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I Get By with a Little Help from My Friends

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I Get by with a Little Help from my Friends: Independent Living Success with Individuals with Intellectual Disabilities
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INTRODUCTION
The Friendship House is a unique residence hall for both high functioning adults with cognitive impairments and non-disabled Hope College and Western Seminary students. The residence hall has six apartments housing 24 people. Six of these residents are adults with cognitive impairments. This housing provides independent living for adults with cognitive impairments who live side by side with liked aged students from Western Seminary or Hope College.

METHODS AND PROCEDURES
1. Human Subjects Review was obtained.
2. An invitation and consent form given to the stakeholders.
3. Subjects who agreed to the Transition Planning Inventory (TPI) qualitative questions. These questions align with the IDEA 2004 transition requirements and the TPI assessment.
4. Subjects were interviewed with at least two researchers and were allowed other requests.
5. Notes from audio recordings were transcribed.
6. Interviews were conducted (r=90).

RESULTS AND THEMES

SUBJECTS
6 roommates with disabilities
6 interviewees (100% participation)

RESULTS AND THEMES (continued)

Home Living and Recreation and Leisure - This includes IDEA definition of independent living

Theme: Have a job
Quote: I am happy where I am with my job.
Theme: No desire to find a different job.
Quote: I like my job and don’t have anything else.
Theme: Don’t know how or to get more job training.

Employment - This includes IDEA definition of Vocational education and Continuing adult education.

Theme: Love their jobs
Quote: I LOVE working at the restaurant. I like being around people, staff and the customers.
Theme: Need assistance setting up appointments—parents usually set up all their appointments.
Theme: Need assistance dealing with money—family members help with financial matters.

Theme: Prompted exercise.
Quote: I try to get exercise every day by going on the treadmill, bike, weight, track or swimming. My goal is to lose some weight.
Theme: Get along well with their family and roommates.
Quote: I get along with my family well! I talked to my parents a lot. Sometimes, I go to their house, at other times, I talk on the phone or face-time them.
Theme: Struggle with articulating what they would do if they met someone.
Quote: They are either in a relationship or really want to be in one.

Community Participation

Theme: Know what sex is and named who told them.
Quote: Yes, I know about sex. Never use it but I have talked to my parents about sex.
Theme: Responsible for taking their own medicine and daily hygiene routine.
Quote: I have learned to take my medication by myself. I also do my chores daily like cleaning out the animal cage. I do it all—shower, get ready, eat breakfast before I go out.

Community Participation

Theme: Aware of laws but not aware of laws that they are enforced to by the government.
Quote: Yes, I am registered and voted in an election. I voted for Obama and Bill Clinton and I will vote in this in the big presidential elections coming up.
Theme: Use the Max bus for transportation.
Quote: One of my roommates to drives to the store, but I can walk pretty much everywhere else (jobs, leisure activities like basketball games, exercise, workout areas).
Theme: Aware of specific laws that effect him/her.

Post-Secondary Education

Theme: Not interested in continuing to look to future training and post secondary education.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

IDEA Transition Requirements Strengths Possible Improvements

Employment Satisfaction with job Access to employment training
Relationships at the workplace are very positive Awareness of current income

Home Living and Recreation and Leisure Exercise regularly Get along with family and roommates
Strong relationship with others

Community Participation

Uses public transportation Some reliance of parents or guardians for financial information and health care
Participates in organized group activities with others

Post-Secondary Education

Not needed Stronger connection with community resources

LIVING SEVERAL YEARS AT THE FRIENDSHIP HOUSE
The Friendship House has helped the Friends improve their transition related skills of employment, home living, recreation/leisure as well as communicative participation.

Areas of continual improvement include self-determination skills, future employment and social skills.

Overall, the Friends have grown tremendously and enjoy living in this special house. They have improved their transition related skill during their time living here.

LIMITATIONS: Finding are limited in generalizability because of subject sample number and access to this type of specialized independent living.

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

TPI Qualitative Questions

Theme: Love their jobs
Quote: I am happy where I am with my job.
Theme: No desire to find a different job.
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