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# Individuals with Intellectual & Developmental Disabilities and Meaningful Employment

Bethanie V. Hernandez; Angela Labrie Blackwell, PhD, OTR; Evan Dean, PhD, OTR

## BACKGROUND

Individuals with disabilities tend to face poverty at a higher rate compared to those without disabilities (Kelley, 2016). Individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) benefit from a variety of supports to work in their communities. Not providing services to address these needs can cause increased unemployment rates and dependence on others. Currently, there is a lack of attention by OTP on supporting individuals with IDD (14-26 years) when acquiring meaningful employment. Increasing OTP's awareness about the relationship between self-determination and employment can promote more services. Self-Determination is about acting or causing things to happen in your life as you work toward your goals (Shogren et al., 2015), and has been linked to enhanced employment outcomes and higher quality of life (Mumbardo-Adam et al., 2020). Advocating for the use of the Self-Determined Career Design Model (SDCDM) by occupational therapy practitioners (OTP) when working with individuals with IDD will help provide employment opportunity, equality, and life-fulfillment to those searching for meaningful employment.

## PROBLEM

**There is little to no attention on acquisition and maintenance of meaningful employment for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (14-22 years) by occupational therapy practitioners in various pediatric settings.**

## PURPOSE

**The purpose of the proposed capstone is to create an advocacy initiative about Self-Determined Career Design Model to promote acquiring and maintaining meaningful employment for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (14-22 years) among occupational therapy practitioners in various pediatric settings.**

## METHODS

### Immersion Phase

Examine individuals with IDD, OTP, and non-OTP in various settings. Identify how SDCDM is delivered by research team via telehealth to individuals with IDD.

### Advocacy Development Phase

Design advocacy presentation and pamphlet for each setting. Design advocacy presentation feedback questionnaire.

### Dissemination Phase – Part One

Execute advocacy presentation and distribute advocacy pamphlet related to SDCDM to OTP.

### Evaluation Phase

Appraise the effectiveness of the presentations about SDCDM and OTP with individuals with IDD in each setting.

### Dissemination Phase – Part Two

Construct proposal for dissemination of capstone project to state occupational therapy community.

## ADVOCATING FOR SELF-DETERMINED CAREER DESIGN MODEL

### Theories & Frameworks:

1. Person-Environment-Occupation Performance (PEOP) Model
2. Framework of Occupational Justice
3. Self-Determined Career Design Model (SDCDM)

### Advocacy Presentation Goals:

1. Distinguish employment vs. meaningful employment.
2. Describe impact of meaningful employment on quality of life and well-being.
3. Identify goals of SDCDM.
4. Explain three phases of SDCDM with application to individuals with IDD.
5. Identify contact information to learn more about SDCDM training.



## DISCUSSION

### Strengths:

- Working in school setting
- Disseminating to OT students
- Collaborating with SDCDM Facilitators

### Limitations:

- Transportation availability
- Not partnering with outpatient setting

### Implications for Practice and Research:

- Educating OT students
- Applying SDCDM in school districts
- Disseminating SDCDM on a larger scale
- Addressing existing policy

### Significance:

- Enhanced OTP's role in school settings
- Educated OT students on transitional services
- Increased individuals with IDD's autonomy
- Fostered interdisciplinary teamwork with SDCDM

## REFERENCES

- Mumbardo-Adam, C., Vicente Sanchez, E., Simo-Pinatella, D., & Coma Rosello, T. (2020). Understanding practitioners' needs in supporting self-determination in people with intellectual disability. *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice*, 51(4), 341-351. <https://doi.org/10.1037/pro0000292>
- Shogren, K. A., Raley, S. K., Burkner, K. M., & Wehmeyer, M. L. (2019). *The Self-Determined Learning Model of Instruction Teacher's Guide*. Lawrence, KS: Kansas University Center on Developmental Disabilities.