

Employment First & Advocacy Newsletter



Questions about employment or advocacy? Contact Tammy Smith, Employment & Advocacy Coordinator

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MAY IS MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH

“How are you feeling?”

Is the process of finding a job taking longer than you hoped? Looking for work can become stressful and overwhelming at times. That is why taking care of your emotional and mental health is so important.

Here are a few ways to help you:

- Remind yourself of what you have to offer. In time, the right job will come along where you can use your skills.
- Find activities you enjoy doing so you have positive moments throughout your week.
- Talk with others about how you are feeling. This could be friends, family, school or day services staff, or your SSA.

How do you feel today?



Advocating and Mental Health

Recognizing your feelings is part of becoming a self-advocate. It is important to recognize when you are becoming frustrated, overwhelmed, or depressed and ask for help if you are not able to manage these feelings on your own. Speak-up about how you are feeling to your family, SSA or staff so that you can get support. Sometimes, just simply speaking about what is bothering you helps to improve your feelings. Other times, professional help from a counselor or therapist may be needed.

Having ways to cope can help you to handle stress and changes that occur along your path to employment.

Some activities that may help you:

- Journaling how you feel gets those feelings out and allows you to see when you were upset and what was the cause of stress. Then you can develop a plan to address it.
- Taking deep breaths when overwhelmed can help calm your nervous system. Slowly breathing in through your nose and out through your mouth is a simple way to calm and relax.
- Finding ways to help others can give a sense of purpose & highlight your strengths. Using your skills to help others not only boosts your mood but can improve the mood of the person you help!

Advocacy in action:

- How do you calm when you are upset?
- Who is someone you can talk to about how you are feeling?
- What is an activity that you enjoy doing?
- Who is someone you can help?

(“How do you feel today?” is an activity from Project STIR-OSDA advocacy training)