PROJECT T.E.A.M.
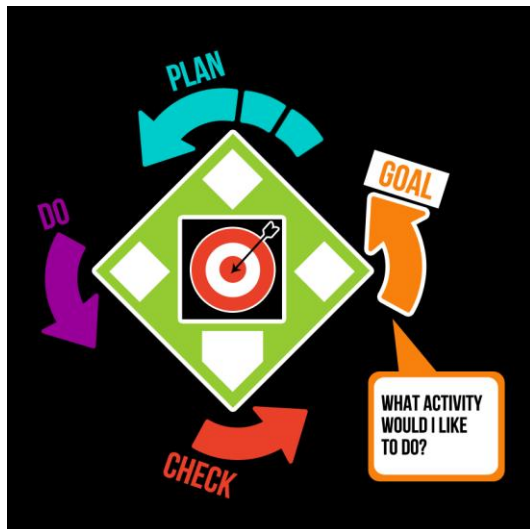## TEENS MAKING ENVIRONMENT AND ACTIVITY MODIFICATIONS

Section 1: Who am I and what do I want to do?

This week during Project TEAM, the trainees:
- Identified their strengths.
- Identified difficulties they have when doing different types of activities.
- Learned First Base of the "Game Plan" – GOAL.
- Completed First Base GOAL for their activity goals.

Why is it important to identify strengths and difficulties?
It is important that the trainees know what they are good at and what they have a hard time doing. When people can identify things that are hard for them to do, they will have an easier time identifying barriers in the physical and social environment.

Game Plan update and review:
Base: First Base: Goal
Base question:
  "What activity would I like to do?"
Base symbol: Bull's-eye

Discussion questions to ask your son or daughter:

What is one activity you are good at doing?

What makes you good at that activity?

What is one activity you have a hard time doing?

What makes it hard for you to do that activity?

Section 2: Introduction to the Environment: What is it?

This week during Project TEAM, the trainees:
- Learned the 11 parts of the environment.
- Talked about how the environment impacts their ability to do activities.

What is the "environment"?
It's everything that surrounds you. It's the people, places, and things that you come into contact with while doing activities.

Sometimes activities might be a little hard to do because of a disability, a condition, or the unique way you learn. But sometimes activities are hard to do because of the environment.

There are 11 parts of the environment. They are:
- **Things –** examples are school supplies, clothing, or backpacks.
- **Inside places** – examples are a bedroom, a classroom, or a store.
- **Outside places** – examples are a park or a street.
- **People** – examples are family, friends, teachers, or employees.
- **Services & organizations** – examples are schools, Medicaid/Medicare, and the YMCA.
- **Rules** – examples are deadlines for homework, time to take a test, or order to steps to finish a job.
- **Technology** – examples are computers, smart phones, and calculators.
- **Ground** – examples are sidewalk, carpet, or ice on the ground.
- **Entrances & exits** – examples are revolving doors, a threshold to a house, or sliding doors at a grocery store.
- **Signs & information** – examples are a website page, a menu, or a bus stop and route map.
- **Light, sound, & smell** – examples are fluorescent lights, fire alarms, and a smelly cafeteria.

Discussion questions to ask your son or daughter:

What parts of the environment do you notice at home?

Section 3: Identifying Environmental Barriers
What helps me and makes it hard for me?

This week during Project TEAM, the trainees:
- Talked about how some parts of the environment help and some parts make it hard for them to do activities.
- Identified environmental barriers and supports in their environments.
- Learned Second Base of the "Game Plan" – PLAN Step One.
- Completed PLAN Step One for their activity goals.

What are environmental barriers and supports?
The environment impacts each of us in a different way depending on a person's unique strengths and difficulties. Parts of the environment that make it hard to do activities are barriers. Parts of the environment that help with activities are supports. If there were no barriers in the environment, young people with disabilities could do any activity they wanted to with support!
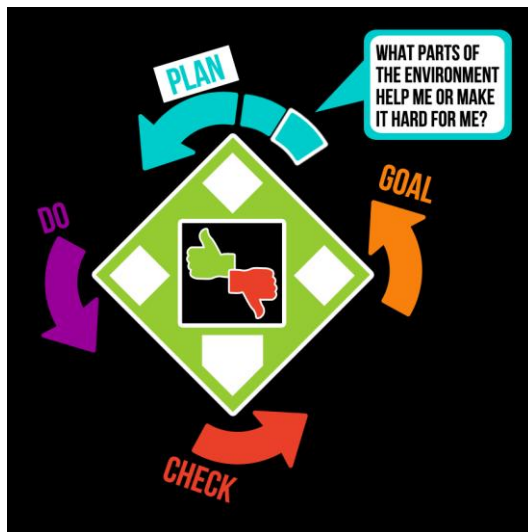
Game Plan update and review:

Base: Second Base: Plan Step 1

Base question:

"What parts of the environment help me or make it hard for me?"

Base symbol: Thumbs up and down

Discussion questions to ask your son or daughter:

What parts of the environment at home help you do activities?

What parts of the environment at home make it hard for you to do activities?

Section 4: Working Around Barriers
Identifying Modification Strategies

This week during Project TEAM, the trainees:
- Learned six modification strategies to change the environment.
- Learned and completed Second Base of the "Game Plan" – Plan Step 2.

What are modification strategies?

When we find a barrier in the environment, we need to find a way to remove the barrier to make the environment work. Strategies help us remove barriers or work around them.

There are six modification strategies that can help us reach our GOAL.
- **Plan ahead**: Get the things you need before you start an activity.
- **Use technology or things:** Use technology or things in different ways to do an activity.
- **Change spaces:** Change the size, shape, and arrangement of spaces, or change the amount or type of light, sound, or smell in the space. You can also do the activity in a different place.
- **Change the rules:** Change the rules, amount of time, or order of steps.
- **Ask someone for help:** Find people who can give you information or help you solve a problem.
- **Teach others about abilities and needs:** Tells others what you can do, the amount of help you need, or about your disability.

Game Plan update and review:

Base: Second Base: Plan Step 2

Base question:

"What strategy can I use to change the environment?"

Base symbol: Person thinking

Discussion questions to ask your son or daughter:

What strategies do you use at home to help you do activities?

What part of the environment are you changing when you use that strategy?

Section 5: Thinking through strategies

This week during Project TEAM, the trainees:
- Learned how to identify the consequences of using strategies and changing the environment.
- Learned Second Base of the "Game Plan" – PLAN Step Three.
- Completed PLAN Step Three for their activity goals.
- Reviewed everything they have learned about the environment and strategies.

How might others feel or be affected if we use strategies?
Before using a strategy, it is important to think how other people will be affected or impacted by that change. People with disabilities have a right to make changes, but it is also important to double check that changes don't make it harder for other people to do an activity. Family, friends, classmates, co-workers, staff, and professionals are some examples of people that may be impacted by changes. **Using a strategy may help or make it harder for other people to do an activity. Using a strategy may also make an activity more or less fun for other people.**
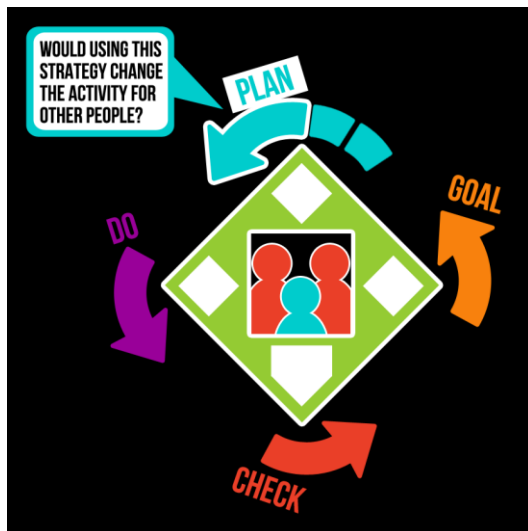
Game Plan update and review:

Base: Second Base: Plan Step 3

Base question:

"Would using this strategy change the activity for other people?"

Base symbol: Group of people

Discussion questions to ask your son or daughter:

Think of a strategy you use at home.

How does using that strategy change how other people at home do activities?

Does it make it harder? Does it help? Does it make it more or less fun?

Section 6: Your Rights
Disability rights and changing the environment

This week during Project TEAM, the trainees:
- Learned about three disability laws.
- Used the Disability Law Database CD to find the disability laws that can help customers/users, employees, and students.
- Identified disability laws that are applicable to their activity goals.

Why do we need disability rights?
Some people think that people with disabilities or medical conditions, or students in special education can't do things. Laws can stop people from treating you differently just because you have a disability, a medical condition, or because you are in special education.

Different laws can help you make changes in your environment. They are:
- **Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)**: For students in elementary, middle, and high school up to age 21.
  Provides a free education that meets a student's learning needs.
- **American with Disabilities Act (ADA)**: For employees or customers with disabilities in all public places in the community.
  People with disabilities have a right to be included in society.
- **Rehabilitation Act (Rehab Act, including Section 504)**: For all customers, employees, and students in programs sponsored by the government.
  People with disabilities cannot be excluded from programs run by the government.

Discussion questions to ask your son or daughter:

Is there something from your last IEP/504 plan that you wish would have been different?

Would you like anything new or different for your next IEP/504 plan? (For example, the therapist not talking about "therapy" in front of classmates, not having the classroom aid walk out to the bus, not having the teacher remind you out loud to use your adaptive equipment.)

Section 7: Communication: Asking for change

**This week during Project TEAM, the trainees:**
- Learned how to ask for changes in the environment using the "Asking for Change" script.
- Identified different people they can ask to change the environment.
- Completed Third Base – Do for their activity goals.

Who can help make a change in the environment?
There are many people that can help make changes in the environment. We might think of getting help from family, friends, and teachers. Other places to get help are Human Resources, Centers for Independent Living (http://www.virtualcil.net/cils/) and Protection and Advocacy Agencies (http://www.napas.org/en/when-to-contact-your-state-paa-cap.html).

We can write a script to ask for change and use it to ask someone to help us make a change.
1. Introduce yourself
2. Share the goal.
3. Describe the part of the environment that is making it hard for you.
4. Describe the strategy you want to use.
5. Explain why the strategy will help you do the activity.
6. Listen to the answer and respond (explain the disability rights law that gives you the right to ask for the change if needed).
7. Describe the decisions made.
8. Thank the person for meeting with you.
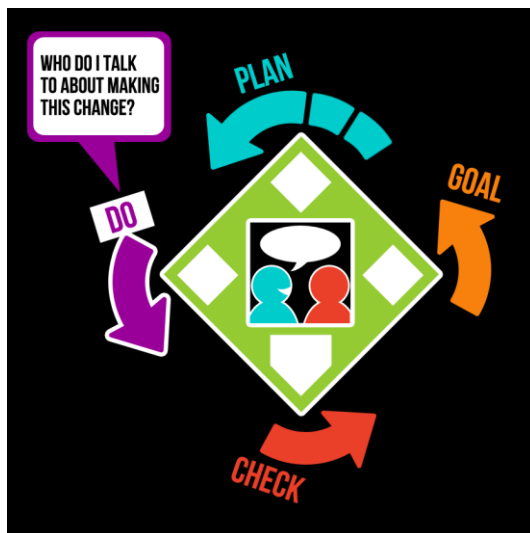
Game Plan update and review:

Base: Third Base: Do

Base question:

"Who do I talk to about making this change?"

Base symbol: Person speaking

Discussion questions to ask your son or daughter:

Think of your goal activity for Project TEAM.

Who could you talk to about a change you need to reach your goal?

Section 8: Did I reach my goal?

This week during Project TEAM, the trainees:
- Described the importance of tracking progress towards a goal.
- Learned Home of the Game Plan – Check.
- Completed Home: Check for their activity goals.
- Reviewed everything they have learned during Project TEAM.

Why is it important to track progress towards a goal?
It is important to check if you have met your goal. If you are not able to do the activity the way you want to, then you have not met your goal. Sometimes you may not reach a goal because a part of the environment is still making it hard to do the activity. You might need to try a different strategy to remove the barriers in the environment.

Game Plan update and review:

Base: Home: Check

Base question:

   "Am I able to do this activity now?"

Base symbol: Check mark

Discussion questions to ask your son or daughter:

What activity would you like to try next?

How can you use the Game Plan to help you do that activity?