



Applied
Self-Direction

Self-Directed Respite Voucher Guide

September 13, 2022

Who are we?

- The Applied Self-Direction team works with self-direction programs to maximize the level of choice and control that participants can exercise over their services and supports
- We provide training to state program administrators, service coordinators, support brokers, Fiscal Intermediaries (FI) agencies, and stakeholders across the country



Agenda

- What is self-direction
- Overview of the guidebook
- Successful self-direction respite programs
- Time for Q&A



What is Self-Direction?



A quick introduction



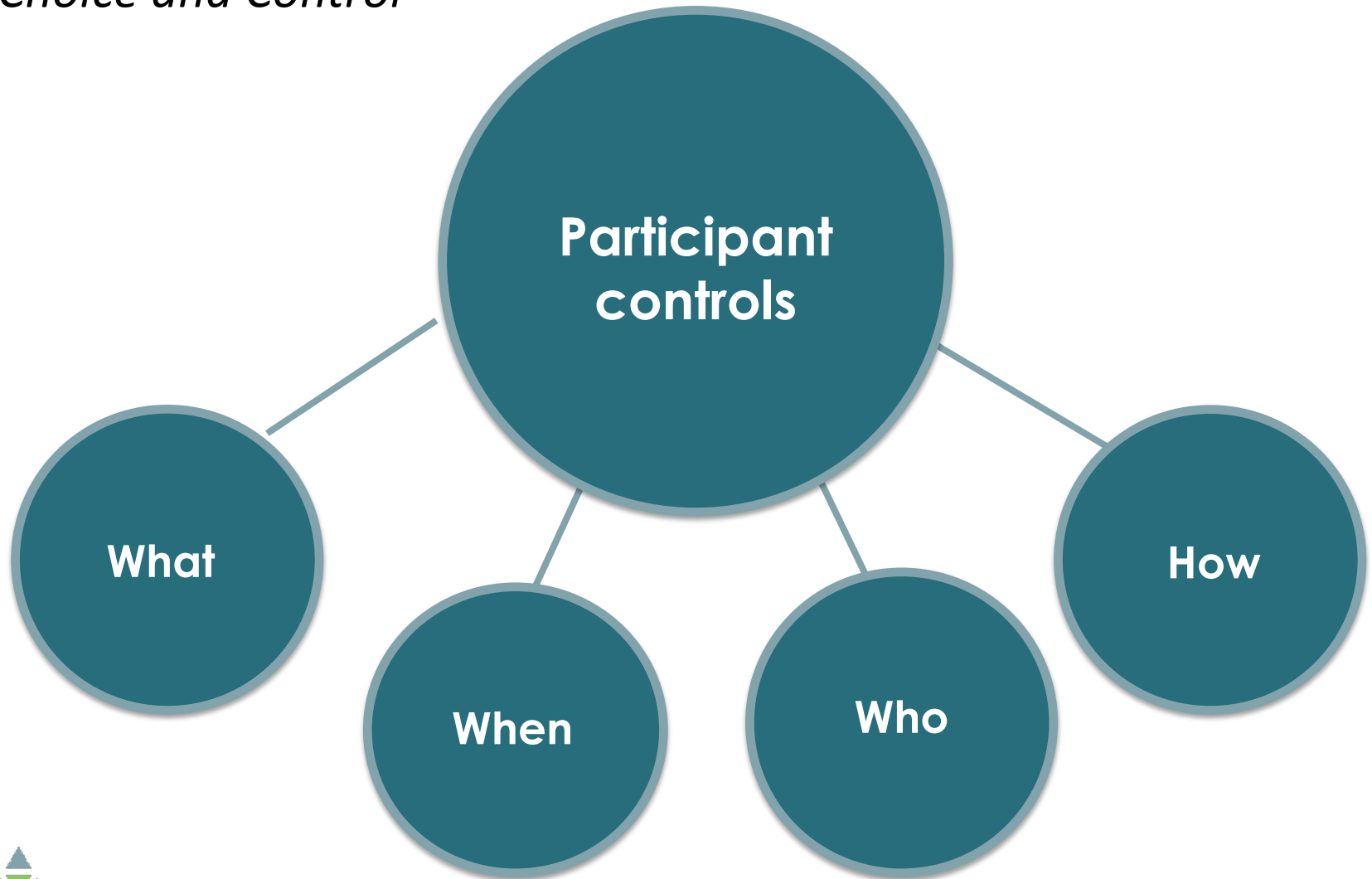
What is self-direction?

- Self-direction is a model of delivering services in which the person receiving those services has a **high level of choice and control**
- A person who self-directs decides *when, how, and from whom* their services are delivered
- Self-direction is based on the principle that **people with disabilities know their own needs best** and should lead the planning and managing of their services
- In self-direction programs people with disabilities are empowered to **hire and fire their own staff and manage a flexible budget**



What is Self-Direction?

Choice and Control



Benefits of Self-Direction

- Self-direction allows people to hire who they want to be providers, expanding the pool of available workers
- The model can be cost effective, because the participant takes on the responsibility of being the employer which can lead to lower administrative costs
- Self-direction has a positive impact on satisfaction and involvement in the community
- Family caregivers are more likely to choose self-direction because they “retain control, choice, and flexibility



Benefits of Self-Direction

- Family caregivers also report greater well-being and higher satisfaction rates than do family caregivers receiving agency-based or ‘traditional’ services”
- If caregivers are more likely to utilize self-directed services, it may have a greater impact on relieving caregiver burnout
- The benefits of self-direction for people who live in rural settings and/or living with high care needs have been found to be especially pronounced



The Truth about Self-Direction

For everyone
with the right
supports

Increases
choice and
control

Reduces unmet
needs

No more fraud
than traditional
services



Overview of the Self-Directed Respite Voucher Guide



Section 1: Introduction

- Introduction
 - How to Use the Guidebook
 - Definition of Terms
 - Overview of Self-Direction
 - Overview of Respite
 - Additional Resources on Self-Direction Overview
 - Stakeholder Involvement in the Program
 - Stakeholder Involvement Case Study Examples
 - Additional Resources on Stakeholder Involvement



Section 2: Program Structure

- Program Structure
 - Administrative Roles
 - Marketing & Outreach
 - Factors That Influence the Participation in a Self-Direction Respite Program
 - Determining Eligibility
 - Tracking Enrollment
 - Offering Information and Assistance
 - Employment and Financial Considerations
 - Financial Management Services
 - Spending Limits
 - Time Limits
 - Rate Setting



Section 3: Quality and Risk Management

- Quality & Risk Management
 - Elements of a Good Quality Management System
 - A Few Quality Tips
 - A Note on Electronic Visit Verification
 - Data Collection



The Importance of Stakeholder Engagement

- “Nothing about us without us”
 - People using services must be able to give input on how it works
- The voices of stakeholders should be heard and listened to from design, implementation, evaluation and continuous quality improvement
- There are several ways to get stakeholder feedback:
 - Formal advisory groups
 - Focus groups, surveys and telephone response lines
 - Peer support and mentoring
 - Involving additional agencies
 - Respite coalitions
 - ADRC
 - State Agencies



Factors that Influence Participation in Self-Directed Respite Programs

- #1 Factor that influences if people choose self-direction is how it is presented
 - Presented as a lot of work with a lot of responsibilities, it will not be chosen
 - Emphasizing the choice and control that comes along with self-direction will make it more appealing
- If they have friends and family members they can hire
 - Resources such as worker registries and information on how to be an employer can be given to help with this concern
- People staying in self-direction is completely dependent on their experience in the program



Offering Information & Assistance (I&A)

- The goal of information and assistance is to offer flexible and personalized support regarding information about self-direction and assistance and training with self-directed tasks
- As choice and control are key in self-direction, I&A Providers should empower participants and families to make decisions, with assistance as needed
- Specific types of assistance can include:
 - ❑ Developing a backup plan if a worker fails to show or other emergencies happen
 - ❑ Identifying and obtaining services, supports, and resources
 - ❑ Recruiting, hiring, and managing workers
 - ❑ Navigating employer responsibilities



Financial Management Services (FMS)

- Many participant-directed programs include one (or more) Financial Management Services (FMS) provider(s)
- The primary duties of an FMS provider are to:
 - Support participant employers with Federal and State tax and labor law compliance
 - Complete financial transactions on behalf of participants in accordance with spending plans, authorizations and/or program rules
 - Including payments for workers, agency support, and goods and services
 - Deposit taxes and file all tax and labor reports
 - Support participants becoming employers and hiring employees
 - Provide protections and safeguards for participants, their representatives and program administrative agencies
 - Generate reports for individuals and program administrative agencies
- With most models of FMS, the participant/employer is still the managing employer and retains the choice and control



Employment and Financial Considerations

- FMS help support employment and financial considerations for self-directed programs. Additional guidance can be found in the guidebook, including:
 - ❑ Guidance how to classify a worker: employee or independent contractor
 - ❑ Tax exemptions, such as the Live In Exemptions that exempt employees from overtime pay
 - ❑ How the relationship between the worker and employer affects taxes, as seen in the chart below

Parent/Representative Employer is:	And Employee is their:	Then, Employer & Employee are exempt from:
Child (adult or minor)	Parent	FICA, FUTA, SUTA
Parent	Child under 21	FICA, FUTA
Spouse	Spouse	FICA, FUTA, SUTA



Quality in Self-Directed Respite Programs

- Successful quality and risk management strategies in self-directed programs:
 - ❑ View caregivers and disabled people as the experts in their own lives and needs
 - ❑ Respect the need for accountability in publicly funded programs
 - ❑ Place a strong emphasis on quality improvement
- Quality assurance requires programs to:
 - ❑ Design quality management strategies as part of program operations
 - ❑ Provide support for participants to obtain high-quality services
 - ❑ Use data to continually improve the program



Risk Management in Self-Directed Respite Programs

- Research affirms that rates of fraud in self-directed programs are very low (Applied Self-Direction, 2021)
- Many programs require both the employer and respite provider to sign the payment voucher to reduce the risk of fraud
- OKDHS has only 1 point of entry for services, so that duplication of services is minimized
 - Also has an electronic referral record
- The FMS has safeguards in place to reduce risk
- Programs have paper trails to reduce risk
- LRW efficiently and effectively vets all new providers to ensure the best caregivers for their populations



Successful Self-Direction Respite Program Examples





Alabama Lifespan Respite Resource Network (Alabama Respite)

- Program details
 - ❑ Caregiver is approved for respite and receives a voucher, which states the amount approved and the dates it is valid
 - ❑ The family recruits, interviews and chooses a respite provider and arranges everything
 - ❑ Once respite has been provided, the caregiver submits a reimbursement form
 - ❑ The allotment can be used all at one time, or many periods of respite provision
 - ❑ Staff process the voucher paperwork and approve expenditures for respite services
 - ❑ Alabama Respite submits monthly invoices to funding agencies
 - ❑ The family is mailed a check for the amount owed
 - ❑ The caregiver is responsible for payment to the respite provider



Alabama Lifespan Respite Resource Network (Alabama Respite)

- Other details:
 - ❑ Eligibility and criteria is dependent on funding stream
 - ❑ Proof of age and disability or direct referral from the funding source are required
 - ❑ There is a waitlist, but every effort is made to move through it quickly
 - ❑ Amounts depend on the number of participants and available funding
 - ❑ Vouchers expire in 3 months, and can't be rolled over
 - ❑ Caregiver is allowed to set the payment rate with some restriction within state guidelines
 - Some providers are paid a set amount for a period of time (for example, \$200 to provide care for a weekend)
 - ❑ Alabama Respite charges an administrative fee of 10-12.5% and handles everything in house, instead of using an FMS



Alabama Lifespan Respite Resource Network (Alabama Respite)

- Successes:
 - ❑ Created year-round, consistent, planned respite to increase caregiver well-being and decrease the need for emergency respite through additional grant support
 - ❑ The amount of planned respite has increased annually from an average of 42 hours (FY20) to at least 84 hours (FY22) per caregiver
- Challenges:
 - ❑ Establishment of a statewide database for caregivers to identify available, individual, self-employed respite providers who have completed basic provider training and have passed a criminal background check



Oklahoma Lifespan Respite Program

- Program details
 - ❑ Caregiver is approved for respite and have full discretion on how to use their respite funding, whether all at once or throughout the 4-month period
 - ❑ Caregivers recruit, hire and arrange for respite worker
 - ❑ Caregivers determine the rate for respite providers
 - ❑ Can be provided in the caregiver's home, someone else's home, a center-based program or care center, such as an adult day services center or nursing facility
 - ❑ Once respite is provided, both the provider and caregiver fill out a voucher and the caregiver sends it to Sooner SUCCESS
 - ❑ A check is sent to the provider
 - ❑ After four months, given the availability of funds, the caregiver is eligible for an additional voucher



Oklahoma Lifespan Respite Program

- Other details:
 - ❑ To be eligible the care recipient must be 59 or younger and need assistance with activities of daily living in order to stay at home
 - ❑ The care recipient must not qualify for respite services or payment through any other program
 - ❑ The caregiver must also meet certain requirements, including be age 18 or older and serve as a full-time, unpaid caregiver or be a grandparent or other relative age 54 or younger raising a child, and not receive respite services from any other programs
 - ❑ Up to \$400 worth of respite vouchers can be issued to each person to be used within a 4-month period
 - ❑ General yearly limit is \$1,200, but funders can make exceptions
 - ❑ Sooner SUCCESS utilizes WovenLife as a FMS
 - ❑ There is no waiting list





Oklahoma Lifespan Respite Program

- Successes:

- ❑ Self-directing caregiver is given autonomy and control
- ❑ OKDHS and Sooner SUCCESS partnership is highly effective
- ❑ OKDHS has been successful in obtaining numerous grants
- ❑ Respite subcommittee has incredible connections and collaborations

- Challenges:

- ❑ Expanding the availability of respite, especially for families without immediate family in the area
- ❑ High incarceration rates, results in families unexpectedly taking on significant caregiving responsibilities with no built-in respite
- ❑ No opportunities to showcase program outcomes and successes to state officials



Lifespan Respite Washington (LRW)

- Program details
 - ❑ Caregivers apply via an online application for mini grants in the form of vouchers for respite services
 - ❑ Caregivers choose a respite provider from a database of registered provider agencies
 - ❑ The caregiver support team offers one on one support by phone, email, or text to assist family caregivers
 - ❑ If caregivers request a program or agency not included in the registry, LRW PAVE staff contact the preferred agency and provide customer service to become a registered respite provider
 - ❑ Vouchers are held in the caregiver's name
 - ❑ Vouchers are paid out directly to the caregiver's selected provider
 - ❑ The respite provider bills LRW directly



Lifespan Respite Washington (LRW)

- Other details
 - ❑ Eligible applicants must reside in Washington State and provide 40 or more hours per week of care or support to someone (of any age) with a special need or condition and the 40 or more hours must include supervision of the person receiving care
 - ❑ Care recipients can be any age and must have a special need or condition and must require 40 or more hours per week of care, including supervision
 - ❑ Caregivers receive \$1000 vouchers (per family) which they are typically required to use within 90 days
 - ❑ Vouchers may be used with more than one provider either sequentially or simultaneously
 - ❑ In Washington, LRW can pay registered providers, but cannot pay friends and/or family members of a voucher recipient
 - ❑ Caregivers do have a choice in their respite provider agency, the staff, and manage the range of service options they receive



Lifespan Respite Washington (LRW)

- Successes:
 - ❑ Database enables LRW to process caregiver and provider applications quickly
 - ❑ Database is user-friendly, and accessible
 - ❑ Provides person-to-person family caregiver support throughout process
 - ❑ LRW Coalition model is also self-directed with meetings where members share many resources for families and for providers
- Challenges:
 - ❑ Other self-directed programs offer more flexibility, including hiring friends and family
 - ❑ Obtaining funding has been a major challenge
 - ❑ Meeting the needs of rural communities has been difficult
 - ❑ Condition, culture, and/or trust factors needs are difficult to navigate





Lessons Learned

- Flexibility is key
- Caregivers should be afforded as much choice and control as possible, as they are best able to meet their own unique needs
- Caregivers benefit greatly from one-to-one, personalized attention and contacts
- Recycling unused money significantly extends the amount of funding and caregivers who can use it
- Spending time limits greatly increase the likelihood of using the money and the amount of unused money available
- The value of respite to people currently receiving services and the dire need for more funding
- Subcontractors will make or break the program





Questions?



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