

# Integrated Resource Team (IRT)

The George Washington University

Center for Rehabilitation Counseling Research and Education (CRCRE)

[www.gwcrcre.org](http://www.gwcrcre.org)

# Agenda

- Quick Review of Charting the Life Course Life Domains
- Overview of the Integrated Resource Team (IRT) model
  - Goals/Benefits of the IRT
  - What is an IRT?
  - What an IRT is/is not
  - Who Participates in an IRT
  - The Phases of the IRT Model
  - The IRT Multi-Partner Agreement

# Charting the Life Course

The Life Domains



### **Daily Life & Employment**

What a person does as part of everyday life—school, employment, volunteering, communication, routines, life skills.



### **Community Living**

Where and how someone lives – housing and living options, community access, transportation, home adaptations and modifications.



### **Healthy Living**

Managing and accessing health care and staying well – medical, mental health, behavioral health, developmental, wellness and nutrition.



### **Safety & Security**

Staying safe and secure – emergencies, well-being, guardianship options, legal rights and issues.



### **Social & Spirituality**

Building friendships and relationships, leisure activities, personal networks, and faith community.



### **Advocacy & Engagement**

Building valued roles, making choices, setting goals, assuming responsibility and driving how one's own life is lived.

# **The Life Domains**

People lead whole lives made up of specific, connected, and integrated life domains that are important to a good quality of life. Life domains are the different aspects and experiences of life that we all consider as we age and grow. Individuals and families plan for the present and future life outcomes that take into account all life domains and have opportunities for life experiences that build self-determination, social capital, economic sufficiency, and community inclusion.

The life domains help us think about the current realities in our lives while also thinking about what life experiences we want to have, which leads us to the good life that we want.



[Exploring the Life Domains](#)



## EXPLORING LIFE POSSIBILITIES | DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITY SPECIFIC

There are many possibilities for people to create the life that reflects their own interests, strengths and preferences. This tool gives examples of different options and supports for a person with a disability. The top row is organized by Life Domains, the middle row highlights Current and New Possibilities happening around the country and the bottom row lists Traditional Possibilities that have existed for many years or might not be offered anymore.

This resource is designed to help you learn about existing possibilities or create new ones as you navigate and plan your good life.

	 Daily Life & Employment	 Community Living	 Healthy Living	 Safety & Security	 Social & Spirituality	 Advocacy & Engagement	 Supports to Families	 Integrated Supports
<div>Innovative Life Options</div> <div>↑</div> <div>↓</div> <div>Traditional Life Options</div>	New ideas; things that someone has tried, and you replicate or adapt for your own needs; things that haven't been thought of yet or tried.							
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Micro-enterprises</li> <li>• Careers</li> <li>• Competitive employment</li> <li>• College or tech school</li> <li>• Supported employment</li> <li>• Job coaches</li> <li>• Volunteering</li> <li>• Inclusive college programs</li> <li>• Online classes or training</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Co-ops</li> <li>• Adapted living space</li> <li>• Environmental technology</li> <li>• Shared living/ host family</li> <li>• Companion living</li> <li>• Public transportation</li> <li>• Home ownership</li> <li>• Independent Living Center</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gym membership</li> <li>• Community Health Centers</li> <li>• Health fairs</li> <li>• Family practice providers</li> <li>• In-home or community based therapies</li> <li>• Family member or school staff implements therapy</li> <li>• Tele-Medicine</li> <li>• Personal fitness devices or apps</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supported decision making</li> <li>• Limited/ joint bank account, automatic bill pay, personal contract, agency agreement</li> <li>• Personal contract/agency agreement</li> <li>• Personal safety devices</li> <li>• Remote monitoring</li> <li>• Special Needs Trust</li> <li>• Abuse/neglect hotlines</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Friendships</li> <li>• Dating/ relationships</li> <li>• Parks and Recreation</li> <li>• Inclusive faith community</li> <li>• Service/social club/groups</li> <li>• Special Olympics</li> <li>• Line passes</li> <li>• Social groups</li> <li>• Video chat or calls</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Voting</li> <li>• Neighborhood group or organization</li> <li>• Self-Determination</li> <li>• Visiting your legislator</li> <li>• Self-Advocacy groups</li> <li>• Advocacy training</li> <li>• Legislative advocacy events</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social Media</li> <li>• Technology</li> <li>• Blogs</li> <li>• Family &amp; friends</li> <li>• Parent-to-parent/Peer Support</li> <li>• Face-to-face support groups</li> <li>• Online Support Groups</li> <li>• Sib-shops</li> <li>• Sibling networks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exchange networks</li> <li>• Time banks</li> <li>• Human service co-ops</li> <li>• General education</li> <li>• Self-Directed Supports</li> <li>• \$\$ follows the person</li> <li>• Technology/ Doorbell or home security camera</li> <li>• Able Accounts</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sheltered workshops</li> <li>• Day habilitation</li> <li>• Work Crews or Enclaves</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Institutions</li> <li>• Intermediate Care Facility (ICF)</li> <li>• Group Homes</li> <li>• Independent Supported Living (ISL)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Center-based therapies (PT,OT, Speech,etc)</li> <li>• Specialized or institutional medical care</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Full or limited-guardianship</li> <li>• 24 hour paid staff and supervision</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Separate or special church service</li> <li>• Special group outings &amp; activities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Paid advocate or having someone else advocate on your behalf</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Institution or center based support group</li> <li>• Intensive all-day parent training</li> <li>• Disability specific groups</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Systems supports only</li> <li>• Provider and agency staff</li> </ul>



# Charting the Life Course - Life Domains In Action

## Charting the Life Course Life Domains

### Advocacy & Engagement

Building valued roles, making choices, setting goals, assuming responsibility and driving how one's life is lived.

### Social & Spirituality

Building friendships and relationships, leisure activities, personal networks, and faith community.



Advocacy & Engagement



Social & Spirituality



Daily Life & Employment



Community Living



Healthy Living



Safety & Security

### Daily Life & Employment

What a person does as part of everyday life-school, employment, volunteering, communication, routines, life skills.

### Community Living

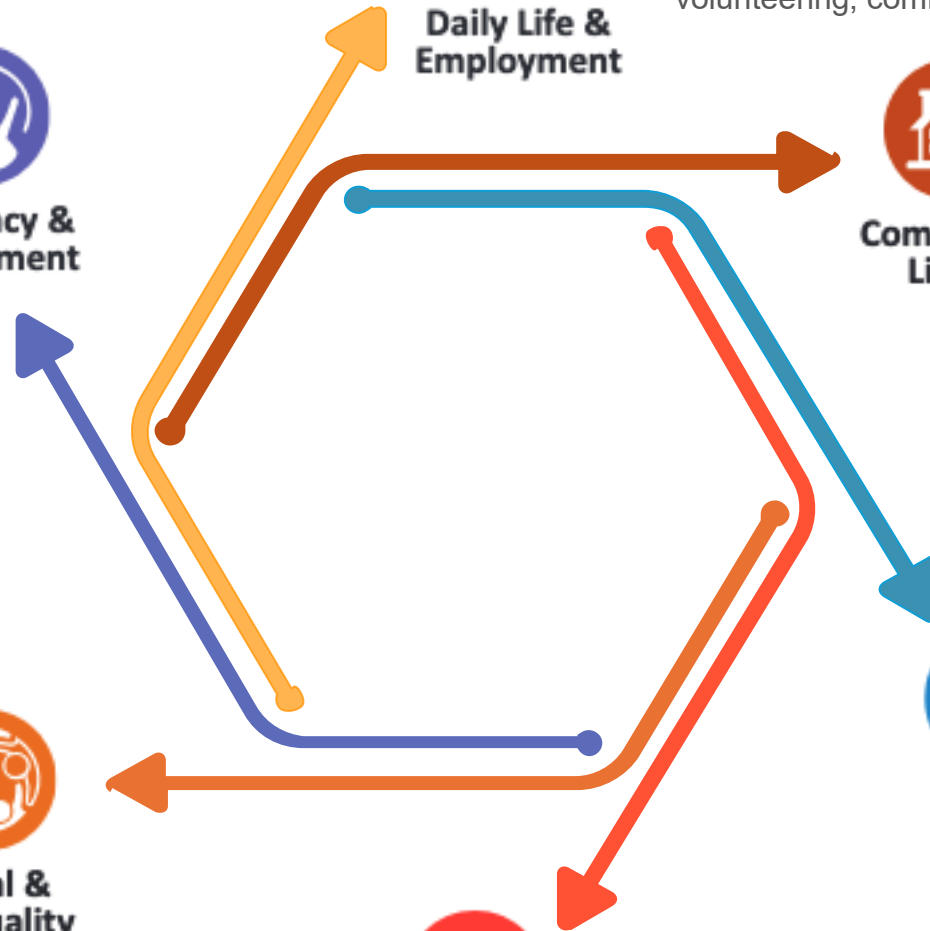
Where and how someone lives – housing and living options, community access, transportation, home adaptations and modifications.

### Healthy Living

Managing and accessing health care and staying well – medical, mental health, behavioral health, developmental, wellness and nutrition.

### Safety & Security

Staying safe and secure – emergencies, well-being, guardianship options, legal rights and issues.





Hi, I'm Haley – here are some things I would like you to know about me.

## Advocacy & Engagement

I am pretty shy so it is hard for me to advocate for myself. My mom and dad do a lot of the talking for me and don't offer me a lot of opportunities to make decisions.

## Social & Spirituality

I enjoy encouragement and positive reinforcement, and I smile when I am happy. I enjoy my friends once I get to know them, and I really like being around my non-disabled peers. I also like to watch TV shows and videos on my cell phone and like using technology as part of my daily life. I also enjoy Word Search puzzles. I also enjoy "girly" time with my mom where we do our make up and nails



## Daily Life & Employment

I graduated from high school and had work experiences at a thrift store and vet clinic while I was in high school. I work in a sheltered workshop and I hate my job and am ready to move. I want to work in the community. I am 29 years old. I only want to work part time in my current job. I can use paratransit transportation.



## Community Living

I currently live with my parents and enjoy having my family around, but I would like to live on my own or possibly with a roommate. My parents do not like for me to be home alone so I go to the workshop 5 days a week. My parents do a lot for - like my laundry and cooking all my meals. I use the paratransit which my parents schedule for me.



## Healthy Living

I do need assistance with my health and taking my medications. I will need someone to assist me in understanding my medications and supporting me with a health plan including with establishing a healthy diet.



## Safety & Security

I currently receive SSI and Medicaid but do not have a Medicaid Waiver. My parents do not have guardianship over me but my Mom is my representative payee and they handle all my finances and my social security.





## Haley's Resource and Support Needs

### Advocacy & Engagement

Needs assistance making a budget, understanding how much she can make without losing benefits, how to report wages to SSA and how to pay bills and resolve disputes as they arise.

### Social & Spirituality

Shy and needs support to find groups to connect with and make friends.



### Daily Life & Employment

Want to work in the community and be among my non-disabled peers. I may need assistance on the job initially to help me learn my duties.



### Community Living

Wants to live on own or with a roommate but still near the family. Currently uses paratransit services but wants to learn how to use the local public transit system.



### Healthy Living

Need supports to develop a healthy diet and learning to cook simple meals as well as understanding medical needs and taking medications safely.



### Safety & Security

Needs to learn how to be safe on the job and in the community and will need to become own representative payee



# Haley's Resource and Support Needs

## Advocacy & Engagement

Resources:

## Social & Spirituality

Resources:

## Daily Life & Employment

Resources:

## Community Living

Resources:

## Healthy Living

Resources:

## Safety & Security

Resources:



# The Integrated Resource Team

Introduction and Overview

# Goals & Benefits of the Integrated Resource Team (IRT)

## Goals

- Enhances cross-agency and cross system collaboration and communication to leverage resources in a more seamless way for individual participants.
- Promotes informal collaboration and relationship building among traditional and non-traditional partners.
- Allows members to coordinate resources (both financial & non-financial) at the participant level.
- Demonstrates the value of collaboration which makes everyone's job easier

## Benefits

- Promotes core rehabilitation values (self-determination & informed choice)
- Shared participants, shared resources, and shared outcomes = Shared Accountability
- Shared participants & resources = agencies can help more participants
- Enhanced cross-agency education through applied learning.
- Everyone gets credit for participants' outcomes

# What is an IRT?

- An IRT is initiated on behalf of an individual participant who is experiencing multiple challenges to employment and who will likely need to access multiple resources, supports, and programs across multiple systems, in order to address that one individual's specific needs.
- It brings together a team of diversified service providers, including community and partner agencies, and other traditional and non-traditional partners, who work together with the individual participant to strategize on how services, resources, and supports can be coordinated around that individual to help reach and maintain an employment goal.
- The participant, along with the team of service providers, comes together to establish three main components:
  - Employment goal
  - Lines of communication
  - Sequence of services

# What an IRT Is/Is Not...

- What an IRT *Is*:
  - An approach focused on a specific individual participant who is present and an integral part of the team.
  - Each IRT is unique and members of the IRT will change with each new IRT that is formed
  - The main purpose of an IRT is EMPLOYMENT.
- What an IRT is *NOT*:
  - an interagency committee consisting of various disability/community agencies who focuses on systemic or community-level issues where membership and participation is consistent and static
  - a multi-stakeholder group who comes together to talk about and/or “staff” current or potentially shared participants.
  - Business as usual (i.e. VR Counselor, VR-Paid Provider & Participant).

# Who *Might* Participate in an IRT?

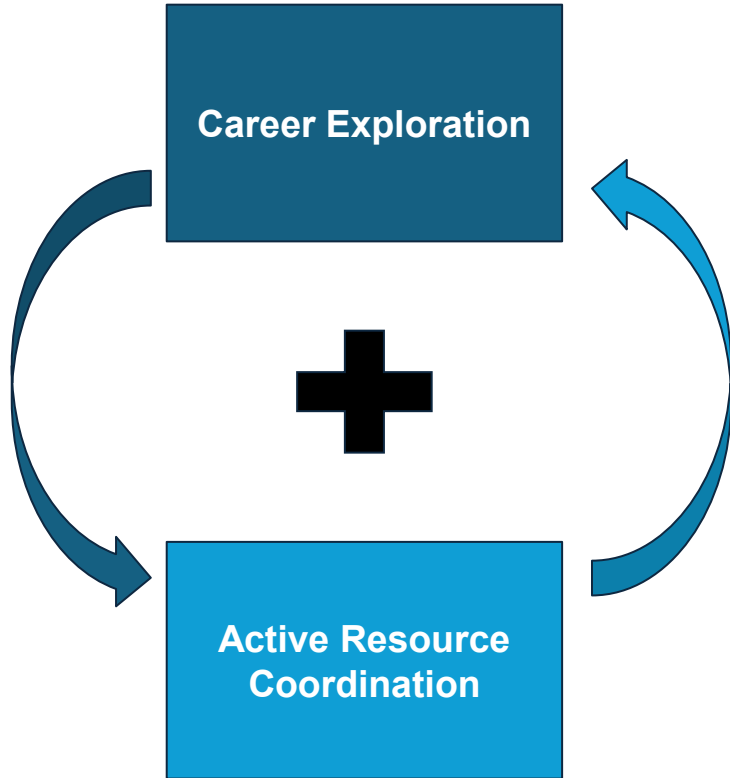
In addition to the participant (who is always present at an IRT meeting), an IRT may consist of a wide range of community partners, contracted providers, and/or others based on the participant's individual and unique needs and preferences.

- Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor
- Developmental Disability Specialist
- Behavioral Health Specialist
- Medicaid Waiver Case Manager
- Supported Employment Specialist (including contracted providers)
- Local School District
  - Special Education Coordinator
  - Special Education Teacher
  - Paraprofessional
- Small Business Administration
- Self Employment Specialist
- Community Work Incentive Coordinator
- Housing Provider
- Independent Living Center
- Workforce Partners
- Community Rehabilitation Providers
- Faith-Based Organization
- Volunteer Network
- Natural Supports/Family
- Representative Payee
- Peer/Family Mentor

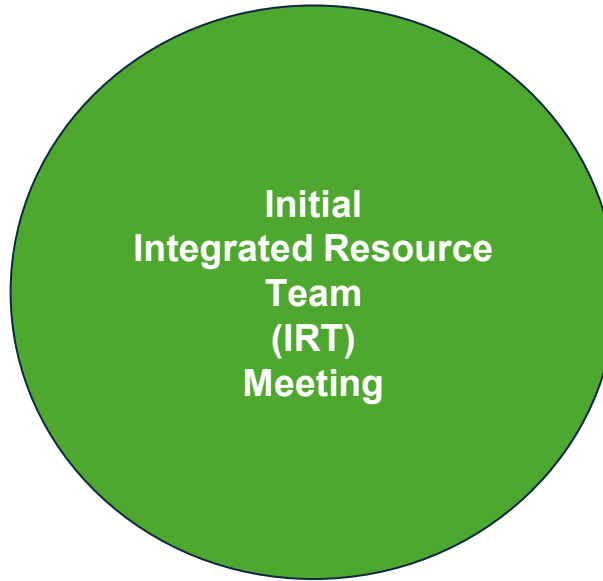
\*This is not an exhaustive  
list



## Phase I



## Phase II



## Phase III



# Career Exploration

The purpose of an IRT is to help the participant attain their specific competitive integrated employment goal.

- Career Exploration serves as the first step in developing an IRT and should result in:
  - An employment goal that is self-determined
  - Strength-based and Meets the Participant's Conditions
  - Concrete enough to build a plan around
  - Meets the required outcomes of the systems being accessed

# Vocational Counseling & Guidance

**Vocational counseling and guidance** are of critical importance in helping empower individuals as well as assist in making well-informed career decisions concerning their employment goal. Additionally, counseling and guidance are vital in the support for individuals in the areas of self-exploration, career exploration, informed decision-making and overcoming barriers.

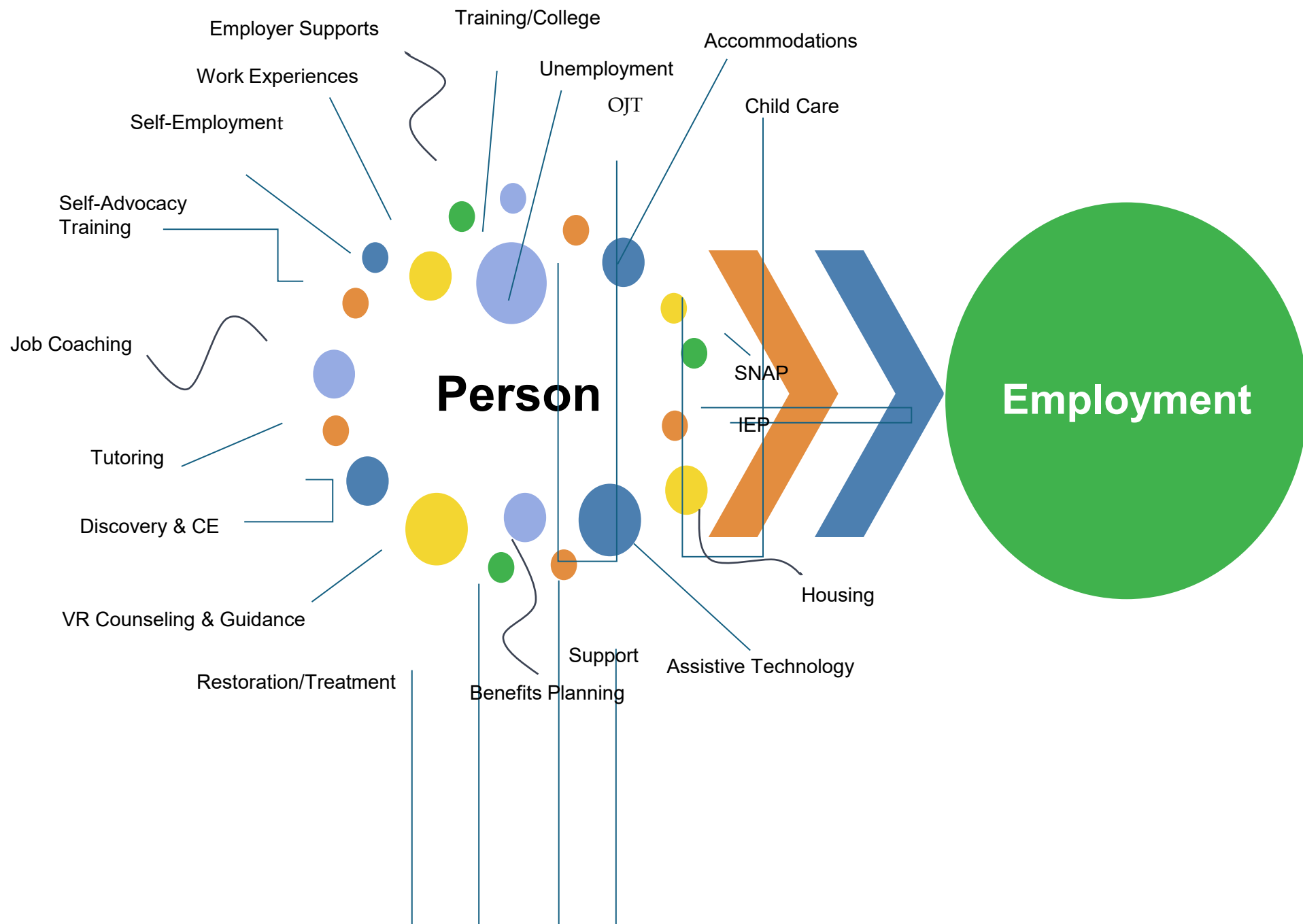
# Active Resource Coordination

Active Resource Coordination (ARC) includes:

- identifying the needed resources and appropriate and prioritized action steps to address specific, targeted barriers to employment experienced by an individual participant.
- helping the participant create a goal-specific (hint hint: employment goal) resource plan and involves directly assisting the participant to outreach and engage with multiple service providers to create the employment plan that accesses needed resources from those multiple systems.

# Active Resource Coordination vs. Simple Referral

- Active Resource Coordination is more than simple referral.
- Many agencies will provide information and referral for participants, but often the participant may not understand the relevance of a referral or the steps that need to be taken to engage with the referral that was made.
- Considerations to determine if your agency does active resource coordination or makes simple referrals:
  - Are referrals given before or after the development of an employment goal?
  - Is communication between service providers solely the responsibility of the participant?



# Forming the Integrated Resource Team <sup>(1)</sup>

Before approaching partners, a participant should be engaged by your system and positioned to access your system's resources.

For example:

- Should be determined eligible and enrolled in system's services
- Should have determined an employment goal that allows for the application of your system's resources
- Should be consulted and agree to all contacts and have a clear understanding of the IRT approach and its benefits



# Forming the Integrated Resource Team (2)

## The Participant

- What system(s) is your participant currently accessing besides your own?
- What services might your participant be eligible for that are relevant in the context of attaining their stated employment goal?
- In thinking through the *Charting the Life Course* domains what other services or supports might your participant need that may not be directly related to employment but are still essential to stability?
  - Daily Life and Employment
  - Community Living
  - Healthy Living
  - Safety & Security
  - Social and Spirituality
  - Advocacy & Engagement

# Forming the Integrated Resource Team <sup>(3)</sup>

## The Employment Goal

- What resources beyond those available in your system are critical to your participant's success in attaining and maintaining competitive integrated employment? Again, consider the *Charting the Life Course* domains.
- **Vocational counseling and guidance** are of critical importance in helping empower individuals as well as assist in making well-informed career decisions concerning their employment goal. Additionally, counseling and guidance are vital in the support for individuals in the areas of self-exploration, career exploration, informed decision-making and overcoming barriers.

# Forming the Integrated Resource Team <sup>(4)</sup>

- Once the participant is determined eligible by another service provider and these service providers are agreeable to partnering, discuss with your participant and/or their natural supports their role as an active member of the IRT.
- After establishing the participant's role, whenever possible, a face-to-face (whether virtually or physically) meeting should be convened with the partners and the participant.
- The purpose of the meeting is to reach consensus around three key parameters:
  - The participant's employment goal
  - Lines of communication
  - A sequence of services

# The IRT Meeting - Introductions, Purpose, Concerns

- Introductions of programs and connections with the participant to get all members of the IRT up to speed on programs and services involved with the participant
  - Whenever possible, introductions can be made by the participant with the support of their natural support or VR Counselor.
- Present information gathered about participant's goal choices, needs, and YOUR program's resource commitments
- Listen to any concerns expressed by partners in relation to identified needs concerning their field of expertise

# The IRT Meeting: Reaching Consensus – Employment Goal

## A Common Employment Goal

- While some service providers do not focus on employment directly, most of the time steady and stable employment can and does contribute to a service provider's goal in an indirect way.
- Each provider will have specific parameters as to HOW an employment outcome is defined.
- Discuss what resources are available and needed and what the prospective outcomes are expected based on accessing a certain resource.

# The IRT Meeting: Reaching Consensus – Lines of Communication

## Lines of Communication

- The participant agrees to communication between partners.
- Identify what information will be communicated.
- Identify how partners will be informed of progress or needs.

# The IRT Meeting: Reaching Consensus – Sequence of Services

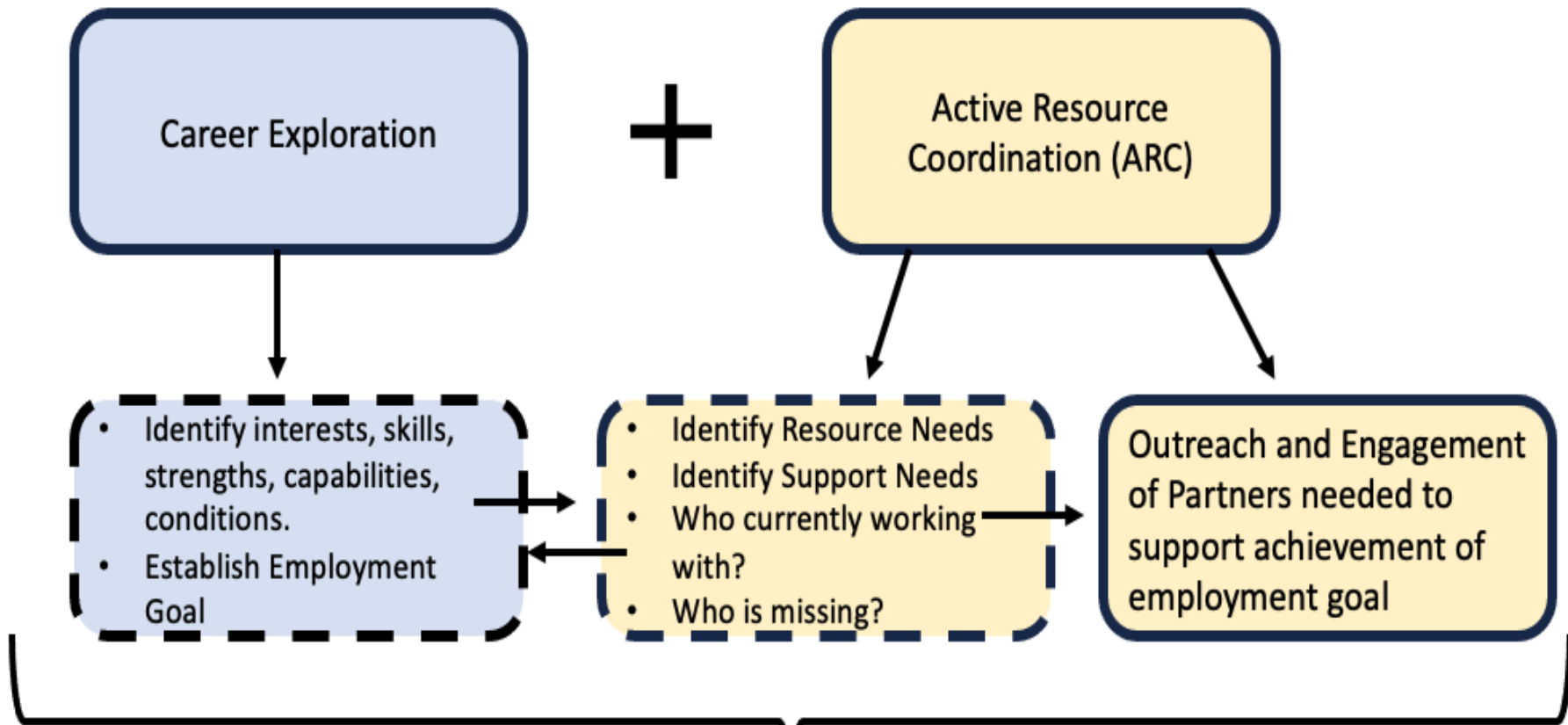
## Sequence of Services

- Determine which services are necessary and at what point in the process.
- Link services to milestones within the process.
- Discuss if/when services stop for each provider.

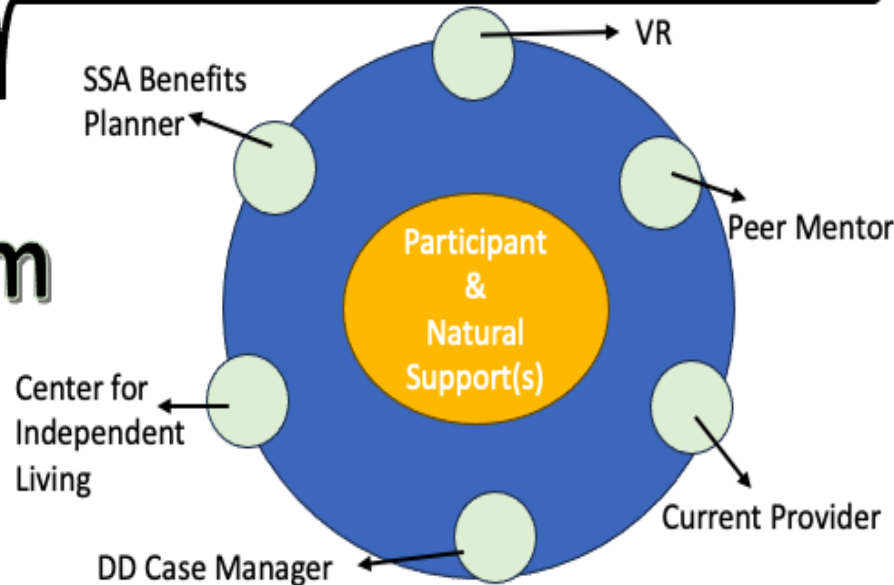


# The IRT Meeting: A Multi-Partner Agreement

- After reaching consensus around the employment goal and the lines of communication and using what is learned about the different services providers during the discussion around sequence of services, agencies agree to provide specific supports and resources based on what is available through their programs in support of the participant obtaining their employment goal.
- Agreement around a timeline or need for further IRT meetings should also be discussed.
- Each agency completes their own specific plan/required documentation and either indicates support provided by other agencies in their MIS system (if the MIS has that functionality) or case notes partner involvement.

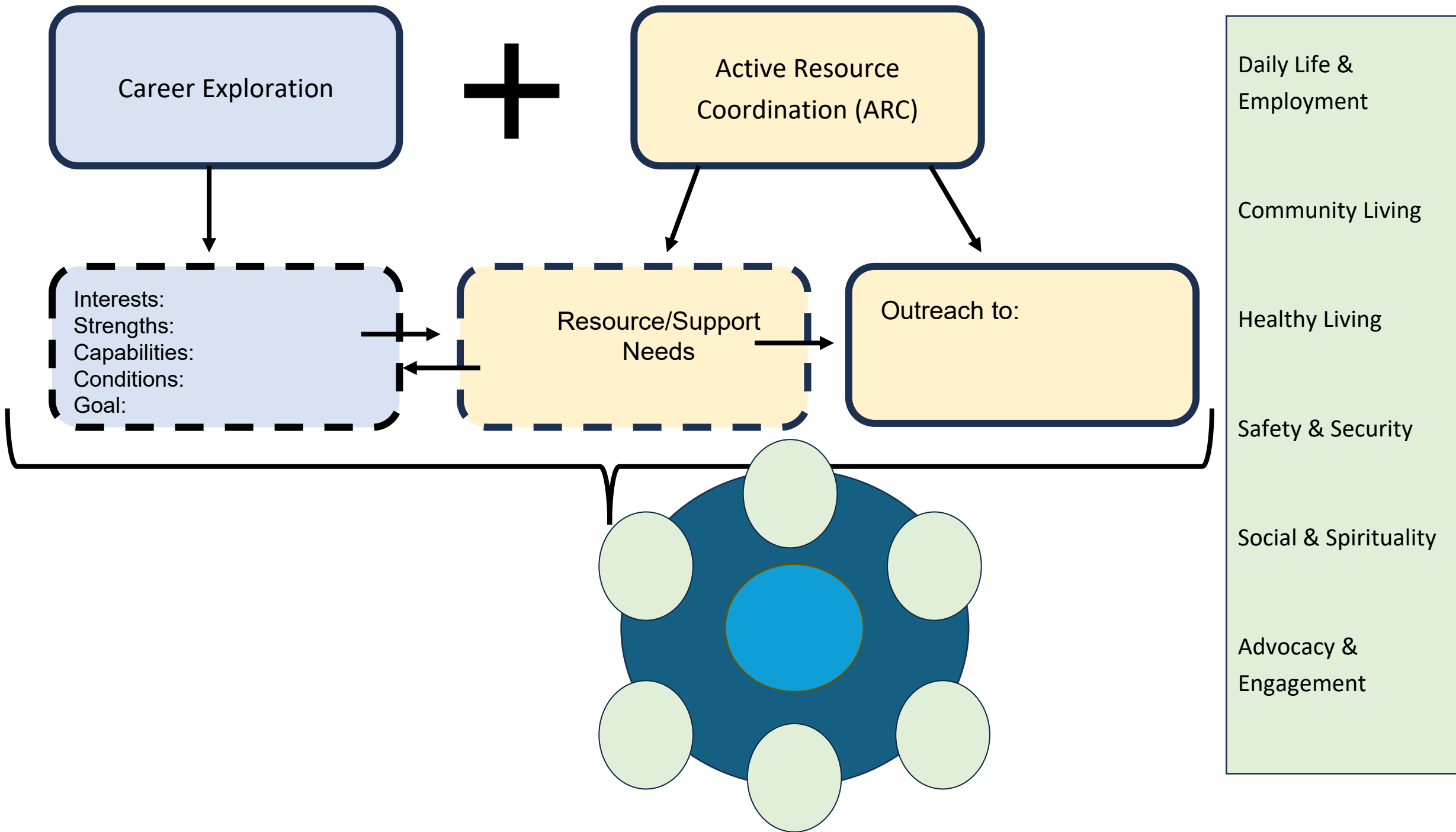


## Integrated Resource Team (IRT)



Examples of potential partners who might be engaged based on resource and support needs:

- Vocational Rehabilitation
- Current Employment Provider (i.e. 14c holder)
- Developmental Disability Program Case Manager
- Behavioral Health Case Manager
- Medicaid Waiver Case Manager
- Special Education (Local School District)
- Peer and/or Family Mentor
- Community Rehabilitation Provider
- Center for Independent Living
- SSA Benefits Planner
- Family/Natural Support
- Group Home Manager



# Resources

- Anderson, C.A., Hartman, E., & Ralston, D.J., (2021). *The family empowerment model: Improving employment for youth receiving supplemental security income*. White Paper prepared for the Office of Disability Employment Policy, U.S. Department of Labor. <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/odep/program-areas/individuals/youth/ssi-youth>
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- Powis, N. (2017). *CT Integrated Resource Team Presentation*. Live Training PowerPoint. Retrieved July 2018.
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