

Community Voices-IM4Q **Independent Monitoring for Quality**

Every year, individuals with disabilities, their family members, and their staff are interviewed by the Independent Monitoring for Quality (IM4Q) project to learn about the overall quality of life for individuals who receive support through the Office of Developmental Programs (ODP) in Pennsylvania. The key objective of IM4Q is to provide information that might help improve the quality of life of people with disabilities.

The IM4Q process begins and ends with the voice of the individual, their family, and the people who know them best.

ALL Voices Must Be Heard
ALL Voices Must Count

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"I think it is wonderful you develop meaningful considerations for the people you meet and interview. You know my feelings on considerations, and I know you both take the responsibility to listen to people and record what they/others say very seriously, so you can help improve their lives."

*Guy Caruso, Ph.D., FAAIDD
Western Coordinator
Institute on Disabilities at Temple University*

The considerations and outcomes provided in this booklet were developed this survey year. The voices are real although the names have been changed to Sharon or Bob, to respect each person's confidentiality.

Program Mission

Community Voices promotes quality of life, recovery, and resiliency by giving voice to all stakeholders.

Program Values

Community Voices' core values are that:

**ALL Voices Must Be Heard
and ALL Voices Must Count**

Program Goals

- To conduct groups, surveys, and related activities with empathy and respect, while maintaining confidentiality.
- To provide all stakeholders with opportunities to voice their perceptions regarding services and Support.
- To support all stakeholders by sharing of survey data, results, information, and opportunities.
- To facilitate greater awareness and communication regarding issues, concerns, and outcomes.
- To participate in regular committee meetings with stakeholders to identify system-wide issues, trends, and solutions.
- To encourage self-advocacy and system responsiveness.
- To provide information to all stakeholders regarding rights, responsibilities, and encourage them to be familiar with the concepts of quality of life.
- To encourage all stakeholders to utilize Support for problem resolution.

My life, My Choice

Family Voices Count

Bob's Foster Mother identified, "**I would like for them to call me for Bob's ISP meetings. It's important to me.**"

Bob's Residential staff provided Bob's Support Coordinator (SC) with Bob's foster mother contact information. Bob's SC contacted his Residential Provider and foster mother, who is now living in a nursing home. During her interview she expressed a desire for increased involvement in Bob's life. SC offered to send her an invitation to his next ISP. Bob's Foster mother also identified she would like a copy of his current ISP. SC provided her with Bob's ISP, contact information and the procedures for calling into the next meeting.

I Want a cell phone, Just Like You

Sharon identified, "**I would like to have a cell phone**".

Sharon met with her Day Program staff and her SC to discuss her getting a cell phone. Sharon agreed to try a track phone first, so she is not locked into paying a long-term contract with a carrier, in the event she does not want to keep it or doesn't use it much. The, Residential supervisor will assist her with purchasing a new phone.

I Want to Vote, Just Like You

Bob stated, **I would like to vote for the president.**

At Bob's meeting with his SC they discussed and reviewed the registration form and the need for picking a party beforehand. Also, the team briefly explained that a person is voting on issues that are important to them and which candidate may best represent his values. Bob stated he would like to learn more about the different political parties before he decides to complete the registration form. It was suggested he could further explore political topics and the processes of voting with his Community Support staff and his mother.

IM4Q

Yearly, the voices of Cameron/Elk, Clarion, McKean, and Venango County residents, who receive services from ODP, their families, and staff are heard and documented. The answers to Independent Monitoring for Quality's (IM4Q) probing questions help identify changes that might improve everyone's quality of life.

During the IM4Q interview, questions in the following areas are discussed:

Satisfaction

Dignity, Respect, and Rights

- Support Coordination
- Emergency Preparation
- Health

Choice and Control

- Employment

Relationships

Inclusion

The questions and discussions all have the potential to lead to new ideas and considerations for change.

With **ALL** our voices and dedication toward improving the quality of life for individuals, this journey has led to many wonderful, fulfilling changes. Some of these changes, are documented on the following pages.

A special thank you to the incredible staff who are dedicated to improving the quality of life of the individuals they support, and a special recognition to all of the families who always go above and beyond.

Every Life Can Be Better

I Want to Help Others, Just Like You

When IM4Q Team asked, "Is there anything you want to do or learn? Bob identified, **"Yes, fire safety"**.

Bob, met with his SC, and his Day Program staff to discuss Bob's request to volunteer at a local fire department. The Day Program staff agreed to assist Bob with volunteering. Bob will begin to contact local fire departments at least once or twice a month. The visits will begin this week.

It Hurt's, Please Listen

Sharon identified, **"there is something wrong with my dentures they have all of this hard-yellow stuff in the cracks and it hurts."**

Sharon met with her SC, Residential Provider staff and Community Support staff. SC identified Community Support staff will make an appointment with dentist to evaluate and potentially see if Sharon might be eligible for a new pair of dentures.

Taste Matters

Sharon identified, **"The food, is not good over here. They always serve the same food and it is always cold."**

SC met with Sharon who reported that she participates in the food board meetings at her home, when she can attend. SC spoke with the Residential Staff who reported dietary will work with the staff to improve their practices. Sharon indicated that the food has been improving since the time of the survey.

Just Like You, I Will Drive

Bob identified, **"I want help to get my driver's license."** IM4Q team identified he might benefit from staff support.

Bob, Community Support staff and SC met and discussed Bob's, request which is now included in his ISP, since his staff should be aware of and should be helping him with.

Steven stated he got the book on line and started studying. He completed the first test and only got 1 wrong. He has an appointment to see his physician to make sure he can drive.

I Grieve, Just Like You

Bob identified, **"I would like to visit my grandfather's grave to pay my respects."**

Bob, met with his SC, and his Day Program staff to discuss Bob's request to visit his grandfather's grave. Bob had never visited the cemetery but knew it was nearby. Bob and the team identified the cemetery and his Community Support staff agreed to take him to the grave site on Memorial Day. They also agreed that Bob might work on some coping skills during this visit.

My Hobby

Staff identified **"Bob loved going to see WWE wrestling"**.

Bob, his SC, the Residential Program Director and Residential Program Supervisor met at Bob's home and reviewed Bob's considerations. Bob's staff went on line and found the next, nearest World Wrestling Entertainment (WWE) exhibition. The event is in July in Pittsburgh. Bob also loves to stay in hotels so his staff will make plans for an overnight stay. Bob enjoys going with his peers, so staff are going to see if Bob's housemates would want to attend.

My life, My Choice

I Am Equal, Just Like You

Sharon identified she would like to know, **“why can’t I collect unemployment, when I am laid off. I know I make enough money”**.

Sharon met with her Day Program staff and SC to discuss how unemployment works and the minimum amount earned in a quarter to qualify for unemployment benefits. They also discussed the "waiting period" of 1 week before you would receive benefits. It was agreed, that the Day Program staff will notify Sharon when she is eligible for unemployment benefits.

Equipment

When asked, “Do you have all of the equipment you need, both Bob and his mother responded, “No”. His mother stated, **“his wheel chair is old, and they have never had any luck finding a replacement chair that is narrow enough to suit Bob’s needs”**.

At Bob’s ISP meeting his SC discussed the need and offered to assist the family through Penn Highlands Dubois campus, since they have a wheel chair clinic. Bob’s mother and his SC agreed to schedule an appointment for a Wheel Chair evaluation.

Family Matters

IM4Q Team identified, **“pictures of Sharon might be sent to her family every quarter”**.

SC spoke to Sharon’s Community Support staff who agreed that Sharon with staff assistance will begin to send quarterly photos to her siblings, since they are the only remaining family Sharon has.

Resources

IM4Q team identified Bob’s family might benefit from, **“information on how to participate in the rent rebate program that is provided for individuals”**. Families who support individuals if qualified may receive around \$600 per year.

SC met with Bob, his mother, Bob’s Residential, and Day Program staff. SC spoke with Bob and the team about the rent rebate. SC gave Bob’s mother the information and instructions. Bob’s Mom stated she will fill the application out and SC stated if she has any questions to contact SC.

I Want a Better Job, Just Like You

Sharon identified, **“I want a job to make more money”**. Sharon agreed to allow staff to explore possible employment opportunities at any job that she could make more money.

Sharon met with SC, Residential and Day Program staff. SC and team identified that Sharon will continue to attend the Day Program four days per week and continue to work on her goal of working the entire shift. Sharon will also work with the Day Program staff to set daily goals for the number of boxes she wants to complete and tracking her daily production. Staff will also continue to offer Sharon job shadowing opportunities. The team agreed that if by August 2019 Sharon is not satisfied with prevocational work and has not seen an increase in her pay that a referral will be made for vocational support.

IM4Q – Quality of Life

I Want To Learn, Just Like You

When IM4Q Team sked, "Is there anything you want to do or learn? Sharon replied, "**I want to be a Photographer**".

Sharon identified, "It would be really cool to learn more about how to work a camera and have a learning experience helping a photographer, so I can learn more about photography and lighting.

Sharon met with her mother and SC in Sharon's home. Sharon's mother identified she would like Sharon to first attend a photography class, so she can learn basic techniques. Sharon was agreeable to starting a basic photography class using her camera.

I Need to Feel Safe, Just Like You

Sharon identified, "**I need information on what to do in an emergency**"

SC spoke with Sharon briefly after the interview with regards to what to do in an emergency and they set up a time the next day for SC to bring more information. SC printed out what to do in an emergency packets from the American Red Cross and FEMA. SC went over the paperwork with Sharon with regards to what she would need to do in case of an emergency. Sharon told SC that she felt better with what she would need to do in event of an emergency. SC let Sharon know that if there were any questions about emergencies in the future to feel free to contact SC and she would help with the situations as they arose.

Make Your Voice Heard



Three incredible Self Advocates gave a keynote address at this year's:

Independent Monitoring for Quality's 50th Annual Statewide Training.

James Meadours, Carolyn Morgan and Debbie Robinson were remarkable as they shared their personal stories of sexual abuse and how it impacted their lives, how they survived their experiences and why it is important to keep talking about it.