

Employment Pathways Programs

Self-Discovery Program Implementation Guide



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Introduction: What is Holland Bloorview's Employment Pathways model?

This guide provides a step-by-step process of delivering Holland Bloorview's Employment Pathways self-discovery programs. This section provides a brief background on our organization and the self-discovery programs. A full description of our program and related materials are available in our Employment Pathways Programs Introduction Guide.

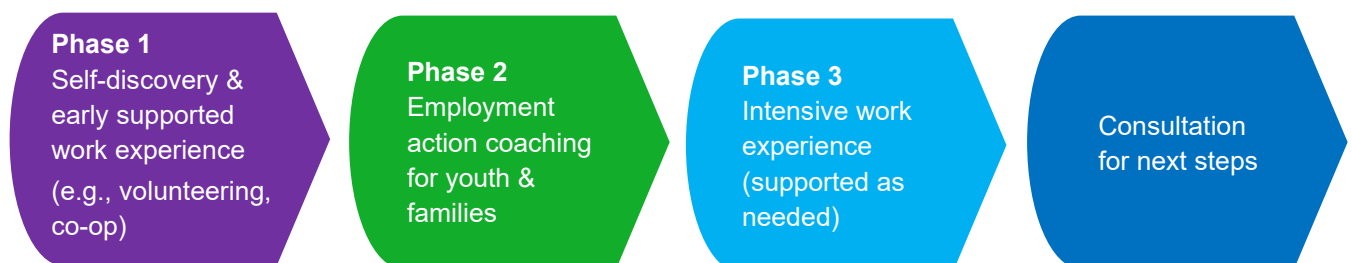
Want to know more about...

More information about the following topics is available in our other resources:

- Our other programs
- Funding Employment Pathways programs
- Organizing and getting leadership on board with this program
- Hiring and training staff

Our Holland Bloorview Employment Pathways Model [Bowman et al., 2023] harnesses evidence-based and evidence-informed practices to guide our implementation of start-early employment programs for youth with disabilities. It includes elements such as person directed planning, starting early (during high school), progressive and ongoing support, a supported employment model, family and community involvement, peer learning and mentorship, and evaluation and research [Bowman et al 2023; Jetha et al., 2020; Shogren & Wittenburg, 2020; King, Baldwin & Currie, 2005; Kohler et al, 2016; NCWD, 2019, NTACTION: Predictors of post school success, n.d.; ODEP, n.d.]. The model provides a structure on which local groups can support their progressive employment participation programming. A simplified version of the model is pictured below:

Holland Bloorview's Employment Pathways model



Phase 1 programs: Self-discovery

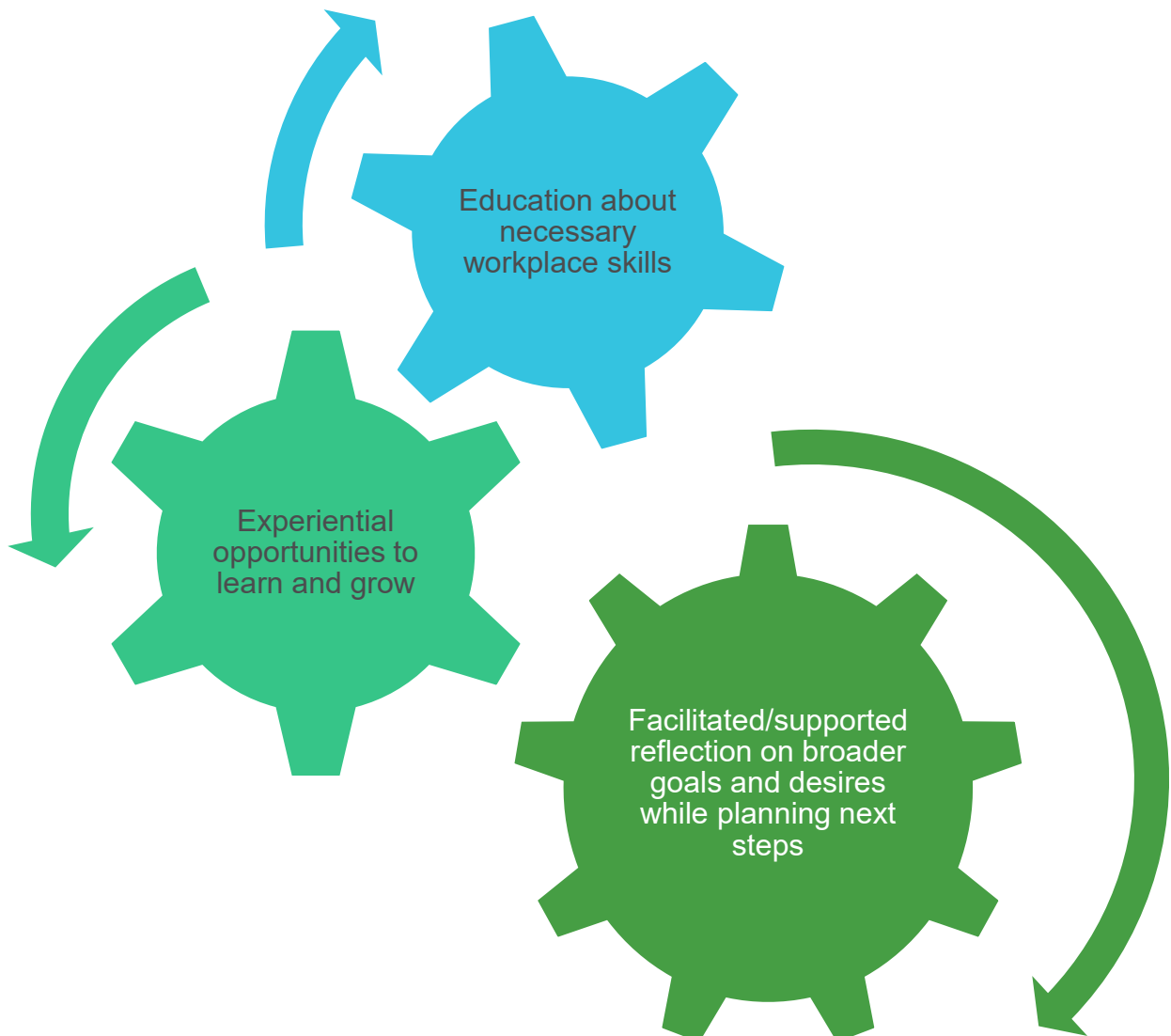
Many clients enter our programs knowing that they want to work towards employment, but are not sure about the types of jobs, tasks, or occupations that would be most meaningful, fulfilling, or suited to them. For these clients, we start by facilitating their self-discovery of goals, strengths, and desires related to employment participation. Self-discovery is an ongoing process that occurs throughout one's working life and is important for education and career planning.

Our self-discovery programs enable youth to learn about the realities of employment while also exploring their own skills and strengths. Such programs include:

- Education about necessary workplace life skills.
- Experiential work opportunities to learn and grow.
- Facilitated/supported reflection on broader goals and desires.

Through facilitated self-discovery opportunities, youth can work with families and service providers to tailor their future employment plans to meet their new and evolving goals.

Figure 1. The main components of Phase 1: Self-discovery programming



Our self-discovery programs: Overview

Given the personalized nature of self-discovery, we offer programs that are agile and allow our team to meet the goals of our program and the needs of our clients. In these programs, clients explore concepts of employment participation through a variety of volunteer experiences. Aligning with the components of a Phase 1 self-discovery program as shown in Figure 1, clients receive education, supported experiential work opportunities to volunteer within differing roles within our organization, supported reflection on their learning and growth, peer mentorship and peer connection.

Experiential work opportunities can be facilitated as a group, adding shared learning and collaboration to the growing experiences of the participants. They can also be offered in ways that meet the more individual needs of each client, increasing the personalization of the program. The decision of how to deliver the program will consider things like the number and type of clients involved, the number of staff available to mentor or coach, the organization's capacity, availability of volunteering tasks etc. In addition to gaining real-world work experience, clients learn workplace life skills (e.g., self-advocacy, communicating with co-workers) through workshops and engage with peers and mentors.

Who is this program for?

Our self-discovery programs are typically offered to clients who:

- Have limited or no work-related experience. The program is geared towards youth who require supported, accessible work opportunities.
- Need an accessible and/or supported experience (physically accessible, require job coaching support, etc.).
- Want to build workplace life skills for future volunteer or paid work opportunities.

At Holland Bloorview, we typically offer a weekly self-discovery program in the fall, winter and spring high school terms, and intensive 3-week programs during summer break. Both program formats are well-received by clients and staff and can meet the different preferences and needs of our clients. On average, clients obtain 40 volunteer hours in total through their program participation (meeting the Ontario high school community service requirement).



Structured and adaptable

Our self-discovery program model was designed to be both structured and adaptable to the needs of the clients and the team. To uphold best practices, programs should adhere to the structural elements of our rough daily schedule, as well as the three program elements listed previously (education, experiential work opportunities, and facilitated reflection).

Other program elements can be adaptable to agilely meet the team's, clients', and organization's needs. They may include:

Program frequency: We have run the program once per week over a period of a few months, and more intensively over 3 weeks in a structure that provides daily engagement.

Program staffing: You may have capacity for higher staffing levels, which may provide more flexibility in the experiential opportunities you deliver or the level of needs of clients you include.

Types of experiential work opportunities: As outlined above, the type of opportunities and whether they are undertaken as a group or more individually can be adapted within our program model.

Program objectives

In our self-discovery programs, clients will:

- Gain work experience.
- Learn about self through:
 - Understanding personal factors that motivate them to work.
 - Identifying interests and strengths.
 - Describing “what helps me do my best at work”.
- Practice and build workplace life skills.
- Build confidence in the workplace.
- Attain volunteer experience hours towards Ontario high school diploma community service requirement (if applicable).
- Engage in reflection on the learning and discuss next steps to continue to build experiences.

Program evaluation and outcome measurement

The purpose of the self-discovery programs is to help clients prepare for future employment by providing opportunities for learning about their strengths, interests, and building workplace life skills. Program evaluation helps us understand the impact of the program, whether it is effective, and how the program can be improved.

Program evaluation may include formal outcome measurement. Outcome measures allow us to evaluate progress in skills and determine if clients met goals they set at the beginning of the program. We typically create a set of 2-3 consistent, achievable goals for all clients in the program group given the focus, content, and format of the program. Individuals indicate which goals are most relevant to

them. They then rate their goals using two outcome measures, the [Canadian Occupational Performance Measure \(COPM\)](#) and [Goal Attainment Scaling \(GAS\)](#).

Goals in our self-discovery programs usually include:

1. I will build work life skills by getting volunteer work experience.
2. I learn about myself (what job I like/don't like, what I'm good at and what I need to practice more).
3. I learn about what helps me be a good worker (strategies for learning jobs, organizing, working independently as I can).

As a team, we also evaluate a common GAS goal, available in [Appendix B](#).

If a client/family endorses only one or two of the goals, they rate only the goals that are meaningful to them. It is common at this stage for families to discuss with youth how to rate goals, but we are open to youth alone rating goals themselves or when necessary, using family ratings. If clients and families do not generally endorse any of the above goals, the program might not be a good fit.

If formal outcome measures are not relevant for your program, we suggest asking at least one or two program evaluation questions at the end of the program to help determine if clients are achieving the intended outcomes. See [Appendix E](#) for a summary of our wrap-up procedures.

For more information on evaluation and measurement, see our [Employment Pathways Programs Introduction Guide](#).

Clients and families will walk away with:

- A summary of their experiences, strengths and reflections.
- Having discussed potential next steps to carry on building their employment experiences.
- Handouts that can support the client's next steps, including one or more of the following:
 - Chores and why they are important
 - Career exploration
 - Employment experience opportunities
 - Life after high school - local programs and resources
 - Holland Bloorview's transitions planning document ([Holland Bloorview's Personalized Transition Plan](#))

Planning program content

Organizing appropriate program content (e.g., work placements, workshops) and creating staff and client schedules takes several weeks of planning. We recommend identifying a team leader who can oversee this process. Timelines for key activities for a self-discovery program is available upon consultation with our team, including the action steps to prepare for each activity.

Including lived experience perspectives

According to the U.S. Office of Disability Employment Policy ([ODEP, n.d.](#)), youth development is best facilitated when it includes opportunities for leadership, role modelling, and mentorship. One important way that we integrate peer mentorship and peer learning is through the incorporation of staff and volunteers with lived experience. Persons with lived experience of disability include those with first-hand experience of disability and their caregivers and families ([RNAO, n.d.](#)). They provide insights into the real experiences, challenges, enablers and tips that our clients and families can use. They also provide “acknowledgement, understanding, and validation for of the situations and the crucial insight into what matters most for persons impacted by knowledge tools such as guideline recommendations” ([RNAO, n.d.](#)).

In our self-discovery programs, our team includes a youth facilitator¹ with lived experience of disability and employment. Having a youth facilitator sharing real-world examples of successes and challenges helps to create an open and engaging atmosphere. The facilitator shares relevant and relatable personal stories that help clients learn and apply the work skills covered in workshops. This peer-level mentorship also supports clients in envisioning themselves in a work role, asking relevant questions, and having someone to socialize with.

We note here that there are many ways to include lived experience if a lived experience staff member is not available to you. These can include having past participants volunteer their time to speak with the group, through videos, and through group support of one another.

Resourcing

We recommend a group of 7-10 participants and a staff ratio of 1 staff to 3 clients.

¹ Youth facilitators (YFs) are clinical team members with a childhood-onset disability. YFs facilitate the planning and delivery of programs and support clients and families by sharing their lived experience of growing up with a disability and navigating employment, education, and healthcare systems.

Recruitment

Different types of learners require different types of support. Consider grouping people with broadly similar needs so the content can be tailored to the group's learning style.

Recruitment can be undertaken from your existing pool of clients or can include wider calls for engagement. Consider using a flyer for recruitment. We use criteria and decision-making steps to help determine who is offered a spot in our Employment Pathways programs. We review our guidelines annually.

Employment Pathways Decision-Making Steps for Program Offers

1. Review that applicant meets general eligibility criteria for example:
 - Support is needed at this stage to promote employment participation.
 - Specific learning goal (reason for applying) that can be met in the program.
 - Staff not aware of any other program/service that could more effectively address the client's goal.
 - No prior successful independent paid work experience of duration more than 3 weeks (unless prior to a change in medical and/or disability status and/or educational situation).
 - Able to participate in and fully benefit from structure/format of requested program (most include a mix of work experience, life skills educational activities, reflection, peer interactions).
 - If 1:1 support for mobility and/or behavioural self-management is needed to participate the program, the support must be arranged/paid by the client/family.
2. Consider the difference in application/referral date if any.
3. Examine balance within the group:
 - Mix of clients' anticipated learning, socialization and support needs to maximize client benefit in program.
 - Other sociodemographic factors such as a mix of age/stage, gender, etc.
4. Remaining spots including waitlist spots may be selected by lottery.

Intake procedures

We recommend conducting an effective intake appointment to make sure that the client is the right fit for your self-discovery group. We get to know our clients so we can connect them to the right programs. This helps us to promote their success in our programs, and our staffs' success in running effective programs.

An intake appointment will help you:

- Arrange work placements that are a good fit for the client's strengths, interests and learning/development goals (a "just right" challenge).
- Understand the client's support and learning needs.
- Tailor the program content, activities, and materials to the needs of the individual and group.
- Determine how to resource staff to best support the needs of the individual and the group.
- Build rapport and comfort ahead of the start of the group.

We present below an example of a successful (example 1) and unsuccessful (example 2) intake meeting based on real clients (names and details are fictional).

Example 1: Sonia, Youth@Work

A staff member met with Sonia and her parents for an intake meeting. During the intake meeting, the family expressed anxiety about Sonia participating in a new program, especially in an unfamiliar environment. Sonia shared that she felt nervous about meeting new people and trying new things. The staff member discussed what the family could try at home to help Sonia transition to volunteering, including helping with household chores. They also planned a second in-person meeting so the client and family could see where the volunteering would take place. The staff member shared the program schedule, visuals of volunteering tasks, and expectations for behavior and program participation ahead of time. A thorough intake meeting helped ensure that the client and family felt comfortable and prepared to take part in the program.

Example 2: Shane, VolunteerABLE

Due to scheduling challenges, staff could not complete a full intake meeting with Shane and his mother. During the program, Shane exhibited difficulties with self-regulation, and it was clear that the demands of the program did not match his current abilities. He was not able to engage with the workshops and required 1:1 staff support to participate in work placements. If staff could do things differently, they would have conducted a more thorough intake meeting to fully understand Shane's support and learning needs. This would have allowed the team to adjust volunteering tasks, prepare job coaching materials in advance, and allocate staff resources so the client could learn and participate in a more meaningful and effective way.

We use the intake procedures summarized in [Appendix A](#). Detailed procedures available upon consultation with the team.

The procedures that we use may not exactly align with your own organization's or program's intake procedures. That is okay. Your program's intake process should align with your organization's policies and procedures and any regulatory health professional college standards of practice and guidelines if applicable.

We encourage you to consider the different facets of our intake procedures, and how they might align with and enhance your current process. The final intake procedures are up to you. We strongly recommend the following elements:

- Describe what the program is for and what a typical day will look like, including when and where the program takes place and who will be involved.
- Discuss client's motivations for working and interests.
- Discuss client's learning priorities to enable program planning and future outcome measurement.
- Gather information to promote participation and safety including any supportive strategies, medical and emergency information.

Organizing experiential work opportunities

The number and type of experiential work opportunities will depend on clients' goals and needs, available staff and resources, the environment, and opportunities within the organization.

It may be helpful to introduce the program broadly to different departments in your organization, but you should wait to set up opportunities until you have a chance to get to know the profile of clients involved. You will need to consider the learning needs of your clients, and the level of job coaching supports and materials necessary to support learning and independence. For more information and guidance around job coaching, see our staff training and coaching guide, available on [our website](#).

It is important to remember when young people first start working, repetition, structure, and guided tasks are required. It can take young people who have little to no work experience longer to become competent with tasks. When developing jobs, consider the mindset of a new worker who might not have experience or opportunities to gain confidence.

To ensure there are enough experiential learning opportunities for clients in the program, we recommend considering the ideal number and balance of work experiences. This will depend on the unique needs and abilities of your group. For example, some clients may work more independently and complete their job tasks efficiently, whereas other clients may require a higher level of job coaching support and time to complete tasks. We recommend developing a variety of work placements of varying levels of complexity to ensure you can flexibly meet the needs of your group.

Examples of department partnerships for experiential work opportunities can include:

Department	Example Tasks
Fitness Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Check-in members ✓ Fold towels ✓ Restock towels ✓ Bring towels to laundry room/bring towels to fitness centre ✓ Fill sanitizing spray bottles ✓ Clean equipment
Clerical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Data entry ✓ Preparing information packages ✓ Reformat documents to update branding, use of accessibility features, etc. ✓ Preparing mail-outs
Cafeteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Stock shelves ✓ Clean tables ✓ Retrieve cafeteria trays ✓ Wash dishes
Welcome Desk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Restock brochures ✓ Greet members ✓ Fold brochures ✓ Photocopying ✓ Scanning ✓ Stock supplies
Environmental Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Sweep/mop floors ✓ Clean tables ✓ Sanitize touchpoints ✓ Outdoor clean-up ✓ Toy sanitizing
Program-specific experiences	<p>These are experiences created just for clients, and may depend on a specific department or manager:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Fundraising (e.g., bake sale) ✓ Appreciation events ✓ Coffee delivery cart for staff ✓ Charity food or clothing drive ✓ Video/writing projects

Within our own organization, the official status of a client of a self-discovery program is client, not volunteer or trainee. Generally, clients are performing tasks that are not directly client-facing or related to confidential client information. They typically will also not do tasks that require network access. Usually, clients are supervised by a job coach and work in a central student area, rather than in individual departments. Given the short duration of our self-discovery programs and our focus, this allows us: combine job tasks from various departments to design a just right challenge for each client, dynamically adapt the specifics of the work task to each client's learning goals, and support each

client's generalization through reflections combined with staff observations. It also allows us to engage and support a greater number of clients and reflects the realities of our organization's space and staff workloads. This is an important decision and should be considered by organizations interested in this type of program in light of program and organizational goals and logistical considerations.

Connecting with departments

We recommend you reach out to existing potential departments across your organization. Consider using the email template in [Appendix C](#).

To help build awareness and buy-in for your self-discovery program, start by conducting a brief introductory presentation. Consider using a presentation to provide an overview of your self-discovery program. Additional materials (resources, videos, tip sheets) for broader awareness and education about the benefits of including youth with disabilities in your organization and workforce can be found at Holland Bloorview's [Employer Resource Hub](#).

Your connection runs from before the program begins and usually continues after the program concludes. Below is an overview of what will be involved.

Before the program begins:

Your team will meet with the department to:

- Share details of the program.
- Consider the job tasks within their department area that would be appropriate and provide examples of possible work placements.
- Explore opportunities for entry-level, systematic and structured tasks for youth.
- Discuss strategies for working with your clients (communication styles, learning styles).
- Consider the safety and behavioral expectations for clients.
- Offer an open channel of communication (e.g., e-mail, phone) with your team.

Observing job tasks & environments

It is essential that you learn about the work environment and job tasks that your clients will be doing. Observe the work environment to determine what clients can do to help and what tasks you can teach clients. Job coaching requires breaking down a work task into steps and teaching clients what to do, when to do it, and how to do it. Often, these steps are not clear until you observe and learn what the job entails. Have employees demonstrate tasks, so job coaches understand what needs to be accomplished, break down the task into steps, and create learning materials as needed.

In [Appendix G](#), we have included an example of an observation guide that was used to develop job tasks for volunteers at a summer camp that took place in a community centre, as well as a list of job tasks for one volunteer that was developed through observation.

During the program:

If you are running a model of the program where your clients are working directly in departments, you will want to make sure that you provide training, check-ins, and feedback to department staff as appropriate. The departments hosting your clients will:

- Help identify possible job tasks.
- Provide orientation/overview of the department.
- Introduce and demonstrate job tasks.
- Provide feedback to program staff and participants.
- Model workplace interactions and professionalism.

After the program:

We recommend you send a message of gratitude to the departments that hosted your clients and/or provided projects, work tasks, and/or mentorship. Thank-yous may be written by the clients during program time (creating and delivering messages), or by your team afterwards. Consider using the email template in [Appendix D](#) to reach out to thank your workplace mentor team. We recommend collecting feedback from workplace mentors to understand the impact of your self-discovery program on the organization, teams, and youth. Gathering feedback from workplace mentors will also help you make program improvements. Examples of survey questions can be found in [Appendix E](#).

This is also a great opportunity to educate your colleagues about disability-inclusive hiring in the workplace! If you are comfortable, offer to answer questions they have on the topic.



Orientation day

To facilitate a meaningful orientation for clients, we strongly recommend providing an orientation session prior to the program. For information on staff training and orientation, please see our companion guide, available on our website.

The goals of the orientation are:

- The client will feel more prepared to start the program.
- All program staff meet all clients ahead of the first day of the program.

The orientation includes a mix of get-to-know-you activities and information about the program (daily schedule, day 1 arrival information, etc.).

Below are some sample slides from our orientation day. Our full orientation package includes our slide deck with speaker notes. The slide deck can be customized to your organization’s or program’s specifications.


What to do every day...

Follow workplace expectations

We will highlight “**work rules**” during VolunteerABLE.

Why?

- This is a program for getting work experience.
- Rules for work & volunteering are different from school.
- VolunteerABLE will help you know these rules and practice them.



Speaker Notes: This is a program for work experience. Know the things that works need to know. What it is like to work. There are rules in the workplace which are different from school. We must know them and practice them.


Orientation – Why?

To help you know what will be expected of you.

- gain work experience
- learn about yourself
- learn strategies to do your best work



You will earn 40 volunteer hours if you attend and participate in all sessions.



Speaker Notes: There is more to know so additional orientation will happen on Day 1. You will be earning volunteer hours (40 if attend/participate in all sessions) as part of VolunteerABLE and need to meet volunteer expectations.

How to play

1. On your turn, staff will spin the virtual wheel
2. Staff will read the question that you landed on
3. Share your answer with the group



Speaker Notes: go to online wheel and facilitate group sharing and getting to know one another.

Program sessions

The programs can be delivered over 5-10 sessions. These can be delivered weekly over a semester, or more intensively over 2-3 weeks. We have also delivered the program intensively over a 1-week period.

Each session includes a workshop, work time, social time, and reflection. In this guide, we provide examples of each, and you can access the full resources (presentations, schedules, etc.) through consultation with our team.

In this section, we will provide an in-depth example of a typical program day and then outline the broader program curriculum.

A typical program day

In the self-discovery programs, the typical day has a flow of:

workshop → work placement → break/lunch/social time → work placement → reflection

The goal is to introduce and share about a workplace life skill at the start of the day, give participants an opportunity to practice it in an authentic work setting, and then provide guided and facilitated reflection on what it was like to use the skill, what helped them to do so, and how the skill is useful in a workplace setting. Below you will see how the program days are structured to introduce new skills and facilitate practice and reflection.

We aim to include 2 or 3 work periods in a typical program day – each with a different task or project - to provide a variety of experiences so that clients can reflect through comparison. Sometimes depending on the individual's preferences, learning style or the demands of the task/project, the afternoon work periods are combined to create a longer timeframe.

Schedule

Program days for the clients follow the same general schedule:

Time	Activity
8:30-9:30 AM	Staff meeting & prep
9:30-10:10 AM	Client arrival & workshop (e.g., introductions/ice breaker, review expectations)
10:10-10:15 AM	Break
10:15-11:30 AM	Work placement 1
11:30-12:00 PM	Lunch
12:30-1:00 PM	Social group
1:00-1:30 PM	Work placement 2
1:30-1:40 PM	Break
1:40-2:20 PM	Work placement 3
2:20-2:30 PM	Break
2:30-3:10 PM	Reflections

Workshops

Workshops set the tone for the day and provide daily skills to work on. The workshop time is a great opportunity to make your expectations of the clients clear and facilitate the development skills that they can use to meet those expectations. In [Appendix H](#), we have provided an overview of workshops that tailored to different learning styles and needs.

Below are some sample slides from one of our workshops. Each workshop includes a didactic presentation, a relevant personal story from the perspective of a youth facilitator (a staff member with lived experience of growing up with a disability), and reflection and practice-based activities for clients. Workshop materials are available upon consultation with our team.

Example workshop topic: Growth mindset and receiving/using feedback


The goals of the workshop are:

- Learn about a fixed vs. growth mindset.
- Practice identifying a growth mindset and reflect on a personal growth mindset example.
- Know how to receive professional feedback at work.
- Practice receiving feedback.

Fixed vs Growth Mindset

Fixed Mindset

- Negative attitude
- Giving up
- “I can’t do it”



Growth Mindset

- Positive attitude
- Sticking with something
- “I can do it”

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Speaker Notes: The workshop includes information about the importance of having a growth mindset at work and how to receive feedback in a work setting.

Mathias' lived experience example

Situation	I was working at a garden centre on a farm. It was a physical job. At times, heavy machinery was used to move heavy or a lot of plants to different locations. My cerebral palsy affects my fine motor/mobility on my right hand. One day I had to use the Loader to move plants. I was worried that I wouldn't be able to use the heavy machinery. I was already telling myself, that I couldn't use the machine.
Task/Details	I thought about my options. These are the ones that occurred to me <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Tell my supervisor I can't use the Loader (When my supervisor tried to give me feedback on using the machine, I was getting frustrated and telling him I can't do it) 2. I could try to move all the plants by hand. But it would take a lot of time and would be physically exhausting. 3. Learn how to use the Loader safely. Listen to my supervisor, who taught me to use the machine
Action	Learn how to use the Loader safely. Adapt how I use the joysticks to control Loader. Use the left joystick most of the time. Use my left hand to operate the right joystick, if I was having difficulty. Practice driving the Loader.
Results & why relevant	I was able to use the machine safely. Move the plants faster. W tal

Speaker Notes: The youth facilitator shares a relevant real-life example of adopting a growth mindset at work. Lived experience examples are shared using the STARR method

Activity-feedback

Think about 1 piece of feedback for yourself. Discuss that feedback with your supervisor.

Reflect: How was it to give yourself feedback? How was it to receive feedback from others?

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Speaker Notes: Clients are paired up with staff to engage in a role playing and reflection activity.




Hooray


1. Share how you demonstrated a growth mindset
2. Did anybody receive any feedback? How did it feel? What changes did you make?
3. Something I am looking forward to trying this week?

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Kids Rehabilitation Hospital

Speaker Notes: At the end of the day, clients reflect on their learnings from the day and engage in group discussion.

For our program, we prepare workshop materials that can be tailored to different learning styles and needs. Below are sample slides from a workshop called “Describing my jobs” that have been adapted for two groups of clients with distinct learning styles. Having learning materials that can fit different learning styles allows staff, clients, and families to engage with the material and participate in activities. We recommend getting to know your clients and adapting the workshop content to their learning needs and delivering the content in an engaging and interactive way.

	<p>Example of “Describing my jobs” workshop tailored for clients who: are used to learning from a traditional lecture style</p>	<p>Example of “Describing my jobs” workshop tailored for clients who: benefit from specific instructions, task breakdown, and structured tasks</p>
<p>The workshop highlights the importance of describing work experiences and jobs effectively.</p>	<p>Our learning objectives today & this week</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Learn how to describe a job professionally 2. Write a description for each of my jobs 3. Practice telling someone about my job (afternoon)  <p>Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital</p>	<p>Explaining our job</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Telling others about our work/volunteer experience might sound like describing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · some of the jobs we have done · what our favourite job was and why it was our favourite job · steps we did to complete a job · skills we learned or worked on  <p>Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital</p>
	<p>Introduction</p>  <p>What is this?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You need to be able to describe your past experience on your resume and in interviews • Balance – just right amount of detail <p>Why is it important at work?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It’s important for getting a job and also when introducing oneself at work to co-workers <p>Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital</p>	

	<p>Example of “Describing my jobs” workshop tailored for clients who: are used to learning from a traditional lecture style</p>	<p>Example of “Describing my jobs” workshop tailored for clients who: benefit from specific instructions, task breakdown, and structured tasks</p>
<p>Clients learn how to describe their work experiences following a structure (STARR method or sentence starters).</p>	<div data-bbox="428 334 1159 760">  <p>STARR break down</p> <p>The STARR method:</p> <p>Situation- Describe a situation that you were involved in</p> <p>Task- Describe the tasks or steps that you completed</p> <p>Action- Be specific. Describe what actions you took</p> <p>Results - Relate - What results followed due to your actions and how it relates to the job you are interviewing for</p> </div>	

The youth facilitator shares an example of describing a work experience using the method discussed.

Lived Experience- Mathias

Situation	I worked at a garden center as a labourer during the spring and summer months
Task/Details	My role at the garden centre included: 1. maintaining the flowers, trees and bushes in the green houses
Action	I maintain the flowers, trees and bushes by watering and de-weeding the plants.
Results & why relevant	On daily basis I was able to water and de-weed 80 plants per day. By watering and de-weeding the plants I was able to ensure that the plants were healthy, presentable and ready to be delivered to customers.

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Example - needs improvement

- I enter awards for staff. They are called Spotlights.

Discuss:

- What's missing in this example?

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Kids Rehabilitation Hospital

STARR example – Youth@Work job

Situation	In 2024 I volunteered with the Youth@Work program at Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital. My job was "Meditech Data Entry". Whenever a client is referred to a new hospital, the database needs to be updated to reflect the new changes
Task/Details	I used Google Sheets which contains information with the mnemonic code and name for each entry. I input the information from Google Sheets into the healthcare information management system, Meditech New Test.
Action	I worked on this for 90 minutes a day for 9 days.
Results & why relevant	I enteentered 200 mnemonic code into Meditech New Test. This example shows that I worked responsibly and efficiently

Mathias's example


The name of the job is...



In this picture I am...presenting a workshop



In this picture I am...leading social hub in a game called conversation ball

	<p>Example of “Describing my jobs” workshop tailored for clients who: are used to learning from a traditional lecture style</p>	<p>Example of “Describing my jobs” workshop tailored for clients who: benefit from specific instructions, task breakdown, and structured tasks</p>										
<p>Clients have time to practice describing their jobs in pairs or small groups with the support of a job coach as needed.</p>	<p>Activity</p> <p>In groups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open up your Google Drive and “Youth@Work profile” • Go to “week 2” • Start to describe 1 of your jobs • If time - describe your 2nd (3rd) jobs <p>If you have more time</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Go back to yesterday’s strategies “what helps me do my best work” and make sure this is in your profile <p style="text-align: right;">Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital</p>	<p>Try it today</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="1220 418 1623 724"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="1220 418 1413 443">Space / Staff / Computers</th> <th data-bbox="1413 418 1623 443">Youth@Work participants</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="1220 443 1413 521"></td> <td data-bbox="1413 443 1623 521"></td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="1220 521 1413 599"></td> <td data-bbox="1413 521 1623 599"></td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="1220 599 1413 677"></td> <td data-bbox="1413 599 1623 677"></td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="1220 677 1413 724"></td> <td data-bbox="1413 677 1623 724"></td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <div style="text-align: right;">  <p>Complete slides in the section “Week 2 - My jobs” Coach can add photos of materials later</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital</p> </div>	Space / Staff / Computers	Youth@Work participants								
Space / Staff / Computers	Youth@Work participants											

Social time

Social interactions and appropriate communication are essential workplace lifeskills (ESDC, 2023). It is important for youth to have opportunities to practice social skills and social interactions outside of the school setting. To build belonging and peer connection, as well as practice appropriate workplace social interactions, we purposefully build social time into our programs. We have found social time to be an important opportunity for youth to apply their learnings from the workshop and volunteer settings. We have received feedback from clients and staff stating that peer learning is valuable and that friendly relationships with co-workers are one of the best parts of work.

Social time occurs during lunch, scheduled social time, and breaks. Social activity can be unstructured (especially during lunch and breaks) or facilitated (e.g., games like Kahoot, Jenga). The social time activities are facilitated by staff who are as close in age as possible to program participants, including young staff and youth leaders. We try to offer a few different types of activities in the beginning and then survey participants or develop a sense through discussions of what types of activities the group would like to try on future days.

Participation is highly encouraged but not required. Staff acknowledge that some clients and workers appreciate having lunch and taking breaks alone, and this is appropriate in a work setting. That said, we offer daily structured social time to help shy participants to meet others and begin to develop friendly relationships or friendships. When they know the social activities are scheduled and begin to understand the flow, it helps encourage participation. For some participants who have particular social skill challenges and/or anxiety, a structured setting also offers a safe, familiar daily opportunity to engage with peers. This time is helpful in supporting youth as they build a sense of belonging and peer connection, all while growing their workplace skills.



Work placements

Work placements enable clients to learn by doing and reflecting in real-world settings, and they provide opportunities for clients to use and show their strengths. For example, at Holland Bloorview, a client may participate in a work placement of delivering coffee orders to customers throughout the building. The client will practice skills such as safety (e.g., handwashing, carrying hot drinks, steering a cart), professional communication (e.g., greeting people, introducing themselves), following a schedule to complete orders on time, wayfinding (e.g., locating rooms on different floors of the building) and managing money (e.g., making change) with job coaching support as needed. Participants engage in up to three different work placements per day. Staff do their best to match available roles to the employment participation goals of the participants.

Information on job coaching and developing materials to support learning and independence is available in our Staff training and Coaching Guide on our [website](#).

The Person-Environment-Occupation (PEO) model

When we are designing, organizing, and coaching in work placements, we use the PEO model to guide how we organize things ([Law et al., 1996](#)). The PEO model is a transactional model that considers the interrelationships between the person (youth), occupation (job task or job need), and the environment (physical, social, workplace culture and expectations, etc.).

We may be tempted to only focus on the person, being the youth in our program and their goals, preferences, and development. Sometimes, we may also be very focused on the occupation,

But proper function requires a good fit between all three concepts. In our self-discovery programs, we need to remember that we have made commitments in a job setting, and in completing a job task in the way that is required by a manager, team, or workplace setting. That means that we must be constantly considering how the youth can complete job tasks in a way that fosters their needs and skills growth, and also that will show them the value and importance of respecting the needs of the environment.

To learn more about how we integrate the model in our program, see our staff training and coaching guide.

Structuring a work placement

Orientation

Staff begin each work placement by teaching what is expected from participants. Participants learn about the task through a brief presentation and demonstration if possible. The presentation is designed to orient participants to what they will be doing, why they are doing it (the impact, what difference it will make), and what skills they will be learning.

Below are some sample slides that have been used to orient participants to a job task.

What are Social Work Packages?

- When social workers meet with clients and families they are often asked about funding options. "Funding" is money that is provided through a grant or foundation to help pay for things such as equipment, recreation and respite services
- It can be overwhelming to fill out applications to receive funding
- The social workers have created a package to give to families. They include printed applications and step-by-step instructions on how to fill out the applications

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Speaker Notes: Provide relevant background information and introduce the task to participants

The Job

- Print the applications and instructions/tip sheets
- Assemble the packages based on guidelines provided by the social work team
- [Checklist](#)

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Speaker Notes: Outline what the job entails, as well as any supporting materials (e.g., checklists, instructions).

Job Skills

- Organization
- Following systematic procedure/checklist
- Attention to detail

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Speaker Notes: Discuss the job skills participants will be learning and practicing during the work placement.

Who are we helping?

- Clients and their families
- The social work team

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Speaker Notes: Highlight why the task is meaningful. Describe who participants will be helping what difference their work will make.

Progression over the course of placement

Generally, job coaches structure the job task which can include: preparation of materials/system, demonstration, providing individualized feedback daily, gradually fading support, introducing new levels of challenge according to individual learning goals, etc.

When we engage a client in a task-focused placement, such as the assembly of social work packages, we provide a checklist along with demonstrations and feedback. We aim first to ensure that the method is being followed to ensure the required result (quality). When the task is being consistently completed at the required quality, we prioritize fading support to increase independence and then increasing quantity.

Checklists break down a task into steps. They promote independence because a client can follow steps and self-check own work (rather than asking a coach/ supervisor). Checklists can include visuals, depending on the task and the learning needs of the individual.

We may introduce individualized task components based on client goals. For example, for a client with a communication goal, we might engage them in booking a meeting with a social worker to ask questions about how they use the package with children and families.

When we engage one or more clients in a project as a work placement, we typically introduce the work methods such as:

- Developing a work plan or timeline to break the overall objective into daily tasks.
- Assigning responsibility for various components.
- Planning and facilitating daily team meetings to update on progress, find solutions to challenges arising, adapt the work plan, etc.
- Making presentations or sending emails to engage needed resources.
- Presenting to the person who assigned project in week 1, week 2, week 3, including scheduling meetings, developing agendas, etc.
- Developing and revising drafts based on feedback.

This web story is an example of a project undertaken by one of our program participants <https://hollandbloorview.ca/stories-news-events/stories/shooting-pucks-and-reaching-inclusion-goals>.

Social Work Handout Assembly Checklist

Open: E:\Quality Safety Share with Employment\2-Social Work packages groups	
Select 1 document from Document List	
<p>[If no coloured documents move to next steps]</p> <p>To print document on coloured paper (if required).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Open single document to be printed and select print - Select number of copies to be printed - Insert coloured paper in the feed tray on the right hand side of the printer - Enter printer code and print - Remove any extra coloured paper from the feed tray and close the tray <p>(note - multiple copies of coloured document can be printed at a time)</p>	
<p>Print document on coloured white paper.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Open single document and select print and make sure document is double sided - Print only 1 document at a time** - Enter printer code and print <p>** (note very important to print only 1 at a time to avoid mixing up any pages of these long documents)</p>	
<p>Assemble</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Take 1 coloured paper - Take 1 of the black and white documents and put behind colour paper - Staple the two documents together - Put completed document in bin 	
<p>Once you have the correct # of copies put them in a file folder</p> <p>Label file folder with post it note</p>	
Move onto next document and repeat steps above	

Reflections and daily wrap-up

The program day ends with an “end-of-day hooray!” activity. This activity facilitates the clients in identifying their accomplishments and allows for staff to share areas of growth and next steps in a safe and solution-oriented way.

Facilitated self-reflection is a key component of a self-discovery employment program. When clients reflect and learn from their experiences, they gain confidence for next steps and are more likely to carry over what they learned into real-world settings. Meaningful self reflection can be challenging for clients and requires the help of staff and support people (e.g., family members).

Staff may pose the following questions to the clients at the end of each day to facilitate self-reflection:

- What are you proud of?
- What is something you did to show us that you were trying to be a good worker?
- What are your strengths? What was hard? What was easy? What did you like? What did you not like?

Clients will consider the above questions and share their reflections on their day. Staff will then share their reflections on the clients’ strengths, areas of growth, and areas for further coaching. These reflections allow for real-time consideration on how the group (staff and clients) will all move forward to make the program as meaningful as possible.

A template to track the daily “end-of-day hooray!” sessions is available upon consultation with the team.

We also include reflective questions in daily workshops and in program wrap-up meetings.

Wrap-up meetings

To set-up clients and families for success in their employment journey, you need to conduct a wrap up meeting. A wrap-up meeting provides opportunities to discuss next steps and connections to resources to facilitate the client’s long-term employment participation goals. We recommend that at least one support person (e.g., parent, sibling) attends the client’s wrap-up meeting to help support next steps and application of workplace life skills learned in the program to other settings (e.g., home, school). In the wrap-up meeting, we provide a “volunteering summary” that clients can share with others (e.g., teachers, program staff) to support their participation in other volunteer, work, and co-op opportunities. Depending on the client, this may be a self-generated document or something that program staff prepare based on observation and comments gathered from the client during the course of the program.

We summarize procedures for the wrap-up meeting in [Appendix F](#).

Staff schedules & staff time

As previously outlined, staff time in the program will have to fit the needs of the clients involved. Some considerations for staff include:

- Levels of staff experience and backgrounds supporting youth with diverse needs.
- Number of staff available to support on a full or “as needed” basis.
- Clients’ profiles and level of needs.

On the next page, we have included an example of our staff schedule.

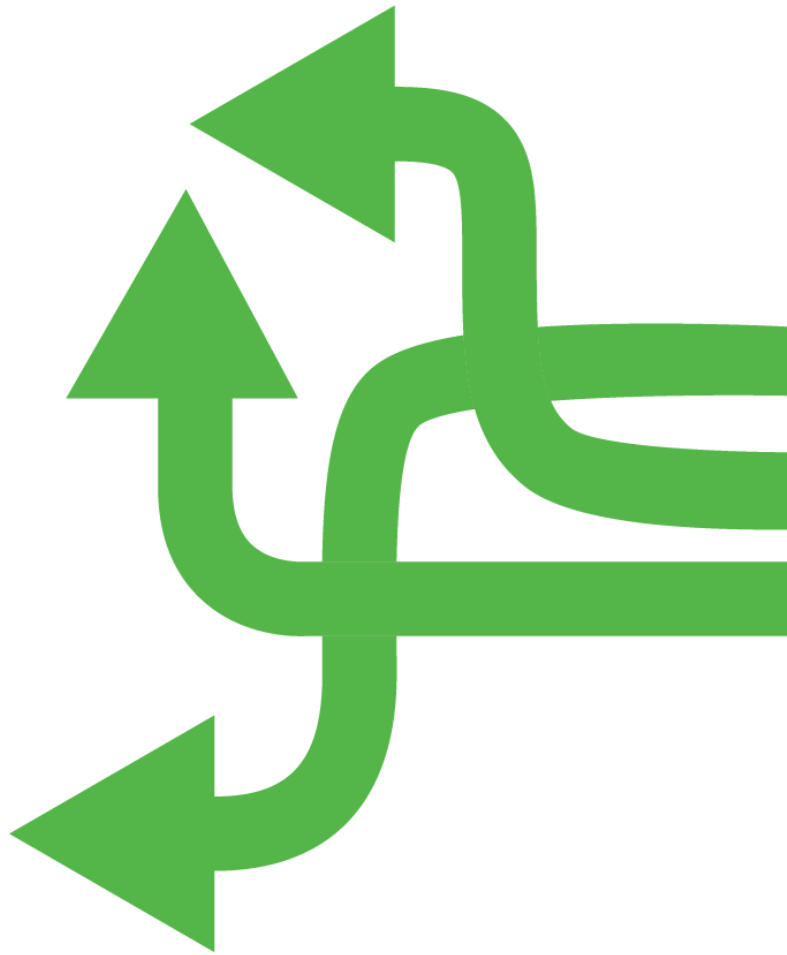


Example of a daily program outline for staff

	Schedule	Staff 1	Staff 2	Staff 3	Staff 4	Staff 5	Volunteer
8:30 - 9:30	Staff Meeting & Prep	Staff Meeting & Prep					
9:30-10:10	Workshop	Workshop	Workshop	Workshop	Workshop	Prep	Prep
10:10-10:15	BREAK	BREAK					
10:15-11:30	Work placement 1 Coffee Carts - (ROOM#) - CLIENTS Book project for school - (ROOM#) - CLIENTS Client waitlist letters - (ROOM#) - CLIENTS (list backup activity if needed) Sleep kits - (ROOM#) - CLIENTS	Coffee Cart CLIENT, ROOM#	Book project for school & Client waitlist letters CLIENT, ROOM#	Sleep Kits CLIENT, ROOM#	Coffee Cart CLIENT, ROOM#	Book project for school? / Take photos of youth? CLIENT, ROOM#	Book project for school/Client waitlist letters CLIENT, ROOM#
11:30-12:00	LUNCH	Lunch	Lunch/ Prep	Lunch/ Prep	Cafe with Youth	Lunch/ Prep	Lunch
12:00-12:30	SOCIAL HUB	Social Hub			LUNCH		Social Hub
12:30-1:30	Work placement 2 Coffee Carts - (ROOM#) - CLIENTS Data entry project - (ROOM#) - CLIENTS Foundation Project (ROOM#) - CLIENTS Bulletin Board (backup ROOM#) - CLIENT	Coffee Cart CLIENT, ROOM#	Data entry project CLIENT, ROOM#	Foundation CLIENT, ROOM#	Data entry project CLIENT, ROOM#	Data entry project CLIENT, ROOM#	Foundation CLIENT, ROOM#
1:30 - 1:40	BREAK	BREAK					
1:40 - 2:40	Work placement 3 Data entry project - (ROOM#) - CLIENTS Foundation Project (ROOM#) - CLIENTS InstaOffice (ROOM#) - CLIENTS	Prep	Insta Office CLIENT, ROOM#	Foundation CLIENT, ROOM#	Data entry project CLIENT, ROOM#	Data entry project CLIENT, ROOM#	Foundation CLIENT, ROOM#
2:40 - 2:50	BREAK	BREAK					
2:50 - 3:30	End of Day Hooray Reflections	All staff support reflection activities					
3:30 - 4:30	Staff Meeting & Farewell						

Appendices

Appendix A	Summary of intake procedures
Appendix B	Sample GAS goal
Appendix C	Email template for departments to generate work experience activities
Appendix D	Email template to thank participating departments
Appendix E	Feedback survey for workplace mentors
Appendix F	Summary or program wrap-up procedures
Appendix G	Example observation guide and task list to develop work placements
Appendix H	Overview of workshops
Appendix I	Recommended program supplies
Appendix J	Real life stories



Appendix A: Summary of Intake procedures

Note: Detailed procedures are available upon consultation with our team.

Consent (permission) to participate in the intake meeting

We review the purpose of the meeting and ask for the client and family's permission to take part.

Consent (permission) to participate in the self-discovery programs

We clarify for clients what is involved in the program. We go over what is involved in the program and make sure it is a good fit for the client's goals.

Media consent (optional)

We ask permission to take photos as part of the program. This is entirely optional and will not impact the client's ability to participate in the program. Photos are primarily used to document clients' work tasks and share their progress at the end of the program. If your organization does not have a photo consent form, you a sample can be shared upon consultation with our team.

Questions about you (the client)

In this section we ask clients questions to get to know their goals and to design their participation in our program in a meaningful way. Questions include information on education, chores, previous volunteering experience, diagnoses, and assistance required to participate in education/work activities.

Work experiences during the program

Staff develop work experiences based on what clients' may be interested in and what they are good at. In this section, we review examples of work experiences and discuss the strengths and skills clients will learn or build on in each so that clients can tell us their priorities and preferences.

Setting goals for the self-discovery program

Setting specific goals helps people accomplish their dreams. Goals can also help support program development and program evaluation and promote more buy-in from clients and families. In this section, we ask the client questions to help them consider their goals for the program.

The self-discovery program is structured so clients can accomplish 1-3 goals:

1. Build work life skills by getting work experience – practice life skills people use at work
2. Learn more about yourself – likes/dislikes, strengths/good at
3. Learn more about what helps you do your best at work (for example: learning strategies)

Medical and emergency information

Clients will be asked to provide emergency contact information, and any medically relevant information that might need consideration during the program.

Skills development questions

We ask clients about their skills related to volunteering and working. These questions contribute to our broader program evaluation and give us a sense of their experiences to-date. Questions ask about the client's skills, employment goals, employment planning, and how optimistic they are about their ability to achieve their job goals.

Next steps

We end with an overview of next steps, including setting up attendant care or other supports if needed, confirming the time of the program orientation, and program fees. Currently, we also schedule a post-program wrap-up meeting so that everyone has it in their schedule.

Appendix B: Sample GAS Goal

Goal Attainment Scaling (GAS) is a helpful way for staff to work progressively with clients in achieving the goals. GAS goals can be aligned with intended program outcomes and provide measurable outcomes for client tracking and program outcome measurement.

GAS is a 5-point scale, with the goal of reaching the mid-point, labeled “expected outcome, 0”. To use GAS, all clients are expected to start at “Present level (-2)”. By the end of program, the GAS rating details can be used to recommend next steps to individual clients and families, and can help program staff explore how clients progress through the expected goals and where potential programmatic shortfalls may be interfering.

<p>Present level (-2)</p>	<p>Client is just getting started with volunteering. Client has not earned volunteer hours yet and wants to learn about strengths, interests and how they do their best work.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Or</p> <p>Client has earned X volunteer hours and wants to learn about strengths, interest and how they do their best work.</p>
<p>Some progress but outcome somewhat less than expected (-1)</p>	<p>(Some progress towards expected outcome by end of Youth@Work program)</p> <p>Client has achieved one or two of the following outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Participated in some volunteering, accumulating less than 40 volunteer hours. - Created a written document identifying at least one strength, one type of volunteering they enjoyed, or one strategy that helps them perform their best work. - Shared this written document with their family. <p style="text-align: center;">Or</p> <p>Client has accomplished one or more of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Participated in additional volunteering, accumulating up to 45 more volunteer hours. - Created a written document identifying at least one strength, one type of volunteering they enjoyed, or one strategy that helps them perform their best work. - Shared this document with their family.
<p>Expected outcome - by end of program/service period (0)</p>	<p>(Expected outcome by end of Youth@Work program)</p> <p>Client has successfully completed all the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Participated in volunteering and earned 40 volunteer hours. - Created a written document identifying at least one strength, one type of volunteering they enjoyed, and one strategy that helps them perform their best work. - Shared this document with their family.

<p>Outcome somewhat better than expected if accomplished within program/service period (1)</p>	<p>(Somewhat more than expected outcome by end of Youth@Work program)</p> <p>Client/family share volunteer summary with his/her school or community organization to explain how they do their best work and how best promote their participation.</p>
<p>Outcome much better than expected if accomplished within program/service period Outcome anticipated 4-6 months after program/service (2)</p>	<p>(Much more than expected outcome by end of Youth@Work program)</p> <p>Client has begun volunteering outside of Youth@Work program.</p> <p>Modify volunteer hours depending on how many client already has</p>

Appendix C: Email template for departments to generate work experience activities

Subject: [Organization] [program name]

[Choice of email introduction],

The [name of department this falls under] is excited to launch our [program name] program beginning [date]!

Program background: In conjunction with [Organization's] [specific statement re: commitment to inclusion, diversity, equity, etc.], [program name] provides youth with disabilities first-time volunteer experiences as they work toward learning more about their interests, strengths and workplace learning strategies. The program will include [# of participants] and will be supported by our staff [insert names and titles].

We would like to schedule a meeting with your team to further discuss the program and ways in which we believe [area/department you are reaching out to] could provide valuable, hands-on work experience and mentorship to the youth.

Thank you,

[choice of email signoff]

Appendix D: Email template to thank participating departments

Subject: [Organization] [program name] thank you

[Choice of email introduction],

We wanted to reach out to thank you once again for partnering with our [program name] to create a meaningful work experience for youth.

Please share any feedback about [organization's] [program name] program by completing our online survey [survey link].

We really appreciate both constructive as well as positive comments to help us improve our support for work placement mentors and youth. [Insert if needed: Feel free to share this link with any other supervisors or staff as you feel is relevant].

Lastly, please don't hesitate to connect if you have any questions or personal feedback to share. [Inset if needed: We may be reaching out again to plan for the next [program name] program in [month/year].

All the best,

[choice of email signoff]

Appendix E: Feedback survey for participating departments

Thank you for collaborating with us to make work placements possible for youth! Please share some feedback with us to help us continue to offer these opportunities for youth - and make improvements.

I felt adequately prepared before [program name] youth started with our team.	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)
[Program name] youth contributed meaningfully to the work of our team.	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)
[Program name] youth contributed meaningfully to the work of our organization.	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)
I enjoyed my experience of supporting [program name] youth	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)
I would work with [organization's] employment programs again.	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)

1. Please share any comments about your experiences of [supervising/mentoring] in this program.
2. I felt that this opportunity benefited the youth in the following ways:
3. I felt that this opportunity benefited me as a [supervisor/mentor/program liaison] in the following ways:
4. I felt that this opportunity benefited my team in the following ways:
5. I felt that this opportunity benefited my organization in the following ways:

6. Do you have a story that you can share that describes the impact that this collaboration/experience has had (for you, for the organization, for youth)?
7. Is there anything else that would have made this experience more doable, enjoyable, or useful for you, your team and/or the organization?
8. The following connections or resources would be helpful to me and my team or organization at this time:

Appendix F: Summary of program wrap-up procedures

Note: Full detailed procedures are available upon consultation with our team.

Review of program tasks, observations and feedback

We review the types of volunteer tasks clients had the opportunity to try during the program, as well as the topics covered during each workshop. We reflect on what clients reported was their most significant change in the program and discuss the progress clients have made in the number of volunteering hours and chores they are completing at home at the start and end of the program.

Update my “Volunteering Summary”

In this section we review a volunteering summary of clients’ strengths, interests, and effective job coaching strategies. It is important to discuss and incorporate the client’s and family’s own reflections into the volunteering summary. We also encourage the client and family to share the volunteering summary with others (e.g., teachers) to gain further support on their employment goals.

Review goals and measure outcomes (if relevant)

We ask clients to re-rate the goals they identified as personally relevant/important at the start of the program. Clients consider their ability to perform in the area after taking part in the program, and their satisfaction with how well they perform on a scale from 1 to 10 via the COPM. The goals are also re-rated by a staff member using GAS.

Skills development questions

To evaluate the impact and effectiveness of the program, we ask about the client’s experience in the program and program impacts.

Next steps

To move clients and families closer to their longer-term employment goals, we ask them to reflect on what next steps they would like to try. We also recommend potential next steps which may include:

- Sharing their volunteering summary with relevant support people.
- Continuing to gain independence and skills through chores, volunteering, school opportunities such as extra-curricular activities, co-operative education, etc.
- Participating in relevant life skills groups.
- Taking part in additional programs or stages of our Employment Pathways.

Volunteer hours letter

We congratulate clients on earning volunteer hours and confirm we will send them a certificate.

Appendix G: Example observation guide and task list to develop work placements

Note: The observation guide and task list were developed for volunteers (young people with disabilities) supporting staff and children attending a summer camp at a community centre.

Observation Guide – [Camp name]

Steps:

1. Read camp manual – complete as much of this form as you can
2. Observe at least 1 full shift – add notes to this form about possible volunteer tasks within the camp program
3. Discuss questions with camp staff – add notes to this form
4. Prepare training materials if needed (e.g., visual checklist, script, etc.)
5. Teach volunteer

Camp scheduled activity name and/or time of day	Possible volunteer task/skill	Complexity			Notes for preparation/teaching volunteer
		High	Med	Low	
General	Introduce yourself to campers (individual or in group)		X		Orientation: Practice introduction
General	Use children's names when you talk to them				Orientation: System for helping volunteer learn campers' names
General	Lead the way to scheduled activity			X	Orientation: Teach wayfinding in building
Swim day	Tidy the change room - put shoes under the bench, hang packs				On swim days

Important safety and/or behavioral expectations for volunteers:

- Use your cell phone only when you are at lunch or on break – never around campers.
- Camp staff make the rules and tell the rules to the campers. Volunteers follow the rules. Volunteers do not tell campers the rules.

Questions:

- Will volunteers swim or help with equipment?

Volunteer schedule for [name]

Room [insert room number/details]

Time	Campers' schedule	[Volunteer]'s schedule / task list	Notes
12:00	Lunch is underway	In Room 201: Tidy	As children finish: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use broom and dustpan to sweep floor around and under all tables/chairs. • Sanitize table using sanitizer spray bottle and paper towel. • Check each chair - brush or wipe off crumbs (into hand or garbage - not onto floor). • Put chairs back under each table.
	Activity		[potentially could help in room 202 during this time if staff leave those tasks - maybe add this later after Stef is picking up speed] Set 1 activity on each table
	Line up for swim	Count # of campers who will be swimming	
	Change for swim	Set lifejackets out on bench	Correct number (Size - purple or green inside)
	Swim	Stand near the equipment rack - hand out equipment as staff ask	Examples: pool noodle, flutterboard, etc.
	Change from swim	Hang up lifejackets Return equipment to rack	
	Outdoor play	Clean up supply closet	

		Pick up food containers [from all rooms?] - wash, dry and put [insert where]	
		Tidy kitchen (dry and put away other supplies	
	Snack and Shabbat	[insert]	
4:00	Dismissal		[are there any wrap-up tasks at this time?]

Examples of tasks that staff might ask for assistance with (as needed)

“Please pick up the markers”

“Please get me the glue sticks from the supply cupboard”

“Please get us 7 puzzles”

“Please take these supplies back to the supply closet”

“Please clean up this spilled water”

“Please sanitize this table”

Appendix H: Overview of workshops

Overview of workshops tailored for clients who: benefit from specific instructions, task breakdown, and structured tasks:

*Example taken from the Youth@Work program at Holland Bloorview, and can be tailored to your organization

#	Title	Learning Objectives	Key Activities	Work expectations of the day	End of Day Hooray
1	5 things I need to do in this program	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Learn basic worker rules and expectations and how they are different from school Learn important information about Youth@Work, Holland Bloorview, the building, safe working guidelines Get to know one another 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> AM - Being in the zone role plays AM – stations (hand washing, moving safely in the building, washroom locations and door closing, say hi/introducing self) PM – Zones strategies “cut and paste” 		<p>I showed I was a good worker today when I...</p> <p>One thing I’m proud of is....</p>
2	Listen & try	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Know that there is a <u>right</u> way to do a job. Listen to instructions from job coaches so we can: ✓ Learn how to do our jobs ✓ Do our jobs well. Practice listening/watching instructions and trying, then making changes based on feedback. Staff and participants have shared understanding of key words that can be used to reinforce expected work behaviors during work placements. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Brief slideshow Activity stations Debrief in large group 	<p>I listen to and watch instructions.</p> <p>I change what I’m doing based on feedback from my coach.</p> <p>I ask my coach if I have a question.</p> <p>I am focused on my work task. I do not interrupt.</p>	<p>Today I listened to _____ and tried to get better at _____</p>

#	Title	Learning Objectives	Key Activities	Work expectations of the day	End of Day Hooray
3	Disability at work	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Recognizing and identifying what makes us different (talk, learn, move) 2. Naming our strengths 3. Naming strategies we already use to help us do our best work 4. Discovering strategies that can help us do our best work while volunteering 5. Learn that people with disabilities work in a variety of job roles 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What does disability at work look like 2. Stories of people with a disability 3. What are our strengths 4. Strategies we can use at work 	<p>I try strategies to help me do my best work.</p> <p>I am respectful of everyone around me and how they learn and/or do their best work.</p> <p>I follow kitchen safety rules (wash hands, hair net, oven mitts, etc.).</p> <p>I work and communicate with my team members while baking.</p>	<p>A strategy I used today to help me do my best work was _____.</p> <p>A strength that I used today was _____.</p>
4	Professional communication part 1: Getting someone's attention/ inserting into conversation/ knowing when to wait	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Learn and practice how to professionally get someone's attention 2. Practice waiting for a conversation to finish before asking a question 3. Learn and practice how to professionally join a conversation 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Staff role play 2. Conversation BINGO 	<p>I wait for others to be finished talking before I ask my question or try to start a conversation.</p> <p>I professionally get someone's attention before I ask a question or start a conversation.</p> <p>I listen to what others say.</p> <p>I stay on topic.</p>	<p>In people bingo I showed I am a good communicator when I...</p> <p>One thing I want to get better at is...</p>

Overview of workshops tailored for clients who: are used to learning from a traditional lecture style:

Note - use [Bloom's Taxonomy](#) to write clear learning examples. Make sure slide deck reflects what is written here.

Activities may include: discussion (small and large group), pair and share, scenario based discussion, personal reflection, practice/role play, game style (e.g., true/false, voting etc), questions to lived experience mentors.

Revise order depending on group and timing of other activities happening in organization.

#	Date	Workshop Title	Learning Objectives	Key Activities	Work Expectations of the Day	Reflections (Things that went well or need to change in future)
Week 1						
1	Insert date	Orientation Facilitator: insert names	Get to know each other Learn important info about Holland Bloorview including who are clients, responsibility to ensure safety of self and others and communication in the building Orient to schedule	Ice breaker- Name cards and one thing you like (5 min starting on arrival - if some late, join late) Station rotations in small groups (hand washing, moving safely in the building, washroom locations and door closing, say hi/introducing self, asking a question) Review schedule, set alarms for transition times Sign confidentiality agreements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I put my cell phone away • I show that I am paying attention • I say hello/goodbye to others • I ask questions • I try something new/challenging • I work hard until it is time for break. • I follow workplace <u>safety rules</u> introduced today • I take responsibility for being in the right place at the right time. 	

#	Date	Workshop Title	Learning Objectives	Key Activities	Work Expectations of the Day	Reflections (Things that went well or need to change in future)
2	Insert date	DisAbility in life and work Facilitator: insert names	Normalize internal questions like “can I?” “how will I...?” etc. Know that people with disabilities work in a variety of job roles and many businesses actively look for diverse workers	Video Discussion(s) No profile pages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Same as morning expectations • I can think of a potential career I would like to work in and understand the value I give to that role 	
3	Insert date	Growth mindset (adaptability) Facilitator: insert names	Learn what a growth mindset is and why it matters at work Reflect on personal growth mindset example	Video Activity: Fixed vs growth? (2 step) (what it does it look and sound like) Lionel scenario (how feel, what can do) No profile pages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify opportunities to demonstrate growth mindset • Demonstrate growth mindset. For example: working through a challenging situation 	
4	Insert date	Self-awareness part 1: Skills, strengths and “not strengths” Facilitator: insert names	Identify my 2-3 top strengths that I am using or expect to use in my time at Youth@Work	Activity 1=pair discussion of strengths Activity 2 Profile: Start Youth@Work profile by filling Worker Expectations self-assessment & selected reflection pages Resource: https://www.canada.ca/en/services/jobs/training/initiatives/skills-success.html	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I know my top work-related strengths and can communicate them. • I believe in my own strengths & abilities to achieve success. 	

#	Date	Workshop Title	Learning Objectives	Key Activities	Work Expectations of the Day	Reflections (Things that went well or need to change in future)
5	Insert date	Self-awareness part 2: Receiving & using feedback Facilitator: insert names	How can feedback help us improve our performance Practice providing and receiving feedback How to respond/ behave when provided with feedback	Activity: Role play: in groups of three youth practice providing and receiving feedback using script. Reviewing how person responded to feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Maintain professionalism when receiving feedback ● How to utilize feedback to make improvements 	
6	Insert date	Self-awareness part 3: Setting goals Facilitator: insert names	Write a goal about something you want to accomplish during your time at Youth@Work	Activity 1: Complete Profile <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● General goal area - SMART if possible (worksheet) - Kari ● Profile pages 6, 7, 8 & 9 ● Week 1 Feedback survey-[STAFF RESPONSIBLE] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● I set realistic and job appropriate goals for my placements at Youth@Work ● I understand the use of goal setting in the workplace. 	
Week 2						
8	Insert date	Solution focused mindset (solution finding) Facilitator: insert names	I know that it is normal to sometimes experience problems / challenges at work I can apply a solution-finding framework to an example of a challenge	Activity 1: Large group (challenge=finding room) Activity 2: Small group identify possible solutions (Gardenia scenario) Activity 3: Examples of challenges so far in Youth@Work (either open-ended or show of hands with challenge examples)	I identify a situation or challenge that requires a solution-finding approach. When that happens: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● I brainstorm possible solutions, evaluate the pros and cons of each. ● I decide which option to try ● I evaluate if I have resolved the challenge or need to try something else. 	

#	Date	Workshop Title	Learning Objectives	Key Activities	Work Expectations of the Day	Reflections (Things that went well or need to change in future)
9	Insert date	Self-awareness part 4: What helps me do my best at work Facilitator: insert names	Identify/list strategies that help me do my best at work Discuss when/how to speak up to alert others to our strategies/accommodations	Activity 1: worksheet (in workshop) Activity 2: Profile pages 11 & 12 (worker expectations Section 3 & 8)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● I can identify strategies that help me at work and when to use them ● I can communicate the strategies I use and how they help me work better. 	
10	Insert date	Self-advocacy Facilitator: insert names	Understand self advocacy Practice using I-statement (assertive) communication in 2 scenarios	Activity 1: Statement Activity Using the given scenario, work as a team to generate I-statements for what the characters can say to each other Activity 2: Discussing self-advocacy in the Youth@Work context and times we may have had to use it here at work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● I am able to tell co-workers what I think and what I feel. ● I speak with someone when I need to change something so that I can do my best at work. ● I make choices and decisions that affect my work and take responsibility for the choices I make. 	
11	Insert date	Teamwork & collaboration Facilitator: insert names	Understand what it means to work as part of a team Practice: Work as a team to plan for Youth@Work celebration	Plan final day celebration <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Group 1 plans snack ● Group 2 plans activities ● Group 3 plans location 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● I contribute my ideas to the group ● I listen to other's ideas and encourage everyone to participate ● I compromise on ideas and plans instead of only voting for my own ideas. 	

#	Date	Workshop Title	Learning Objectives	Key Activities	Work Expectations of the Day	Reflections (Things that went well or need to change in future)
13	Insert date	n/a No workshop decided to focus on end of day hooray that was based on strengths		Develop a list of compliments or strengths of each participant through group brainstorming	N/A	
Week 3						
14	Insert date	Describing my job Facilitator: insert names	Learn how to describe a job professionally Write a description for each of my jobs Practice telling someone about my job (afternoon)	Activity 1: Profile- job description slides & pictures (slides 13 - 22 - may be less if some people only have 2 jobs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I understand the STARR method and how to use if for describing my jobs • I understand the importance of giving the right information about the jobs I do at work 	
15	Insert date	Small talk at work Facilitator: insert names	Identify good topics for workplace small talk and small talk etiquette Practise small talk (1) in small groups in workshop and then (2) with a workplace mentor	2:50-3:10 Orient youth to activity and discuss small talk questions [STAFF RESPONSIBLE] 3:00-3:10 Orient mentors [ROOM#] Then mentor+youth pairs go either to mentor office or outside/to caf [STAFF RESPONSIBLE] 3:10-3:20/3:25 Youth/mentor chat 1:1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I ask coworkers appropriate questions and listen to their answers • I greet coworkers and end conversations politely 	

#	Date	Workshop Title	Learning Objectives	Key Activities	Work Expectations of the Day	Reflections (Things that went well or need to change in future)
16	Insert date	Self-awareness 4: Next steps in my “employment plan” Facilitator: insert names	Understand why continuing to build experiences is very important Know what types of supports are available Identify personal next step/action	Activity 1 Who would an employer hire and why? (identifying the better candidate based on credentials) Activity 2 Brainstorming ideas for next steps after Youth@Work to get more experience and skills Activity 3 Discuss volunteering and co-op; the benefits, how many hours, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I understand the importance of building experiences • I will consider volunteer opportunities and co-ops as possible next steps • I will consider other Holland Bloorview opportunities if I am interested 	
17	Insert date	(work on profile)		Profile my favourite job is...because My most significant change is...		
18	Insert date	Prep for individual presentations My favourite job at Youth@Work was...(I did) because... (show product) My most	Reflect on your time at Youth@Work	Activity 1 Complete applicable slides in profile Activity 2 Practice presenting	I will participate openly in the activities and be open to sharing my experiences	

#	Date	Workshop Title	Learning Objectives	Key Activities	Work Expectations of the Day	Reflections (Things that went well or need to change in future)
		significant change was My favourite compliment was...				
19	Insert date	Final day celebration Games & share reflections				

Appendix I: Recommended program supplies

We recommend keeping an ongoing list of supplies that you will need to deliver the program. For an example, see the list below. We typically provide each client with a basket of their own supplies including a name card, hand sanitizer, and pens/markers. Consider items that may support self-regulation and concentration throughout the session (e.g., fidget toys)

General

- Pens
- Paper (blank)
- Markers
- Name tags - lanyards with plastic sleeves - can be reused for each session
- Folding Clipboards (1 per participant) - can be reused for each session
- Small plastic bins (1/participant)
- Fidget toys
- Scissors
- Stapler/staples (depending on tasks)
- Disinfectant wipes

Personal protective equipment (PPE)

- Hand sanitizer
- Gloves

Technology

- Adaptor for computer to plug into HDMI

Appendix J: Real life stories

To bring this program to life, we want to share an overview of one of our programs. The case example below is based on a previous 1-week delivery of our VolunteerABLE program. We note here that we typically deliver our self-discovery programs over multiple weeks. We have found that having time between sessions allows for greater reflection and skill integration as youth rapidly learn new skills in unfamiliar settings in the program. During this 1-week trial delivery, we found a reinforced need to provide more time for clients to grow into the self-discovery program learning.

We hope that this example will help you consider the different questions, opportunities, and challenges of delivering your own self-discovery program.

Case study: VolunteerABLE March Break

VolunteerABLE is an entry-level (self-discovery) program in the Employment Pathways for clients obtaining an Ontario Secondary School Certificate of Completion (OSSC) or attending special education programming. Clients typically participate in a variety of group-based volunteering experiences and workplace life skills workshops over nine Saturday sessions during the school year. In 2024, Holland Bloorview's Employment Pathways team offered an adapted version of VolunteerABLE over March Break. The program was offered to clients earning high school credits towards an Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD) and post-secondary education who also desired supported early work experiences. March Break provided an opportunity to pilot a shorter, more intensive five-day VolunteerABLE program for clients in the OSSD education stream.

This case study may help illustrate the process of planning and delivering an adapted version of an Employment Pathways program. We will highlight underlying principles of service delivery and share program challenges and successes.

Planning stages

Adapting an existing program to a new format and client population required an intensive amount of planning and collaboration among staff. A core team of four staff began meeting in November 2023 to prepare for the modified program. Weekly meetings took place from January to March for planning as a team. To stay on track, staff used a meeting agenda template to cover priorities and action items necessary to conduct the program. The core programming components included:

- 1:1 client and family intake meetings (e.g., confirming/scheduling meetings).
- Daily workshop activities (e.g., choosing workshop topics, reviewing materials).
- Matched work placement activities (e.g., booking rooms and equipment, creating materials, coordinating jobs, developing job coaching materials).
- Evaluation and feedback planning.

This differs from the planning stages of a developed program format by the number of hours and meeting time required to develop or alter the program delivery schedule and opportunities.

Job matching

One essential component of VolunteerABLE includes providing meaningful and accessible work experiences through which clients learn and practice workplace life skills. Staff developed work placements and matched clients to jobs based on their unique needs, goals, abilities and interests. Staff designed work placements that suited the abilities of clients in the OSSD stream (e.g., data entry tasks requiring computer and literacy skills) as compared to typical experiences). Work placements had to: target relevant employment skills, occur naturally within the organization, and be beneficial to Holland Bloorview clients, families, and/or staff.

There were a total of nine work placements prepared for clients in this program. Some examples included:

Work Placement	Skills Involved
InstaOffice: Youth complete a variety of office and administrative tasks as submitted by employees/departments of Holland Bloorview. Job tasks included laminating, photocopying and creative projects.	time management, communication, attention to detail, computer skills, & organization
Fundraising Projects & Sales: Raise money for Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital Foundation by planning, advertising and running a bake sale.	teamwork, customer service, time management, & organization
Storybooks: Creating fill-in-the-blank style short stories for students in Holland Bloorview’s Integrated Education and Therapy Program.	communication, editing, creativity, time management & organization
Coffee Delivery: Deliver coffee and snack orders to hospital staff.	customer service, making change, organization, time management

After confirming potential work placements, staff undertook a job matching process to support a good match between the placement and the client’s strengths, interests, and abilities. To appropriately match clients with meaningful work experiences, getting to know each client and family was essential. Staff conducted 1:1 intake meetings with clients and a family member to explore the client’s goals and needs in entering the program. Intake meetings were structured to gain insights into clients’ previous work experiences (e.g., volunteering, chores, co-op), how they can be supported to participate in work activities, and what types of jobs they would like to try (e.g., customer service, kitchen skills, office/computer work) and performance and satisfaction with program goals. To match clients to work placements, staff considered questions such as:

- What types of jobs is the client interested in or passionate about?
- Is the job a good fit with the client’s abilities and strengths? Can they perform the job safely?
- Is the job a good fit for the client’s unique personality and preferences?
- What jobs are best aligned with the client’s future employment goals?

- Is the client open to trying something new?
- Does the client want to try a variety of jobs or focus on a larger project from start to finish?
What is the right balance of jobs?
- What resources (e.g., staff, equipment, space, job coaching materials) are needed to help clients accomplish the task?

Scheduling and program preparation

Before the start of the program, staff prepared daily schedules for the team that outlined the timing of client arrival/end-of-day, staff meetings, daily workshops, three work placements, lunch/social time, and breaks. The schedule also indicated what jobs the clients would be completing in each work placement, where the work placement would take place, and which staff would be supporting clients. Clients received a personalized schedule at the start of each day. A daily schedule helped staff coordinate program activities and provided youth with a structure to practice their time management skills.

Although the program was highly structured, the staff recognized and prepared for the fact that flexibility would be needed to meet clients' on-the-spot needs. For example, one client expressed an interest in baking and asked to participate in the bake sale fundraiser after the program had already started. Another client quickly gained independence and proficiency with one of his jobs, and staff were able to agilely shift his schedule to include back-up jobs he was interested in trying.

Program delivery

To set up clients for success in the program, staff held a virtual orientation session the week before the start of the program. The orientation covered staff introductions, a sample of a daily schedule, COVID-19 precautions, program goals, and reminders for what items clients should bring (e.g., laptop, lunch, water bottle). The orientation clearly communicated workplace expectations for clients upfront (e.g., "I am respectful to everyone and use positive language."). These workplace expectations were reinforced consistently throughout the program to help clients learn and apply professional standards for behavior. Staff purposefully modeled these behaviors throughout the program. Halfway through the week, staff reviewed a list of key worker expectations 1:1 with clients to re-establish expectations for appropriate workplace behavior and the differences between professional work and school environments (e.g. "My phone is my pocket or backpack unless I am setting an alarm or I am on break/lunch.").

The "VolunteerABLE March Break" program took place over five consecutive days from 9:30 am to 3:30 pm. In total, seven clients participated in the program. Program facilitators included five staff and one Holland Bloorview volunteer. Each day started with a 1-hour workshop that focused on a specific goal or skill that the clients were expected to work on for the day. The workshop was followed by a work placement, lunch/social time, and two more work placements. The days ended with a short continuation of the morning's workshop to bring some closure to the topic, and an "end of day hooray" (group reflection and celebration).

Staff met for one hour at the start of the day to prepare and for one hour at the end of the day to debrief. During these meetings, they reviewed the schedule, suggested alterations to the day, and discussed what coach strategies were most effective for clients.

Work life skills workshops and facilitated self-reflection

Supporting clients to reflect on their experiences is a core component of the VolunteerABLE program. In addition to gaining real-world work experiences, staff guided clients to reflect on what strategies helped them do their best work, their strengths and interests, and how their VolunteerABLE experiences could be applied towards future employment goals. This helps clients and families understand what aspects of the experience were meaningful and what some next steps might be to build on their experiences. Due to the shortened program format, staff prioritized workshop topics covering essential work life skills that would support clients in their next steps towards their employment goals. Workshop topics included:

1. Growth mindset and receiving/using feedback (adapting to challenges at work, developing a growth mindset, and becoming comfortable with receiving feedback)
2. Self-awareness: Using my strengths and setting goals (identifying strengths, 21st century skills, and setting SMART goals)
3. Disability at work/self-advocacy (working with a disability, understanding self-advocacy, practicing assertive communication)
4. Describing my job(s) (learn and practice how to describe a job professionally, practicing telling someone about my jobs)
5. Developing a professional profile (strengths, goals, job descriptions/photos, and “what helps me do my best at work”)

Workshops were led by two staff members and consisted of didactic teaching, small group activities (e.g., think-pair-share, role play) and group discussion, as well as independent work time with staff support as needed. The youth facilitator, with lived experience with disability and employment, was one of the staff members leading the workshops. Having a youth facilitator sharing real-world examples of successes and challenges helped create an open and engaging atmosphere. The facilitator shared relevant and relatable personal stories that helped clients learn and apply the work skills covered in the workshops.

Staff took a solution-focused approach to all program activities, including facilitation of the workshops and self-reflection activities. Staff asked clients questions that focused on possibilities and reinforced their strengths and resources. For example, one client had a goal to become more comfortable in a group setting, and staff prompted him to consider what had worked in the past and what he would be doing differently once he had achieved his goal.

Staff also facilitated opportunities for clients to practice their workshop skills in the workplace. For example, they had the opportunity to practice describing their job professionally when the director of the department visited to learn more about the VolunteerABLE program. The director briefly met with each client and asked questions about their jobs and what they liked about them.

Clients had the opportunity to introduce themselves, describe their jobs, and answer questions about their roles. Staff supported conversations by helping clients to provide more details about their jobs and highlighting the skills they had developed.

Team agility and challenges

The intensive program format involved long days of learning for clients. Throughout the week, it became clear that one client would benefit from a higher level of support given the novelty of the environment and high expectations for appropriate workplace behavior. The team took a flexible and personalized approach to programming and worked together to consider strategies that would best support the client's participation in the program. The team re-organized resources to have a consistent staff member supporting the client on a 1:1 basis. They learned that coaching strategies such as consistent reminders for "good worker rules", frequent breaks, and using a checklist helped the client be successful in their work. In addition, taking part in activities with a staff member in lieu of group workshops helped the client stay focused throughout the day. The team was agile to the client's needs, and the client was able to successfully complete the program.

Supporting independence in the workplace (fading job coaching supports)

After staff supported clients in establishing a routine in their work placements, they gradually faded job coaching supports over the week. This helped foster clients' confidence and skills for independence in the workplace. From the beginning, staff set clear expectations that clients were responsible for managing their time and "being in the right place at the right time". As the program progressed, staff provided less direct coaching to help clients manage their daily tasks and allowed them to learn from their mistakes. For example, on the fourth day of the program, the clients gathered for their break and many either socialized or spent time on their phones. When the break ended, most clients moved themselves on to their next activity, but two clients were using their phones and missed the cue that the break was over. Rather than step in immediately, the staff member waited for a few minutes, and then cued the clients to observe what was happening in the room around them. The clients realized that the break had ended, checked their schedules, and got themselves started on their next work placements.

Staff also gradually faded job coaching support for job tasks over the week. At the start of the program, staff used a variety of job coaching techniques (e.g. demonstration, step-by-step instruction) to help youth develop their skills. By the end of the week, staff took a step back, allowing clients to take more ownership of their job tasks, make choices about their work, and ask for help when needed. Staff encouraged clients to refer to their job coaching materials (e.g., check lists) before asking questions. Clients were also given opportunities to work as a team and teach each other how to complete job tasks. For example, a staff member encouraged two clients to work together to accomplish an office task. The client who had more experience with office tasks such as hole punching and photocopying demonstrated how to complete the tasks. Throughout the work placement, the client who was less familiar with the task asked his team member for feedback on the accuracy of his work. He also asked that his teammate accompany him to the photocopier so he "didn't make a mistake." By stepping back, staff facilitated positive, supportive interactions between clients that facilitated learning and growth in new areas.

At the end of the program, staff supported clients to reflect on their work experiences and complete a professional profile. Staff used the professional profiles during wrap-up meetings to facilitate discussions about clients and families' next steps in their employment journey. As a group, clients shared a skill they had learned in the program or something they had learned about themselves.

Examples included customer service, data entry, and sales. Some clients expressed they had learned they could perform job tasks they had tried for the first time. Staff concluded the program by sharing a slideshow celebrating the accomplishments of the group, including the number of work outputs (e.g., the number of dollars raised for the Foundation, the number of letters mailed to clients) and expressed gratitude for the positive impact clients made on the Holland Bloorview community.

Wrap-up meetings and next steps

To prepare for 1:1 meetings with clients and family, two post-program staff meetings (4 hours in total) were held to review clients' strengths, interests, workplace accommodation needs, effective job coaching strategies, and next steps. Staff summarized this information using a volunteering template summary. The volunteering summary also included a link to the clients' professional profile.

Staff encouraged clients to share their volunteering summary with teachers and relevant service providers after March Break. The volunteering summary could be used to help clients and families advocate for their needs and take further steps towards their employment goals. Staff also considered opportunities for each client to further support the development of work life skills and interests. Recommendations included participation in other Holland Bloorview programs and opportunities (e.g., life skills programs, youth advisory council) and activities in school or the community (e.g., extracurricular, co-op, and volunteering roles at school). Staff also identified other service providers clients and families could connect with (e.g., school guidance counselor) to further their goals towards employment. Staff met with each client and family to discuss the volunteering summary, review the work experiences clients had gained in the program, re-rate program goals, and plan for next steps. By the end of the program, staff reported that they had gained good insights into each clients' strengths, employment skills, and effective job coaching strategies. After the program, staff recommended that most clients move onto the next phase of the pathway to gain further support for job searching.

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Glossary

We have defined the terms below according to how *we* use them. This may be different from how *you* use them, and that is okay! If you are unsure, consult the list below to see the context of how the term is being used in this Implementation Guide.

Canadian Occupational Performance Measure (COPM): The COPM is a clinical tool through which clients can assess their own performance on a goal and their satisfaction with said performance, both on a scale of 1 to 10. Clients will usually rate their performance before and after an intervention, so that they can see if the intervention has made a meaningful difference. For information, see <https://www.thecopm.ca/>

Employment Pathways model: Holland Bloorview’s model that outlines the evidence-informed programming model that we created to improve participation in employment for youth with disabilities through direct, community, and system-based intervention (Bowman et al., 2023).

Evaluation: In this guide, we primarily refer to program evaluation. This type of evaluation is used to understand the outcomes and impacts of a program, service, or intervention through data. Data is collected in many ways (outcomes data, experiential data, observational data) and used to determine the successful delivery of programs. Evaluation outcomes can help to steer future program iterations and provide essential feedback to clients and staff (see also, Research).

Experiential work opportunity: A chance to try out a work skill or role in a true-to-life context. This might be a volunteer or work setting, or a simulated setting. Examples include volunteer placements, short-term job opportunities, and cooperative work experiences.

Family and community involvement: In this work, family and community involvement include both functional and emotional support of those in the client’s environment as they work toward employment goals. Such support can lead to natural opportunities to practice or extend the employment skills clients are learning (e.g. chores in the home, finding volunteering in community), and provides the confidence and comfort to know that they are believed in. Functional or logistical support is important to many young people, some examples include scheduling appointments, planning transit routes to new destinations, updating resumes to apply for jobs, etc.

Goal Attainment Scaling (GAS): GAS provides individualized and criterion-referenced measures of change following an intervention. Based on the client’s goals, a range of outcomes are defined, with their current (“baseline”) level being set at “-2”, their expected outcome being set at “0”, and +1 and +2 representing progressively better-than-expected outcomes. For more details, see https://www.researchgate.net/publication/232092303_Goal_Attainment_ScalingIts_Use_in_Evaluating_Pediatric_Therapy_Programs

Job coach/job coaching: A job coach can provide on-the-job support for a worker with a disability and their employer to enable job performance and workplace inclusion. The coach supports as the individual learns the job tasks and acclimatizes to the workplace culture and expectations. The coach may assist in adapting training materials and demonstrating communication strategies. The coach gradually fades support and may re-engage to support changes or as needed.

Lived experience: “By definition, persons with lived experience include those with first-hand experience of the topic of interest, caregivers and advocates. They provide crucial insight into what matters most for persons impacted by knowledge tools such as guideline recommendations” (RNAO, n.d.). In our case, we refer to clients and their caregivers and families.

Person-directed planning: ‘Person-directed planning services and supports’ means services and supports to assist persons with disabilities in identifying their life vision and goals and finding and using services and supports to meet their identified goals with the help of their families or significant others of their choice (Services and Supports, 2008).

Research: While research comes in many forms, in our guides we use the word “research” to refer to the methodical and scientific study of a topic, usually communicated through peer reviewed sources or trusted agencies/organizations. Research-based evidence drives our work and provides a credible, reliable source for program design and delivery (see also, Evaluation).

Self-discovery: Self-discovery is “the act or process of gaining knowledge or understanding of your abilities, character, and feelings” (Merriam-Webster, n.d.). In our work, self-discovery that is focused on employment participation starts with facilitated opportunities to consider one’s strengths, preferences, and curiosities, and then explore opportunities to connect those things to real work experiences through group and individual volunteer and work placements. The self-discovery process continues throughout one’s life as new experiences lead to new reflections on one’s desires, goals, and preferences.

Start-early (starting early): In our work, we define a “start-early” program to begin before an individual completes high school (Bowman et al., 2023).

Solution-focused approach: A solution-focused approach involves collaborating with clients and families to focus on solutions rather than problems. Service providers support clients and families in taking meaningful steps towards their goals and preferred futures by amplifying their strengths and resources.

Workplace life skills: These are often grouped with what are called “soft skills”, and represent the different types of knowledge that contribute to success across different workplace settings that are *not* the technical skills required for a specific job. These include appropriate communication, hygiene, punctuality, etc. Examples include [Canada’s “Skills for Success”](#) and [Ontario Ministry of Education Learning Skills and Work Habits](#).

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Contact

For further information on Holland Bloorview's Employment Pathways programs and services or for questions about this report, please contact:

Carolyn McDougall

Manager, Employment Pathways
cmcdougall@hollandbloorview.ca

Laura Bowman

Project Manager, Research & Evaluation
lbowman@hollandbloorview.ca

Employment Pathways

Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital
150 Kilgour Road
Toronto, Ontario
M4G 1R8

*For information on our programs and
Employment Pathways model:*

<https://hollandbloorview.ca/services/programs-services/youth-employment-participation-programs>

*For information for employers, see our
Employer Resource Hub:*

<https://hollandbloorview.ca/employer-resource-hub>