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Task 4: STAR Center: Enough Said

1. What is STAR Center? The STAR Center is a center dedicated to ensuring all individuals with needs and disabilities maximize potential for independence.

2. What new info did you learn from the flashing marquee? By watching the flashing marquee I learned that some pretty important people had “disabilities.” Also I noticed that these people did not let their interruptions get the best of them, but instead, they made the best of them and of themselves as well.

3. What is Art Therapy? Art Therapy is a therapy used with individuals who have needs/disabilities to meet a non-art goal. I learned that by participating in Art Therapy an individual will realize that enjoyable experiences and non-threatening environments exist. In addition to this therapy being an enjoyable experience the client is targeting several therapeutic goals.

4. Have you ever encountered the use of an augmentative or alternative communication device? The only time I have encountered an augmentative/alternative communication device is when I visited the STAR Center my sophomore year of college on a group fieldtrip. What would you expect to see? I would expect to see some type of board manipulative that an individual can use by hand, mouth, or other means, that allows them to communicate more effectively with others. When I went to the STAR Center I saw a patient use her device. She was proud that she could communicate with us, and was excited to show us how skilled she had become with her communicator. I think this is a wonderful development and I also believe this advance has decreased the gap of misunderstanding between the paired and the impaired.

5. Describe the Access Express. The Access Express is a mobile unit that travels among different counties providing assistive technology evaluations and services to people with disabilities. What is its purpose? Its purpose is to extend the STAR Center’s mission to ensure that all individuals with disabilities maximize their potential for independence through special services. When do you think the STAR Center would put this to use? I think the STAR Center would utilize the Access Express whenever it came to Jackson. The counselors and members of the STAR Center would enjoy participating in this service because it aids in determining effectiveness of a device on an individual and how one is becoming accustomed to a service in search for independence.

6. Who does the STAR Center serve? The STAR Center serves children and adults with all types of disabilities along with their families, caregivers, professionals in health, educators, rehabilitation specialists, and employers in an attempt to create a group effort in achieving maximum potential from the client. Are there specific ages or conditions? There are no specific ages for attendants. Patients are accepted regardless of their ability to pay for their services. Are the technologies used at the STAR Center current? The technologies used at the STAR Center are up-to-date. How Current? The STAR Center is the only center with a mobile assistive technology bus, it is a beta test site for many conventional and assistive companies and their newly developed technology products, and visitors come from all around to see how to replicate the programs used in the STAR Center’s Demo Urls. How is the STAR Center funded? The STAR Center has a 4+ million dollar budget and can match local contributions four to one with state and federal grants with all services that are employment related.

7. What services are available to clients with visual impairments? The services that are available include the Optometric Low Vision Consultation and the Orientation and Mobility Specialist. In the Optometric Low Vision Consultation is and evaluation of an individual done by a licensed optometrist who is trained specifically in low-vision. The doctor will first establish an accurate level of vision and abilities. Then he will coordinate with several professionals to set up diagnosis and goals. Lastly, he will prescribe special devices for the clients to aid in their improvement. In the Orientation and Mobility program skills and adaptive equipment are provided to enhance ability to travel independently. Clients receive one-on-one instruction and are taken to multiple surroundings in order to practice skills.

8. Reflect on two success stories. Diane O’Dell’s Story…This is amazing. It is so refreshing to see an attitude of perseverance. This lady carried her dreams and aspirations first, and her health and disabilities second. She overcame complications and barriers and achieved her life-long goal. She is an encouragement to all-the disabled, as well as the abeled. Julie Duke’s Story… A support system goes a long way. I believe that because this child has such a supportive mother that she is able to be somebody today. This mother loved her child enough to work through the frustration and the lack of resources in order to find help for her daughter. I hope for well-rounded support systems for all individuals with disabilities.

9. How is the STAR Center supported? The STAR Center is supported through donations. Each donation has the potential to help up to five individuals with disabilities thanks to the matching programs and grants. How can WE help? WE can help by getting word out about the STAR Center. We can communicate with others about its services and its mission to help those who have special needs. By getting the word out we are encouraging others to help see this foundation grow.

10. What is the main focus of Music Therapy? The main focus of music therapy is to use positive reinforcement to improve self-esteem. Music Therapy helps clients become confident while also addressing a variety of needs, and encouraging patients to reach their individual goals.

11. What else did you learn about the STAR Center, after viewing the video? After watching the video I learned that one of the boys I used to go to daycare is a client at the STAR Center. He appeared to be very happy and to be more at ease in his communication skills with others. I also learned that there are several well known community members that are actively involved in the development of the center.