

A key to your future



**your individual
and family service plan
a book for adults**



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Introduction

WHO IS THIS BOOK FOR? This book is written for you, an adult who receives services from Harbor Regional Center (HRC). Your family may also be interested in this book, but it is really written for you. Harbor Regional Center has another book for family members. It is called ***Understanding the Individual and Family Service Planning Process: A Resource for Family Members***. Your family member may get a copy from the Regional Center.

WHAT IS THIS BOOK ABOUT? This book is about the Individual and Family Service Plan (IFSP). The IFSP is a guide for how you can do the things you want to do in your life. This book tells you what is in your plan. It also tells you how to get ready for the meeting where a group of people will help you write your plan. This group of people is called your team. The book also tells you how to pick people to be on your team.

Section 1

Section 1

This book includes a workbook that you may use to get ready for the meeting where you will write your plan. The workbook is called ***Planning For Your Future***. It asks questions that are important for you to think about when you are planning your future.

WHAT IS IN THE REST OF THIS BOOK? **Section 2**

of this book tells you a little bit about HRC. It explains what a Regional Center is and what it does to help people with a disability. It also tells you how people from HRC will help you get the services and supports you need to live your life the way you want to.

Section 3, called *About the Plan*, explains why people have plans. It talks about what plans have in them and how a plan can help you work to make your wishes and dreams come true. It also tells you things that may help you decide which people to pick to be on the team that helps you write the plan.

Section 4 is called *Getting Ready for the Meeting*. It explains what you need to do to get ready for the meeting with your team. It also tells you what happens in the meeting. You will find the workbook called ***Planning For Your Future*** at the end of this book. Section 4 tells you how to use the workbook.

Section 5 is called *Living with the Plan*. It helps you understand what happens after the plan is done. It talks about how your team reviews the plan to make sure it is working well for you. It also tells how the team makes changes if the plan is not working well. The last part of this section talks about some things you can do if you are not happy with your plan.

After you have read this book and done the things it says to get ready for the planning meeting, you will be well prepared to work with your team to develop the best possible plan. You will then be ready to go out and take charge of your life!

this book will tell you about
the plan. the plan will help
you reach your life goals.

Section 1

What is Harbor

WHAT DOES THE REGIONAL CENTER DO? Harbor

Regional Center gets money from the State of California and the United States Government to help people with disabilities. But the center belongs to the community. It is run by a group of people from the community. This group is the **Board of Directors**, but most people call it the Board. Some people on the Board have a disability and some are family members of a person with a disability. Other members of the Board are just people who are interested in helping people with a disability.

HRC is here to help people with a disability do two very important things. The first is *to help people with a disability be true members of their community.*

the regional center helps
open doors for people
with a disability.

Section 2

To be true members of the community means people with a disability are able to do the same things and go to the same places as people who do not have a disability. This means they go to regular schools, they have real jobs, they use regular buses, and they live in regular homes and apartments in the community.

The second important thing Harbor Regional Center does is *to help people with a disability make their own choices about how they live their lives.*

That's what the IFSP is all about. When you make your plan you will have a chance to talk to your team about your hopes and dreams. Team members will help you think of things you could do to make these things come true. They will also talk to you about how the Regional Center and others can help you do the things you decide you want to do. You will then decide what you want to do and the team will help you find the services and supports you need to live your life your way.

The things you decide you want to do are your goals. Goals include things like where you live, what you do during the day, what you do for fun, and who you do things with.

Section 2

Section 2

WHAT IS A REGIONAL CENTER COUNSELOR? The

Regional Center has many staff members who work with people and make sure they get the services and supports their plan says they need. These staff members are called Counselors. You will have your own Regional Center Counselor. (If you have been getting services from HRC, you may have a Counselor already.)

Your Counselor is a very important person. He or she is the person from the Regional Center you will talk to most often. You may call your Counselor if you are having problems or if you need something. You may also call your Counselor if you have something to talk about.

About

WHY DO YOU NEED A PLAN? Most people have plans for their

lives. A plan helps answer the questions: ***What future do I want for myself? and How do I make my future happen?*** (Think of your future as how you will be living your life in one, five, or ten years.)

People have different types of plans. You may remember that when you were in school you had a plan called an IEP, or Individual Educational Plan. It helped you, your teachers, and other people know what you needed to do your best in school. People who are getting job training from the the Department of Rehabilitation also have plans, called Individual Habilitation Plans.

Your IFSP talks about all areas of your life, not just school or a job. It may include things about:

Family and other important people (who these important people are – like your mother, father, boyfriend, girlfriend, close friends – and how they might help you reach your goals)

Section 3

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Home (where you live and who you live with)

School, work, or day activity program (what you do during the day)

Health (whether you feel well, get sick often, or have medical problems)

Social, recreation, and leisure (what you do for fun)

Your IFSP has your goals in it. Goals say very clearly what you would like to be doing in the future. You decide what you want your goals to be.

A plan can help you more if it is written down. You work with your friends, your family, and others to write the plan. This is because you may need support from people around you to reach your goals. Getting people together to do a plan helps make sure that they know what you want. It also lets them know what they can do to help you reach your goals.

the plan tells you how to
find your way to your goals.

WHAT WILL BE IN YOUR PLAN? First of all, your plan says a lot about you. It talks about things such as what you like to do now and what you would like to do in the future. It talks about what you do well and what you would like to do better. It talks about what makes you happy or sad, what you do for fun, and other important things about you. It also talks about what things get in the way of your doing what you would like to do.

What are your goals? The plan gives you a chance to work toward goals in different areas of your life. Let's look at two examples.

Example 1. Your plan may include what you want to do during the day. This could be a job, school, or some other type of day activity. If you decide you want a job, your plan will talk about what kind of job you want, who would help you find a job, what kind of support you would need to do the job, and who would give you that support.

Section 3

Example 2. You may have goals for how you spend your free time. This may include having a hobby or doing things with your friends or family. Suppose you want to learn to swim and go swimming with your friends. The plan would talk about how you could get swimming lessons if you need them, where you could go swimming, and how you could get from your home to the beach or pool where you will go swimming.

What help and support do you need? A very important part of making a plan work is making sure the needed help and support are there. Sometimes you will need to learn a new skill. For example, maybe in order to keep a job, you will need to learn to ride the bus to and from work. If so, part of your plan would be to help you learn how to ride the bus. Sometimes, you may need to have someone around to help you do things. For example, maybe to live in your own apartment in the community you need to have someone help you handle your money. The plan would talk about how you would get the help you need to do this.

Where will you get the services and supports? The plan tells who will provide the service or support you need at home, at work, at your day activity program, or in the community. For example, if you need to learn how to ride the bus in order to get a job, a special trainer might help you learn that skill. This person may work for an agency that helps people get jobs or maybe this person will be a friend or relative of yours. If you want to learn to cook a trainer from an agency could help you learn, or someone in your family or group home could help.

WHO IS ON THE TEAM THAT HELPS YOU WRITE

A PLAN? You are the most important person on your team and you choose the other people you want on your team. They should be people who are important in your life. Most of the time they will be people you see often, like a boyfriend or girlfriend, a person you live with, a friend from work or school, or a family member.

The team may also have members whom you don't see very often but who are important to you. For example, you may invite your job coach or someone from your church to be on your team.

The HRC Counselor is a member of the team. Other people from HRC may also be on the team if they are giving you help or support. Finally, some people whose job it is to provide services or support to you may be on your team. For example, this may be a residential service provider if you live in a group home, or a staff member from your day activity.

Getting ready

WHAT SHOULD YOU DO BEFORE THE IFSP MEETING TO GET READY

FOR IT? Remember that the IFSP meeting is your meeting. You are in charge! Because of this, before you go into the meeting you may want to think about what your goals are. Ask yourself what you like about your life and what you would like to do that you don't do now. Think about what would make your life better or more fun.

Make sure your HRC Counselor knows which people you want to invite to be on your team. Talk to your Counselor also about where the meeting should be. Try to pick a place that you like and that the team members will also like. Plan far enough ahead so that everyone will be able to come to the meeting. If you like, your Counselor will help schedule the meeting.

think about what you really
want to do with your life.

Section 4

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ne meeting

USING THE WORKBOOK. The workbook called *Planning For*

Your Future is for you to use to get ready for the planning meeting. You will find it at the end of this book. If you aren't sure how to use this workbook, you may call your Counselor and ask him or her to help you understand it. You may also ask someone to work with you to answer the questions. If you can't read the workbook, you may ask someone to read the questions to you or to write your answers for you. This helper may be someone like a person from your group home, a family member, or a friend.

WHAT HAPPENS IN THE PLANNING MEETING?

The team's job is to learn about you and what you want from your life, then to help you figure out how you are going to do these things. In other words, your team helps you get where you want to go from where you are now.

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You will talk to the team about your hopes and dreams, what you like to do, and what you would like to change. If you cannot talk, you should have a person in the meeting who can help you communicate with the team members.

Team members should listen to you, but they should also have a chance to talk and ask questions. They may want to say something about you. Some of these people will know you very well and may be able to help you think of things that would make you happy.

If you have done the workbook, *Planning For Your Future*, you may want to ask your HRC Counselor to make copies for your team members. (Your Counselor should do this a few days before the meeting.) Team members may want to ask you questions about the workbook, or you may want to tell them why you wrote some of the things you did. You may also want to ask them to answer some of the questions about you. For example, one of the questions in the workbook is, *What are some great things about you?* You could ask some of the team members what they think are great things about you.

The team should give you information about what opportunities are out there for you. For example, if you want a job, they could talk about the kinds of places people work or the kinds of jobs they think you might like. If you want to live in your own home, they could help you learn about the kinds of places where people can live on their own. They could also tell you about what things you must do when you live on your own.

The team will help you think about what things get in the way of your doing what you want to do. For example, if you wanted to get and keep a job, maybe you will need to learn to get along with people better than you do. Or maybe you have some special health problem that you would need help with if you lived on your own in the community.

MAKING CHOICES. When you have the information you need, you can make choices about what you will do. After you make your choices, the team will help you write these things as goals. The goals will be

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things that are important to you. Your plan will be different from other people's plans because you are different from other people.

Once you choose your goals, your team will help you decide how you are going to reach these goals. Let's look at an example.

GOAL: I would like to live in an apartment in Long Beach.

What would you need to do to achieve this goal? You would talk with your team about the kinds of things you would need know if you lived in an apartment alone or with a roommate. These would be things like:

What kind of apartment you can afford

How to shop for food

How to cook and clean

How to pay bills

You may already be able to do some of these things. The team would talk with you about the things you can do and the things you can't do. They would help you decide which things you would like to work on and what kind of help you need. They would then decide where you would get help and how long it might take for you to reach the goal.

If something is very hard for you to do, the team could decide to have someone support you doing that thing. For example, you may not be able to handle your own money, so someone could come to your home to help you pay your bills and balance your checkbook.

Remember, you are in charge of your life, so the plan should have in it what you want to do.

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Section

Living

WHAT HAPPENS AFTER THE PLAN IS FINISHED?

The plan guides you and the people who are going to give you help and support. After you write the plan, you start living the plan. That is, the services and supports in your plan should begin as soon as possible, and you should be able to see how they are helping you work toward your goals.

HOW DOES YOUR TEAM MAKE SURE THE

PLAN IS WORKING? You will talk to your Counselor about how your plan is working. Your Counselor is the person on the team who will spend the most time making sure your plan is working.

Your team will get together at least once each year to see how things are going and to make changes that you want. At this meeting the team will ask you if you are happy with the plan and with the services and supports. They will also make sure that the plan is really helping you do the things you want to do.

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WHEN DO YOU GET A NEW PLAN? You may ask for a new plan at any time; you don't have to wait for your review with your Counselor or for a team meeting. You might ask for a new plan if, after some period of time, something is not working for you. You may also ask for a new plan if you reach the goals that you and your team put in your plan, if there is an important change in your life and your plan is no longer right for you, or if you chose something to be in the plan but you no longer want it.

WHAT CAN YOU DO IF YOU ARE NOT SATISFIED WITH THE PLAN? If you want a new plan, you should ask your Counselor to help you get one. If you want a new plan but feel like your Counselor or your team is not supporting your request, there are a couple of things you can do.

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You can ask to speak to your Counselor's supervisor about your concerns. Maybe the supervisor will help work things out, or maybe the supervisor will give you a new Counselor that might work out better for you.

Another thing you can do is you can ask to use the complaint process or you may ask for a fair hearing. A fair hearing is a special meeting with people from the Regional Center and from the State of California where you can talk about what you want. If you feel like you want to register a complaint or have a fair hearing, you should ask your Counselor for a copy of the Harbor Regional Center book that explains about complaints and fair hearings.



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