

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Project Significance

All people should enjoy guaranteed equal opportunities for life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. The cornerstone belief underlying *Leadership Through Personal Change* is that independent, informed decision-making, with quality services and supports, will enhance inclusion of persons with disabilities in community life.

The Department of Developmental Services (DDS) recognizes that Californians with developmental disabilities continue to encounter barriers to higher education, gainful employment and active participation in decision-making that affects their lives. Acknowledging that practical skills are central to meaningful lives of self-determination, DDS engaged its Consumer Advisory Committee (CAC) to undertake a path of learning and leading for themselves, their peers and their service system to better reflect its vision – My Life, My Way.

In addition to advising DDS on policies and programs affecting service delivery to youth and adults with developmental disabilities, the CAC's *Leadership Through Personal Change* project advanced a personal leadership focus of CAC members who represented all regions of California. The project supported the CAC to build personal and professional plans that increased personal wellness, employment opportunities, and skillfulness in creating community connections.

Members learned, created, practiced and made notable advances in their own lives to lead by example. Because the CAC was involved in all development, assessment and application of tools in their own lives, they believe *Leadership Through Personal Change, Making Transition Effective*, can enable successful transition for youth and young adults to career and higher education opportunities.

Demonstrations were conducted statewide and at national conferences with young adults with disabilities, educators and community-based service providers. These demonstrations illustrated *Leadership Through Personal Change* advances self-direction and quality of life for anyone interested in giving voice to their dreams.



Carol Risley, Chief
Office of Human Rights and
Advocacy Services
California Department of
Developmental Services



Board Resource Center



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BRC believes all people are entitled to understandable information on issues important to them, their lives and communities: health, legal rights, government activities, self-protection and consumer services.

BRC's activities are guided by principles of independent decision-making and inclusion. What underscores this work is direct involvement of persons who rely on the human service system in the development and dissemination of all tools that encourage the exercise of fundamental rights and freedoms.

Our practices are based on a very simple set of beliefs. We believe every person has the ability to determine their own quality of life, become participating community members and have the ability to change and grow.

- Persons with disabilities have capabilities and goals;
- Persons with disabilities and their families are the primary decision makers about programs and services that affect their lives;
- Persons with disabilities need access to information they understand to be more informed decision-makers and fully included in community life.

BRC acknowledges, supports and encourages persons with disabilities to reach their goals and meet their own needs. By producing curricula, guides and companion digital media in accessible formats, BRC provides a library of easy-to-understand materials and media developed under the guidance of persons with disabilities, their families and organizations who provide services and supports. These publications, presentations and videos are available on our website: http://brcenter.org/lib_library.html.

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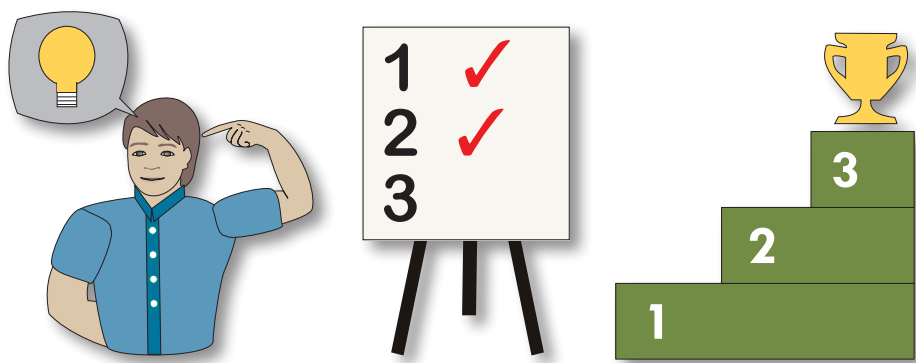
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Project Background

In 2001 the California Department of Developmental Services' Consumer Advisory Committee (CAC) began to consider what was important to their futures as community members. These discussions led to inaugurating the practice of Committee members creating easy-to-use advocacy tools about basic rights and strategies for living more independently. They developed a series of accessible publications about the California Lanterman Act. They also surveyed their peers throughout the state to ascertain what they found most meaningful to them. This led to numerous easy-to-use and field-tested publications to help them become advocates, take charge and make informed decisions at school and agency team meetings.

With a commitment to enable more persons with disabilities to acquire practical skills, the CAC decided to lead by example and create advocacy tools that would inspire peers to live self-determined lives. *Leadership Through Personal Change* provided the framework, methodology and tools to do so. It extended the CAC



Consumer Advisory Committee members.

vision and personal investment of members to advance personal capacities and the CAC's reach to the California service system and beyond.

The CAC helped to establish a decision-making and transformation process called: **Think–Plan–Do**. Members used these steps to advance their own lives, then shared the strategy and tools statewide to encourage people to “live the lives they want.” After several years, CAC members also became fluent about disability issues, more confident in policy discussions.

Given the years of success with these tools in the areas of leadership, jobs, personal empowerment, and community inclusion, these materials are seen as a key tool for high school students in their transition planning and preparation. Beginning with the 9th grade IEP, steps to achieving successful transitions to “*My Life, My Way*” are laid out in the *Leadership Through Personal Change* program.

Key Leadership Through Personal Change Elements:

- Weekly advisory meetings
- Leadership skills training
- Facilitation and support at meetings and in the community
- Adapted materials, sequential steps, and scaffolded instructional strategies
- Full participation in IEP meetings
- Community building and inclusion in school settings



Making Transitions Effective Project Overview

Educational Policies and Legislation

Prompted by programs initiated at the federal level, the California Department of Education in 1995 undertook the development of a series of curricular standards, K–12, in all subject areas. These standards were designed as guides and benchmarks that respective convening committees identified as appropriate and necessary for students to acquire and master to ensure success in post-secondary collegiate and career situations.

Making Transition Effective exemplified in the 9–12th grade Science Standards of Investigation and Experimentation (edited) by promoting critical thinking skills:

“Scientific progress is made by asking meaningful questions and conducting careful investigations. As a basis for understanding this concept and addressing the content students should develop their own questions and perform investigations. Students will:

- *Select and use appropriate tools and technology... to perform tests, collect data, analyze relationships,*
- *Formulate explanations by using logic and evidence,*
- *Analyze situations and solve problems that require combining and applying concepts...*

(Science Content Standards for California Public Schools, CDE, reprinted, 2003, p.83)

The systematic progression of skills developed through the *Transition* project underscores the 2010 publication, *Common Core State Standards (CCSSO)*. “...content standards and curricula are coherent if they are: articulated over time as a sequence of topics and performance that are logical and reflect, when appropriate, the sequential and hierarchical nature of the disciplinary content from which the subject matter derives. That is, what and how students are taught should reflect not only the topics that fall within a certain academic discipline, but also the key ideas that determine how knowledge is organized and generated with that discipline.”


(Common Core State Standards for Mathematics, p.3)

These are only two examples of curriculum standards, state and national, embedded in *Making Transition Effective*. Beyond delineation of standards, current educational policy specifically addresses the accountabilities of *No Child Left Behind* policies. These are reflected in The Council of Chief State School Officers *Accommodations Manual: How to Select, Administer, and Evaluate Use of Accommodations for Instruction and Assessment of Students with Disabilities*.

The new *Common Core State Standards* noted above include the section *Application to Students with Disabilities*, stating “Students with disabilities — students eligible under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) (Office of Special Education Programs, 2006) — must be challenged to excel within the general curriculum **and be prepared for success in their post-school lives, including college and/or careers.**” (ed. bold)

In addition, California passed legislation in 2009 that charges state and local agencies with enhancing integrated and gainful employment opportunities for persons with developmental disabilities by:

- Identifying strategies and best practices, including but not limited to ways to improve transition planning process for students 14 years and older, and increase participation by public and private employers and job developers.
- Identifying existing sources of employment data and recommending goals for, and approaches to measuring progress.
- Recommending legislative, regulatory, and policy changes to increase number of people in integrated employment, self-employment, and who earn at or above minimum wage, including ways to improve transition planning and services for students 14 years and older and development of an Employment First policy.



The World Institute on Disability in Oakland, California, when developing youth-related content and tools for employment, through focus groups revealed¹:

- High interest in work and tools to assist with a range of considerations, from supporting aspirations and rights, to transportation, finding an appropriate job, and managing budgets.
- Practical advice and information was desired to support aspirations, rights, and finding a job.
- Very limited knowledge of benefits, deferring to parents to handle.
- Parents discouraged employment, fearing impact on benefits or work experience as too stressful.
- Employers and schools often failed to make reasonable accommodations.

The Pacer Center, the Minnesota Parent Training and Information Center, funded by the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education Programs² also identified needs and promising strategies to enrich the futures of youth and young adults with disabilities. These included meeting information needs of youth and families, work-based learning and active vocational rehabilitation in schools, youth empowerment, benefits counseling, system linkages and transition training. There is new recognition of the need to place development of transition skills in secondary schools, if not earlier.

¹ Centralis, *DB101 School and Work Focus Groups Report* for the World Institute on Disability. (2010).

² Pacer Center, National Council on Rehabilitation Education Conference. (2009).

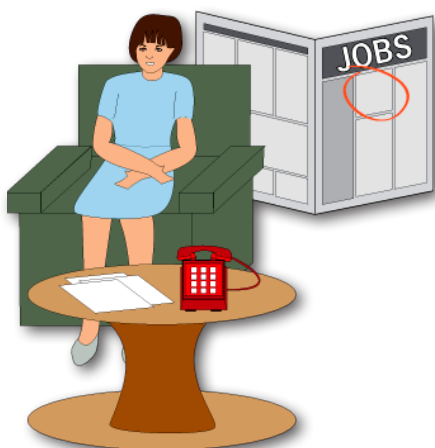
Transition Curriculum

A Call to Action

Employment: The Target Option

A growing movement to establish Employment First policies is underway across the country to advance gainful integrated employment as a desired outcome or the *first option* for persons with intellectual and other disabilities who have left high school. The California State Council on Developmental Disabilities in June 2011 will be submitting Employment First policy recommendations to the California State Legislature.

Leadership Through Personal Change Strategies and Tools



Given the call to tackle employment needs and desires of persons with disabilities and their families, the success of the DDS Consumer Advisory Committee's project demonstrates a ready fit for innovative policy and practice. Because this work offers clear strategies and accessible multi-media tools, its results-oriented methods can be easily applied by schools to advance *employment first* options and community inclusion in student transition processes.

After field testing the effectiveness of their teaching and learning curricula with approximately 2,400 individuals, including youth and families across California, CAC members settled on two priorities for sharing leadership project outcomes in the future:

- *Leadership Through Personal Change* offers essential learning and decision-making tools that assist individuals to plan for meaningful education, training and employment.
- *Leadership Through Personal Change* should be included as elements of transition and incorporated in school curricula.

Now more than ever, current data from the U.S. Department of Labor tells the story of high rates of unemployment and underemployment of persons with disabilities. Given the eager response from young adults and school programs, CAC members continue their peer-to-peer outreach with demonstrations at transition classes in local schools, community groups, case management organizations and family support groups.

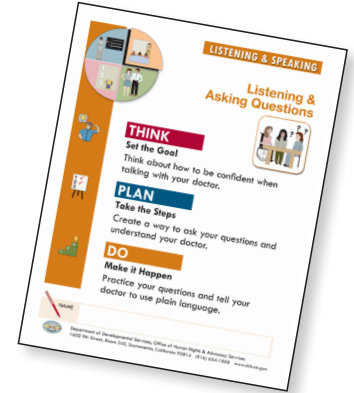
Leadership Through Personal Change Tools

LISTENING AND SPEAKING

Listening & Asking Questions



Being a good listener and getting answers to your questions in a way that makes sense is important. Lisa took steps to feel confident when talking with her doctor. ***“I listen and communicate better with my doctor.”***



Accepting Advice



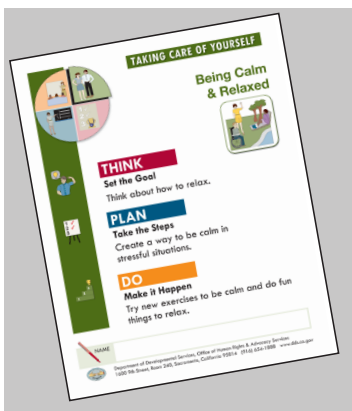
Choosing a trusted person to ask advice can give a person greater confidence. Tommy met with his trusted friend to ask advice on where and how to get a volunteer job. ***“I took the advice – and now I am a volunteer!”***

Public Speaking



Taking time to prepare for a public speaking event helps you deliver a processional speech. ***“I took time to organize my speech and it was great.”***

The *Leadership Through Personal Change* units were created by the members and reflect their adult perspectives and needs. Similarly, these personal growth tools would be modified or created with adolescents responding to their own needs and situations. These may include additional tools and topics to facilitate peer social engagement, navigating school cultures, initiating self-direction with teachers and professionals, career development, and full participation in IEP meetings including determining appropriate accommodations needed.



TAKING CARE OF MYSELF

Being Healthy



Taking charge of your health, eating good food and exercising helps you be active and involved in your plans for the future. Nyron carried out plans to be healthier so he could do more and enjoy his community. *"I keep track of what I eat and I see a difference – I lost weight and it is easier to stand up now."*

Being Calm & Relaxed



Learning new techniques to be calm in stressful situations helps you feel in control. Krisi used a new way to help her feel relaxed and calm during tense times. *"It helped me at the dentist when I used to get very nervous – now I use the thumb technique and I am calm."*

Professional Image



Being prepared and looking good is important. You are seen as responsible person and in charge. Sam created a professional image and gained confidence as a leader. *"When I look good, I know I will do good, I know I am good."*

Managing My Money



Budgeting money is hard to do especially if you do not have a goal. Betty created her own money savings plan to buy something she wanted. *"It can make big changes in how much money you save when you use Think-Plan-Do."*

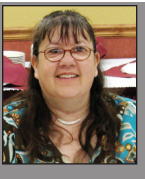
MAKING GOALS HAPPEN

Leading My Own Team Meeting



Sometimes people are left out at their own meetings. Practicing to lead your team meeting and using an agenda and notes helps you be in control. *"I was prepared and had a good team meeting."*

Finding a Job



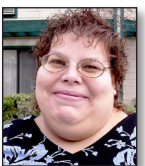
Looking for a job can be a challenge. Following **Think–Plan–Do** makes it easier. Cindy created her plan to get the job she wanted. She created her resume and met with people in her community. Cindy interviewed at local businesses and learned to take the bus to be independent. *"I thought about what was important to me and my family – got support and didn't give up – now I have a good job."*

Building A Career

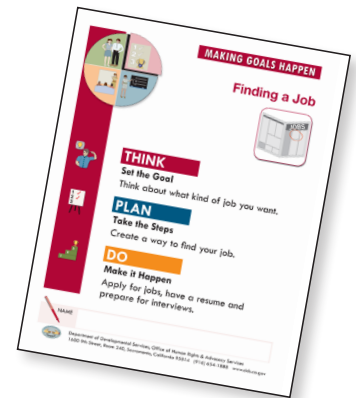


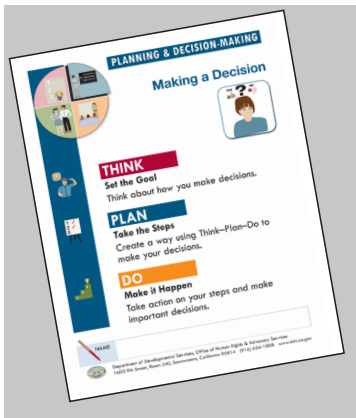
There are many steps involved in creating a career. It takes research, time and willingness to learn new things. Michelle used **Think–Plan–Do** to put her career plan together. She knows it will take time and her support team helps her learn about resources and networking. *"I looked into schools and met people doing what I want to do – I am motivated now."*

Having My Own Business



Many people want to start their own business but don't know how. With a plan and support, it is achievable. Danielle took steps to start a jewelry business. She found a business mentor who helped her obtain a license, and learn about ways to let people know about her business. By networking she found gift stores and started selling her jewelry. *"I am now selling my jewelry at conferences and fairs; I am enjoying myself and making money too."*





PLANNING AND DECISION MAKING

Making a Decision



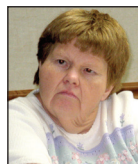
Learn about **Think–Plan–Do** from Tommy, Cindy, Lisa and Cindy. *“I learned that I am in control of my decisions.”*

Mission Statement



A mission statement makes clear what is meaningful to a person. It has key words that guide a person toward a goal. Donald created his mission statement to help him achieve his goal. *“A mission statement reminds us of who we are and where we are going.”*

Organizing & Planning



Being organized for your meetings and following up with assignments is an important characteristic of a professional. Debbie used the **Think–Plan–Do** strategy to help her be organized and prepared for her meetings. *“I begin by thinking about what leaders do to be organized and professional.”*

Finding a Mentor



A mentor is someone who gives advice on personal or professional goals. They have expertise in the area a person wants to learn about. Kim took steps to find a mentor who could help her reach her goal to be a Life Coach. *“I talk often with my mentor; she is helping me find a coaching school.”*

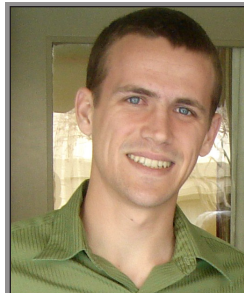
Teaching and Coaching

Teaching and Coaching Support

Students and their teachers work together each week to focus on enhancing natural community supports building on the acquisition of appropriate skills. With ongoing training and technical assistance, teachers guide students on innovative ways to be active in their communities, develop relationships and successfully meet their goals.

The CAC developed the following to guide teachers and coaches new to this role.

- Be clear and consistent in how you talk with us.
- Use **Think–Plan–Do** strategies yourself.
- Use **Think–Plan–Do** to help us prepare for an IEP and other team meetings.
- Wait for us to ask for help.
- Ask us questions in a slow manner, using plain language.
- Work with us on our own terms (we will let you know what we need).
- Be an example, model what you plan to teach and coach.
- Divide goals into small parts so we can be successful.
- Prepare before meeting with us so our time is focused.



Framework and Methods



Wanting to make a difference, the CAC first developed a vision for their advocacy efforts and learned about committee governance and service system organization.

To guide their work, the CAC created a statement: “My Life, My Way: People with developmental disabilities in California will live their lives the way they want,” along with goals to direct their personal development.

Method

The CAC believes demonstrating change in personal lives can influence



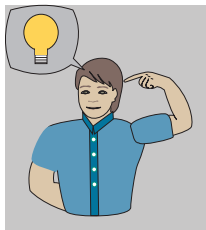
change in others. Members developed personal mission statements that identified what was important to them and directed their own process. Using these as foundations, it was easy

to next identify a significant goal and develop a personal plan of action to achievement.

As CAC members worked on their plans, they received one-on-one coaching that helped with sustaining focus and carrying out individualized strategies. They used facilitation support to connect with experts in a field of their interest.

A quarterly training schedule focused on themes identified by members. Content experts were employed to provide state-of-the-art information in adapted easy-to-access formats. Facilitators provided interactive assistance and members engaged in hands-on experiences that were reinforced with community assignments. Over the course of the project, the CAC developed its own training agenda, collaborate with guest experts and coaches, and help conduct portions of their trainings. All statewide field-testing of the new tools and **Think–Plan–Do** was done by CAC members and their facilitators, as needed. It was learned that by using **Think–Plan–Do** much was accomplished: finding a job, organizing for meetings, saving money, starting a business, and moving into independent living arrangements.

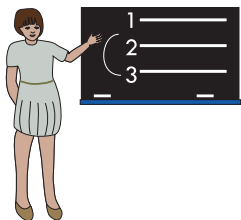
Think–Plan–Do



The foundational strategy for change and personal accomplishment is **Think–Plan–Do**. It is a tested process to make decisions and take thoughtful steps to achieve success. As an easy-to-use learning process in an adapted format, individuals and their support teams identify natural supports, minimize use of “staff,” and engage more deeply in community life.

Think–Plan–Do is the platform on which all the CAC media and companion guides are built. They are divided into four themes and reflect significant topics the CAC wanted to learn about to become empowered and successful in their personal and vocational lives. Each theme has supporting stories to illustrate a particular focus area.

DVD Story Development



Draft video stories were previewed at CAC meetings to review ease of use, clarity and focus. Each digital story used photographs, graphics, narration, video and music to create an educational tool that employs **Think–Plan–Do**. All storylines mirror personal developments by

members in their journeys to accomplish their goals. Key to the success of the DVD formula was simplifying a storyline to focus on one goal, a limited number of people involved, and illustrating steps, plans and the final outcome. Companion guides were also developed to provide written worksheets that outline steps used to accomplish a goal in the same focus area on which the DVD story concentrates.

Outcomes

The CAC learned, created, practiced and made notable personal and professional changes in their own lives using **Think–Plan–Do** and the project leadership tools. At the end of the three years, they increased their well-being, accomplishment and greater participation in their local communities.

Building first on personal capacities and committee governance, CAC members promoted the significance of adaptations to complex information for individuals with limited literacy skills to be engaged decision makers, at their own team meetings and in policy making arenas. Their work reflected the fundamental right of all people to understandable information on issues important to their lives and communities. It transformed the CAC from a group of self-advocates to able peer and system-wide advocates who were sought for inclusion in governance boards, statewide committees and as presenters at conferences.

Project Outcomes:

- Personalized strategies used in daily life, health, self-advocacy and career development.
- Increased decision making, personal goal setting and accomplishment.
- Personalized leadership, organization, professional presentation.
- Establishment of **Think–Plan–Do** as a successful learning/teaching process used by individuals, families and service providers.
- Multi-level project information delivery system – newsletters, dedicated webpage on the DDS website, YouTube play of CAC videos, conference presentations and training sessions.

Facilitation and BRC Role

To ensure continuity and consistency, project facilitators and coaches created a 16th video to provide guidance on how to deliver support. Over three years, they learned and practiced new skills to increase each CAC member's ability to successfully navigate their community, develop professionally and become leaders for their peers.

Project facilitators were an important link between learning about leadership and accessing community resources. They assisted members in identifying natural community supports and services such as neighbors, mentors, common interest groups and faith-based organizations. All facilitators demonstrated a commitment to insuring members have access to learn about and participate in typical community settings.

An important element of successful teaching and coaching was communication skills that facilitated the learning and application of **Think–Plan–Do**. They facilitated steps for understanding, sought clarification and summarized what was agreed. Life examples were paramount and in plain language, with ongoing practice.

Board Resource Center's Role

Establishing standards of adaptation, accommodation and meeting organization

BRC coordinated the three year *Leadership Through Personal Change* project and published more than 20 advocacy videos and guidebooks that helped activate “consumer” voices and enable the service delivery system to listen to individuals it serves. The BRC team designed quarterly leadership trainings, facilitated committee governance meetings, and guided facilitation support and coaching for all CAC members. *Leadership Through Personal Change* demonstrated that CAC members and countless advocates could identify goals, advance leadership and pursue employment and career opportunities.

In partnership with the CAC, BRC created curricula, conducted trainings, developed adapted multi-media learning tools and promulgated best practices in individualized support services. Specializing in media, instruction and facilitation focused on universal access and utility, BRC assisted the CAC with establishing standards of accommodation, best practice meeting organization and support that transformed both its membership and the expectations for leadership on the part of persons with developmental disabilities.

Availability

The *Leadership Through Personal Change* curricula and tools offer clear strategies that enable outcomes for persons with developmental disabilities to pursue dreams and contribute to their communities. Because of its easy utility, the project's accessible materials can be employed by a range of schools and service agencies to address the needs of diverse populations.

Access to Tools

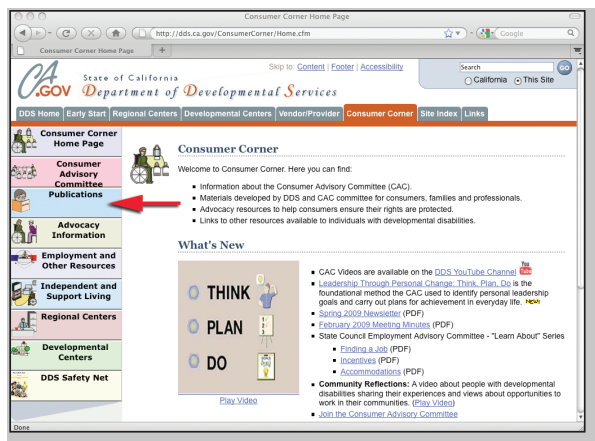
Leadership Through Personal Change and other curricula are available through DDS. Phone 916-654-1888 for more information.

The *Leadership* videos and companion materials are available for viewing and download on the internet. The guides can be viewed and downloaded using a PDF reader. An additional feature includes being able to type answers in the "white boxes," save to a computer and print completed forms.

Available Sites to Access Leadership Tools and "How to Use" Booklet

DDS Consumer Corner Web Page:

<http://dds.ca.gov/ConsumerCorner/ThinkPlanDo.cfm>



Board Resource Center Library:

<http://www.brcenter.org/library.html>



Community Outreach

Provider Community

The California service provider community offered insight into the application of **Think–Plan–Do** and Leadership Through Personal Change tools. Provider field test groups, led by CAC members and BRC project leaders, included day activity programs, residential community staff, case managers and large community facility managers. The purpose was to explore use and practicality of tools and use of **Think–Plan–Do**. Participants learned how to use **Think–Plan–Do** by applying the strategy to topics selected for themselves. After completing the exercise, they identified an interested person they served and guided them through the process using the tools. Outcomes confirmed the importance of applying the tools first before engaging with a person served. *Key learning:* Know the materials well enough to explain to non readers and be knowledgeable about good facilitation practices.

Conference Workshops: Community, State and National

BRC created a customized presentation template that CAC members used at community and conference workshop presentations. Members conducted more than the 24 workshop presentations annually. All members presented to local advocacy groups and/or advisory committees. Among the audiences addressed and trained were: individuals (peer-to-peer), psychologist groups, state developmental center staff, agency governance boards, day programs, day and work programs, independent living agencies and regional People First gatherings.

Continuing today, CAC members and facilitators take the leadership tools to transition classes in local school districts and community groups throughout the state to demonstrate how **Think–Plan–Do** empowers responsible decision making at all ages. BRC and the CAC members have made presentations at more than 200 venues at state, national and international conferences.

Final Statements

CAC Members Speak Out

Think–Plan–Do and Leadership

- ◆ I am starting to speak up for myself now.
- ◆ I have less stress; I am less worried about what others think.
- ◆ I am teaching others how to stand-up for their rights.
- ◆ I show other people what I have accomplished.
- ◆ It is a good tool to help teach people how to make decisions.
- ◆ I will use **Think–Plan–Do** in different parts of my life.
- ◆ The guides give me easy steps to follow.
- ◆ Now my peers come to me for advice.

How is Your Life Different Today?

- ◆ My parents look at me as an adult; people don't walk on me
- ◆ I am in control of my decisions.
- ◆ I understand about trust and feelings of being confident.
- ◆ I have real financial security today!

Making Goals

- ◆ People did not know about my goals but now they do!
- ◆ I have tools now for making goals; I use **Think–Plan–Do** to set my goals.
- ◆ I realize my goals are attainable.
- ◆ I set goals with the help of others.
- ◆ My thoughts didn't have any organization before; today I use **Think–Plan–Do**.

