

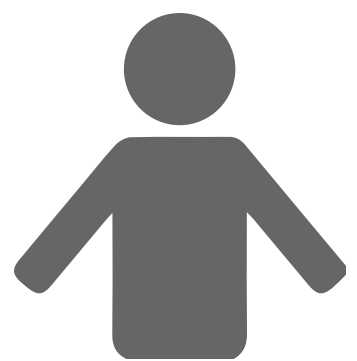
HOW TO INSPIRE INDEPENDENCE

IN ADULTS WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

Adults with disabilities may need more assistance with daily tasks, but they're often capable of more than their caregivers think. When they're encouraged to try new things and make choices, adults with disabilities can become more independent---and discover all of their true abilities. That's easier said than done, though. Here's how to get started:

SET APPROPRIATE GOALS

Everyone feels uncomfortable in new situations. But if they experience too much stress, adults with disabilities may lash out or regress. So introduce tasks that align with each person's developmental and emotional capabilities.



MAINTAIN OPEN COMMUNICATION

Many adults with disabilities struggle with communication and crave approval, so they may not be able or willing tell you when they're scared or confused. Be proactive about asking them how they feel and anticipate their questions.



START WITH SMALLER CHOICES

Because many aspects of their lives are decided by others, adults with disabilities may feel anxious when given a set of choices. So start small with decisions about friends, activities, and weekend outings.



ENCOURAGE WORK OR VOLUNTEERING

Appropriate supported employment and volunteer positions help adults with disabilities improve their cognitive, decision-making, and self-advocacy skills--all necessary for building and sustaining independence.

