

Integrating Faith-Based Support within Transition Planning Services



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Today's Road Map

- Role of faith for transition-aged youth and their families
- Integration of faith-based support in the transition planning process
- Recommendations for successful transition planning





What Is the Role Of Faith for Transition- Aged Youth and their Families?

Is Religious/Spiritual Attendance Common Among Young Adults With IDD?

Data from the National Core Indicators survey states:

- Between 2017-2018, **41%** of adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities stated that they attended religious service or spiritual practice at least once in the past month.
- **81%** of those who attended religious services had friends who were not family or paid staff.

Data from a national survey by the Human Services Research Institute (HSRI) and The National Association of State Directors of Developmental Disabilities Services (NASDDDS). 2017-2018.



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Is Religious/Spiritual Attendance Common Among Young Adults With Disabilities?

Among 24,712 young adults (18+) with IDD from over 36 states, **32%** indicated they attended services 1-4x in the past month.

8% attended services 5 or more times.

Breakdown By Race:

White: 38% attended services 1-5 times

Black/African American: **51%** attended services 1-5 times.

Hispanic/Latino: **41%** attended services 1-5 times.

Asian: **45%** attended services 1-5 times.

Native American: 33% attended services 1-5 times.

Pacific Islander: **52%** attended services 1-5 times.

Data from a national survey by the Human Services Research Institute (HSRI) and The National Association of State Directors of Developmental Disabilities Services (NASDDDS). 2017-2018.



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Engagement In Faith-Based Activities For Young People with Intellectual Disability

63% of parents indicated that their child attends worship services daily/weekly

27.8% of parents indicated that their child participates in congregational social gatherings on a monthly basis

34% of parents “agreed” that their child’s faith affects many of his or her decisions

38.3% of parents “agreed” that their child looks to his or her faith as providing meaning in their lives



How do Families Engage with Faith-Based Communities?

Parents:

- Interviews with 187 families indicated that parents used faith to make meaning of their child's disability, engage in faith communities for support, and find faith to be an important component of their lives (Poston & Turnbull, 2004)
- In a survey with 362 racially minoritized parents, 54.6% of racially minoritized parents reported that attending religious services was important for their child to have a high quality of life (Shikarpurya et al., *under review*)

Siblings:

A survey of 140 siblings of people with disabilities found that siblings who were involved in faith-based communities reported higher resilience, life satisfaction, and positive perceptions toward disabilities (Lee & Shikarpurya, *under review*).



South Asian Muslim Parent Perspectives

"The part that I think makes Daniel unique is the spirituality. And so, for Daniel, if you're going to have a conversation with him, initially, it used to be strictly about the spirituality. He got the people and social connection from the mosque."

"She goes to the mosque every evening. She knows everyone there. It makes her happy."

Shikarpurya & Singh, 2022

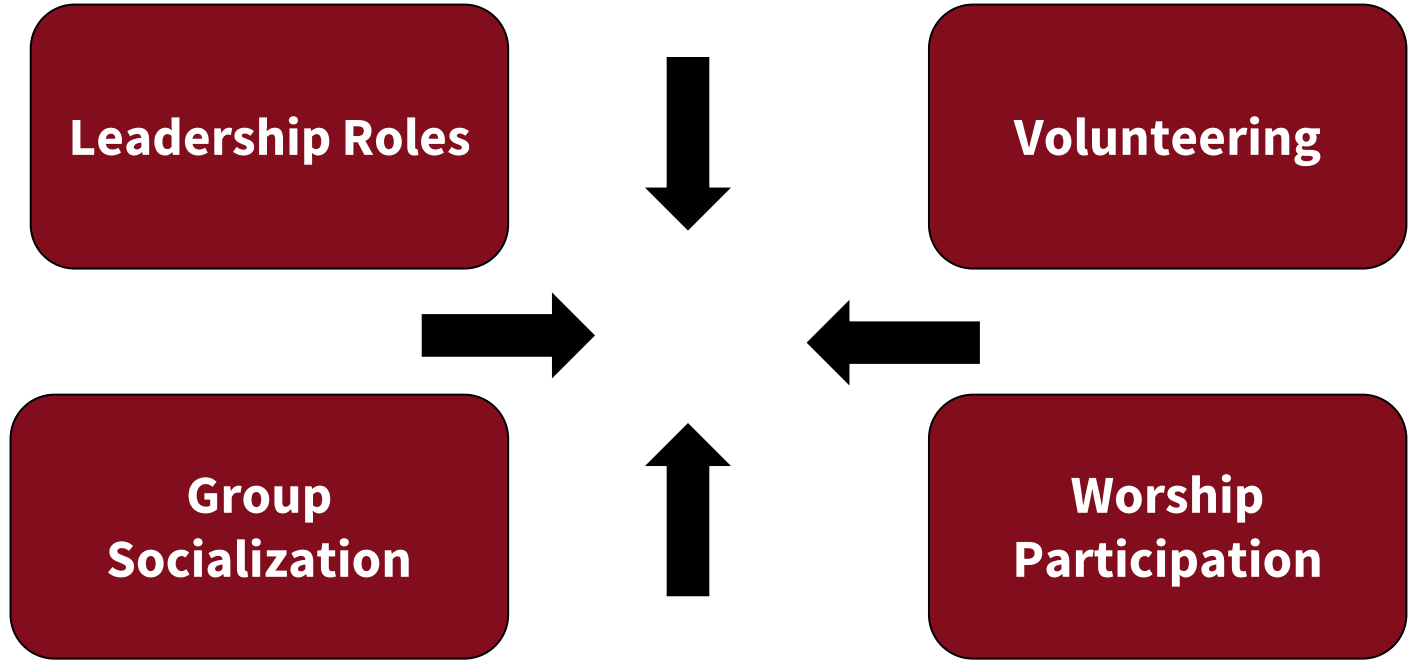


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Avenues of Engagement in Faith-Based Spaces



Pause and Reflect

- Young adults with IDD and their families see faith as an important component of their sense of belonging and identity.
- More young adults with IDD and their families from minoritized backgrounds have indicated belonging to faith-based communities and its integral role in their lives.
- Faith-based communities have resulted in increased socialization and overall well-being for young people with IDD and their families.



If faith forms an essential part of a young adult's life, is it represented in their transition plan? Is it evident in their transition outcomes?



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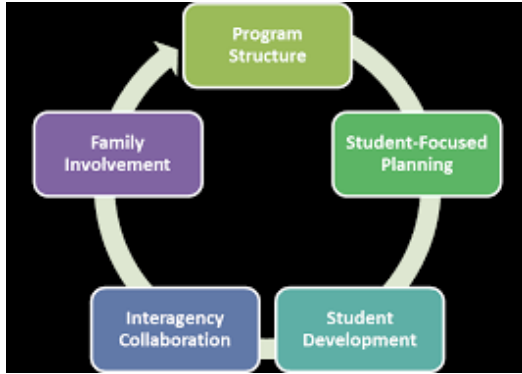


How Can I Integrate Faith-Based Supports In Transition Planning?

Defining Transition Planning

According to IDEA (2004), transition planning is:

“A **coordinated set of activities** for a child with a disability that is designed to be within a results-oriented process, that is focused on improving the academic and functional achievement of the child with a disability to facilitate the child’s movement from school to post-school activities, including **post-secondary education, vocational education, integrated employment, continuing and adult education, adult services, independent living, or community participation.**”



Exploring Transition Skills

- ❑ Communication
- ❑ Social skills
- ❑ Self-Determination
- ❑ Independent Living
- ❑ Friendships
- ❑ Health & Hygiene
- ❑ Leadership Skills
- ❑ Advocacy

- ❑ Schedules/Flexibility
- ❑ Decision-Making
- ❑ Daily Living
- ❑ Recreation/Leisure
- ❑ Financial Health
- ❑ Career Choices
- ❑ Higher Education
- ❑ Community of support

Transition Health Care Checklist. Wisconsin Community of Practice on Transition Practice Group on Health

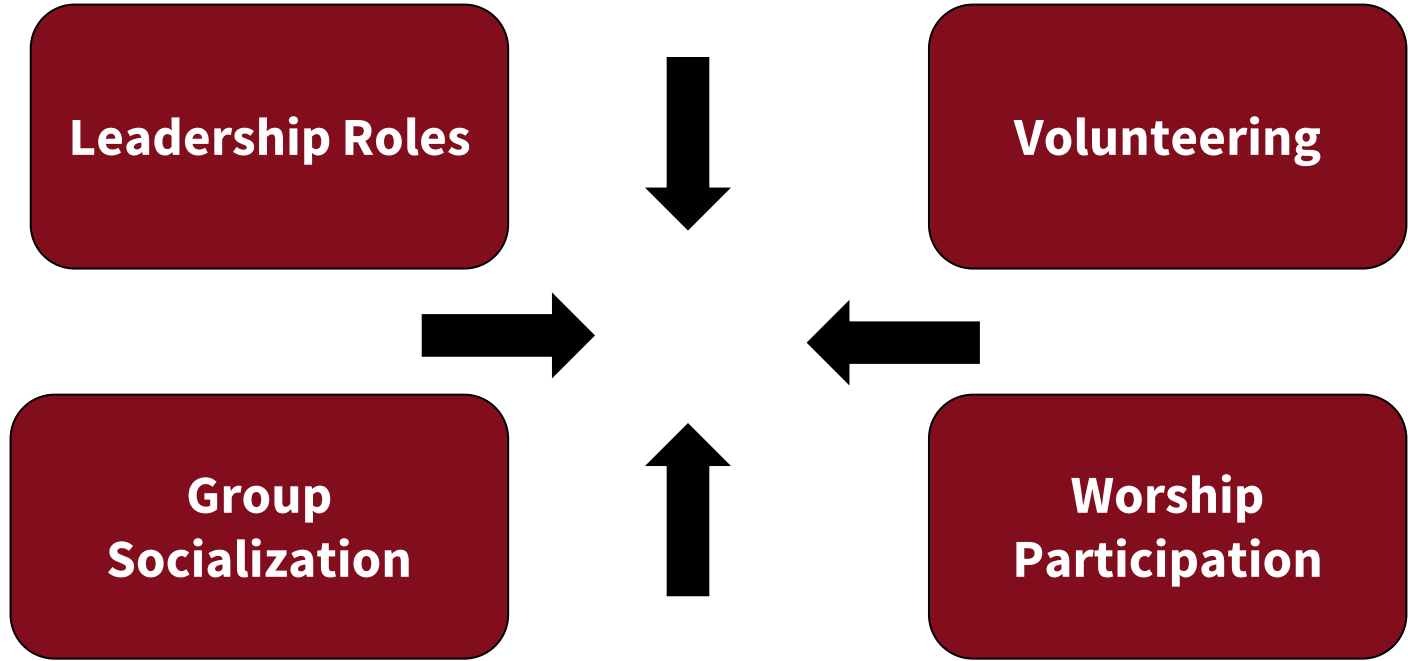


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Community of Support

Employment

**Faith-Based
Collaboration**

Self-Determination

Social Skills



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Where Does Faith Development “Fit” Within Transition Planning?



Transition Assessments:

- Gauge students’ level of importance to faith-based supports
- Informal and formal opportunities

Career/Employment Goals:

- Identify skills related to these goals in faith-based participation
- Collaborate with faith-based stakeholders to develop a career/employment plan

Community Mapping Resources:

- Faith-based stakeholders in community conversations
- Identifying community support system in faith community
- Digital resource mapping

Family and Person-Centered Planning:

- Identify extent to which faith impacts family’s decisions for young adult
- Actively advocate for and with families keeping in mind their individual cultures and values



Collaboration with Faith-Based Partners

Action Item	Persons Involved	Purpose
Step 1: Conversation with families	Transition educator, family, individual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gather information about family needs • Evaluate support preferred • Assess approach and transition goals
Step 2: Build interagency support	Transition educator, family, individual, transition team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Define the support preferred • Establish a plan for the student with timed goals • Identify role of the stakeholders and their level of involvement
Step 3: Contact faith leader *	Transition educator, family, individual, individual from faith community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify student transition goals • Discuss current student roles in faith-based services • Develop a plan to meet student goals (e.g., leadership skills gained via volunteering as a youth leader every Tuesday) • Establish the role of the stakeholder and level of involvement



Collaboration with Faith-Based Partners

Action Item	Persons Involved	Purpose
Step 4: Establish Checkpoints/ Share information	Transition educator, family, individual	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Create markers to check in with stakeholder• Delegate roles played by family, individual, and educator to track progress• Self-advocacy development during PCP for student
Step 5: Continuity of Collaboration	Transition educator, family, transition team, stakeholders, individual	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Long term sustainability plans• Opportunities for careers/training after high school• Assessing social skills, friendships, and community support• Revisit each term/year for growth





Practical Tools and Recommendations For Integrating Faith-Based Supports

Sample Family Interview Questionnaire

1. How important is attending religious services (going to church, mosque, synagogue, temple, etc.) for your child? How important is it for you (for parents)?
2. What kinds of activities does the youth prefer to participate in at _____?
3. Do you expect the youth to be connected to faith-based services after high school?
4. Are there any individuals that have been influential for the youth at ____? Perhaps a Sunday school instructor, youth-group leader, etc.
5. Do you prefer faith-based supports or goals to be part of the transition plan?



Embedding Faith-Based Skills in Transition Plan

Employment Goal: Open a bakery in my hometown				
Strengths	Supports Needed	Next Steps	Stakeholders	Date of Completion
Bakes with church group every week	Needs support to initiate plans	Will text in group chat about next item to bake	Youth-group leader will support with leadership skills; Teacher will support with initiating group text.	January 10, 2024
Uses Pinterest to locate recipes	Needs help prioritizing which recipes to choose	Will choose 1 item per week to bake with group using Pinterest boards	Teacher to prompt about choosing only one recipe	February 13, 2024
Great people skills, particularly during church bake sales	Needs support with discussing topics not related to church for non-church audience	1-1 support with choosing topics to discuss during bake sales	Teacher and parent will engage in conversations 3x a week. - Peer support preferred	March 30, 2024
Connection with local business owners at church	Locating internships for student via church stakeholders	Will set up an interview for an internship	Youth-group leader will support with identifying internship opportunities within church	Summer 2024



Including Faith-Based Goals in an IEP

- ❑ Connect student growth/skill development with faith-based goals
 - ❑ Social outcomes, independent living outcomes, behavioral outcomes, career outcomes, mental-wellbeing outcomes
- ❑ Build meaningful relationships with faith-based stakeholders to support student's success
- ❑ Use faith-based skills as one of the *strengths* to evaluate student progress and success



Re-Visiting Person-Centered Planning

Opportunities

- ❖ Holistic & individualized planning
- ❖ Asset-based inventory/assessment
- ❖ Self-Advocacy with meaningful faith-based partnerships
- ❖ Natural supports
- ❖ Ongoing and visible growth

Challenges

- ❖ Conversations around faith could be difficult
- ❖ Defining growth in faith-based settings
- ❖ Value of faith-based growth for families vs. individual/student
- ❖ Service provider barriers
- ❖ Discomfort/Uneasiness



Practice, Practice, and Practice!

Ali is a 16-year-old youth with autism in your class/program. He and his family identify as South Asian Muslims. He is very connected with his faith and attends his mosque every evening with his father. His father has mentioned in meetings that he even moved his house to be closer to the mosque so Ali could attend daily using a public bus.

Sometimes, in class, you have heard him say his prayers loudly when he gets nervous or anxious. Other teachers/your leads have recommended putting this as part of his behavior plan to work towards eliminating or decreasing this behavior.

1. Considering his involvement with his faith community, how could you integrate faith-based goals within his transition plan (or PCP)?
2. What steps would you recommend to support Ali with this concern?
3. What challenges do you see with supporting him in your context?



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Any Questions?

Thank You!

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