



Innovative Employment Methods and Quality of Life

February 23, 2023



COLORADO OFFICE OF
EMPLOYMENT FIRST
— Work Elevated —

Colorado Office of Employment First (COEF)

Our Vision

A culture of inclusive, meaningful, and competitive employment for all people.

Our Mission

Leading Colorado toward equitable employment for all people with disabilities through collaboration, systems innovation, and training excellence.



Collaboration

Promoting work as part of a financially secure, healthy, and fulfilled life.



Systems Innovation

Convening to improve policies, remove barriers, bust myths, and promote technology.



Training Excellence

Elevating evidence-based strategies through training and learning communities.

Colorado Office of Employment First (COEF)

- COEF is proudly part of JFK Partners through an interagency agreement between the Colorado Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and CU School of Medicine
- We are available for training and technical assistance
 - State agencies, community centered boards (CCB), program approved service agencies (PASA), other direct service providers, advocacy organizations, individuals and their families, educators, medical providers and more

JFK Partners- LEND

The purpose of the LEND program is to improve the health and well-being of individuals with autism spectrum disorder and other developmental disabilities by preparing an interdisciplinary cadre of professionals to take leadership roles in providing services, improving systems of care, and building inclusive communities for these individuals and their families.



JFK Partners

UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO
ANSCHUTZ MEDICAL CAMPUS



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Webinar Objectives

- 1 **Understand the connection between employment and health outcomes**
- 2 **Exploration of philosophies and methods around employment and learning**
- 3 **Participate in a Gamification Demonstration**



Employment First & Social Determinants of Health



What is Employment First?

- A belief and **value** that all individuals regardless of level of disability are capable of full inclusion and working in competitive integrated employment (CIE)
- Competitive integrated employment is the **first and preferred outcome**, regardless of level of disability, in businesses found in the community, with regular compensation, equal advancement and equal interaction with non-disabled co-workers
- Systems Change and **culture shift** efforts in state agency employment-related policies, service delivery practices, and alignment of service funding structures to increase outcomes in competitive integrated employment

Why is Employment First Important?

National Core Indicators:

- Nearly 85% of individuals with significant disabilities are unemployed or underemployed

IPS Employment Center:

- 65% of individuals with significant mental illness want to work, only 2% have access to an evidenced-based Supported Employment Program

Disability Type	Participation Rate (%)
Cognitive Disability	15%
Mental Disability	25%
Any Disability	34%
No Disability	80%

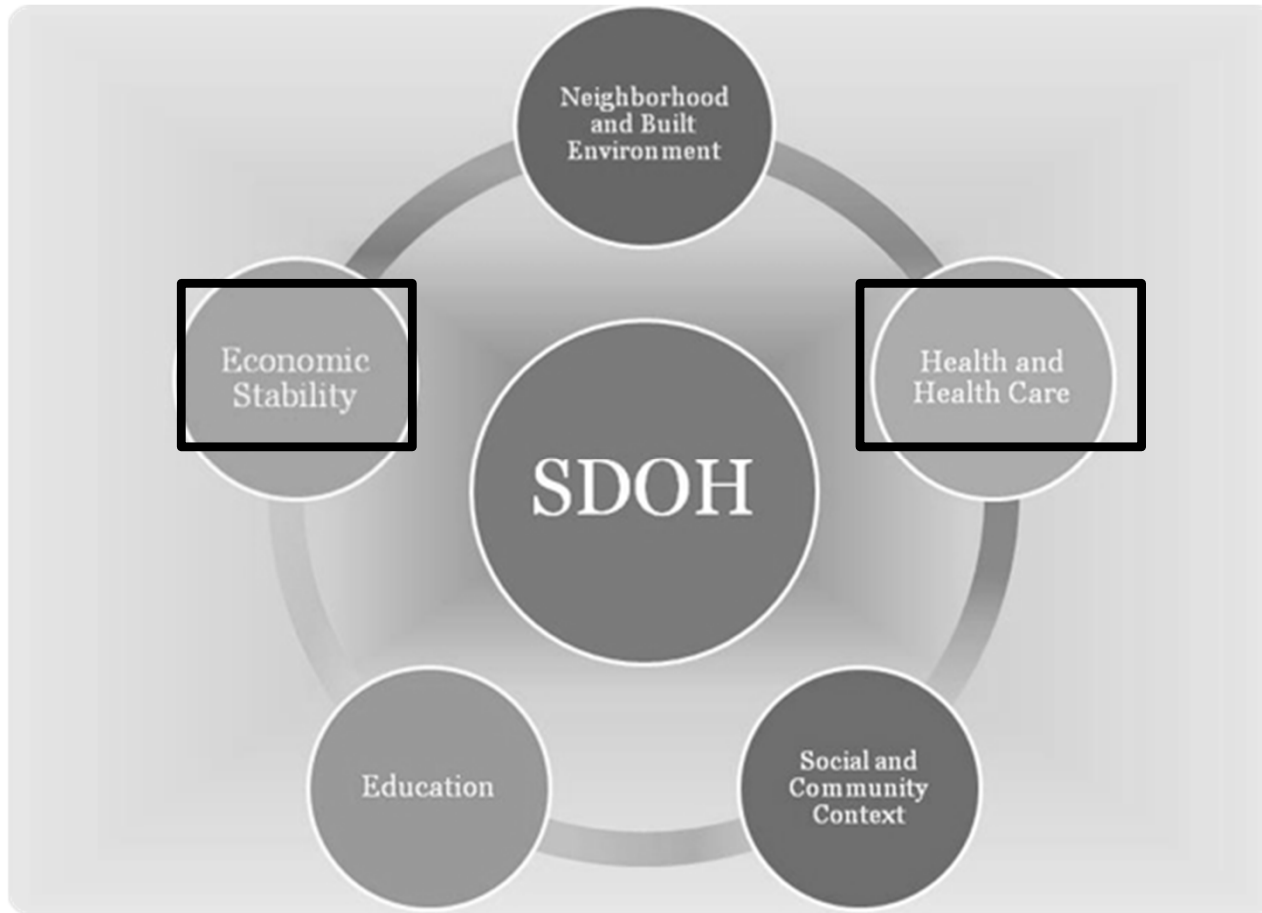


American Community Survey (2018)



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Social Determinants of Health



<https://www.healthypeople.gov/2020/topics-objectives/topic/social-determinants-of-health>



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Employment as a Social Determinant of Health

- Unemployment can have negative health consequences
- Those who are unemployed report feelings of depression, anxiety, low self-esteem, and demoralization
- Unemployed individuals tend to suffer more from stress-related illnesses such as high blood pressure, stroke, heart attack, heart disease, and arthritis

- Job benefits such as health insurance, paid sick leave, and parental leave can affect the health of employed individuals
- Periods of economic recession are possibly associated with higher prevalence of mental health and substance use disorders, and other physical health concerns
 - Employment is a protective factor (SAMHSA, 2020)



Employment and Health

- Engaging in employment can reduce healthcare costs
 - Medicaid health costs reduced by \$161 per member, per month when members were engaged in an employment support program (Momany, Schartz, Nguyen, Carter, & Strong, 2012)
- Employment to achieve greater **health equity** for people with disabilities
- **Many employment supports are available through federal and state programs**

Zero Exclusion & Full Inclusion

- All people interested in working have access to employment services regardless of job readiness factors, symptoms, history of violent behavior, prior convictions, cognition impairments, treatment non-adherence, and personal presentation
- Zero exclusion criteria translate into full inclusion of **ALL** people with disabilities into the workforce and their communities





Innovative Approaches, Philosophies, and Methods



Philosophies & Approaches

Self-Determination: The ability to know and believe in oneself toward achieving something that is wanted

- Self-determination contributes to positive results in areas such as employment, education, community living, and improved quality of life (Wehmyer et al., 2003)

Person-Centeredness: The belief and mindset that all people should remain at the center of all decisions regarding their own life

- Empowers people to advocate for what they want and what they do not want



Methods

Customized Employment: A universal employment strategy that uses flexible strategies toward competitive integrated employment

- A “no fail process” that presumes everyone can work
- Determination of the person’s strengths, skills, interests, and needs/supports for success

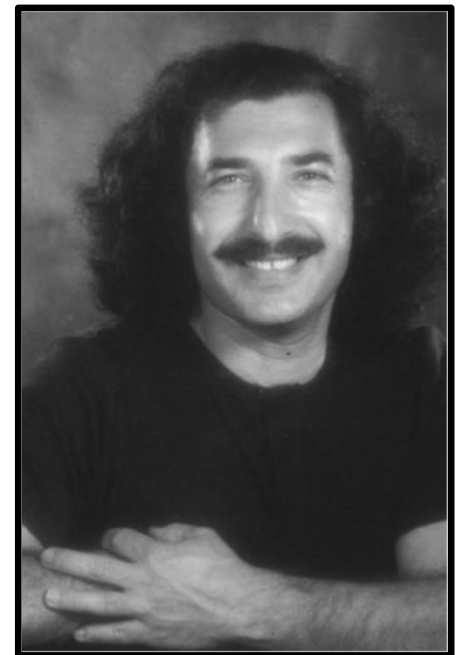
Systematic Instruction: Planning and implementing individualized instruction for learning how to complete a task(s)

- Matching the learning style and methods for providing instruction
- Everyone can and is capable of learning
 - ‘Presumed competency’



Overview of Systematic Instruction

- **History:** Dr. Marc Gold – founder of "Try Another Way", a values-based systematic instruction model
- **Brief description:** "The process of transferring the "correct" image in your head to trainee's performance"
- **The Seven-Phase Sequence:** the process of balancing the natural capacity of the workplace with the needs of an employee

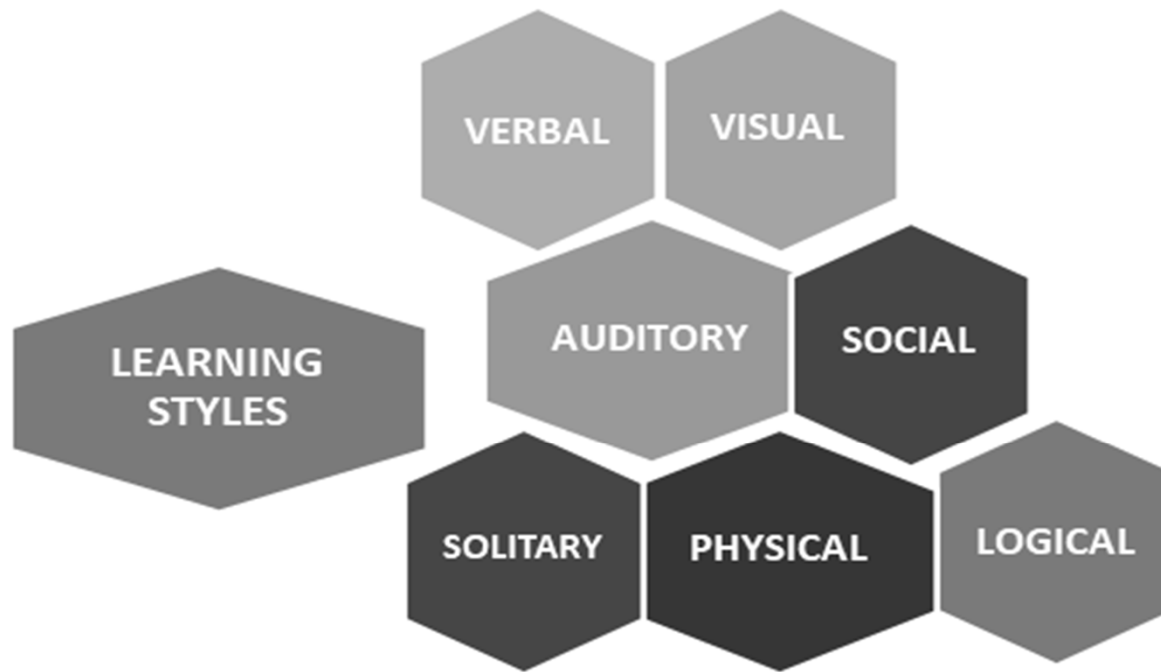


Marc Gold



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Teaching & Training Strategies

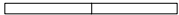


Support through Technology

- Technology can be an easy and accessible form of support for learning and completing tasks
- Technology is a non-intrusive support that is:
 - Individualized for the person
 - Individualized for the environment
 - Individualized for the tasks

Assistive Technology

- Definition: technology used by people with disabilities to accomplish tasks and perform functions that might otherwise be difficult or impossible
- This includes low-tech, high-tech, and free or paid application options
- Resources:
 - University of Colorado Center for Inclusive Design and Engineering (CIDE)
 - Assistive Technology program- assessments/evaluations/training
 - Job Accommodation Network: <https://askjan.org/>



Gamification Learning Experience



Resources

- [Center for Inclusive Design and Engineering](#)
- [Social Determinants of Health](#)
- [JAN - Job Accommodation Network \(askjan.org\)](#)



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Thank you!

