| **NIDILRR Updates**  September 2023  The National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research (NIDILRR) funded 7 new research and development projects related to products and outcomes for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD). Three projects will address employment outcomes, three will address community living and participation outcomes, and one project will establish methods for conducting remote virtual research with people with IDD. These projects started September 1, 2023 and are briefly described, below.  **Augmented Reality Enhanced Supported Employment for Individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities** |
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The purpose of this study is to advance employment of individuals with IDD by supplementing supported employment interventions through augmented reality (AR) technology. In this project, we will develop an AR application with job coach functions such as contextual guidance on task completion, task performance, and remote monitoring. The study will determine the impact of the AR application on participants’ skill acquisition and work performance. In addition, semi-structured interviews will be conducted with stakeholders to assess the acceptability, appropriateness, and feasibility of an AR application in a supported employment. Findings from this study will generate information that could inform organizational and policy changes that offer a solution to increase the employment rate for youth with IDD by enlarging the pool of employees for entry-level positions that require simple, routine, and repetitive tasks.

**Rehabilitation Research and Training Center (RRTC) on Community Living and Participation Among People with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities**

The applied RTC/CL research program responds to the recommendations from the 2022 State-of-the-Science conference on community living: Engaging persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities from underserved racial, ethnic, linguistic, and cultural groups in research, advisors, the literature and NIDILRR’s long-range plan. Studies include a variety of “stages of research” and methods appropriate for research question(s) and relevant to community living policy (CLP) interventions, policy and outcomes. Studies include: 1) Understanding CLP in the 21st Century Through a Multicultural Lens, 2) Identifying Potential Solutions to Direct Support Workforce High Vacancy and Turnover Rates at the Employee, Employer, and Systems Levels, 3) Longitudinal Look at CLP Outcomes for Adults with IDD, 4) Using Existing Datasets to Examine Impacts of Policies and Systems on Outcomes for People With IDD, 5) Embedding Cultural Competence in Supported and Customized Employment, 6) Retirement of Workers With IDD: Developing and Piloting an Online Educational and Planning Resource, 7) Outcomes for Family Members that Provide Supports, and 8) Facilitating Supported Decision-Making Outcomes of Culturally Diverse Transition-Age Youth.

**Healthcare Transition Readiness among Racially/Ethnically Minoritized Youth with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities**

In partnership with self-advocates and caregivers, this project will identify and describe the healthcare transition readiness of racially/ethnically minoritized youth with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) and their caregivers. The overall goal of this project is to identify the gaps in knowledge and skills about the healthcare transition of minoritized youth with IDD and their caregivers. The objectives are 1) to assemble a community advisory board comprised of self-advocates (youth with IDD), caregivers, and providers to inform the study procedures, interpretations, and dissemination, 2) to identify and describe the healthcare transition readiness of racially/ethnically minoritized youth with IDD and their caregivers, 3) to characterize person-centered outcomes prioritized by youth with IDD and their caregivers, and 4) evaluate the utility of healthcare transition readiness resources.

**Building Managerial Capacity through Employer Training: Creating Lasting Employment Supports for Persons with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities**

The goal of this project is to engage in inclusive research practices to further develop an accessible, employer-ready training intervention for managers aimed at building their capacity (i.e., maximizing job fit through supports and accommodations, training employees on the job, managing employee performance and promoting career growth) to promote the conditions for persons with IDD in production, growth, and feeling valued in the workplace. The objectives of this research are to: 1) include representation of persons with IDD and increase their contributions in the development of employer training content; 2) ensure the accessibility of all training content, including both online and written materials; and 3) develop a rigorous intervention evaluation protocol that can be used to gather evidence-based support for the training.

**Community Mobility Plans: Improving Community Participation through Travel Interventions for Adolescents and Young Adults with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities**

The goal of this project is to develop and test a personalized community mobility intervention for Adolescents and Young Adults with ID (AYA with ID). In phase 1, the grantee will establish proof-of-concept by developing and iteratively refining a personalized community mobility intervention for AYA with ID. Through focus groups and semi-structured interviews with AYA with ID (16-25 years), parents/caregivers, and interventionists, we will resolve technical challenges associated with: (1) identifying self-determined community mobility/transportation challenges; (2) assessing individual's unique personal and environmental assets, barriers, and transportation preferences; (3) generating and implementing personalized community mobility plans; (4) implementing fidelity processes; and (5) conducting summative evaluations of goal attainment. In phase 2, we will establish proof-of-product by implementing, testing, and iteratively refining the community mobility intervention embedded within current services with 45 AYA with ID in real-world settings. The expected product is a dissemination-ready intervention prototype, including an implementation manual, interventionist training resources, fidelity assessment measures, and dissemination tools. The intervention will help AYA with ID develop travel skills and overcome transportation barriers, necessary to increase community mobility.

**VRM-IDD: Virtual Research Methods for People with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities**

Applying inclusive participatory research throughout this 5-year project, The American Institutes for Research (AIR) offers the field rigorously validated research methods appropriate for remote virtual environments. Project partners include coresearchers from TASH, peer navigators, and an Advisory Panel with diverse expertise. The goals of this project are to identify, vet, develop and test virtual research methods for people with IDD, to promote uptake of validated methods, and build research teams’ capacity to use them. The objectives are first, to conduct research to identify, vet, develop and document methods for conducting virtual interviews, World Cafés, and surveys, with particular emphasis on producing a virtual mode, in English and Spanish, of the Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) member of the Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers & Systems (CAHPS) family of surveys, used by CMS. Secondly, to promote utilization, AIR will apply universal design for learning in all project activities, in particular a Usability Lab to investigate best practices for using pertinent devices and platforms. Third, the team will develop, identify, and disseminate how-to resources based on project findings. The chief expected product is an online toolkit housing three modules for i) researchers; ii) people with IDD; and iii) caregivers and support professionals for people with IDD.

**A Strength-Based Tool to Enhance Employment for Adults on the Autism Spectrum**

The goal of the current study is to develop and evaluate a strength-based job interview program: Kessler Foundation Strength Identification and Expression (KF-STRIDE). KF-STRIDE was designed to help individuals with ASD identify their personal strengths and improve their ability to express these strengths to others. KF-STRIDE was originally developed for adolescents on the spectrum; thus in the current study the objectives are: 1) To adapt KF-STRIDE for adults; 2) To evaluate the acceptability, usability, feasibility, and initial effectiveness of the adapted KF-STRIDE in adults.