

Working with a Service Provider
(Personal Support Worker / Direct Support Professional / Caregiver)

Before You Meet for an Interview

Consider the following:

1. What could I use help with in my life at this time? Here are some examples:

- Housekeeping
- Laundry
- Grocery Shopping
- Meal planning
- Managing medications
- Going to the doctor
- Budgeting
- Paying bills
- Advocating for myself
- Creating a scheduling system so I get to appointments on time
- Personal care: eating, bathing dressing, personal hygiene
- Learning a new skill that makes me more independent, like riding the bus
- Making new friends
- Taking a class
- Getting out to do more activities in the community
- Improving communication skills or other personal skills
- Arranging transportation

2. What personal traits would I like my provider to have? Examples:

- Friendly
- Keeps appointments and shows up on time
- Responsible: does what they say they will do
- Patient with me when I'm frustrated or angry or _____
- Patient with me when I want them to explain something I don't understand
- Treats me with respect
- Doesn't do everything for me and asks me if I need help
- Talks to me not at me
- Sense of humor

3. Does it matter to me if my provider has a car and can provide transportation?

Yes /No If yes, why: _____

4. Does it matter to me if my provider smokes? Yes / No

5. Does it matter to me if my provider has worked with someone with a similar disability in the past?

Yes / No

6. Is there any specific training a provider needs to have to work with me?

Yes / No If so, what: _____

7. What will I have to do to make this partnership work? Examples:

- Be patient when my provider doesn't do everything I want- remember they are human.
- Communicate my needs clearly so my provider understands if they need to do something differently.
- Show up to appointments and be on time.
- Give the partnership time to grow.
- Be ready for my meetings with my provider when they arrive.

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Interviewing a New Service Provider

Usually you will have a Personal Agent or Service Coordinator with you to help with the interview process. You may want to share your answers to the questions above with the provider you are interviewing. Find out if they match up with what they offer. Remember, you're not looking for a perfect match, just one that's a good enough fit to start working together. You can always work on the partnership as time goes on or find a new provider if it doesn't work out.

Once You Hire a New Service Provider

Once you hire a new provider, you will both sign a contract that says the basics of *what* you will do together (related to your ISP goals). But what about discussing *how* you will work together?

You may want to brainstorm some agreements that help you work well together. Sit down together with a piece of paper and write them down. When you both agree to what's on the list, then you can sign it. You may want to have your Personal Agent or Service Coordinator there to help come up with ideas. Here are some examples:

(In the following example, Jane is the consumer and Maryann is the provider.)

We will keep appointments that we make together and be ready on time.

If Maryann is late, Jane will wait ten minutes and then call her. (Sometimes traffic is slow.)

If Jane doesn't answer the door when Maryann knocks, she will call Jane right away.

Jane can call Maryann any time between the hours of 9am and 6pm, but not on the weekend.

Maryann will not do any housekeeping until Jane explains exactly what she wants help with.

Maryann and Jane will do housekeeping together. Maryann will not do housekeeping unless Jane is helping.

Maryann will go to doctor's appointments with Jane and can ask the doctor questions to help Jane understand more about what the doctor is saying. Sometimes Jane may not want Maryann to come in with her to see the doctor. Then Maryann will wait in the waiting room.

Maryann and Jane will schedule one grocery-shopping outing per week. Jane will visit her payee before that outing to make sure she has money for shopping.

Maryann will be patient with Jane if Jane gets frustrated.

Jane will be patient with Maryann if Maryann is tired.

We will treat each other with respect.

This is just an example.

Your agreements can be anything you want.

Successful partnerships do not happen automatically. They happen by design. They require clear communication and adjustments along the way.