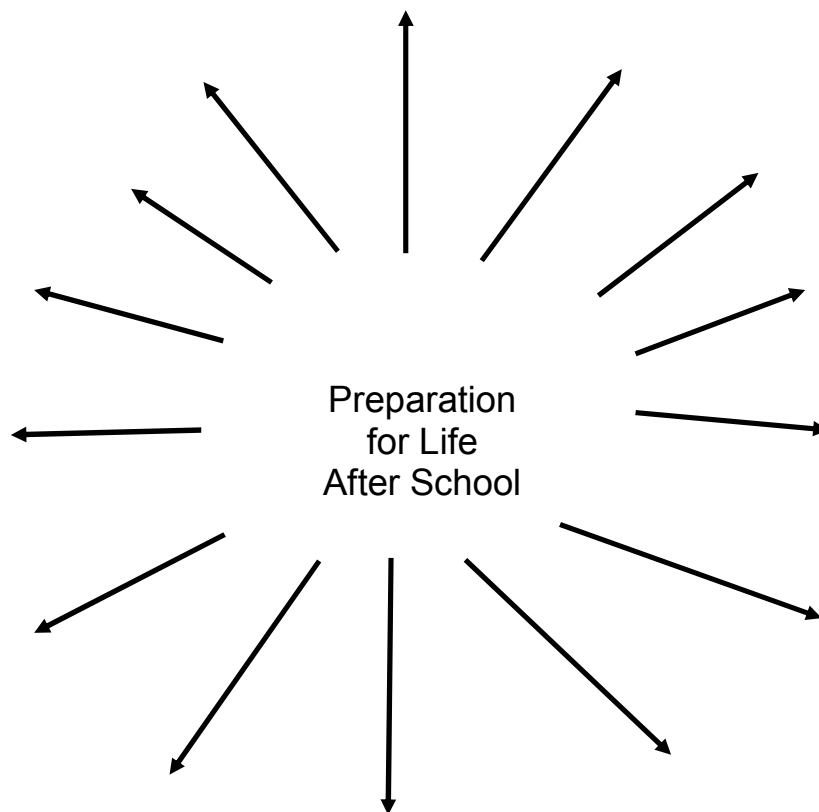


Young People Designing Their Own Futures Transition Project



Presented by Grant Cleland and Karen Rickerby
in association with the Community Employment Group and CCS



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If you would like any further information on this project, please contact either:
Grant Cleland from Creative Solutions at grant@creativesolutions.co.nz
Karen Rickerby from New Perspectives at karen@newperspectives.co.nz

Young People Designing Their Own Futures Transition Project

1. Introduction

National and international research shows that disabled people are under-represented in tertiary education and over-represented in low socio-economic groups. The low levels of academic success of disabled students in both secondary and tertiary settings has an impact on their ability to gain employment.¹

Robinson, Bishop & Woodman's² review of the literature describes a failure of mainstreaming policies to result in improved access to supported employment for school leavers. To some extent this is surprising given the raised expectations of students who have been in inclusive settings now making it into senior secondary settings. They reported that there is very little research that describes the impact of mainstreaming on supported employment for disabled students.

When we started this project our ultimate goal was to work intensively with a small group of up to 10 young people with congenital disability, aged 15 years and over, who were in the transition phase from school to work. We wanted to use strategies aligned to the Social Model of Disability to break down the barriers to participation and achievement in education and employment. Our aim was to link the young people in with services and supports that enabled them to actively plan and implement their career path choices and overcome the barriers to participation and achievement in education and employment.

The outcomes we hoped to achieve were a more planned and effective transition process, specific programmes to overcome barriers to participation and achievement, and real jobs and career choices that utilise the dreams and skills of the students involved.

This is a two-to-three year project that will involve three stages.

- Development and Scoping of the Project.
- Implementation including piloting some new ideas in some Christchurch schools.
- Evaluation and follow-up.

This report discusses the outcomes of phase one.

2. Aims and Objectives of Phase One

The *aim* of this phase of the research project was to:

- a. Identify barriers affecting the transition of disabled youth from school into employment.
- b. Develop the framework of a support model that facilitates inter-agency coordination in support of disabled youth and which is targeted towards the involvement of young people in the decision making regarding their career, training and participation pathways.
- c. Identify potential stakeholders/funders to support a pilot programme of the model developed.

¹ Lunt, N. (2003). Disabled people within the UK labour market: Evidence from the United Kingdom and New Zealand. *New Zealand Journal of Disability Studies*, 10, 5-30.

² Robinson, D., Bishop, K. & Woodman, B. (2000). Students making it into paid employment: A report of a pilot supported employment programme. *New Zealand Journal of Disability Studies*, 8, 65-87.

3. Acknowledgements

At this point we would like to thank and acknowledge all of the current and past disabled students, parents, carers, staff within schools and other stakeholders involved with transition who have provided their personal information for this project. It is this feedback that has made this report so valuable.

We would also like to thank and acknowledge:

- Murray Griffin and Maryanne Lomax from the Community Employment Group of the Department of Labour, for their encouragement and support with ideas and seeking funding for this project.
- The wonderful support we have received from the CCS Canterbury West Coast Branch, in particular Tania Batley and David Matthews.
- Missy Morton, a Senior Lecturer and the Research Coordinator within the School of Professional Development at the Christchurch College of Education. Missy has been a sounding board for our ideas and has supervised and guided our practice with this project.

4. Background

There are significantly more disabled people without qualifications and fewer with school or post-school qualifications, compared to the general population. Disabled people who require intensive assistance on a daily basis are also the most likely to have no qualifications and least likely to have post-secondary qualifications. It is therefore likely that these trends contribute to the fact that disabled people are less likely to be employed, when compared to the general population, Maori, Pacific Island people and other minorities groups.

In 2001 Statistics New Zealand ³ found that:

- 39% of disabled adults have no educational qualification, compared with 24% of those adults without disability.
- 56 percent of disabled people have a gross personal income of less than \$15,000.
- Fewer disabled people had school or post-school qualifications, compared to the general population.

Educational Outcomes for People Over 15 years of age	Disabled People	People <u>without</u> Disability
Highest qualification - school.	34%	42%
Highest qualification – tertiary.	27%	34%

In 1998 the Ministry of Health ⁴ reported that disabled people who require intensive assistance on a daily basis were:

- The most likely to have no qualifications (46%).
- The least likely to have post-secondary qualifications (21%).
- More likely to have no qualification if they had multiple disability. The percentage of those with multiple disability and without qualifications was 21% higher than adults with a single disability.

³ *Statistics New Zealand Disability Counts 2001*. Statistics New Zealand. 2001. p. 15-18, 26, 54-55, 66.

⁴ *Disability in New Zealand*. Ministry of Health. 1998. p. 46, 47, 50, 90, 169.

This project aims to address some of these issues. We want to identify barriers to learning, participation and achievement for disabled students. We will then pilot solutions that we hope will lead to improvements in learning, participation and achievement rates of disabled students at secondary school and their preparation for life after school.

This aims of this project are aligned with various government priorities for disabled people. The New Zealand Disability Strategy ⁵ guides Government action to promote a more inclusive society. This includes the following objectives relevant to this project:

Objective 3:

Providing the best education for disabled people.

Actions

- 3.6 Improve schools' responsiveness and accountability to the needs of disabled students.
- 3.8 Improve post-compulsory education options for disabled people, including: promoting best practice, providing career guidance, increasing lifelong opportunities for learning and better aligning financial support with education opportunities.

Objective 4:

Provide opportunities in employment and economic development for disabled people.

Actions

- 4.6 Ensure a smooth transition from school to work.

Objective 13:

Enable disabled children and youth to lead full and active lives.

Actions

- 13.6 Improve support for disabled children and youth during transition from early childhood education, primary and secondary school, tertiary education and employment.
- 13.7 Introduce ways of involving disabled children and youth in decision making and giving them greater control over their lives.

The government has also developed 'Pathways to Inclusion' ⁶ which aims to increase the numbers of disabled people moving from vocational services to open employment settings. This includes objectives and action that aim to ensure:

1. Smooth transition from school to work.
2. Services that provide the foundation skills that are vital part for people to participate in communities, employment and training.
3. Practical options to removing barriers to participation in society and improve access to community services and facilities.

⁵ *The New Zealand Disability Strategy: Making a World of Difference Whakanui Oranga*. Ministry of Health. 2001. p. 16, 17, 20, 27.

⁶ *Pathways to Inclusion*, Department of Labour, 2001. p. 12- 16.

Given these specific government objectives for disabled people, the Schooling Strategy and Tertiary Education Strategy 2002-07 recognise the need for change. The Schooling Strategy ⁷ states that:

“Education is at the heart of this government’s aims for New Zealand’s sustainable social and economic development. This government wants all children and young people to participate and succeed in all stages of education, to make sound transitions into employment, and to contribute socially and economically in ways that benefit themselves and others, now and in the future.”

This includes improving support for students as they make transitions to further education, training or work and improving the ability to monitor student participation. Essentially the government wants all school leavers, including disabled students, making successful transition to further education, training or employment.

This is reinforced by the Tertiary Education Strategy 2002-07. ⁸ It includes objectives such as

Strategy Three: Raise foundation skills so that all people can participate in our knowledge society.

Objective 21: Learners are equipped to make informed choices about career and learning options.

The vision for this strategy and objective states that by 2007:

- Information and advice about the employment opportunities and experiences of specific groups, including disabled students, will be readily available.

Objective 15: Clearer accountability for quality and outcomes within foundation education, including a greater focus on assessment.

The vision for this strategy and objective states that by 2007:

- We will have achieved improvements in the number and diversity of learners accessing and succeeding in obtaining foundation skills through tertiary education, particularly amongst priority groups with lower literacy levels, including disabled students.

5. Methodology

The methodology for this project is Participatory Action Research (PAR). PAR frequently emerges in situations where people want to make changes after critical reflection, when they want to think about where they are now, how things came to be that way and how, in practice, things might be changed. ⁹

The participants in this stage of the project were key stakeholders involved with transition from school, including:

- a. Disabled students currently attending secondary school.
- b. Parents and other caregivers.
- c. Other disabled people who had left school and were able to give their experience of how their transition process had prepared them for life after school.

⁷ Making a Bigger Difference for all Students: A Schooling Strategy Discussion Document. Ministry of Education, 2004. p. 5, 8.

⁸ *Tertiary Education Strategy 2002 – 07*. Ministry of Education, May 2002. p. 1- 47.

⁹ Kemmis, S. & McTaggart, R. (2000). Participatory action research. In N. Denzin & Y. Lincoln (Eds). *Handbook of Qualitative Research* (2nd Ed.). Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, pp. 567-605.

The PAR design is typical of the Action Research process as described by Kemmis and McTaggart ¹⁰ and further elaborated by others such as Mills.¹¹

<p>Cycle 1 Plan Act and Observe Critically reflect, which leads to</p>	<p>Cycle 2 Revised plan, and so on.</p>
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The *steps* in the process (from Kemmis & McTaggart, 1988) are:

1. Reconnaissance – initial reflection on the situation in light of the concern or interest. What is the basis for planning the first step of action?

Before planning to improve a situation, the group needs to address these questions:

- a. What is the area of interest? Kemmis & McTaggart call this the *thematic concern*, and caution against confusing this with a method for intervention.
 - b. What are we currently doing? This is an initial analysis of relevant activities and practices, social relationships and organisation.
 - c. How is our work informed by our own and others’ values? By educational theories?
2. Planning for improvement, based on the initial reflection – a plan that is able to be justified and agreed upon by all members of the action research group.
 - a. How will any change be monitored? How will this be recorded?
 - b. What will help in the acceptance of new ideas or practices?
 3. Enacting the plan and observing how it works, which results in an account of an effort to change.
 4. Reflection – the stage of analysis, interpretation, and explanation. The aim is to review what happened, consider the constraints and opportunities, achievements and limitations, unintended outcomes, and to begin to think about implications for future actions.

Phase one has essentially involved scoping the project, identifying potential barriers and solutions to consider in phase two, implementation, where we hope to pilot some new ideas in some Christchurch schools. Our method for phase one included holding four focus groups with a range of stakeholders that the transition process within schools has an impact on.

They were largely associated with CCS Canterbury/West Coast and included:

- a. Disabled students currently attending secondary school. They were considered to be the critical reference group for the project and included a range of ages, gender, schools and disabilities. We have referred to this group as the ‘current students’.
- b. Parents and other caregivers.
- c. Other disabled people who had left school and were able to give their experience of how their transition process had prepared them for life after school. We have referred to this group as the ‘past students’.

¹⁰ Kemmis, S. & McTaggart, R. (Eds) (1988). *The action research planner*. Victoria: Deakin University Press.

¹¹ Mills, G.E. (2003). *Action research: a guide for the teacher researcher (2nd ed.)* Upper Saddle River, NJ: Merrill Prentice Hall.

During this phase we also held brief discussions with a range of other stakeholders to get their perspective on the transition process. This has included for example different schools, teachers, transition teachers, counselors, therapists, staff from the Ministry of Education and CCS.

Missy Morton from the Christchurch College of Education has supervised our practice with this project. We have also worked closely with Tania Batley, the Transition Worker at CCS Canterbury West Coast, who has been our link within CCS, providing support with publicizing and arranging focus groups. Their contribution has been extremely valuable.

Participants in the focus groups were recruited by firstly sending out an invitation to the students and parents/carers associated with the CCS transition service. In addition, we held an extra focus group at one unit for disabled students at a Christchurch high school and another for past students who had shown an interest in the project. All focus group participants signed a consent form, which was explained to them at the beginning of the meeting. This covered the purpose of the research, the information that they had received about the project and how the information that they would give as part of this project would be used (Appendix 2).

We used a standard process with each focus group, which covered the following:

1. What is Transition?
Firstly we gave our definition of transition. This was “Transition is the cooperative process used to assist a student to move from school to the next stage in life. The next stage could involve further study, employment or other meaningful activities.”
2. Then we asked and discussed some key questions that covered the following themes:
 - a. What are the students’ hopes and dreams?
 - b. Design the best programme to help students prepare for life after school. Firstly have a think about what does it look like? Here are some areas to think about:
 - What planning is involved?
 - What information do you want?
 - How would you like to get that information?
 - What support do you require?
 - Who should be involved?
 - What opportunities would you need?
 - When should you start this programme?
 - c. Is the current system meeting your expectations?
 - d. If so, what has worked that you want to share with others?
 - e. If not, why not? What is needed to make it better?
 - f. Do you think it is meeting the needs of other students with disabilities that you know?
For example, those students with high support needs?

With each focus group, participants were given the opportunity to work individually or in groups. On most occasions they choose to work in groups. With each group we went over some ground rules to ensure safety (Appendix 1). Written notes and a Dictaphone were used to record the process and consent was also obtained for this.

After each focus group the notes were collated and sent out to the participants for their confirmation or amendments. This was followed up with a telephone call or an email to ensure people had the opportunity to comment on the accuracy of the data collated.

Prior to hosting the focus groups, we attended a transition event held by CCS. This involved disabled people and their parents/carers who had an interest in transition. They talked about their experiences and the issues and barriers that they faced. This provided valuable information which helped with the development of the focus groups. This feedback reflects the information we have received from focus groups and is also included with Appendix 3.

Throughout this project and report we have used the term ‘disabled’ people and students. This reflects the New Zealand Disability Strategy which describes disability as “the process which happens when one group of people create barriers by designing a world only for their way of living, taking no account of the *impairments* other people have.”¹² Therefore we consider that people have impairments and are disabled by their environment.

¹² *The New Zealand Disability Strategy: Making a World of Difference Whakamui Oranga*. Ministry of Health, 2001, p. 1.

6. Focus Group Feedback and Analysis

“Something needs to be done!!!”

The following section is an overview and analysis of the feedback we received from the four focus groups. This includes the issues and barriers identified by current students, parents, caregivers and past students, that we spoke to. These issues and barriers have been divided into key topic areas. These areas are the themes that emerged from the responses to the questions posed in the focus groups. Appendix 3 provides the complete overview of the feedback from each of these focus groups.

Hopes and Dreams

We asked the participants in the project what their hopes and dreams for the future were.

a. Feedback from Current students:

- Current students were very clear about their career goals for the future.
- Some wanted to do further study to achieve their career goals.
- The current students also had similar goals to other students leaving school, including: *travelling overseas, attending social events with friends, helping as a leader in community activities, developing interests such as music, coaching, sports and drama, having their own home/flat, having a car, getting married, having a family someday, further education and employment.*

b. Feedback from Past Students:

- University.
- No one sat down to look at what I wanted to do when I left school, but due to mainstreaming my hopes, dreams and expectations mirrored those of my friends.
- Travel.
- To get out of Burwood Hospital.
- To get work (but the person hadn't identified a specific job).
- To work.
- I didn't have a specific goal but I wanted something where I felt comfortable.
- I had an attitude of being able to do anything I wanted to.
- I wanted to do something integrated and not with a "bunch of crips".
- Sex.
- I assumed that the social relationships that had developed at school would continue.
- I was always exposed to the dreams and expectations of others, so naturally wanted to have similar things for my life as well.

c. Analysis:

Essentially this project found the disabled students had hopes and dreams that were similar to what you would expect from their non disabled peers. These related to goals in employment, education, personal development, recreation and sport.

The following topic areas are based on the key themes that emerged from the responses to the questions posed in the focus groups. We have firstly included the feedback from the various focus group participants and then our analysis of this information.

Information

a. Feedback from Current students:

- As part of the transition process current students would like to receive information about different courses and opportunities, read books and other course material, research options on the Internet, attend information days at CPIT, College of Education and University.
- They want to check facilities; discuss subject choices, courses, costs and entry requirements; talk with tutors and support staff and find out about the experiences of other disabled people.
- Current students were keen to talk with lots of people to get ideas for life after school. For example, transition teachers about career choices, asking family for ideas, asking friends about different courses. Some talked about brainstorming ideas.

b. Feedback from Parents and Caregivers:

- Knowing where to go for help.
- Need information about things students and families can link into. Can be done by key people making contact with students and families, putting information in newsletters etc.
- Barriers:
 - Schools give out information but it isn't always helpful for disabled students who have different needs.

c. Feedback from Past Students:

- People need access to information about course material and what they cover, cost etc. This helps to start planning.
- Need to also find out about supports available before making a decision to do a course etc.
- Opportunities needed to get information from other disabled people so they can give you a personal perspective.
- Schools knowing where to get that knowledge about disability if they need to get it.
- Barriers:
 - Schools not having good knowledge about support services, what's out there in the community, the social model of disability or disability knowledge in general.

d. Analysis:

It appears that some disabled students are given the same types of information as non disabled students, which is great. Some current students spoke about attending open days, being given course and career information and visiting particular tertiary education campuses. Students, parents and carers find this really helpful and would like to see this continue.

They identified specific information that they require. As part of the transition process current students would like to receive a range of information about different courses and opportunities available. They want this information provided in alternative formats (e.g. written, electronic, on the Internet). They want to be able to attend information days, check facilities; discuss subject choices, courses, costs and entry requirements; talk with tutors and support staff and find out about the experiences of other disabled people.

One of the key types of information that students and parents/carers require is what disability supports services are available for study and employment. People spoke about not being able to make an informed decision about their future without this information. It appears that more could be done to improve knowledge of available supports and that this would help to allay some of the fears that students, parents and carers often have about life after school and give people a sense of what potentially may be possible.

Students, parents, carers, teachers and therapists need this information and this needs to be obtained as part of a coordinated transition planning process involving all of these parties, plus other external networks such as disability support staff from tertiary education and supported employment agencies. It also appears that some teachers, therapists and transition staff, who provide advice, do not have this sort of information. This reduces their ability to provide informed advice and a full range of options for students.

Some parents/carers also spoke about students being given unhelpful and unrealistic information from career services. It is great that some students are being given the same information about career options as their peers. However, if students and their parents/carers feel that they are being given this information without any coordinated process or any sense of supports available for working through issues, this may result in fear and some may even feel dumped on. We heard examples where this made parent/carers really afraid of the next stage.

Some felt that speaking with other disabled people who had experienced tertiary education and employment would also be helpful. Disabled people with these experiences can provide practical knowledge and give a sense of what is possible, networks to link into and solutions for resolving issues. They could also be role models for current disabled students.

Expectations/Beliefs

a. Feedback from Current students:

- Barriers:
 - Primary School teachers not bothering to teach them the same basic things other children learnt and not taking them seriously, because they had a disability. This has an impact at secondary school.
 - Some students with disability not being taken seriously and treated equally by other students.

b. Feedback from Parents and Caregivers:

- Look at people's strengths and how to develop them to their full potential.

c. Feedback from Past Students:

- Teachers having expectations that students can and will achieve.
- Support people etc working with students to think outside the square and modelling high expectations for students so students also believe they can do things.
- Having disabled adults as role models, sharing their stories and experiences and seeing successes.
- Need to be able to have the opportunity to try and fail, like other people do. Disabled people need to be able to have these choices too.
- Need to be able to dream and be supported to achieve that dream, not told you can't.
- Helps to talk to other disabled people about what they've achieved.
- Due to their personality they have to work harder at getting noticed and being assertive because they have a disability.
- Community Development - more disability awareness in the community so more organizations, employers, tertiary institutions, volunteers etc can come on-board and offer opportunities.
- There needs to be more disability awareness. This could be a role for CCS in raising disability awareness (community development, advocacy, increasing expectations of the community around what disabled people can achieve).
- It would be interesting to compare if the situation for disabled students is actually different to what happens for able-bodied students.
- Barriers:
 - People thought I couldn't go to varsity due to my high support needs – I had to convince people.
 - The person inside the school might have pre-conceived ideas about the disabled person.
 - Person supporting needs to not be an assessor as too many assessments are done to see what you can do, whether you're ready to do it, and whether they'll let you do it (disabled people seem to be constantly assessed).
 - Teacher attitudes were quite negative as they were unsure about disability and what that person's capabilities were.
 - Being categorised by physical needs rather than intellectual ability meant that school staff etc had expectations of where the student would go when they left school, based on their physical needs, rather than their skills and choices.

d. Analysis:

Some current students talked about not being taken seriously and not being taught the same things that other students are taught. This had an impact on their options and choices after school. We also heard examples where people felt that they had been given options based on their medical condition (e.g. Spina Bifida, Cerebral Palsy). Another significant barrier that students identified was the system not being flexible enough to provide individualized support to minimize the impact of a disability on their learning and assessment.

We heard examples of students:

- Only being able to get classroom support on particular days, despite the fact that the disability doesn't go away and the learning difficulties remain.
- Not being able to get individualized support outside of the classroom to help understand the class material or to catch up (e.g. tutoring).
- Not being able to get classroom supports to reduce the impact of a student's disability, match the student's learning style and allow them to achieve the best possible academic outcome (e.g. copies of the teacher's notes).

These support strategies are now standard practice in many tertiary education settings. We therefore question why it appears easier to get these supports at tertiary level, when secondary school lays the foundation for life after school. It is important that there is a coordinated process for identifying hopes and dreams, potential barriers to implementing these and actions for resolving these issues. It appeared that often the complicated system didn't allow the students to show their potential. The focus of any system should be on allowing people to show their abilities, not their disabilities. Past students also reinforced these experiences and many seemed shocked about the lack of progress with resolving systemic barriers which continue to impact on some students' ability to show their potential.

The following ideas were suggested to improve expectations of disabled students:

- Teachers having expectations that students can and will achieve.
- Support people working with students to think outside the square and modelling high expectations for students, so students also believe they can do things.
- Having disabled adults as role models, sharing their stories and experiences.
- Providing students with the opportunity to dream, try and fail, like other people do.
- Not being told you can't.
- Having the opportunity to try different experiences and support options.
- More education for students, parents and school staff about available support networks during and after school, so people get a sense of what is possible.

It would also be good to compare the support structures that are available for disabled and non disabled students, to ensure that all disabled students are getting the same opportunities as other students and the general school systems can be tailored to meet their needs.

Work Experience

a. Feedback from Current students:

- This was an important component of a transition process for many current students.
- Barriers for current students:
 - Work experience not starting early enough (needs to start at Year 12).
 - Waiting list for work experience slowed down the availability of these options.
 - Time off school needed for work experience, so it's hard to fit it in.
 - Not always able to do what you want to with work experience or courses because no spaces available or the employer might not want someone on work experience.

b. Feedback from Parents and Caregivers:

- Assistance with work experience (needs to be done properly- have a contract, a valued role).
- Needs to be realistic and of benefit in developing their skills and options.
- Having paid work in roles that are valued and the experience of working and earning their own money.
- Being treated as an adult - being valued and taken seriously, signing contracts and police check forms, having a real job and money, learning about the reality of working and work ethic.
- Doing tasks where they have adult responsibilities.
- Need to have a drive on a huge range of employers who can think about offering different options to students.
- Need to broaden student's experiences to increase their options.
- Barriers:
 - Not being taught work ethic and responsibility through the school work experience to the same level as they do through a third party (such as CCS Transition Worker).
 - Work experience and the options being suggested don't necessarily focus on the person's strengths.
 - Students not being given the opportunity to do work experience in areas they haven't thought about as potential job opportunities for the future. Some concern that students were being encouraged to explore unrealistic work options.
 - Having work experience that isn't meaningful.
 - Work experience great but where does it lead to in the long term? (It appears to be more a social experience than an employment option).

c. Feedback from Past Students:

- Do meaningful work experience.
- Work experience is helpful.
- A participant was involved in the transition class and went on work experience and did a course, which were both helpful to finding out what to do after leaving school.
- Work experience possibilities can lead to paid work.
- Other options for work after leaving school can develop through work experience.

d. Analysis:

People really valued the role of work experience. Some current students would like there to be more, for it to start earlier (e.g. year 11-12) and to be planned, so it doesn't impact on the student's ability to keep up at school.

Current students and parents/carers had the following criticisms of current work experience offered:

- People wondered what skills they were learning from some work experience at school. We heard examples where students felt exploited and were left wondering what was the value of the work experience provided.
- Some also felt that students were given a 'set menu of work experience' that often didn't have any link to their hopes and dreams or give people the experiences or skills that they wanted or needed.

Overall participants involved with this project suggested work experience should:

- Link to skill development, hopes and dreams and include a broad range of options.
- Be a valued and meaningful role where the student is taken seriously.
- Include having paid roles that are valued and the experience of working and earning money.
- Involve doing tasks where the student has adult responsibilities.
- Include a contract so that everyone is clear about the boundaries and expectations of the work experience.
- Where possible, be in workplace which may lead to potential job opportunities and a paid role, linked to the student's hopes and dreams.
- Focus on assessing and developing skills and strengths, rather than just giving students an 'experience' or filling in time.
- Teach skills such as work ethic and work responsibility.

We also heard examples where students were given work experience in sheltered workshops. If barriers to employment are to be broken down and more choices are to be provided for disabled students after they leave school, we believe more work experience in open employment settings will be essential. People involved in supporting disabled students through the transition process need to be careful not to lower their expectations of disabled students and reinforce barriers that prevent them having choices when they leave school.

Support at School

Individual Support

a. Feedback from Current students:

- For transition to be successful some of the current students identified they required help with transport - buses, taxis, cars.
- Barriers:
 - When students need to take time off they are unable to catch up with what others have been doing while they are away from school.
 - More one-on-one teaching support needed - flexibility.
 - More support needed with explaining things so people can understand - extra tutoring, support person to explain things outside of class, classroom notes.
 - Some people with high support needs are not able to access things easily. They always need a support person and they are not able to be an individual if their support person always has to be there.
 - Some students felt that they hadn't been able to achieve entry requirements for tertiary education while at school because of barriers with support. Some were willing to complete bridging programmes at tertiary level. They identified specific barriers that had impacted on their ability to complete these entry requirements while at school, including time off due to hospitalization, ill health and family issues and the lack of strategies to help students catch up and minimise the impact of long periods away from school. Another related issue was lack of flexibility with support in classroom settings and on an individual basis.

b. Feedback from Parents and Caregivers:

- Getting the right support and help.
- Concern about what happens at a later age when parents/grandparents are no longer around.
- Students are happy to go to school (and sometimes don't want to leave safe school environment).
- Support from Hospital Correspondence School Teacher.
- Barriers:
 - Insufficient support and resources (funding).
 - Feeling they're being pushed out of school too early (some schools).
 - Need more funding for teacher aides.

c. Feedback from Past Students:

- Hours of teacher aides need to meet the person's needs and times of learning (i.e. not just have it for a few hours per week at set times).
- Having lots of support from school, caregivers, CCS etc all helping the student and working together.
- Seems to be more support and flexibility in smaller schools.
- Barriers:
 - School is difficult for some students when they can't get the support they need. Students can't achieve their potential due to the lack of support. This can result in decreased self esteem and make them feel like giving up school altogether.
 - Transition teachers need more resources to work with people effectively.

Classroom Support

a. Feedback from Current students:

- For transition to be successful some of the current students identified they required help with transport - buses, taxis, cars.
- Barriers:
 - More teachers and teacher aides needed. If teacher aide support is not available then some students have to keep up in class without any support. This can create difficulties for students who can't write their own notes or who take their own notes and then cannot read the notes that they have taken.
 - Support only being offered either to certain classes (e.g. Year 13) or only to ORRS funded students.
 - Needing to adjust to working with different teacher aides. Having different teacher aides means the student has to spend time explaining to the teacher aide what they are doing and building a relationship. Need consistency.
 - Some mainstream teachers are not in tune with the needs of disabled students. For example, some don't give information out to students in handouts that would make learning easier. Some teachers don't understand the need to catch up with work or for the student to get copies of their teaching notes. Being able to get teachers to explain things again after class is useful. This can have drawbacks though if students feel uncomfortable requesting the support or they fear the teacher may blame them for not listening. Some students felt that Special Unit teachers cater more for students' needs than teachers in the rest of the school and think ahead about what will assist disabled students.

b. Feedback from Past Students:

- Adequate support needed from teacher aides, for classroom and test/exam support.
- Barriers:
 - Lack of teacher aides.
 - Insufficient time to complete exams.

Analysis:

Overall the feedback indicates that there appears to be insufficient support, resources and services for supporting many disabled students in the classroom and on an individual basis. Most people thought there needs to be more support available to meet the specific needs of disabled students.

Another common theme we heard was that the support system for disabled students is very inflexible. There are disabled students with learning difficulties who can't access the support they need and this is having a significant impact on their ability to achieve their potential at school and their life choices after school. On more than one occasion we heard of students leaving or considering leaving school because studying was too hard because of a lack of support. This experience had put off some students from doing further study. Some of the current students also said that they hadn't been able to achieve the entry requirements for further study while at school, because of a lack of support.

Feedback suggested some students can only get support on particular days or in particular ways, despite the fact that their disability doesn't go away. We heard examples where teacher aide support was not available in the classroom, but no alternative arrangements had been made available to minimize the impact of the disability on learning and assessment. (e.g. providing teachers notes). This makes it difficult for these students to keep up and catch up in classroom. Some students also have more than

one teacher aide and this means they have to adjust to different styles of support. This can also create difficulties with understanding the content of the course, for both the student and staff member.

It appears that support needs to be more flexible and consistently provided, with fewer personnel changes. There needs to be more support targeted to each individual students' requirements, so as to minimise the impact of their disability on learning and assessment.

Current students would like to see more individualized support available and more flexible modes of delivery which account for different learning styles. This includes further explaining things to students outside of the classroom setting, extra tutoring to help students catch up or understand course material, providing teachers notes and 'one on one' teaching support.

This was reinforced by the past students who were concerned about how a lack of individualized and classroom support had impacted on their own self esteem and ability to realize their potential. Another issue that parents/carers raised was who would provide support when they were no longer able to.

We also heard that some classroom teachers lack awareness of the needs of disabled students and alternative support systems that they could put in place to support them. At the same time some disabled students stated that staff employed within schools to provide specific disability related support played a very valuable role. They were often more aware of disabled students' needs, played an important part in advocating for disabled students needs around the school and were more likely to think ahead about creating an inclusive environment for disabled students, despite all staff having a responsibility to do this.

The needs of disabled students are a school wide issue. Disability related professional development and resource information for all teaching and support staff is required, that focuses on more inclusive methods and support systems for disabled students. This will help to create a more inclusive environment for disabled students.

Transport is another issue that was identified. Students often have support with transport when they are at school. However once they leave school they need to be independent enough to be able to access their own transport. Many are reliant on family and friends or have the additional expense of taxis. These issues need to be part of transition planning.

Career Advice

a. Feedback from Parents and Caregivers:

- Need more support for job seeking and job interview skills.
- More difficult to find options for some people (i.e. those with intellectual disability).

b. Feedback from Past Students:

- One person felt the Careers Advisor needs to be within the school system for continuity and so they can support the student with each step. However, they need to have knowledge of disability, know the person, have a positive attitude and be realistic.

c. Analysis:

There were suggestions that there needed to be more assistance with job seeking and job interview skills and that some disabled students would find it more difficult to find options than others, due to their disability.

Although most people thought the person coordinating and supporting the disabled student through the transition process needed to be from outside of the school system, some also thought there should be someone providing careers advice from within the school to provide continuity of support at each step in the transition process. However, it was seen as vital that the person providing the support, whoever it was, needed to know the person, have a good understanding of disability and have a positive attitude.

Some parents/carers spoke about students being given unhelpful and unrealistic information from career services. This may be due to the fact that there appears to be no coordinated transition process in many schools, so careers staff, students and parents/carers don't have any sense of supports available or required for working through issues.

External Agency Support

a. Feedback from Parents and Caregivers:

- A Transition Co-ordinator outside the school system is needed as a link between the school and the family (someone with the knowledge).
- Strategies needed for overcoming barriers, expectations and public attitudes that limit potential - more awareness needed.
- The Transition Co-ordinator feeds through to parents tips on what has helped other students after they have left school.
- Being able to link into community group where they can develop skills.
- When people get jobs, someone needs to ensure they aren't being exploited through low/no pay for work they do.
- CCS Transition Co-ordinator position good.
- Barriers:
 - People get used to a service (e.g. Transition Co-ordinator) then policies and/or funding changes and the position is lost.
 - Need more funding for Transition Co-ordinators who are outside of the school system and can focus just on transition.
 - Gap between ACC and Disability Support Services funding needs to be addressed.

b. Feedback from Past Students:

- Having lots of support from school, caregivers, CCS etc all helping the student and working together.
- Don't let professionals take over.
- Person (doing transition planning) needs to be outside the school system and have a disability so they know the issues etc.
- Having Supported Employment services linking into schools is good.
- There needs to be more disability awareness. This could be a role for CCS in raising disability awareness (community development, advocacy, increasing expectations of the community around what disabled people can achieve).
- Needs to be better links between schools and community organisations, such as Supported Employment.
- Workbridge could have a specialised worker for working with people with High Support Needs.
- Have a whole new agency focusing just on transition.
- Barriers:
 - Workbridge caseloads are too big so people are not getting the support they need and some people are put in the "too hard basket".
 - Workbridge are more helpful at providing the support once you have found your own job, but not at actually finding the job for you. They tend to put people on courses to get an outcome.
 - Extra support that should be provided seems to be coming from outside school.

c. Analysis:

People generally thought it was vital to have a Transition Co-ordinator who was outside of the school system and could focus solely on coordinating the transition process for individual students. It needed to be someone with a wide range of information who could act as a link between the school, the family

and the options available to students (e.g. Disability Support staff within tertiary education settings, employers for work experience that may lead to paid work and supported employment agencies).

There was a view that a lot of the good linking and information was already coming from outside the school system. However, there was also caution that professionals should not “take over” and some even argued the person coordinating transition needed to have a disability so they knew the issues. There was positive feedback about the role of the Transition Coordinator that CCS is currently providing, from current students and parents/carers. People were concerned though that there was insufficient funding for these types of roles and that they only ever seemed to be temporary until there was a change in policy or a cut in funding, despite the importance of transition.

Past students and parents/carers felt there needs to be more disability awareness in the community. This should ensure the community expectations around disabled people are higher and there is more community understanding of integration, inclusion and the rights of disabled people, barriers that limit potential and solutions that help disabled people achieve.

One of the key issues raised was that there needed to be more linking between schools and community organizations, including supported employment agencies, who needed to have a higher profile. However past students were concerned about the high caseloads and the outcome-focused approach of Workbridge impacting on the transition and support of disabled students with high support needs. They were suggesting smaller caseloads and maybe specialised workers to work with people with high support needs, who were often overlooked.

Transition Planning Process

a. Feedback from Current students:

- The current students felt that it was really important that this process involves parents, classroom teachers, transition teachers, teacher aides and support people from agencies such as Polytech or Community Organizations (e.g. CCS Transition Worker, carers).
- Some also felt that the transition planning process should include specific transition planning meetings, be flexible, allow students to try various options, happen earlier (e.g. Years 11 - 12), continue a while after the student leaves school and cover areas such as learning how to save, looking for a flat, getting a car and places to travel.
- The current students felt the following was working well with transition:
 - Talking and linking with transition teachers one-on-one.
 - Work experience.
 - Information on careers, courses and other areas available and easy to get.
 - Teachers take their future goals seriously.
 - Parents and other family members involved, giving ideas, support and offering new ideas to think about and things to try.
 - Parents, siblings (e.g. brothers and sisters) and other people helping to explain things.
 - Senior life skills and transition programmes where people learn about issues such as safety and accessible buses.
- Some recommended more mixing of school and tertiary courses. They felt there needs to be more flexibility, more fun and the ability to study what you want to (what is relevant and interests you). This makes it not such a big change when you leave school!
- Barriers:
 - Planning needs to start earlier.

b. Feedback from Parents and Caregivers:

- Planning for the future beyond school.
- Being able to try different options while still at school, so people have the school back up.
- Planning needs to be realistic and individual.
- Not building up false hopes for student.
- Not only focussing on work as an option (especially if not able to work full time). Need other meaningful things to do during the week.
- Barriers:
 - Some schools are not even talking about what will happen after they leave school.
 - Nothing in their plan about what happens if they leave school with nothing to go to.

c. Feedback from Past Students:

- Access to mentors and people who can spend time looking at goals and what they want to do (must be someone who knows their stuff and knows where they are going).
- Non-professional input is more helpful. Important to have a person who has been there/done that and can work with the person to guide them, but also to question and challenge.
- Students should start thinking about what they want when they leave school when they are about 14 years old (Years 9-10).
- Others thought this (14 yrs) was too young for some students to start.
- Need to start early so you can plan for the subjects you need to take and the exam passes you need.

- Let people with disabilities experiment as much as able-bodied people do - in work, education, social situations etc.
- A participant was involved in the Transition class and went on work experience and did a course, which were both helpful to finding out what to do after leaving school.
- Need to have more workers focusing just on transition- at school, CCS, Workbridge, SES, etc.
- Something needs to be done!!!
- Barriers:
 - Transition starting too late. People leaving school without anything to go to.

d. Analysis:

The feedback received as part of this project has indicated that many schools may lack a coordinated and specific transition planning process for disabled students. However there are components of the transition process which current students think are being done well.

It appears that the Individual Education Plan (IEP) tends to focus on day to day management issues related to schooling, rather than planning for life after school. Given the number of issues that need to be resolved through the IEP process, it doesn't seem realistic to include transition planning as part of this process.

Another question the project raised is whether there is a lack of resources for transition for all students. We heard of examples where ten hours were allocated per week for working with a thousand students. Given this climate it is not surprising that many disabled students don't have a coordinated transition plan. This is not a criticism of schools. They are busy places and there appears to be limited time for transition planning and investigating networks which are an essential part of the transition process.

This is essentially why current students, past students and parents/carers involved in this project have all stated that transition planning within schools should be coordinated by an external agency. This role needs someone with expertise in transition, the disability area and access to networks that can provide support for students, parents/carers and school staff.

Current and past students and parents/carers indicated that the ideal transition process includes:

- Specific transition planning meetings, where a disabled students hopes and dreams are discussed, potential barriers to implementing these hopes and dreams, and actions including networks and support for resolving these issues are identified. These meetings also need to focus on what a disabled student will do if they do not have anything specific to go to after they leave school.
- The involvement of a number of key people, such as:
 - The disabled student;
 - Family, friends and other non professional input (e.g. mentors);
 - People from within the schools system (e.g. teachers, teacher aides, transition teachers, careers advisors);
 - People from external community organizations (e.g. CCS);
 - Disability support staff within tertiary education, supported employment agencies and employers who are interested in providing working experience and employment.
- The ability to allow disabled students to try various options while still at school. This includes meaningful work experience, students having access to a mixture of school and tertiary courses which allows them to gradually get used to life in a tertiary education environment.

- Flexible, realistic and individual planning that starts early. Current and past students recommended starting to think about what they wanted to do when they leave school and subjects they needed to achieve this in Years 9-10. They also felt transition planning should start in Years 11-12 and include various options.
- Planning for study which is linked to the student's hopes and dreams.
- Continuing support after the student leaves school.
- A more holistic focus on education, employment and other whole life issues after leaving school (e.g. available support networks, living situation, work, study, other meaningful activities such as social and recreational activities, how to save, look for a flat, safety issues, transport, how to travel).
- Access to information and the information outlets mentioned in earlier sections.
- The use of mentors who can share their stories and experiences, help to look at goals and dreams and provide practical advice and support. It was recommended that the mentors needed to have a disability so they could relate to some of the barriers that the disabled students may face, provide practical solutions to guide and challenge them. Having mentors who work or study will also provide an insight into what is possible.
- Allowing disabled students to experiment as much as able-bodied people do in a range of settings (e.g. work, education, social situations, recreation, etc), to try and fail.
- Having more staff focusing just on transition (e.g. at school, CCS, Workbridge, SES, etc).

Overall there was a feeling that something needs to be done to improve transition planning, so people don't leave school without anything to go to or a few limited options.

Funding

a. Feedback from Current students:

- Barriers:
 - Funding only available for support of some students - needed for others too. ORS Funding system not catering for all students with support needs.

b. Feedback from Parents and Caregivers:

- Concern if working part-time and losing benefit money (benefit disincentives).
- Barriers:
 - Gap between ACC and Disability Support Services funding.

c. Feedback from Past Students:

- Need to use the resources we have already got but use them more effectively to meet the defined needs and gaps.

d. Analysis:

Many of the issues relating to funding are also covered under other headings. Essentially the people we spoke to in focus groups indicated:

- That there is a general feeling that there is insufficient funding for supporting disabled students in secondary schools.
- The ORRS funding system and criteria is not catering for all disabled student who have learning support needs.
- This is impacting on many disabled students' ability to show their academic potential and to have choices after they leave school.
- There is a disparity between students funded by ACC and DSS. Those on ACC seem to be more satisfied with the funding for support.

Professional Development

a. Feedback from Past Students:

- People having an understanding of different disabilities and related needs.

b. Analysis:

Feedback shows that there is a need for staff within schools and who are associated with transition to have a better understanding of:

- Disability issues and philosophies.
- Systemic barriers that limit the choices of disabled student when they leave school.
- Support strategies that can minimise the impact of disability on learning and assessment.
- Work and study options in the wider community.
- The support strategies and networks available in these settings.

Personal Networks Support

a. Feedback from Parents and Caregivers:

- There are too many expectations on the families.

b. Feedback from Past Students:

- Having friends around for support is good.
- Extra support that should be provided seems to be coming from outside school.

c. Analysis:

Current and past students saw parents/carers, siblings and friends as really important parts of a successful transition process. They also felt they had an important role to play in the setting and implementation of hopes and dreams. Students generally felt well supported by family and friends during the transition process. However some parents/carers felt there were too many expectations placed on the families.

7. Conclusion and Recommendations

“People thought I couldn't go to varsity due to my high support needs – I had to convince people.”

This is a quote from one of the past students. This person described how they always felt that they had the potential to go to university, but they had to convince staff at school that this was possible. They indicated that there was a tendency to assess their potential on the basis of their disability, rather than their ability, and that there wasn't enough support structures in place to allow a disabled student with high support needs to show their potential. In fact they felt that they had never been able to show their true potential because the support wasn't in place to allow this to occur. This person has gone on to successfully complete tertiary study and is now in paid employment.

The *aim* of this phase of the research project was to:

- a. Identify barriers affecting the transition of disabled youth from school into employment.
- b. Develop the framework of a support model that facilitates inter-agency coordination in support of disabled youth and which is targeted towards the involvement of young people in the decision making regarding their career, training and participation pathways.
- c. Identify potential stakeholders/funders to support a pilot programme of the model developed.

Overall we have found that there are some positive things happening in schools which contribute to successful transition. Some of the current students spoke about attending open days, being given course and career information and visiting particular tertiary education campuses. People really valued the role of meaningful work experience and the staff employed within schools to provide specific disability related support. Participants also felt that the funding and structures in place to support disabled students were of assistance and parents/carers, siblings and friends were a really important part of a successful transition process. Having a specific Transition Worker at CCS had also made a real difference. Each of these examples were only happening for one or two students and no students experienced all of these things.

The previous section is an analysis of the feedback from current students, parents/carers and past students involved in this phase of this project. These people have identified specific barriers which are having an impact on successful transition to life after school. The majority of these barriers are systemic. They have recommended a number of solutions to overcome these barriers, which provide a framework for a successful transition process.

Below is the transition framework that the participants in this project have suggested:

1. Transition planning within schools coordinated by staff from an external agency, who can focus solely on coordinating the transition process for individual students. It needs to be someone with useful information, who can act as a link between the school, the family and the wider range of options available to students (e.g. Disability support staff within tertiary education settings, employers offering work experience that may lead to paid work, supported employment agencies).

They need an understanding of how to overcome barriers to successful transition for disabled students, expertise in the disability area and access to networks that can provide support for students, parents/carers and school staff. This role needs sufficient funding to ensure it becomes a permanent fixture.

2. Specific transition planning meetings occurring where a disabled student's hopes and dreams, potential barriers to implementing these and actions to be taken, are discussed.
3. Involving a number of key people in the transition planning process:
 - The student;
 - Family, friends and other non-professional input (e.g. disabled mentors);
 - People within the schools system (e.g. teachers, teacher aides, transition staff, careers advisors);
 - People from external community organizations (e.g. CCS);
 - Disability support staff within tertiary education settings, supported employment agencies and employers who are interested in providing working experience and paid employment.
4. Transition planning that:
 - Covers education, employment and other whole life issues after leaving school (e.g. available support networks, living situation, work, study, other meaningful activities such as social and recreational activities, how to save, look for a flat, safety issues, transport, how to travel, etc).
 - Is flexible, realistic, individual and starts early. It was suggested that students need to start thinking in Years 9 and 10 about what they want to do when they leave school and the subjects needed to achieve this. They also felt the actual transition planning should start in Year 11 and include various options.
 - Considers study linked to the student's hopes and dreams.
 - Involves continuity of support after the student leaves school.
 - Allows disabled students to experiment like other people do in a range of settings (e.g. work, education, social situations, recreation, etc).
 - Gives people the chance to try and fail.
5. Higher expectations that improve access, participation and achievement of disabled students. Participants suggested:
 - Teachers focusing on what students can and will achieve.
 - Support people thinking outside the square and modelling high expectations for students, so students also believe they can do things.
 - Having disabled adults as role models, sharing their stories and experiences.
 - Providing students with the opportunity to implement their dream.
 - Having a 'can do' attitude.
 - Ensuring sufficient support and opportunities to allow the student to show their potential.
6. Disabled students trying various options while still at school. This includes 'meaningful' work experience, students having access to a mixture of school and tertiary courses which allows them to gradually get used to life in a tertiary education environment.
7. Schools utilising disabled mentors who can share their stories and experiences, help students to look at goals and dreams, provide practical advice and support to guide and challenge students. Having mentors who work or study will also provide a sense of what is possible and access to networks to link into and solutions for resolving barriers.
8. Having staff within schools that have a good understanding of support strategies and networks available to support disabled students in work, tertiary education and other settings. Involving these networks in transition planning would also be of benefit.

9. Providing a range of information so people can make informed decisions. Students, parents/carers and schools need to receive information about:
 - Course and career options, including skill requirements.
 - Specific disability support services for employment and study (e.g. Workbridge, Disability Support Services within tertiary education settings).
 - Job market expectations.
10. Students having more individual and classroom support that allows them to reach their academic potential. This individualized support includes help with explaining things outside of the classroom, extra tutoring, teachers notes and 'one on one' teaching support. This support needs to be flexible enough to meet the specific needs of the student and be available when they require it.

We have seen examples where support systems appear to meet the needs of the school, rather than the student. For example, a student who needs a notetaker every day, but only has this on one day and there not being an alternative system for ensuring the student can get a copy of the notes. The disability doesn't go away and the learning difficulties remain.
11. Classroom and individualised support that is consistent, flexible and ensures continuity so the student isn't disadvantaged by having to explain the requirements of the support persons role, the subject or their support needs to a number of different people.
12. More funding for individual and classroom support.
13. Work experience that:
 - Starts earlier (e.g. Years 11-12).
 - Is in an open employment setting.
 - Links to skill development, hopes and dreams and include a broad range of options.
 - Offers a valued and meaningful role where the student is taken seriously and not exploited.
 - Includes paid roles that are valued and offers the experience of working and earning money.
 - Provides a contract that sets out boundaries and the work experience expectations.
 - Is wherever possible, in a workplace which may lead to potential job opportunities and a paid role, linked to the student's hopes and dreams.
 - Focuses on assessing and developing skills and strengths, rather than just giving students an 'experience' or filling in time.
 - Teaches skills such as work ethic and work responsibility.
 - Is planned so it doesn't impact on the student's ability to keep up at school.
14. More assistance with job seeking and job interview skills.
15. Professionals are careful not to "take over".
16. Better linking between schools and community organisations, including supported employment agencies. However for this to be successful, support agencies require smaller caseloads and specialised workers for people with high support needs who are often put in the "too hard basket".
17. More disability awareness in the community. This helps to ensure the community expectations around disabled people are higher and there is more community understanding of integration, inclusion and the rights of disabled people, barriers that limit potential and solutions that help disabled people achieve.

Local, National and International Research ^{13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22}

Many of the suggestions offered in this transition framework are consistent with local, national and international research and writings on 'best practice' models for the transition of disabled students. Our broader research and experience identified key factors for a successful transition process:

1. Early planning (beginning around the age of 14 years) that looks beyond school and focuses on a students' broader hopes and dreams for the future in a holistic way. This includes looking not only at vocational aspects but also at living arrangements, recreation and social aspects as well.
2. Students:
 - Spending as much time in mainstream, community-based environments as possible, including schooling, part time work, clubs and recreational activities.
 - Knowing about their rights and about how to advocate for themselves (or where to get this support from if they wish to access it).
 - Being encouraged to be as independent as possible.
 - Having access to community based activities (e.g. work experience, courses outside of the school setting), while they are still at school so they can get used to life outside the school system and it isn't such a huge change when they do leave school.
 - With the same access to other options and opportunities that all students have when leaving school.
3. Students and families being :
 - Fully involved in determining and driving their transition process.
 - Given lots of information about the range of options available to them so they can make truly informed decisions.
4. Community organizations being involved with the student at least a couple of years before they leave school and providing continuity of support for them and their family through the transition process
5. Families using their own networks to explore options for their child when they leave school

¹³ Lankard, B.A. (2000). *Parents and the School-to-Work Transition of Special Needs Youth*. Educational Resources Information Centre. Digest #142. www.kidsource.com

¹⁴ National Information Center for Children and Youth with Disabilities (NICHCY). (1994). *Options After High School for Youth with Disabilities*. Transition Summary 7. www.nichcy.org

¹⁵ National Information Center for Children and Youth with Disabilities (NICHCY). (2002). *Transition Planning: A Team Effort*. Transition Summary 10. www.nichcy.org

¹⁶ Robinson, D., Bishop, K. & Woodman, B. *Students Making It Into Paid Employment: A Report of a Pilot Supported Employment Programme*. *New Zealand Journal of Disability Studies*, 8.

¹⁷ Routledge, M. (2000, November). *Collective Responsibilities, Fragmented Systems: Transition to Adulthood for Young People with Learning Disabilities*. *Tizard Learning Disability Review*, 5 (4). Pavilion Publishing (Brighton) Limited.

¹⁸ Sax, C.L., Noyes, D. & Fisher, D. (2001, September). *High School Inclusion + Seamless Transition = Desired Outcomes*. *Tash Connections*.

¹⁹ Thomson, G., Ward, K., Dyer, M. & Riddell, S. (1992). *Transition from School to Adulthood*. *Special!!*

²⁰ Timmons, J.C., Moloney, M., Dreilinger, D., & Schuster, J. (2002). *Making Dreams a Reality: Using Personal Networks to Achieve Goals as You Prepare to Leave High School*. *Tash Connections*, September/October 2002.

²¹ Turner, S. (2000, November). *Measuring the Effectiveness of Transition Services*. *Tizard Learning Disability Review*, 5 (4). Pavilion Publishing (Brighton) Limited.

²² Wayne County Regional Educational Service Agency. *Guide to Transition Planning*.

There has been a lot of interest in this project. During this phase we have spoken with some secondary schools, staff from the Ministry of Education, teachers, transition teachers, counselors, therapists, staff from CCS and a range of other stakeholders involved with transition. This is a two-to-three year project that aims to pilot and evaluate some new transition ideas in Christchurch schools, using Participatory Action Research. This stage of the project has provided the basis of a transition framework. We have held discussions with three secondary schools in Christchurch who have all shown an interest in being involved with the next phase, which is piloting some new ideas included in this transition framework.

With this in mind, we recently applied for a research grant through the Teaching and Learning Research Initiative, but were unsuccessful. However we have received a small grant from the Christchurch College of Education to begin some work with staff and disabled students at Mairehau High School. We have also presented a paper about this project at the CCS National Conference, the Christchurch Youth Health and Development Research Workshop, the Christchurch College of Education Research Fair and at the New Zealand Association for Research in Education National Conference.

This phase indicates that there are some good aspects of current transition practice. However it has also identified various systemic barriers which appear to be having a significant impact on successful transition and the academic achievement of some disabled secondary school students in Christchurch.

There is a real need to provide information and support to disabled students that opens the door to a wider range of inclusive community based options. This will reduce the likelihood of them becoming one of the unemployment statistics of the future and ensure they have an active life with more choices, valued roles and are able to contribute to their community.

Recommendations

We would therefore like to recommend the following:

1. That the Community Employment Group hosts a meeting/s to discuss the key findings of this project with local key stakeholders involved with the transition of disabled students from secondary school. For example, Ministry of Education, Secondary Schools, Tertiary Education Commission, Canterbury Development Corporation, Work and Income New Zealand, Accident Compensation Commission, Christchurch City Council, Disability Support Agencies, Tertiary Education Providers, the Minister of Disability Issues and the Ministry of Health.
2. That part of the agenda for this meeting/s is to:
 - Discuss possible funding options for piloting and evaluating some new transition processes with disabled students in Christchurch secondary schools.
 - Look at how this project ties in with other initiatives around transition.
3. That the next phase of this project is to pilot and evaluate some new transition processes, based on the framework developed as part of this project and ongoing research, within some Christchurch secondary schools.
4. That the findings of this report are circulated widely to key stakeholders involved with the transition of disabled students from secondary school.

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9. Appendices

Appendix 1

Focus Group Schedule

10.30am - 11am Introductions:

1. Provide people with name tags that are easily readable by all
2. Welcome people and explain the purpose of the research:

Being part of this focus group means being part of a project which is looking at what you require to help you prepare for life after school.

We want to look at ways of making this the best possible experience for students and families.

We want to hear your thoughts and ideas about the systems that need to be in place and supports that are needed, to help you prepare for life after school.

This is what we will be discussing at the focus group.

3. Quick round of self introductions.
Group introduce themselves with their name and tell us 2 people they would like to invite to dinner and why
What do you want for lunch
Go over format for today.
4. Key Points:
 - a. This focus group will go to 2pm.
 - b. We will be asking you some questions and giving you an opportunity to give your views.
 - c. We will be taking notes and tape-recording the focus group.
 - d. The notes and taped material will be typed into a draft report prepared by those involved with coordinating the project.
 - e. We will send you a copy of the draft report for your comment. This will allow you to check the report to see that it reflects your views.
 - f. The general ideas that come out of this focus group will be discussed at other focus groups which are part of this project.
 - g. The final report will be presented to the Community Employment Group, who are funding this stage of the project, and other organizations who may be interested in or willing to fund the piloting of ideas from the project.
 - h. CCS may use some of this information for the development of services.
 - i. We will not use your name or any other information that may identify you to protect your identity.

Discussion topics

1. 11am – 11.30am Hopes and Dreams:

- (a) What are your hopes and dreams for after you leave school? (Brainstorm in larger group-2
Large Sheets of Paper)
- (b) Give definition of transition (*Overhead*)
- (c) Summarize

2. 11.30am – 12.30 Designing the Best Programme to Prepare for Life After School:

- (a) We want you to be able to achieve these hopes and dreams.
- (b) Design the best programme to help you prepare for life after school. (It can be in any form- e.g. a playstation game, a rap song, etc).
- (c) What does it look like?

Here are some areas to think about: (*Emphasise they don't have to follow like a script*)

- What planning is involved?
 - What information do you want?
 - How would you like to get that information?
 - What support do you require?
 - Who should be involved?
 - What opportunities would you need?
 - When should you start this programme?
- (d) Work in small groups, choose someone to present back to larger group. (*Overhead*) (*6 Large Sheets of Paper- 3 headed and 3 blank, coloured pens*)
 - (e) Summarize

3. 12.30pm – 1pm LUNCH (*Pizza, F&C, Fruit Juice, Tea, Coffee, Milo*)

4. 1pm – 1.45pm **How does reality measure up to the dreams?**

- (a) Is the current system meeting your expectations?
 - If so, what has worked that you want to share with others?
 - If not, why not? What is needed to make it better?
- (b) Do you think it is meeting the needs of other students with disabilities that you know?
For example, those students with high support needs?
- (c) Potential Barriers:
Other things Grant and Karen have noticed in this area (confirm/disagree and why)

5. **1.45pm - 2pm Finishing the discussion**

(a) Check that everyone has had a chance to say what they wanted to.

Is there anything else you would like to say?

(b) Provide an overall summary of key points from the discussion.

(c) Thanks for all the ideas developed today

(d) Explain what happens next, and their future feedback on the draft report.

Focus Group Ground Rules

1. Keep what is said in the group to yourself.

This means keep it confidential. You cannot tell anyone outside the group what other people in the group said.

2. Try not to interrupt when someone else is talking. "One at a time".

3. Listen to each person speak, and think about what they are saying.

4. Take the opportunity to give your views about the topics being discussed.

5. Value everyone's ideas even if you don't agree with them yourself.

6. This focus group is about getting the views of students - support people therefore cannot talk unless they are interpreting for the person they are supporting.

Appendix 2

Hi

You Are Invited To Lunch !

Our names are **Karen Rickerby** and **Grant Cleland**. We are working on some research about what you require to help you prepare for life after school. This is usually called **transition**. Some of you may be interested in employment, further study or other community activities.

We want to look at ways of making **TRANSITION** the best possible experience for students and families. We are really keen **to talk to you** about your thoughts and ideas about the systems that need to be in place and supports that are needed, to help you prepare for life after school.

If you have already left school, we would like to find out more about what went really well and what you think could be done differently for future students.

So we are inviting you to lunch to discuss your ideas, thoughts, etc. The **lunch/meeting will be held at CCS and Tania Batley**, the Transition Worker is helping us to organize these meetings.

- You are invited for lunch to discuss how you want to Transition from school.**
- Friday 23rd of April.**
- We start at 10:30am and will go to 2:00ish**
- Please contact Tania to confirm your attendance by Wednesday the 21st of April.**

We look forward to meeting with you then. If you have any queries, please call **Tania at CCS – 348-8974 ext 878**

Yours sincerely

Karen Rickerby and Grant Cleland
Transition Project Coordinators

Hi

Some of you may remember us from the transition meeting at CCS in January. Our names are **Karen Rickerby** and **Grant Cleland**. We are working on some research about what students with disability require to help them prepare for life after school. This is usually called **transition**. Some students may be interested in employment, further study or other community activities.

We want to look at ways of making **TRANSITION** the best possible experience for students and families. We are really keen **to talk to you** about your thoughts and ideas about the systems that need to be in place and supports that are needed, to help students prepare for life after school.

We are holding two meetings, one to talk to parents and caregivers and the other to talk to the students. We are keen to discuss your ideas, thoughts, etc. The **meetings will be held at CCS and Tania Batley**, the Transition Worker is helping us to organize these meetings.

The Parents and Caregivers Meeting will be held:

- Thursday 20th of May.**
- 4:30 pm - 7 pm**
- Please contact Tania to confirm your attendance by Wednesday the 19th of May.**

We look forward to meeting with you then. If you have any queries, please call **Tania at CCS – 348-8974 ext 878**

Yours sincerely

Karen Rickerby and Grant Cleland
Transition Project Coordinators

Hi

Young People Designing their Own Futures Transition Project

Our names are **Karen Rickerby** and **Grant Cleland**. We are working on some research about what you require to help you prepare for life after school. This is usually called **transition**. Some of you may be interested in employment, further study or other community activities.

We want to look at ways of making **TRANSITION** the best possible experience for students and families. We are really keen **to talk to you** about your thoughts and ideas about the systems that need to be in place and supports that are needed, to help you prepare for life after school.

So we are inviting you to meet with us to discuss your ideas, thoughts, etc. This will occur during school time. If you are interested in meeting with us we need you to sign a consent form to be involved in the project.

If you are under the age of 16 years this consent form needs to be signed by one of your parents or your guardian. You need to read this carefully, sign it and give it to **Mr. Mears by the 28th of May**. We cannot include you in the project without your full, informed consent.

We look forward to meeting with you. If you have any questions, please call **Grant Cleland (3321898)** or **Karen Rickerby (942 2389)**.

Yours sincerely

Karen Rickerby and Grant Cleland
Transition Project Coordinators

20 April 2004

Young People Designing their Own Futures Transition Project

Thanks for agreeing to be part of the focus group this Friday. In order for you to be part of this group we need you to sign a consent form to be involved in the project.

If you are under the age of 16 years this needs to be signed by one of your parents or your guardian. You need to read this carefully, sign it and bring the consent form with you to the focus group. We cannot include you in the project without your full, informed consent.

We look forward to meeting you on Friday.

Yours sincerely

Karen Rickerby and Grant Cleland
Transition Project Coordinators

Young People Designing their Own Futures Transition Project

Consent Form to be Involved in a Focus Group

If you want to take part in this project, please read this consent form very carefully, then sign it at the end and bring it along to the focus group on Thursday.

I understand that:

1. Being part of this focus group means being part of a project which is looking at what students require to help them prepare for life after school. We want to look at ways of making this the best possible experience for students and families.
2. We want to hear your thoughts and ideas about the systems that need to be in place and supports that are needed, to help you prepare for life after school. This is what we will be discussing at the focus group.
3. This focus group will occur from 4 – 6pm on Thursday 17th of June at CCS.
4. We will be asking you some questions and giving you an opportunity to give your views.
5. We will be taking notes and tape-recording the focus group.
6. The notes and taped material will be typed into a draft report prepared by those involved with coordinating the project.
7. We will send you a copy of the draft report for your comment. This will allow you to check the report to see that it reflects your views.
8. I may bring a support person along to the focus group. However the focus group is about getting the views of past and current students. Therefore support people are not able to talk unless they are interpreting for the person they are supporting.
9. The general ideas that come out of this focus group will be discussed at other focus groups which are part of this project.
10. The final report will be presented to the Community Employment Group, who are funding this stage of the project, and other organizations who may be interested in or willing to fund the piloting of ideas from the project.
11. CCS may use some of the information from this project to help with the development of services.
12. We will not use your name or any other information that may identify you to protect your identity.
13. We will ensure all tapes and the typed material are kept private locked in a filing cabinet.
14. This information will not be used for any other purposes other than the project and when the report is submitted, all tapes will be destroyed.
15. My participation in this project is voluntary, it is my choice whether I take part in the project and I can stop taking part in the project at any time.
16. This is not a review of CCS services. It is about hearing my views about transition and the support I require.

17. My involvement in the project will not affect the service I receive from CCS.

18. During the focus group I can:

- Ask for any questions to be repeated as many times as I want until I feel that I have fully understood the question.
- Answer none, a few, some or all of the questions.
- Stop the focus group for any reason at any time including for toilet breaks or refreshments – just let us know when you need these.
- Ask for any support.

19. There is no right or wrong answers to the focus group questions. We want to learn from you by hearing your answers.

20. I can contact Grant Cleland (3321898) or Karen Rickerby (942 2389) if I have any questions about the focus group or project.

Please fill in:

I understand the purpose of the research, the information I have been given about the project and how the information that I will give as part of this project will be used.

Name of Focus Group Participant:

Your Signature

Date:

Name of Parent or Guardian:

Your Signature

Date:

Appendix 3

The Feedback About Transition from Disabled People, Parents and Carers

a. Transition BBQ at CCS Canterbury and West Coast – 20th January 2004

Feedback from Young People

What Are Your Dreams?

- Doctors treat you as an individual
- Dog handler for police
- Breaking records – swimming
- Sports
- Boccia
- Paralympics
- Bowling
- Special Olympics
- Travel and work
- Be serious in what I do
- Teachers college
- University
- CPIT
- Courses/education at own pace
- Be lazy for a while
- More out of home
- Be independent
- Get married
- Live a happy life
- Aussie – find work
- Sydney
- Spain
- Paris
- Samoa
- Enjoy friendships and relationships
- Lasing, trusting friendships
- Be sociable
- Be confident making friends
- Support networks
- Jobs
- Be serious in what I do
- Reception / office
- Working with children
- Working with people with disabilities
- Police officer
- Teacher – teacher aide
- Counselling
- Own home
- Youth counselling
- Services that recognise disabilities
- Schools that understand and support
- People be genuine and be taken seriously
- Listened to

Feedback from Parents

What Are Your Dreams For Your Son/Daughter?

- Purpose in his/her life
- Worthy
- Confident
- Cope with life
- Holidays/programme – to meet people
- Happy, well, reach his/her goals
- To move out if he/she wants
- To have his/her own space
- To do naughty things with their friends
- Self confidence
- Independence
- To test boundaries
- To get a job they want
- Different (work life) experiences

b. Focus Group One – Current Students

Summary of Student Hopes and Dreams

1. Very clear about career goals for the future.
2. Want to do further study to achieve these goals.
3. Entry requirements mean they can not access the tertiary training they want to get into as soon as they leave school.

Certain things have impacted on this (e.g. Time off, lack of flexibility with support).

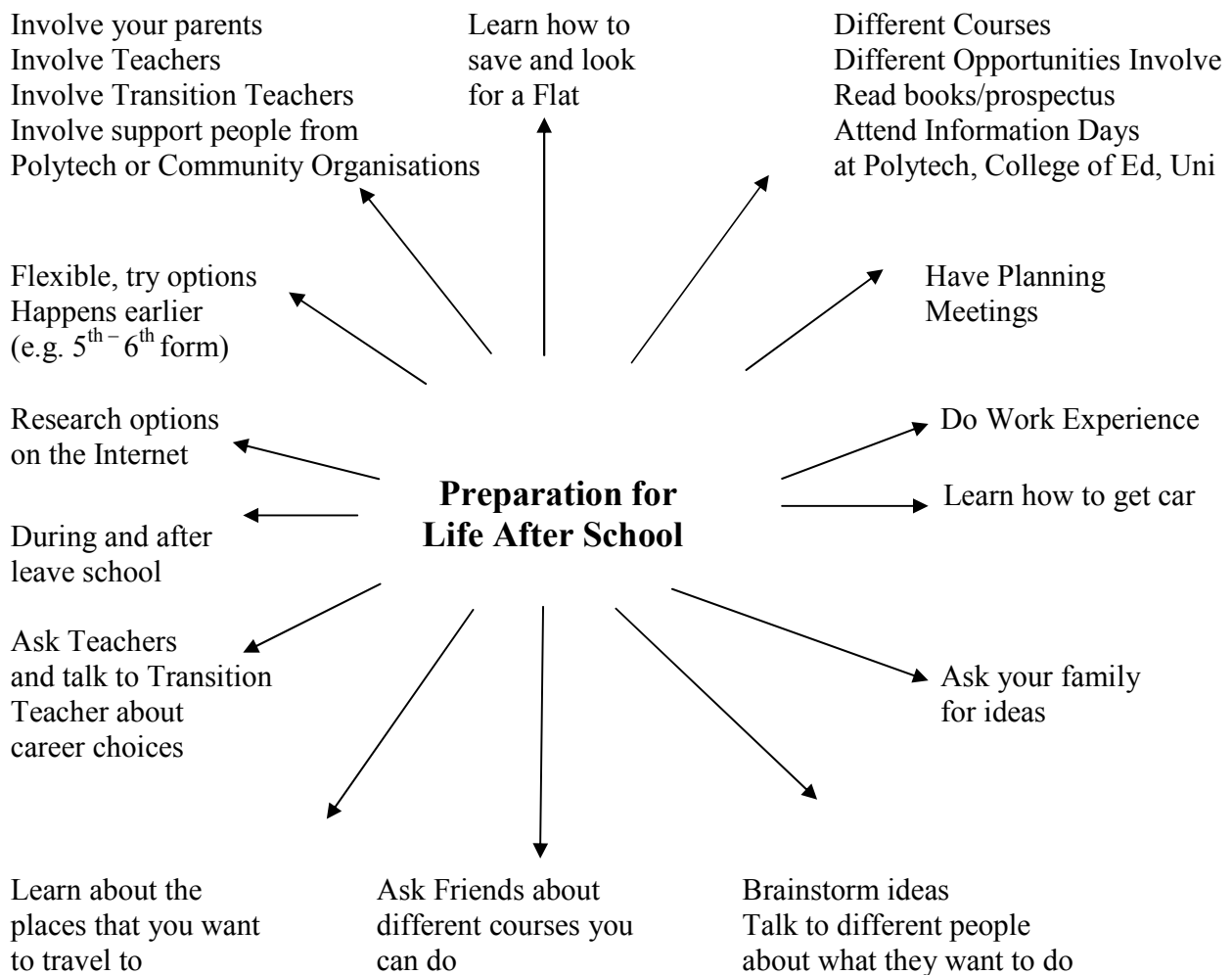
They are willing to undertake study that is a "stepping stone" to the next level of training that they actually want to do.

4. Similar goals to other students leaving school.

This includes things like:

Travelling overseas, social events with friends, sports, helping as a leader in community activities, having own home/flat, having a car, getting married and having a family someday.

Design the Best Programme to Help You Prepare for Life After School



Is the Current System Meeting Your Needs?

Sort of ...

What has worked well that you want to share with others?

- Talking to Transition Teacher one-on-one.
- Work experience.
- Information on careers and courses easy to get.
- Teachers taking their future goals seriously.
- Family support important:
 - Brothers and sisters can spend extra time explaining things to students.
 - Parents involved and supporting students and help explain things.
 - Family giving ideas, support and offering new ideas to think about and things to try.

What is not going well? Why not?

- Work experience not starting early enough (needs to start at 16 years or in 6th Form).
- Waiting list for work experience.
- Time off school needed for work experience, so it's hard to fit it in.
- Funding only available for support of some students - needed for others too. ORS Funding system not catering for all students with support needs.
- Not always able to do what you want to with work experience or courses because no spaces available or they might not want someone on work experience.
- When students need to take time off they are unable to catch up with what others have been doing while away.
- More teachers and teacher aides needed:
 - More support needed with explaining things so people can understand - extra tutoring, support person to explain things outside of class, notes.
 - More one-on-one teaching support needed - flexibility.
 - If teacher aide support is not available then students have to keep up in class without any support (e.g. notes). Can create difficulty with demand of taking notes and with being able to read their notes they have taken.
 - Needing to adjust to four different teacher aides.
 - Having different teacher aides means student has to spend time explaining to the teacher aide what they are doing and building a relationship. Need consistency.
- Planning needs to start earlier.
- More mixing of school and tertiary courses needed. There needs to be more flexibility, more fun and the ability to study what you want to (what is relevant and interests you). This makes it not such a big change when you leave school.
- When at Primary School teachers not bothering to teach them the same basic things other children learnt and not taking them seriously, because they had a disability.
- Some students with disability not being taken seriously and treated equally by other students.
- People with high support needs are not able to access things easily. They always need a support person and they are not able to be an individual if their support person always has to be there.
- Mainstream teachers are not as in tune with student's needs and don't give information out to students in handouts etc.
 - Physical Disability Resource Centre teachers cater more for students' needs and think ahead what will assist them.
 - Being able to get teachers to explain things again after class is useful. Can have drawbacks - teacher may blame student for not listening, student uncomfortable.
- Teachers not understanding the need to catch up with work.
- Support only being offered either to certain classes (e.g. 7th Form) or only to ORS funded students.

c. Focus Group Three – Current Students

Summary of Student Hopes and Dreams

- Journalism
- Music
- Polytech- Hospitality Course
- Coaching
- Drama
- Art
- Travelling
- Jamming with friends
- Marriage
- Having Children

Design the Best Programme to Help You Prepare for Life After School

- Parent/Family support and information important
- Carer Supported
- Work Experience
- Checking facilities out
- Careers Advisor
- Subject choice advice
- Talking to tutors etc
- Find out by asking about other people's experiences
- Learning about the courses, costs, entry requirements etc
- Going and visiting places
- Teachers should be involved
- Teacher aides should be involved for writing etc
- Involvement from Support person
- Need help with transport- buses, taxis, cars
- Information needed through school, newspapers

Is the Current System Meeting Your Needs?

What has worked well that you want to share with others?

- Linking in with Transition Teachers
- Attending Senior Lifeskills Programme
- Doing Work Experience
- Therapists have assisted with getting work experience
- Information available
- Family support
- Learning about safety issues through the Transition class
- Accessible buses

What is not going well? Why not?

- Students didn't feel they had anything to comment on in this section.

d. Focus Group Two – Parents and Caregivers

Design the Best Programme to Help Students Prepare for Life After School

- A Transition Co-ordinator outside the school system as a link between the school and the family (someone with the knowledge).
- Assistance with work experience (needs to be done properly- have a contract, having a valued role etc).
- Needs to be realistic and of benefit in developing their skills and options.
- Getting the right support and help.
- Planning for the future beyond school.
- Being able to try different options while still at school, so have the school back up.
- Planning needs to be realistic and individual.
- Not building up false hopes for student.
- Strategies needed for overcoming barriers, expectations, public attitude that limit potential - more awareness needed.
- Not only focussing on work etc as an option (especially if not working full time- need other meaningful things to do during week).
- Looking at people's strengths and how to develop them to their full potential.
- Knowing where to go for help.
- Workers feed through to parents tips on what has helped students after they have left school.
- Being able to link into community group where they can develop skills.
- When people get jobs, someone needs to ensure they aren't being exploited through low/no pay for work they do.
- Need information about things students and families can link into. Can be done by key people making contact with students and families, putting information in newsletters etc

Is the Current System Meeting Your Needs?

What has worked well that you want to share with others?

- Students are happy to go to school (and sometimes don't want to leave safe school environment).
- Transition Co-ordinator position.
- Having paid work in roles that are valued and the experience of working and earning their own money.
- Being treated as an adult- being valued and taken seriously, signing contracts and police check forms, having a real job and money, learning about the reality of working and work ethic.
- Doing tasks where they have adult responsibilities.
- Support from Hospital Correspondence School Teacher.

What is not going well? Why not?

- Not being taught work ethic and responsibility through the school work experience to the same level as they do through a third party (such as CCS Transition Worker).
- Work experience and the options being suggested don't necessarily focus on the person's strengths.
- Students not being given the opportunity to do work experience in areas they haven't thought about as potential job opportunities for the future. Some concern that students were being encouraged to explore unrealistic work options.
- Having work experience that isn't meaningful.
- Insufficient support and resources (funding).

- Feeling they're being pushed out of school too early (some schools).
- Some schools not even talking about what will happen after they leave school.
- Nothing in their plan about what happens if they leave school with nothing to go to.
- Need more support for job seeking and job interview skills.
- There are too many expectations on the families.
- People get used to a service (e.g. Transition Co-ordinator) then policies and/or funding changes and the position is lost.
- Work experience great but where does it lead to in the long term? (It appears to be more a social experience than an employment option).
- More difficult to find options for some people (i.e. intellectual disability).
- Gap between ACC and Disability Support Services funding.
- Schools give out information but it isn't always helpful for disabled students who have different needs.
- Concern if working part-time and losing benefit money.
- Concern about what happens at a later age when parents/grandparents no longer around.

What is Needed to Make it Better?

- More funding for teacher aides.
- More funding for Transition Co-ordinators who are outside of the school system and can focus just on transition.
- Gap between ACC and Disability Support Services funding needs to be addressed.
- Need to have a drive on a huge range of employers who can think about offering different options to students.
- Need to broaden student's experiences to increase their options.

e. Focus Group Four – Current and Past Students

Summary of Past Student Hopes and Dreams

- University
- No one sat down to look at what she wanted to do when she left school, but due to mainstreaming her hopes/dreams/expectations mirrored those of her friends
- Travel
- To get out of Burwood
- To get work (but hadn't identified a specific job)
- People thought he couldn't go to varsity due to High Support Needs - had to convince people
- To work
- Didn't have a specific goal but wanted something where they felt comfortable
- Had an attitude of being able to do anything he wanted to
- Wanted to do something integrated and not with a "bunch of crips"
- Sex
- Assumed that their social relationship they had developed at school would continue
- Always exposed to the dreams and expectations of others, so naturally wanted to have similar things for their life as well

Design the Best Programme to Help Students Prepare for Life After School

- Adequate support needed from teacher aides, classroom support, test/exam support.
- Teachers having expectations that students can and will achieve.
- Support people etc working with students to think outside the square and modelling high expectations for students so students also believe they can do things.
- Transition Teachers need more resources to work with people effectively.
- People having an understanding of different disabilities and related needs.
- Hours of teacher aides need to meet the person's needs and times of learning (i.e. not just have it for a few hours per week at set times).
- Access to mentors and people who can spend time looking at goals and what they want to do (must be someone who knows their stuff and knows where they are going).
- Having adults with disabilities as role models, sharing their stories and experiences and seeing successes.
- Person needs to be outside the school system and have a disability so they know the issues etc.
- Person needs to be within the school system for continuity and so they can support the student with each step. However, they need to have knowledge of disability, know the person, have a positive attitude and be realistic.
- Non-professional input is more helpful. Important to have a person who has been there/ done that and can work with the person to guide them, but also to question, challenge and guide.
- The person inside the school might have pre-conceived ideas about the disabled person.
- Work experience is helpful.
- Having lots of support from school, caregivers, CCS etc all helping the student and working together.
- Person supporting needs to not be an assessor as too many assessments are done to see what you can do, whether you're ready to do it, and whether they'll let you do it (disabled people seem to be constantly assessed).
- Need to be able to have the opportunity to try and fail, like other people do. Disabled people need to be able to have these choices too.
- Need to be able to dream and be supported to achieve that, not told you can't.
- Students should start thinking about what they want when they leave school when they are about 14 years old (3rd/4th Form).
- Others thought this was too young for some students to start.
- Need to start early so you can plan for the subjects you need to take and the exam passes you need.
- Let people with disabilities experiment as much as able-bodied people do- in work, education, social situations etc.
- Do meaningful work experience.
- Access to information about course material and what they cover, cost etc. This helps to start planning.
- Need to also find out about supports available before making a decision to do a course etc.
- Don't let professionals take over.
- Opportunities needed to get information from disabled people so they can give you a personal perspective.
- Helps to talk to other disabled people about what they've achieved.

Is the Current System Meeting Your Needs?

What has worked well that you want to share with others?

- Involved in the Transition class and went on work experience and did a course, which were both helpful to finding out what to do after leaving school.
- Work experience possibilities can lead to paid work.
- Other options for work after leaving school can develop through work experience.
- Seems to be more support in smaller schools.
- Seems to be more flexibility in smaller schools.
- Having Supported Employment services linking into schools.
- Having friends around for support.

What is not going well? Why not?

- Tutor's attitude was quite negative as they were unsure about disability and what that person's capabilities were.
- Being categorised by physical needs rather than intellectual ability meant that school staff etc had expectations of where the student would go when they left school based on their physical needs, rather than their skills and choices.
- Students can't achieve their potential due to the lack of support. This can result in decreased self esteem.
- Lack of teacher aides.
- Insufficient time to complete exams.
- Extra support that should be provided seems to be coming from outside school.
- School difficult for some students when they can't get support they need so feel like giving up school altogether.
- Transition starting too late. People leaving school without anything to go to.
- Needs to be better links between schools and community organisations, such as Supported Employment.
- Schools not having good knowledge about support services, what's out there in the community, the social model of disability or disability knowledge in general.
- Due to their personality they have to work harder at getting noticed and being assertive because they have a disability.
- There needs to be more disability awareness. This could be a role for CCS in raising disability awareness (community development/ advocacy/ increasing expectations of the community around what disabled people can achieve.)
- Schools knowing where to get that knowledge about disability if they need to get it.
- Community Development- more disability awareness in the community so more organisations/ employers/ tertiary institutions/ volunteers etc can come on-board and offer opportunities.
- Workbridge caseloads are too big so people are not getting the support they need and some people are put in the "too hard basket".
- Workbridge are more helpful at providing the support once you have found your own job, but not at actually finding the job for you. They tend to put people on courses to get an outcome.

What is Needed to Make it Better?

- Workbridge could have a specialised worker for working with people with High Support Needs.
- Need to have more workers focusing just on transition- at school, CCS, Workbridge, SES, etc.
- Have a whole new agency focusing just on transition.
- Need to use the resources we have already got but use them more effectively to meet the defined needs/gaps.
- It would be interesting to compare if the situation for disabled students is actually different to what happens for able-bodied students.
- Something needs to be done!!!