Our Purpose: To Create the Conditions for the Emergence of Valued Support Workers

Opportunity depends on…
- relationships – ability to collaborate
- how staff see people
- staff competency & connections
- commitment to changing community to increase inclusion
- level of control people have over how service $ is spent
- flexibility in use of resources
- design of services (e.g. support for people in own home vs group living)

Greater Opportunity for People with DD
- Contribution to community life
- Control of own life
- Secure home
- Support to learn
- Work & income

Devalued keepers
- cheap & segregating
- minimal physical tending

Costly keepers
- expensive institutionalization run for worker convenience & benefit

Better Working Conditions
- Fair wages & benefits
- Respect for good work
- Learning opportunities
- Rewards for increased knowledge & skills
- Job security

Workforce Sectors
- Overcomers
  - struggling for opportunity despite poor pay by making the most of collaboration
- Valued support workers
  - competently assisting self-direction & contribution to community life
- Status-quo Supporters
  - capable performance that keeps people inside the boundaries of existing agencies

Working conditions depend on…
- respect for direct service workers
- contribution & high expectations for performance
- level of rates for services
- agency policy on how much of available $ will go to direct support pay
- how rigidly regulations & agency policies dictate staff activities
- level of investment in learning for direct support workers in agency & community

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Georgia Workforce Development Discussion • 26 October 2002 • 1
5. Develop resources to support agencies to re-design themselves to increase opportunities & improve direct support worker performance

4. Enable a community of practice\(^*\) focused on improving teacher’s competencies in developing opportunities for people with developmental disabilities
   - Person-centered planning and Discovery approaches to job development
   - Systematic instruction
   - Community building
   - Positive behavior support
   - Positive approaches to wellness
   - Communication technologies & the presumption of competence

3. Develop a network to share learning about curricula and delivery methods
   - Learning based on creating an individual portfolio documenting changes in the lives of people receiving support from the learner
   - Web based instruction in collaboration with The College of Direct Support
   - Internal agency training
   - Curricula & instruction developed &/or delivered through colleges and universities
   - Curricula & instruction developed &/or delivered in collaboration with DTAE & local technical colleges
   - Maximize use of workforce development resources for funding & student support


1. Advocate to increase pay & benefits & reward acquisition of new skills for direct support workers