Staying on Course

“We could never learn to be brave and patient if there were only joy in the world.”
– Helen Keller, disability advocate

Introduction

Change can be stressful, and may bring with it feelings of frustration and discouragement. Learning how to manage stress in healthy ways can be a key skill in keeping on the path to goal achievement.

In the Staying on Course session, participants explore the difficult feelings they may experience as they create change in their lives, and how they can keep their momentum by developing stress management skills, building their network of support, and challenging discouragement while embracing encouragement.

Content Summary

Coping with Stress: Identifying and practicing positive coping skills to manage stress, and recognizing when to try a different problem-solving approach

Peer Support: Finding peers, and receiving encouragement to continue working on goals

Self-Talk: Exploring your inner voice and practicing ways to challenge negative self-talk

Building Momentum: Inviting encouragement by recognizing successes and creating a supportive environment

Discouragement and Depression: Exploring the connections between frustration, discouragement, feelings of depression, and health, and knowing when to seek additional support
Learning Objectives

The Staying on Course session guides participants to develop positive coping skills for managing the stress and frustration that may come with change. They can learn how to identify and connect with peers who may offer support and encouragement, and explore ways to boost encouragement and confidence for themselves and others.

In addition, participants can reflect on feelings of discouragement and depression, and review resources for seeking additional help.

Disability Community Partnership Shaped Content

In developing this session, community partners recommended a more proactive approach to addressing frustration and discouragement rather than reactive, which is reflected in the title, Staying on Course. They demonstrated the need to emphasize the importance of peer support for building confidence and keeping motivation. CIL staff also identified many unique ways in which people with disabilities might become discouraged while working toward their goals, because of the unique barriers and stressors they may face. Supporting participants in exploring stress management strategies that work for them as individuals is key to their success in developing effective coping skills.

Healthy Community Living is a program to support opportunities for people with disabilities to live well and participate fully in their communities.

It includes two peer-led independent living skills workshops, Community Living Skills and Living Well in the Community, which are each divided into ten specific content sessions.

RTC:Rural used an iterative participatory curriculum development (IPCD) process to involve key stakeholder engagement in the development, implementation, and evaluation of each workshop.

Each workshop has been developed through partnerships with people with disabilities with the Association of Programs for Rural Independent Living (APRIL) and Centers for Independent Living (CILs).

The HCL Snapshots series explores how partner participation through the IPCD process was fundamental in shaping the HCL program to improve people’s wellbeing by providing support, health promotion, education, and opportunities for people with disabilities to succeed in reaching personal goals.

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