

INDEPENDENCE ASSOCIATION HCBS Policy: 014**Title: Autonomy****Date: May 1, 2022****Policy:**

Independence Association (IA) is committed to supporting all participants it serves to exercise informed choice to the maximum potential of the individual. IA will define the supports and strategies necessary to ensure authentic informed choice is optimized by each person in the course of service delivery and in the development / updating of their Person-Centered Plan (PCP). Once strategies are identified IA will support individuals to exercise the maximum level of self-determination and self-direction each day.

Procedures:***General Guidance**

All IA programs will:

1. Ensure individual participants can talk with and spend time with anyone they choose when being supported outside the setting (assuming there is mutual interest in spending time together).
2. Prohibit limiting the amount of time a participant may choose to spend time with other participant(s) when receiving services outside the setting if there is mutual interest in spending time together.
3. Prohibit the separation of individual participants from one another when receiving services outside the setting unless requested by one or more participants or a restriction is documented in the Person-Centered Plan.
4. Train all staff on policy and practices/protocols to support policy; provide refresher training as needed.
5. Allow participants to choose with whom they spend time at the setting including who they sit by at meal/break/free time.
6. Assuming there is mutual interest in spending time together, ensure individual participants can talk and spend time with anyone that is at the setting.
7. Ensure all participants may sit with whomever they choose (or sit by themselves, if preferred).
8. Prohibit limiting the amount of time a participant may choose to sit with or spend time with other participant(s) in the setting if there is mutual interest in spending time together.

9. If setting is divided into separate areas (e.g. classrooms) ensure that individuals are not put into strictly defined groups assigned to certain classrooms, without the ability to change this in order to be with people who are not in the same classroom.
10. Prohibit the separation of individual participants from one another in the setting unless requested by one or more participants or restriction documented in Person-Centered Plan.
11. Train all staff on policy and practices/protocols to support policy; and provide refresher training as needed.

****Choice of staff**

IA understands that all people should have a choice in who provides them direct supports.

1. Individuals will be included in the staff hiring process by identifying the qualities desired in new staff to the respective program managers, who will incorporate those qualities into the interviewing process.
2. Input will be solicited via the Community Supports Stakeholder Committee and through the Residential Council.
3. Once a staff member is hired, he/she will formally introduce themselves to the members of the respective program.
4. Program managers will incorporate program participant comments into the probationary evaluation.
5. When members of a program report significant deficiencies, the staff member may be transferred into a different program where the skills of the staff can be better utilized.
6. When unhappy with a particular staff member, participants may request a change in a staff through their program manager.
7. Program managers will investigate why the person is desirous of a change and determine if mediation can resolve the problem.
8. If mediation does not remedy the situation, the program manager may transfer the staff to a program that better matches the skills and needs of a different program.
9. If the program manager is the individual the individual requests to change, he/she will need to contact their respective case manager, or the director of that department.
10. Individuals will be informed of the procedure for requiring a change of staff via the grievance process at least annually and any time they make such a request they will be supported to work with their team for a satisfactory outcome.

**Note: All general guidance is subject to respective behavior plans, and or health and safety issues.*

***Note: Due to staffing availability, choice in staff may not be available.*