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[Person-Centered Culture and Practice Website](#)

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Welcome

Best Life was created by Washington County Community Services staff to promote the use of equitable, person-centered best practices as we support people to live their best lives. We will spotlight success stories, share artwork and talents, provide education about language and goals, and offer resources. It is meant to be uplifting, supportive, and available for all people, families, providers, and staff.

The theme of this issue: **Working and living your best life.**

Spotlight:

Carolyn's Dream Job



Carolyn

Carolyn shares about her dream job at Spalon Montage!

Tell us about yourself. What is important to you? What do you like to do for fun?

My name is Carolyn. I am 36 years old. I live in Woodbury, Minnesota. I am originally from Romania. Building friendships throughout the years, including friendships with others from Romania, is very important to me. I am actually connected with one person who was adopted only an hour away from me, in Romania. Staying connected to my Romanian culture is important to me along with good friendships, family, spending time with close friends, building a good work ethic, trying to find an apartment where I can live on my own, and writing a book of her own called *The Woman You Thought You Knew at the Swing*. For fun, I love being outside, going camping, bike riding, and being near a campfire.

Where do you work? Tell us about your job and what you do.

I work as a front desk concierge at Spalon Montage in Woodbury. I just had my one-year anniversary. My job duties include helping people check into their appointments on computer, helping spa staff, folding towels, stocking robes and towels in spa, and offering guests a beverage. Sometimes, when customers purchase an all-day package, I get to serve their lunch to them. I also get to serve my co-workers their lunch when they order in.

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When I first applied for Spalon Montage, I was originally going to go for a laundry position, but God had a plan, and I got hired for a position at the front desk. Mom and Dad knew I always loved hair and this would be a good job for me.

Is there anything or anyone that helps make your work your dream job?

Spalon Montage offers so much room to grow. I am so blessed to be part of this company. I have a wonderful team who helps me. Beth and Maureen from Kaposia are two wonderful people who helped support me in my job. Dillon and Laurie, my supervisors, are awesome and so supportive of me. I really love how both of my supervisors are very personable with each person and makes them feel so special in each and every personal way. My supervisors can make someone feel that they are the only person in the world - for both staff and customers. My supervisors really help people out a lot and believe in people.

I have always been interested in and dreamed of doing hair. I actually volunteered working in a hair salon at a nursing home. A woman at the nursing home helped me with my humble beginnings. This woman believed in me

and never gave up on me. Her friendship is held dear in heart. Always remember your humble beginnings will really help you push through, never forget who helped you become who you are.

Is there anything you want to share with others who want to achieve their dreams through working or doing things they love?

I have always known I will have challenges in life and will have to work twice as hard to get half as far. This has been a good thing and has helped me build a good career in the workforce. Working at different places I have worked has taught me good work ethic. The longest place I have worked at is five years.

Recognize people may tell you, you can’t do it or not believe in you. You may feel the odds are against you. You may not believe in self at first. If you knock down those three barriers, the sky is the limit. Make sure you have a good support system and tools to achieve your dream.

Interview conducted by: Chantelle Heifort-Adams, Social Worker



Our Words Matter

To people supporting someone in living their best life: By following best practices with person-centered language, we show we are taking care with the words we use when talking *with* others, when talking *about* others, and/or when *writing* about others.

When helping someone with their career goals or in doing the things they love to do, our words need to be inclusive and person-centered. We need to use words that are understandable, personalized to them, their preferences, and what is important to them.

Below are some examples:

Best Practices	vs. Historical Language
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spell out acronyms for people, families and guardians. • Use full name of the service or program at the beginning of a document, Assessment Summary, Support Plan, and provider addendums. • Examples are waiver names (i.e. Community Access for Disability Inclusion or CADI) or service names (i.e. Employment Supports or ES). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acronyms/Jargon
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specify the person’s diagnosis: “Is diagnosed with paraplegia.” • Person has a disability or people with disabilities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disabled

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Best Practices	vs. Historical Language
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Specify the person’s diagnosis: “Is diagnosed with Muscular Dystrophy.” Accessible parking. _____ is/is not accessible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Handicapped (Handicapped Parking, Handicapped Accessible)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Benefits from support with... Needs support with... Needs help with... Start with identifying a strength before describing what is needed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dependent/Dependency
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use the person’s name. Person I support... Person I work with... Ask them how they would like to be referred to. Person receiving support... Person in recovery... People we support ... 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Client Consumer
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does really well in _____ areas. Does really well with _____. Use a specific diagnosis, if known: “diagnosed with mild intellectual disability.” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High Functioning
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do not use this term. Has challenges with... Needs support with or benefits from support with... State testing that has been completed during a diagnostic, if appropriate: “Testing scores are at the same level as a 5-year-old.” Struggles with... Symptoms interfere with their [relationships, work habits, etc.] in the following way... Be specific with needs. Use a specific diagnosis, if known: “diagnosed with severe or profound intellectual disability.” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Low Functioning
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expresses frustrations/emotions/self by... Identify the typical cause of the behavior first (i.e. communication difficulty, change in routine or environment, trouble with something important to them, etc.), then say what specifically may happen: “When having a hard time communicating what they want, they may yell or throw things.” It may be appropriate to use the term “behaviors” when there are several of them and it would be less person-centered to generate a long list of what they are (this could be in situations where you are documenting eligibility for a program or service). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Behaviors (Challenging Behaviors, Aggressive Behaviors, “Having behaviors”)

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Best Practices	vs. Historical Language
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Declines. Does not take medications as prescribed because... Not open to... Chooses not to... They have their own ideas of how they want to live their life. Prefers to use other ways to support themselves. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Noncompliant Resistant
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide specific examples of the situation and reasons for not having interest: "When experiencing symptoms of depression, they may not have the energy to [clean the house, take medications, etc.]." Does not wish to ____ when [symptom, situation, etc.]... Quote the person if they identify as being unmotivated or use other ways to describe how they are feeling. Avoid assuming someone is unmotivated without a reason or clinical/medical reason, such as depression. Preferred supports are not available. Is not interested in... Is unsure what they want or need. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unmotivated
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Our job is not to identify what is realistic or unrealistic, rather capture what is important to the person and what they want to do in their life and help them get there or as close to it as possible. Be as specific as possible about the situation: "Wants ____, but the team is concerned they need to work on ____ first to be safe and to work towards their goal." 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unrealistic
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Avoid using these terms and focus on words that are supportive. Supports recommend... Supports encourage... Help or support with... 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Control Terms (Let, Allow, Make, "You Should")
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Much of the language utilized in statute and policy refers to a person's access to and right to live and work "in their preferred community." Consider how the use of this language may further marginalize people with disabilities who have historically lived or do live in institutions. It can indicate that a person "gets" to go into the community where that is not even questioned for others. Do you say you want to do something "in the community"? It is likely you say specifically what you want to do, such as "I want to get to Como Zoo" or "I am going to start working out at the Y" or "We hope to move to Forest Lake." Be specific about what a person wants to do, where they want to go, where they want to live or where they want to work. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "...in the community"

For more guidance on person-centered best practices and the words we use, please see Washington County's [Our Words Matter](#).

Coordinated by: Molly Henningsgard, Social Services Supervisor

★ Goals, Outcomes, Dreams



Your goals are just that – YOURS. They are a very important part of supporting you to live your best life. For those supporting someone, it is important to understand the shift to using best practices with person-centered goals. The Minnesota Department of Human Services *Informed Choice and Transition Protocol* defines person-centered outcomes as: Achievement of what is most important to the person in ways that work for [them] and build on [their] strengths... supports help the person connect to opportunities in the community, as well as build relationships [they] care

about. It is not the job of a support person to decide if a goal is “realistic” or “appropriate.” Rather, the job of a support person is to capture the person’s goal – that they identified – because it is important to them, then help them get there.

For those providing support to someone, please see Washington County’s [Best Practices – Outcomes](#) for more guidance and below for examples of goals and action steps (*Note: People and goals are fictional*):

Person-Centered Goal	
Best Practices	vs. Historical Language
Victor wants to work at the local greenhouse because he loves working with plants and being in nature.	Victor will meet with his job coach 80% of trials and complete a minimum of three job applications at local businesses.
Action Steps	
Victor	Victor will partner with his employment and natural supports to pursue his dream job of working at the local greenhouse. He will work on getting a job application with the help of his parents.
Support Staff	Victor’s employment supports will assist Victor in completing a job application at the local greenhouse, prepare for the interview, and assist with additional areas of support.

Person-Centered Goal	
Best Practices	vs. Historical Language
Dora wants to get a job working with kids.	Dora will participate in transitional programming opportunities to gain work and volunteer experience.
Action Steps	
Natural Supports	Dora’s family will continue to provide opportunities for her to help care for her baby sister, in addition to supporting her with finding additional opportunities to meet and spend time with children.
Transitional Supports	Dora’s school transition supports will help her explore opportunities to tour and volunteer at local day care centers and help her volunteer at the elementary school library to learn more about jobs working with kids she may like to pursue. School supports will also help Dora learn more about job skills and applying and interviewing for jobs.

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Person-Centered Goal	
Best Practices	vs. Historical Language
Yuvraj would like to turn his hobby of writing and performing music into a career and paid job.	Yuvraj will continue to take his medications and learn to manage his emotions by participating in therapy to increase basic independent living skills to find a stable job and maintain housing.
Action Steps	
Yuvraj	Yuvraj will continue recording his music and sharing it on his newly created YouTube page. He plans to talk to the local coffee shop about the possibility of performing a few songs at an upcoming open mic session. He will partner with natural and formal supports to continue to work towards his goal of having a career in music.
Case Manager	Yuvraj’s case manager will continue to support him with his goal of pursuing a music career. His case manager will give him a ride to the coffee shop to talk about open mic opportunities.

Washington County Welcomes Six New Employment Support and Day Support Service Providers for Adults With Disabilities

What are employment support and day support services?

Employment support services: Individualized services and supports that help people maintain paid employment in community businesses/settings. Employment support services occur in integrated community settings.

Day support services: Individualized, community-based training and support services that help a person develop and maintain essential and personally enriching life skills so they can access and participate in activities they prefer in their community.

Choice and Inclusion: Bringing in these new providers expands the options available to our residents, offering a wider range of service providers and in locations closer to where people live and want to socialize.

This is especially exciting for day support services. Historically, day support services have been only available in licensed buildings with limited capacity. Our new providers will be offering community-based day supports services in shared public areas. Community-based day

support services eliminates the 30-45 minute van rides to a day service building.

Community-based day support services will take place in community spaces carefully selected to align with the interests of the participants. These spaces may include community centers, libraries, parks, art galleries, coffee shops and various other locations.

All of these new providers will be offering both Employment Support and Day Support Services throughout Washington County!

Please work with your social worker to find out more information on how to access employment support and day support services. If you do not have a social worker and are interested in employment support or day support services, please call Access, Aging, and Disability Intake at 651-430-6422 (*select option 1*) for more information and to request a MnCHOICES assessment.

Welcome!

- [Accord](#): Bringing Possibilities to Life
- [Believe Again Home Care](#)

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- [Jannah Health Services LLC](#): *This provider will be offering employment services only.
- [Lifeworks](#): Day Services for People with Disabilities
- [TSE, Inc.](#): Enriching Lives Through Employment and Community Connections
- [Premier Cultural and Social Services](#): [Email Wilson Tindi](#) at Premier.

Submitted by: Winna Bernard, Senior Social Worker

Provider Spotlight:

From Fear to Triumph: A Job Seeker’s Journey With Person-Centered Support

Job searches often come with challenges and uncertainty. With little work history, Elisa Raymond’s search began with a goal to find support discovering her skills and abilities. She also knew that having a job would force her to confront her greatest fear – a phobia of elevators.

Elisa connected with Rise early in her search through our vocational evaluation services program, offering paid employment exploration and skills assessments for people who are unsure about their specific job goals or career direction.

"We visited two different job sites," Elisa said. "I did various tasks at one site, which I really enjoyed."

Armed with a better understanding of her preferred work environment, Elisa and her Rise team crafted a career plan based on her interests. A Rise employment consultant guided her through the interview and onboarding process, resulting in a new laundry services job at an assisted living center.

As a person-centered organization, Rise’s life enrichment and employment supports prioritize the specific needs of each person, avoiding a one-size-fits-all approach. That has allowed people like Elisa to explore work opportunities and build happy lives in their communities.



Elisa

"Rather than fitting people into a generalized employment plan, we support them in creating a tailored strategy addressing their personal and professional goals," said Chief Program Officer Tim Dickie. "We've taken this person-centered approach for decades. With hundreds

of success stories in both Minnesota and Wisconsin, we are proud of the customized support we offer."

With a job opportunity that involved delivering laundry to assisted living residents across several floors, Elisa knew her success depended on overcoming her fear of elevators. So, she worked with her employment consultant, who supported her as she rode in elevators over and over until she could confidently use them alone.

"I gradually overcame my fear," she said.

Now free from elevator anxiety, Elisa takes on work tasks with a smile, and enjoys the relationships she’s built with residents during her laundry deliveries, all made possible by an elevator she once would have avoided.

Article contributed by: Rise

My Supports (Resources)

Resources to Support Working Goals

- E1MN:** Minnesota's state agency partnership to advance Employment First outcomes for youth and adults with disabilities. The state agency partnership evolved from Minnesota's [Employment First policy](#) adopted by the Olmstead sub-cabinet in 2014. Employment supports for people with disabilities span multiple state agencies, which can be complicated for all involved. E1MN coordinates and brings things together to help the system make more sense. Any reference to E1MN signifies shared efforts and agreements across the Department of Human Services (DHS), Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED), and Minnesota Department of Education (MDE).
 Visit the [Disability Hub MN - E1MN partnership website](#) for more information.
- Tree Trust:** Youth, ages 14-21, are able to earn and learn through hands-on experience working

on outdoor construction and landscape projects in local parks and green spaces! *While all the spots are filled for 2024, you can complete a 2025 interest form!*

Visit [Tree Trust's Summer Youth Employment Program website](#) for more information.

- Washington County Workforce Development:** Washington County Workforce Development is a division of Washington County Community Services. Their mission is to provide employment services and training options that connect employers and job seekers through community partnerships and technology.
 Visit the [Washington County Workforce Development and CareerForce websites](#) for more information.

Submitted by: Caitlin McNamara, Social Services Supervisor

Employment Spotlight:

Artability

Artability started as a casual showcase for family and friends and has evolved into an annual series of free workshops across the metro, culminating in a vibrant community-wide showcase event. We believe in the healing power of art and aim to foster it as a cathartic and powerful coping mechanism within our community.

To be eligible, all you need to do is self-identify as someone struggling with mental health, with no official diagnosis or doctor's note required. Our workshops are open to individuals aged 18 and above.

Workshop Details:

Explore our [online workshop calendar](#).

Registration:

Registration is required for attendance. Visit our workshop calendar on Eventbrite to read class descriptions, find location information, and sign up for workshops. After registering, you'll receive a confirmation email from Eventbrite.

Cancellation Policy:

If you can't make it to a workshop, please cancel

your registration to allow others to take your place. Additionally, workshops with three or fewer registrations may lead to workshop cancellation. All communications about cancellations are sent via email. Find cancellation instructions in your Eventbrite confirmation email.

Workshop Locations:

We have two workshop locations offering the same workshops, rotating bimonthly:

- York in St. Paul:** 317 York Ave.
(Approach door #1 and ring the buzzer for entry)
- Northside Community Support Program in Minneapolis:** 1309 Girard Ave. N.

Annual Art Show:

[Discover more about our annual art show.](#)

[Visit the Artability web page on the People Incorporated website](#) for more information.

Written by: Tessa Weyhe (She/Her), Artability Coordinator and Lead Teaching Artist | Call/Text: 507-317-9268

Coordinated by: Winna Bernard, Senior Social Worker

Employment Spotlight:

Washington County: Direct Hire

Many people with disabilities want an opportunity to be part of the general workforce. Many businesses and organizations are experiencing significant staffing shortages. With the approval of direct hiring of people with disabilities, the Washington County Board of Commissioners and Community Services have taken important steps toward connecting these dots.

To increase and support Washington County's diversity, equity and inclusion efforts, address workforce shortage, and create opportunities for residents with disabilities, the county has created a new office aide position. In an October meeting, the board approved the hiring of one full-time equivalent to be shared by two part-time employees in the Community Services Department.

The Community Services Department (CSD) has participated in Supported Worker employment for decades, most notably through its contract with [Rise](#) - a nonprofit founded on the belief that everyone deserves opportunities to achieve meaningful growth and live a purpose-filled life. Through Rise, one individual previously worked with CSD for more than 30 years and two individuals currently work alongside CSD's Internal Supports team performing tasks such as handling mail, building packets, stamping envelopes, and assembling and tracking diagnostic test kits.

The direct hire of workers not only helps to bridge the gap in staffing shortages, but it fully integrates people into the workforce. Being an official employee brings the dignity, responsibilities and expectations that all employees have, as well as opportunities afforded other employees.

"This has the potential to change people's lives now and for many years to come," said Deputy Director of Community Services Beth Pierce, speaking to the county board on the direct hire of workers with disabilities at Washington County. "We're reducing a significant barrier for workers with disabilities."

Special acknowledgement in making direct hiring possible in Washington County goes to our Board of Commissioners, Human Resources team and Rise.

Written by: Christy Moravitz, Senior Communications Specialist

Disability Services - Employment Options

Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS)

The Minnesota Department of Human Services provides information about a wide range of employment options and support for people with disabilities such as:

- Competitive employment
- Supported employment
- Definitions/Terminology (including extensive support services, natural support and supported services)
- Vocational rehabilitation (VR) services
- Assistive technology

[View the Disability Services - Employment Options Supports website](#) for more information.

More Information to Check Out

- [Minnesota Department of Human Services Person-Centered Practices Overview](#)
- [Washington County Person-Centered Culture and Practice](#)
- [What does person-centered mean for me? An introduction. \(DHS-6803\)](#)

Contact Us

For questions or article and spotlight submissions, contact:

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