



A DEGREE IS NOT ENOUGH

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Numbering System within Module Folders

The files in each module folder are numbered so that similar topics stay together. Except for the Introductory Materials folder, the numbers follow this pattern:

1. Introduction to the module
2. Sample invitation letters for students and parents
3. Sample flyer
4. Sample agenda
5. Materials for the module's presentations and/or exercises
6. Facilitators' notes or guidelines

Introduction and Planning Guide

Overview:

One of the most important aspects of organizing an effective training is being well prepared. We have created some planning guidelines which will be useful in identifying appropriate meeting partners, setting a timetable to prepare for the workshops, and getting all the logistics into place.

Online Resources

Overview:

As you plan your workshop series using the A Degree Is Not Enough modules, you may also choose to refer students for additional information. Connect-Ability has prepared a Distance Learning Initiative specifically for job seekers with disabilities. These modules cover a wide range of topics and include multiple resources; so you will be able to recommend modules that meet the individual needs of your students. Also, the Bureau of Rehabilitation Services offers a web page about personal assistance services. Hiring and managing one's own supports is a daunting task, and this resource answers many of the questions beginners frequently ask.

** Modules may be offered in any order*

Module 1*

Why Work? Why Now? The Importance of Employment During School

Overview:

In addition to providing the finances to live independently, employment strengthens self-esteem, motivation, and relationships. This workshop will acquaint students with employment accommodations, self-advocacy, soft skills, and the impact of work on disability benefits. Other topics include balancing school with a job, the employer's perspective, and resources such as the Connect-Ability website. Parents will learn how they can support their son or daughter in developing necessary workplace skills.

The folder includes:

- Invitation letters for students and parents
- Flyer
- Agenda
- PowerPoint presentation for parents: Help Your Student Prepare for a Job
- PowerPoint presentation about Connect-Ability
- Two handouts about soft skills
- Top 10 Qualities Employers Seek
- Other Resources and Ideas for Planning the Workshop

Module 2*

Power Up! Achievement through Technology

Overview:

Assistive technology is any piece of equipment or system that improves the functional capabilities of persons with disabilities. This workshop will give students information about how to evaluate their need for assistive technology, how to access it, how to pay for it, and how to request a reasonable accommodation from an employer. Parents will learn about accessing and funding assistive technology, and how to support their sons or daughters in developing self-advocacy skills.

** Modules may be offered in any order*

The folder includes:

- Invitation letters for students and parents
- Flyer
- Agenda
- PowerPoint presentation: Introduction to Assistive Technology and the Connecticut Tech Act Project

Module 3*

Disabled Will Travel

Overview:

Accessing transportation is key to becoming employed and living independently. This session will help students assess their transportation needs and find the best ways of getting around, including public transportation, paratransit, and planning for getting a vehicle. They will get a taste of cross-country travel through a fun exercise where they plan a trip. Glitches are thrown in to help develop problem-solving skills. The parent track features a presentation about the importance of travel and an opportunity to ask questions.

The folder includes:

- Invitation letters for students and parents
- Flyer
- Program
- Agenda for parents
- Itineraries for five US cities
- Sample planning journal for Boston
- Personal planning journal
- Resource list of useful web sites
- Guidelines for facilitators
- Formal overview of travel module

** Modules may be offered in any order*

Module 4*

Get Fired Up! A Career Fair Prep Rally

Overview:

Employment makes many things possible. In this session, students will prepare to attend an actual career fair. Freshmen and sophomores will focus on researching careers and networking; juniors and seniors will bring résumés and present themselves as candidates for employment. The parents' track will cover what will be expected from their son or daughter at a career fair, how to create a professional appearance, and how to help with this process.

The folder includes:

- Invitation letters for students and parents
- Flyer
- Agenda

Module 5*

Financial Literacy: Planning for Today and Tomorrow

Overview:

Knowing how to handle money is a critical skill, especially as employment leads to increased resources and choices. This workshop will provide information to students about how to think about their finances, plan wisely, and avoid common mistakes. A separate track for parents will discuss debt management, tax resources, funding for assistive technology, and other financial information.

The folder includes:

- Invitation letters for students and parents
- Flyer
- Agenda

Module 6*

Social Media and Your Job Search:

** Modules may be offered in any order*

Taking a Look at Your Digital Dirt

Overview:

Social media can provide jobseekers with opportunities for networking, but creating the wrong impression on these sites can turn off potential employers. This workshop will teach students how to take advantage of the connections social media offers, as well as how to use these tools wisely. Students will learn to create a profile on Linked-In, search, join groups, and create connections. They will also find out how to avoid social media pitfalls. Equipped with this knowledge, students will be ready to do some serious networking.

The folder includes:

- Invitation letters for students and parents
- Flyer
- Agenda
- Social media faux pas
- PowerPoint presentations: LinkedIn Part 1 and LinkedIn Part 2

Module 7*

Bingo: Putting the Pieces Together

Overview:

This session will give students information about how to prepare for life in the working world. Working while in school makes it easier to find a job after graduation. Students will learn about resources at college and in the community to help them overcome employment barriers and gain work experience. Preparing for employment includes writing a resume, going to job fairs, interviewing, and using transportation and technology. Students will develop a "Passport for Success" with a follow-up event at the end of the semester.

The folder includes:

- Invitation letters for students and parents
- Flyer
- Bingo list of accomplishments

** Modules may be offered in any order*



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NUMBERING SYSTEM

Numbering System within Module Folders

The files in each module folder are numbered so that similar topics stay together. Except for the Introductory Materials folder, the numbers follow this pattern:

1. Introduction to the module
2. Sample invitation letters for students and parents
3. Sample flyer
4. Sample agenda
5. Materials for the module's presentations and/or exercises
6. Facilitators' notes or guidelines

** Modules may be offered in any order*



A DEGREE IS NOT ENOUGH INTRODUCTION AND PLANNING GUIDE

Too many students with disabilities who have completed post-secondary education and even graduate school are sitting at home because they lack basic independent living and job search skills. Being able to arrange transportation, understand money and benefits, acquire work experience, and sell oneself to an employer are every bit as necessary as having good grades and a good resume.

In 2005 the Bureau of Rehabilitation Services, Southern Connecticut State University, and the Center for Disability Rights came together to put on a workshop about job readiness for students with disabilities and their parents. The session was so well-received that the planning group decided to create additional modules, one of which would be delivered each semester. The assumption was that a student would attend all of the workshops while completing a four-year degree.

This series has become known as A Degree Is Not Enough. Here are the accomplishments of just three of the students who participated in the program:

- Traveled independently, moved into an apartment, attended graduate school, and took a professional position;
- Overcame feelings of inferiority to become a teacher and tutor; and
- Changed a pattern of overreliance on others and became a professional in the school system.

It is now time to make these modules available throughout Connecticut. In this toolkit you will find the resources and planning materials you will need to offer A Degree Is Not Enough to your students. If you have questions about how to implement this series at your college, contact Connect-Ability at info@connect-ability.com or 866-844-1903.

Workshop Planning & Preparation Guidelines

One of the most important aspects of organizing an effective training is being well prepared. Toward that end, we have created some planning guidelines. Following these guidelines will require a significant time commitment from the series organizers and planning committee. The guidelines will be useful, however, in identifying appropriate meeting partners, setting a timetable to prepare for the workshops, and getting all the logistics in place.

This toolkit contains the basic materials you will need to plan and implement A Degree Is Not Enough workshops. Checklists are included in this overview and in other places throughout the toolkit. Use these to assist with your planning, and to ensure that you have anticipated what you will need prior to the start of the workshop.

You will want to tailor the number and content of the workshops to the needs of your students. For example, for students with physical disabilities, it may be important to incorporate personal assistance services into one of the modules. Deciding what content will be most useful for the specific students you are working with will be a critical part of the planning process.

- 1. Create a Planning Committee:** As soon as you decide to offer A Degree Is Not Enough, establish a planning committee to help organize both the content and the logistics. Consider including some of the following individuals on this committee:

- A dean or department head who has the authority to make relevant program and fiscal decisions;
- Disability services coordinators, advisors, and other staff who have direct contact with the students you hope will attend the workshops;
- Any necessary clerical or administrative staff who will be active participants in planning and setting the meeting logistics;
- A representative of the local independent living center (ILC) who would be an important partner in the series; and
- Someone from your college or another agency that specializes in the issues faced by students with disabilities as they transition from school to employment;
- An employer who can provide the employer's perspective in planning the workshops and participate as a speaker or panelist.

- 2. Collaborate with Relevant Partner Organizations:** Once the planning committee has been established, one of its first tasks should be to identify potential organizations or individuals to help conduct the workshops. This should include agencies whose work is relevant to students' needs around independent living and securing employment. Potential partners include:

- the local independent living center,
- the area vocational rehabilitation agency,

- the State Tech Act Project,
- Work Incentive Benefits Specialists,
- local community colleges, and
- Job Corps or other community training programs.

3. Set a Planning Timetable: When you first start creating the design of the series, outline a planning schedule. There will be a lot involved in developing the content and arranging the logistics, so initiate the process a full 12 months in advance if possible. The following timeline is a suggested schedule based on a 12-month timeframe.

12 Months Ahead:

- Identify potential members for the series' planning committee and confirm their commitment to participate.
- Schedule an initial meeting of the planning committee where the workshops' goals and content are set, their target audience identified, a planning timetable outlined, and potential workshop partners named.
- Confirm funding for the workshops and set a budget.
- Confirm the dates for and length of the workshops.
- Contact partners identified by the planning committee to confirm their commitment to collaborate in the workshop.
- Present information to referral sources to begin recruiting participants.
- Create a planning checklist for the series and its planning committee meetings.

6 Months Ahead:

- Confirm the workshop site, making sure that it contains the right configuration of rooms and space necessary for the workshops, and keeping in mind the accessibility needs of participants and presenters.
- Outline an agenda for the workshop.
- Contact individuals you would like to be presenters or facilitators for the various workshop sessions and identify them on the agenda.
- Decide whether you want to provide food. If so, set menus for each workshop with the catering staff or identify an outside caterer if the site does not offer catering services.
- Create a "save the date" card or flyer advertising each workshop. Distribute it to students with disabilities, and be sure it is posted on the college website.
- Send an invitation letter to students with disabilities.
- Send a separate letter to their parents. Parental participation in this series is important, both to maximize the growth of the students and to assist parents in letting their young adult mature.

3 Months Ahead:

- Create a registration process for students participating in the workshop.
- Follow up with potential participants to have them formally register for the workshop.
- Finalize the workshop's agenda.
- Confirm session presenters and facilitators. Arrange for any audiovisual equipment they will need.
- Confirm the accommodation needs of all presenters and participants.
- Confirm all the relevant event contracts including the venue and food.
- Identify and secure any transportation and providers.
- Identify and confirm the participation of any personal assistants to be used for the workshop.
- Confirm that all relevant staff and planning committee members are available to participate in the workshop.

1 Month Ahead:

- Send reminder notices or make follow-up calls to students to reconfirm their attendance and remind them of the logistics.
- Gather resources for the workshop's notebook or resource table.
- Reconfirm participation of staff, presenters, and other workshop facilitators.
- Finalize and reconfirm all assistive technology and audiovisual equipment for the workshop.
- Make nametags for all participants and presenters and create sign-in sheets.
- Create and print enough staff, counselor and student evaluation forms for all workshop participants.
- Organize and copy all relevant materials to be distributed to all workshop participants.

- 4. Logistics:** Making sure that your workshop's logistics are well planned and meet participants' needs is an important part of hosting a successful event. In fact, organizing the logistics of an event can become as time consuming as developing the content. The following list identifies some of the main logistical issues to consider.

Location

- Be sure that the location you choose is physically accessible for all meeting participants and preferably located close to public transportation.
- Partnering with local community resources that participants may access in the future is a good way to help them connect with follow-up services.
- Confirm that the physical space you will be using for your workshop sessions will allow enough space for multiple wheelchair users to be comfortable.

Food

- Decide whether or not you want to serve food.
- When planning the menu and ordering food, check on the dietary restrictions of workshop participants.
- Be sure that your registration materials clearly identify whether or not meals will be provided as part of the workshop.
- Think about leaving some time in the agenda for participants to network during meals.

Transportation

- Be available to assist any participant who wants help arranging accessible transportation.
- If possible, encourage students to get to the workshop by using the kind of transportation they might use to commute to work.
- If you are providing transportation for participants, be sure to ask the right questions to insure you are providing the appropriate transportation. Try to connect them with the transportation they will likely be using to commute to work.

Personal Assistance

- If participants use personal assistance services, ask if they will need help during the workshop. If so, find out whether they will be bringing an assistant with them, or whether they will need support in making these arrangements.
- When organizing personal assistance services, note that most participants will not need 1:1 personal assistance for the entire time.
- Be sure to ask participants what they will need assistance with (i.e. toileting, eating, repositioning, or taking notes) and be sure that the personal assistants you have available at the workshop are prepared to provide those services.
- Sign contracts in advance with the personal assistants you hire for the workshop.

Assistive Technology

- Determine the need for assistive technology well in advance of the meeting to be sure that you can meet the needs of your participants.
- Partner with the state Tech Act Project in hosting the workshop.
- Use the workshop's staff and counselor evaluations to identify barriers to participation or problems with assistive technology.

Materials

The following checklist is designed to help you be sure that you have all the necessary materials in place prior to the workshop:

- Participant invitation letter
- Parent invitation letter
- Campus map for parents
- Attendee confirmation letter
- Evaluations for participants, facilitators, and staff
- Agendas
- Resource materials/notebook/CD
- Nametags
- Sign-in sheets
- Any table decorations
- Camera
- Audiovisual equipment
- Flip charts, markers and tape

Speakers/Presenters

- Whenever possible, have representatives of local community resources present or facilitate so that students will be more likely to access their services after the workshop.
- Ideally, the presenters should be experts in the subject area they present on and have disabilities themselves.
- Session presenters should also be working, in a training program, or in postsecondary education.



A DEGREE IS NOT ENOUGH ONLINE RESOURCES

As you plan your workshop series using the A Degree Is Not Enough modules, you may also choose to refer students for additional information.

Connect-Ability has prepared a Distance Learning Initiative specifically for job seekers with disabilities. The Distance Learning modules cover a wide range of topics and include multiple resources. As you browse through the table on the following pages, you will be able to recommend modules that meet the individual needs of your students. Distance Learning courses are free. Students have 30 days to complete each course; they can take just one course, or sign up for additional courses. They will receive a certificate upon completion of each course.

In addition, the Bureau of Rehabilitation Services offers a comprehensive web page about personal assistance services. Hiring and managing one's own supports is a daunting task, and this resource answers many questions beginners frequently ask.

Bureau of Rehabilitation Services' Web Page about Personal Assistance Services

People who need assistance with everyday tasks such as bathing, dressing, eating, driving, making phone calls, handling papers, and taking notes may hire a personal assistant. Becoming an employer is a big responsibility, and people who are just getting started have many questions and concerns. To look at the Bureau of Rehabilitation Services' web page about personal assistance services, click on

<http://www.ct.gov/brs/cwp/view.asp?a=3955&q=465114&brsNav>

Connect-Ability Distance Learning Modules

Below is a list of A Degree Is Not Enough modules and their companion pieces from the Distance Learning Initiative. To see the Distance Learning Initiative course catalog online, learn what each module is about, and register for courses, go to <https://elearning.connect-ability.com/catalog.cfm>

A Degree Is Not Enough Module	Connect-Ability Distance Learning Module	Course #
#1 - Why Work? Why Now?	Getting To Know Yourself	23
#1 - Why Work? Why Now?	Employment Benefits and Risks	24
#1 - Why Work? Why Now?	Independent Living Skills Overview	54
#1 - Why Work? Why Now?	Personal Assistance	58
#1 - Why Work? Why Now?	Service Dogs	57
#1 - Why Work? Why Now?	Emergency Preparedness	56
#2 - Power Up – Technology	Assistive Technology	55
#3 - Disabled Will Travel	Buying and Leasing a Vehicle	62
#4 - Get Fired Up – Prep Rally	Cover Letter and Resume Development	26
#4 - Get Fired Up – Prep Rally	Job Search	27
#4 - Get Fired Up – Prep Rally	Job Application and Interviews	28
#4 - Get Fired Up – Prep Rally	Introduction to Soft Skills (with Downloadable Facilitator's Guide)	17
#4 - Get Fired Up – Prep Rally	Communicating as a Professional	18
#4 - Get Fired Up – Prep Rally	Working with Others	19
#4 - Get Fired Up – Prep Rally	Learning to Add Value at Work	20

A Degree Is Not Enough Module	Connect-Ability Distance Learning Module	Course #
#4 - Get Fired Up – Prep Rally	<u>Putting it all Together</u>	22
#4 - Get Fired Up – Prep Rally	<u>Work Expectations and Communication</u>	29
#4 - Get Fired Up – Prep Rally	<u>Personal Challenges and Workplace Ethics</u>	30
#5 - Financial Literacy	<u>Financial Planning</u>	59
#5 - Financial Literacy	<u>Budgets</u>	60
#5 - Financial Literacy	<u>Your Money: Keeping It Safe and Secure</u>	61
#5 - Financial Literacy	<u>Financial Basics and Time Management</u>	25
#6 – Social Media	<u>Being Professional</u>	21