



Realizing Employment First for Youth



Craig's Path to Community Employment

Case Study of Serious Emotional
Disturbance (Mental Health Diagnosis)

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Craig is a student served through an IEP in his local school district. The ETR indicates that Craig's educational identification is as a student with a Serious Emotional Disturbance (SED) or Emotional Disturbance (ED).

Brief History

Craig has a diagnosis of Bipolar disorder that he received from a psychiatrist at age 13. Prior to the diagnosis, Craig struggled with relationships with peers and adults. His behavior could be explosive and disruptive. The school provided Tier 2 behavior supports that were generally successful during the early years. However, as he approached adolescence the interventions seemed less effective and additional supports were needed. With new insights that came with the diagnosis, Craig's team began planning additional interventions and supports for his mental health needs as they prepared for transition planning. However, soon after the diagnosis, Craig's family found it necessary to make an unexpected move to a new county. With the rapid pace of the move, transition planning with the family was complicated. In addition, the family chose to wait until after the move to connect with a psychiatrist or community mental health services in the new county. At this same time, Craig began refusing to take his medications on a regular basis. As a result, Craig entered his new school district under great stress with no connections to mental health services or medication management.

Early Discussions

Prior to age 14, Craig had indicated a desire for future community employment, however, he had no specific career goals or even ideas. While unsure of his career goal, Craig stated he was wanted to go to college. He felt a 2-year college experience was a good place to start. After his diagnosis and relocation to a new school district, however, Craig's fears for the future surfaced and he began to wonder if he would not be able to regulate his mood during difficult moments on the job or in college. These concerns only worsened the mood swings and his challenging behaviors.

In School Support

Craig required assistance to complete assignments. He was also provided behavioral support for mood management. These services began during the elementary years, however, as he entered middle school other support was likely to be needed. Additional assessment data was required to determine the types of services or supports necessary. This information was added to other documentation from a variety of agencies. Agency representatives came together as a transition team to engage in multi-agency planning (MAP) and Backwards Planning with Craig and his family.

The following information reviews the multi-agency information gathered to inform transition assessment and to develop the postsecondary goals. Highlights of the services and supports that were identified as necessary through multi-agency planning are also reviewed in the information on the following pages.

Family Engagement

It is important to recognize that a general family outreach procedure is not sufficient to meet many of the individual family needs. Throughout Craig's journey, team members' efforts focused on engaging Craig's family in meaningful future planning using a variety of strategies and resources. This included offering ongoing and timely information while assisting the family to understand and connect to resources. The team was also sensitive to the family's priorities and goals (including Craig's) and used these to help guide the planning. Through the years the family's needs changed, requiring the school and agencies continuing efforts and strategies to evolve as well.

The following information reviews the multi-agency information gathered to inform transition assessment and to develop the postsecondary goals. Highlights of the services and supports that were identified as necessary through multi-agency planning are also reviewed in the information on the following pages.

Transition Assessment:

Information was collected by a multi-agency team using the following tools and methods:

Transition Assessment Tools and Processes Included:

- OhioMeansJobs.com career planning tools, including Career Cluster Inventory, Occupational Search, In-Demand Jobs report
- Use the Online Training Center on OhioMeansJobs.com for assignments and ACT practice assessments
- Record review (including the ETR) of previous teacher observations, reports and assessments
- Interview with Craig about his interest, preferences, strengths and needs
- Review of Tier 3 Behavior Support Plan
- Record review to identify effective positive behavior supports and academic interventions and accommodations
- Review of the effective Tier 2 PBS supports
- Information from Psycho-Social Assessment from Community Mental Health Center
- OT assessment to identify sensory triggers and potential academic accommodations
- Information from situational assessment and job shadows
- Opportunities to shadow law enforcement, coroner's investigators, etc. would be helpful to determine if these are avocations or true vocational interests

Figure 1: Selected Transition Assessment Tools and Processes

Transition Assessment surfaced the following information (selected items):

Preferences/ Interests

- Working with technology
- TV and movies about law enforcement and crime
- Enjoys cross-country running/track
- Reading true crime books
- Researching famous criminals online
- Being an 'expert' on topic of interest
- Emerging interest in birds, visits Audubon Center

Skills/Strengths

- Academics, especially math and science
- Able to navigate a variety of electronic devices/gadgets
- Beginning to creates /develops Apps
- Scientific inquiry
- Demonstrates skills to be a self-directed learner
- Emerging proficiency in online learning platforms

Needs/Challenges

- Intermittent, yet ongoing, unstable mood resulting in significant difficulty in making interpersonal connections
- Time management difficulties
- Difficulty completing academic assignments on-time and as directed
- Lack of consistency in taking medications as prescribed and connecting to physicians for medication management
- Interactions with peers, especially during team-based classroom activities
- Self-awareness of when he is reaching a crisis point and ability to select strategies to address potential crisis and mood instability
- Unable to consistently engage in self-directed learning (although he shows skills in that area)

Figure 2: Selected PINS resulting from Transition Assessment Process

Post-Secondary (Adult Life) Goals: Ongoing Transition Assessment and resulting information assisted to develop and confirm the following Post-Secondary Goals

Postsecondary Goals	Supporting Transition Assessment Data Below are examples of Transition Assessment data that support the identified goals
<p>Education Goal</p> <p>Craig's Early or Initial PS Education Goal</p> <p><i>Following graduation from high school, Craig will attend a 2-year community college to gain skills in a career of his interest and skill.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academic skills suited to community college • Needed assistance for interpersonal skills more likely to be supported in a community college setting, where he can commute to school, rather than a dorm setting
<p>Refined Education Goal</p> <p>As the team and Craig gained more information and insight, the PS Education goal was refined as he moved through high school</p> <p><i>Following graduation from high school, Craig will attend a 2-year community college to complete a degree in Cyber Security and Computer Forensics</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working with technology supports the degree area selected • TV and movies about law enforcement and crime supports and enjoys reading true crime books support the major selected
<p>Community Employment Goal</p> <p>Craig's Early or Initial PS Employment Goal</p> <p><i>Following graduation from high school and post-secondary education, Craig will obtain employment in a career of his interest, skill and education.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Craig's stated employment goal is supported by skills, strengths and interests with associated academics (science/math). • Reading true crime books • Researching famous criminals online
<p>Refined Community Employment Goal</p> <p>As the team and Craig gained more information and insight, the PS Employment goal was refined as he moved through high school</p> <p><i>Following graduation from high school and post-secondary education, Craig will obtain employment in the field of Cyber Security and Computer Forensics</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Able to navigate a variety of electronic devices/gadgets • Scientific inquiry • Demonstrates skills to be a self-directed learner
<p>Independent Living Goal</p> <p><i>Following graduation from high school, Craig will self-monitor/self-regulate his emotional responses through medication and regular counseling.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pervasive unstable mood resulting in inability to make interpersonal connections. • Intermittent, yet ongoing, unstable mood resulting in significant difficulty in making interpersonal connections • Lack of consistency in taking medications as prescribed and connecting to physicians for medication management • Needs continued support to have awareness of his mental state and internal dialogue and recognize symptoms of spiraling down. • Self-awareness of when he is reaching a crisis point and ability to select strategies to address potential crisis and mood instability

Review the Activities, Services, and Supports Included in Craig's Journey to Community Employment

	Early Years (Up to 10 years)	Early Middle School Years (11-12 years)	Late Middle School Years (12-14 years)	Early High School Years (14-16 years)	Late High School Years (16+ years)	After Graduation
Department of Developmental Disabilities - County Board of Developmental Disabilities	No referral or service was found to be needed					
Education Local Education Agency (School)	<p>Tier 2 supports included guidance counselor facilitated peer counseling group</p> <p>—————→</p>	<p>Check in and Check Out. School counselor meets with him on Monday morning and Friday afternoon of each week to identify and reflect upon self-monitoring strategies.</p> <p>—————→</p> <p>OT Consultation for Sensory based needs to include environmental adaptations</p> <p>—————→</p>	<p>Connects to local psychiatric practice that works with adolescents.</p> <p>With parent consent, school psychologist connects with Craig's psychiatrist to bring information to IEP team</p> <p>—————→</p> <p>Instruction in use of OhioMeansJobs.com career planning tools, including Career Cluster Inventory, Occupational Search, In-Demand Jobs report, education/training providers and how to build a resume</p> <p>—————→</p>	<p>School counselor meets with Craig on Monday mornings Only</p> <p>School referral to community mental health services</p> <p>—————→</p> <p>Use the Online Training Center on OhioMeansJobs.com for assignments and ACT practice assessments</p> <p>—————→</p> <p>Instruction and monitoring use of apps to assist in time management and assignment completion</p> <p>—————→</p>	<p>School counselor meets with Craig 2 times a month and upon request</p> <p>—————→</p> <p>IS organizes learning opportunities so Craig can identify how to obtain/ maintain health insurance for medication and counseling after he is no longer on parent's insurance.</p>	<p>Education services end at graduation</p>

	Early Years (Up to 10 years)	Early Middle School Years (11-12 years)	Late Middle School Years (12-14 years)	Early High School Years (14-16 years)	Late High School Years (16+ years)	After Graduation
Education Local Education Agency (School)			<p>Tier 3 support included a positive behavior intervention plan</p> <p>—————→</p> <p>Tier 2 supports for anti-social behaviors in group and unstructured settings.</p> <p>—————→</p> <p>Assisted with referral to OOD. The family was familiar with OOD from previous school, therefore only minor assistance needed.</p>			
Vocational Rehabilitation Agency - Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities (OOD)	No Service. Vocational Rehabilitation Services begin at age 14	With parent consent, OOD Counselor (OTSP) attends IEP meeting to explain OOD services to family	<p>Completed referral process for OOD services. Opened Case</p> <p>Job Exploration counseling (Pre-ETS) provided to confirm employment interests and begin to define a career pathway</p>	Summer Youth Career Exploration (between 10th and 11th grades) to learn more about the careers in law enforcement, cyber security, forensics and computer programming.	Summer Youth Work Experience (between 11th and 12th grades) to gain knowledge and skills in the areas of cyber security and forensics	At graduation from college, OOD may continue to support Craig should his disability present a barrier to obtaining or maintain his employment.
Ohio Job and Family Services Workforce Development OhioMeansJobs	No services were accessed	Although use of the OMJ backpack can begin at any age, Craig did not access these tools until later years of Middle School	<p>Created and used OhioMeansJobs.com backpack. Used Career Cluster Inventory, Occupational Search and In-Demand Jobs report to better target and narrow career interests and identify PINS. Viewed videos of careers and career environments. Accessed free tools for college and career readiness.</p> <p>—————→</p>	<p>Use Online Training Center on OMJ for assignments and ACT practice assessments</p> <p>—————→</p>	Posted resume, searched and applied for jobs, and practiced interviews.	Updated and posted resume, searched and applied for jobs

	Early Years (Up to 10 years)	Early Middle School Years (11-12 years)	Late Middle School Years (12-14 years)	Early High School Years (14-16 years)	Late High School Years (16+ years)	After Graduation
Mental Health and Addiction Services	Group School based counseling elementary provided by community mental health services.	Family support and counseling provided by community mental health provider to assist family to support Criag in proactvie and reactive measures related to mood stabalization and crisis.	IEP team, including Craig and psychiatrist, determine the self-monitoring techniques Craig will use, and the manner in which he will be taught these techniques.	<p>Craig was referred to Community Mental Health Board Services (ADAMH Boards) that connected him to a community mental health agency for counseling outside of the school day. This agency could also assure he had access to a psychiatrist for medication management should be become disconnected from his current psychiatrist.</p> <p>Community Mental Health counselor weekly session with Craig and communicates to school team with consent of Craig and parents.</p>	<p>Referral to mental health services and support on community college campus.</p> <p>Identify the adult mental health providers that Craig will use as he transitions to adult health care services</p> <p>Community Mental Health counselor reviews the information on the Disability Benefits 101 website (https://oh.db101.org) with Craig and his family with a careful focus on information to maintain health benefits.</p>	Available mental health services on campus - Disability Services

Figure 4: Craig's Path to Employment

Read About Craig's Journey to Community Employment

Craig's preparation for employment began even before he formally entered the transition years. The following information discusses Craig's Path to Community Employment through his education years and is intended to narrate the previous graphic.

In his early **elementary years**, supports focused primarily on assisting Craig to regulate his behavior. His teachers recognized the need for additional behavior support as he struggled to follow the class rules and had difficulty interacting with his peers without becoming frustrated or angry.

- Using the Positive Behavior Support model (PBIS), Craig's educational team developed several Tier 2 supports that included guidance counselor facilitating peer group counseling.
- The school team met regularly to discuss Craig's progress and to modify or intensify supports as needed.
- In addition, the school team communicated regularly with the community mental health counselor that provided group counseling in the school building. These types of counseling supports continued into the middle school years.
- This team also met together with Craig's parents to offer strategies for home support.

As Craig moved into the **Middle School**, the school team identified the need for more individualized support due to the transition and the anxiety he communicated to the guidance counselor and the community mental health counselor.

- A 'Check In and Check Out' strategy was implemented. He met with the school counselor on Monday morning and Friday afternoon of each week to identify and reflect upon self-monitoring strategies.
- Craig's teachers raised concerns of his responses to the school environment, noises and people in the middle school. It was decided that an Occupational Therapy assessment with a focus on sensory processing would be helpful to identify any needs and discuss environmental adaptations. The OT continued periodic consultation with Craig's team after the assessment and into the High School years.
- Community Mental Health supports were also intensified at this point. Family support and counseling was provided by community mental health provider to assist family to support Craig in proactive and reactive measures related to mood stabilization and crisis.

Career planning began early in Craig's school district (prior to age 14).

- One step that the school recommended was to gain the permission of the family meet with OOD to explain the vocational rehabilitation agency and pre-employment transition services. Craig's family agreed to meet and learn more about what to expect with Craig turned 14.

Unfortunately, as these supports intensified during **Middle School**, so did Craig's difficulty maintaining mood stability. At age 13 he was diagnosed with Bipolar Disorder by a psychiatrist and placed on medication. In the midst of these changes, Craig's family also found it necessary to make an abrupt move to a new city requiring a change in school district.

The transition to a new school and a new community was fraught with challenges. Craig was not connected with a new psychiatrist, which could create barriers to monitoring and refilling his medications. Craig was not too worried as he had decided he did not need the medication and often refused to take his daily pills. Disruptive behaviors increased in school while the family showed resistance to the new school team's inquiries and questions. At this point Craig was age 14 and should have his transition plan moving forward, yet many of the transition planning steps that were initiated prior to the move came to a halt. The team needed to prioritize their focus for Craig and adjust his transition plans.

After moving into his **New Middle School** and recognizing the intense need for behavior support, the school took these action steps:

- Connected Craig to a local psychiatric practice that works with adolescents
- With parent consent, school psychologist connected with this psychiatrist to bring information to IEP team on a regular basis through graduation
- Tier 3 support added that included a positive behavior intervention plan that remained in place as he entered high school
- Tier 2 supports provided to address anti-social behaviors in group and unstructured settings were provided into his later high school years

In **Later Middle School** years additional intervention was needed from community agency partners:

- Craig was referred to Community Mental Health Board Services (ADAMH Boards) that connected him to a community mental health agency for counseling outside of the school day. This agency could also assure he had access to a psychiatrist for medication management should he become disconnected from his current psychiatrist.
- The IEP team, including Craig and psychiatrist, determined the self-monitoring techniques Craig would use, and the manner in which he will be taught these techniques. These steps represented a blending of education and mental health services.
- Throughout high school, Craig received weekly counseling sessions with the Community Mental Health counselor. Communication between the school team and the counselor occurred with consent of Craig and his parents.

While focusing on behavior support, the team also needed to continue career development in **Middle School**. This included:

- Developed an OhioMeansJobs.com backpack using the OhioMeansJobs website. Craig used Career Cluster Inventory, Occupational Search and In-Demand Jobs report to better target and narrow career interests and identify PINS. He viewed videos of many careers and career environments. He accessed free tools for college and career readiness. The intervention specialist instructed Craig in how to use the backpack and other tools.
- The school assisted with referral to OOD. The family was familiar with OOD from previous school, therefore only minor assistance needed.
- OOD Completed referral process for services, found Craig eligible and opened a case which made him eligible for vocational services beyond Pre-ETS.
- OOD provided Job Exploration counseling as part of Pre-employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) to confirm employment interests and begin to define a career pathway

As Craig moved into **High School**, the positive behavior supports provided by school and the counseling and medication interventions provided by the mental health agencies proved to be a winning combination. Craig's moods became more stable and he better understood how to use self-management strategies.

- PBIS supports continued as needed until graduation, however the intensity lessened as Craig took more responsibility. The School counselor met with Craig on Monday mornings only and then decreased in later high school to 2 times a month or upon request.
- Craig was referred to Community Mental Health Board Services (ADAMH Boards) that connected him to a community mental health agency for counseling outside of the school day. This agency could also assure he had access to a psychiatrist for medication management should he become disconnected from his current psychiatrist.

Other important services/interventions that took place in the **High School** years focused on continued career development

- Instruction and monitoring use of apps to assist in time management and assignment completion. These same apps could be generalized to use in the employment setting.
- Use of the Online Training Center on OhioMeansJobs.com (OMJ) for assignments and ACT practice assessments
- OOD Summer Youth Career Exploration (between 10th and 11th grades) to learn more about the careers in law enforcement, cyber security, forensics, and computer programming.
- OOD Summer Youth Work Experience (between 11th and 12th grades) to gain knowledge and skills in the areas of cyber security and forensics
- Nearing graduation and after graduation, Craig used the OMJ website to post his resume, search and apply for jobs, as well as to practice interviews.

In his **last year of High School**, Craig's community mental health counselor, school counselor and intervention specialist worked together to target interventions that would help him sustain positive mental health in light of the post-secondary transition.

- Community Mental Health Counselor
 - Assisted Craig to identify the adult mental health providers that he will use as he transitions to adult health care services
 - Community Mental Health counselor reviewed the information on the Disability Benefits 101 website (<https://oh.db101.org>) with Craig and his family with a careful focus on information to maintain health benefits
- School Counselor
 - Referred him to mental health services and support on the community college campus (Disability Services), which he continued to use as he attended college.
- Intervention specialist
 - Organized learning opportunities so Craig could identify how to obtain/ maintain health insurance for medication and counseling after he is no longer covered by his parent's insurance.