



SELF-ADVOCACY PROGRAM

# WITHOUT LIMITS

FOR HIGH SCHOOL AND POST SECONDARY STUDENTS IN TRANSITION





**Without Limits** is an interactive curriculum designed for trainers and teachers to provide a safe environment for high school and post-secondary students in transition to discover their own value as individuals. Students gain an understanding of effective ways to be fully productive and succeed at school and work. They learn more about themselves and strategies for self-advocacy. The curriculum is designed for four different intellectual levels of students including:

- 1 High school and/or post-secondary academic skills,
- 2 Middle school level and high elementary academic skills
- 3 low elementary level of academic skills
- 4 Pre-K Kindergarten level of academic skill

The curriculum includes a series of 11 interactive exercises. These activities can be adapted to lesser durations to accommodate various classroom/training schedules. In addition, it includes 4 hours of training for Parents and Guardians to support their children and young adults with disabilities towards achieving success at school and work.

**The curriculum is designed for high school and post-secondary students in transition to:**

- Discover positive traits, values and qualities
- Explore quality and values other people see in them
- Consider the beneficial lessons learned from having a disability

- Learn not to let people's reactions affect how they feel about themselves
- Discover how to positively bring up their need for an accommodation at school and work
- Educate students on how to resolve common concerns that teachers and employers have about possible accommodations
- Learn how attitudes about persons with disabilities are formed and discover new ways to overcome misperceptions with their peers, teachers and employers
- Explore different options to the traditional interview that increases their chances of being hired

**Parents of high school and post-secondary students in transition:**

- The traits and attributes that help persons with disabilities succeed
- Options for protecting their children from the effects of bullying

This curriculum can be easily integrated in special education classes, School to Work transition activities, community organizations contracted to deliver Self Advocacy programs and Vocational Rehabilitation Pre Employment Transition services. It can be implemented as a stand-alone 15 to 36 hour course, with two separate 2 hour to 4 hour training for parents.

The authors include the 2018 special education transition teacher of the year in Oregon, A vocational Rehabilitation transition counselor, President of a nationally renowned Community Rehabilitation agency and a highly respected keynoter, trainer, and curriculum developer with over 50 products created.

# Introduction to Without Limits

*Without Limits* is an interactive curriculum targeting students and youth with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities and their parents and/or guardians. It's created to provide a safe environment for students and youth with disabilities to help discover their personal value as individuals and to develop and practice self-advocacy skills for successful participation in school and work. It is also an opportunity for parents and guardians to develop their own skills and learn our philosophy of parents-as-partners.

*Without Limits offers this supplemental curriculum as a self-advocacy program for students and youth impacted by developmental disabilities. According to the Developmental Disabilities Act, section 102(8), developmental disability is defined as:*

*"a severe, chronic disability of an individual 5 years of age or older that:*

- 1. Is attributable to a mental or physical impairment or combination of mental and physical impairments*
- 2. Is manifested before the individual attains age 22*
- 3. Is likely to continue indefinitely*
- 4. Results in substantial functional limitations in three or more of the following areas of major life activity*
  - a. Self-care*
  - b. Receptive and expressive language*
  - c. Learning*
  - d. Mobility*
  - e. Self-direction*
  - f. Capacity for independent living*
  - g. Economic self-sufficiency*

5. *Reflects the individual's need for a combination and sequence of special, interdisciplinary, or generic services, supports, or other assistance that is of lifelong or extended duration and is individually planned and coordinated, except that such term, when applied to infants and young children means individuals from birth to age 5, inclusive, who have substantial developmental delay or specific congenital or acquired conditions with a high probability of resulting in developmental disabilities if services are not provided."*

By offering differentiated learning activities designed to maximize skill building in the area of self-advocacy, Without Limits recognizes the wide variability of academic and life functioning for individuals in this demographic.

The curriculum focuses on three areas of instruction:

Module I: Finding Your Music – Identifying Your Strengths, Abilities and Goals

Module II: The Art of Talking About Your Disability

Module III: Parent / Guardian Training

*Without Limits* presents a customized curriculum designed across 4 different levels of functional academic and communication abilities to maximize learning. This differentiated curriculum includes interactive group exercises for up to 36 hours of instruction time. Depending on the functional academic level of students, the amount of time needed for each exercise may vary. A pilot program used a 3-hour class model, which worked well for this population.

**Modeling, practice, and review of the key concepts and skills in self-advocacy are woven into each activity with a central focus on employment.**

*Without Limits* also includes 6 hours of training for parents and guardians to support their children and young adults with disabilities in achieving success at school and work. The concept of parents-as-partners is emphasized to reinforce learning of self-advocacy concepts and how to apply them outside of the classroom.

# Participant Instruction Levels

As the trainer, it is important to familiarize yourself with the content of the Without Limits exercises. This curriculum provides options for implementing the activities based on the following levels.

## ◆ Level 1 : Diamond

- Independently motivated
- High school and/or post-secondary academic skills
- General understanding of concepts behind self-advocacy and need opportunities to practice and apply advocacy to current or future post-secondary applicable goal(s)
- Require little or no prompting to complete daily activities
- Communicates independently
- Flexible and adaptable

## \* Level 2 : Asterix

- Shows potential to be independently motivated
- Middle school levels and high elementary academic skills
- May know what self-advocacy is but need guidance and structured opportunities to practice and apply advocacy to current or future post-secondary applicable goal(s)
- Requires at least 1 prompt to complete daily activities
- Primary mode of communication is verbal but may need instruction in communication and social skills
- Flexible and adaptable with minimal support

# Participant Instruction Levels

## ● Level 3 : Square

- Needs support to maintain motivation
- Low elementary level of academic skills
- Need to be taught what self-advocacy is and will need guidance and structured opportunities to practice and apply advocacy to current or future post-secondary applicable goal(s)
- Requires 2-3 prompts to compete daily activities (i.e., verbal list, reminders, cell phone alarms)
- Primary mode of communication is verbal and/or the use of assistive technology; students will need instruction in communication and social skills
- Flexible and adaptable with moderate support

## ▲ Level 4 : Triangle

- May need high structure in all aspects of life
- Pre-K/kindergarten level of academic skills
- Comprehension of self-advocacy will require support-driven guidance and structured opportunities to practice and apply advocacy to current or future post-secondary applicable goal(s)
- Requires high levels of prompting (4 or more prompts) to complete daily activities potentially with one-on-one support - i.e., verbal list, reminders, cell phone alarms
- May possess verbal communication, but primary mode of communication is based in the use of assistive technologies or adult support; instruction requires adult assistance/coaching
- Flexibility may be challenging even when provided high levels of support and adaptable with moderate support



# Module I

## Identifying Your Strengths, Abilities & Goals

*This module consists of five exercises to help students gain confidence in their value and ability.*

While this is important for all students, it is especially important for students who encounter negative attitudes from others as a result of having a disability. Without a solid understanding of who they are, young people with disabilities are at risk of accepting these reactions as a picture of themselves.

Sociologists call this process, internalized oppression. Internalized oppression is the process by which a member of an oppressed group comes to accept and live out the inaccurate myths and stereotypes applied to their group.

This dynamic also presents challenges to students of different ethnicities, races, sexual identities, religions, and socioeconomic statuses. Overcoming this process may be more difficult for a student with a disability than the challenge of the disability itself. By establishing a positive self-image and an understanding of personal values and strengths, a student can increase their chances for success.

Establishing a positive self-image and an understanding of personal values and strengths can be a student's best chance for success.

### Module Objectives

#### **Exercise 1: Who Am I?**

Students will be able to identify their positive traits, values, and qualities.

#### **Exercise 2: Major Life Activities**

Students will be able to learn about basic rights to ask for what they need to perform work and identify their own needs.

#### **Exercise 3: My Superhero Qualities**

Students will be able to identify strengths resulting from living with a disability.

#### **Exercise 4: What Do Others Think My Superpowers Are?**

Students will be able to learn what positive qualities and values others see in them.

#### **Exercise 5: How Do I Deal With Villains?**

Students will be able to overcome the effect of stereotypes, assumptions and prejudice.



# EXERCISE ONE

## WHO AM I?

**Objective:** The students will be able to identify their positive traits, values and qualities.

### Learning Targets:

- ◆ **Level 1:** Students will be able to communicate/express three qualities about themselves.
- \* **Level 2:** Students will be able to communicate or identify three qualities about themselves.
- **Level 3:** Students will be able to identify three qualities about themselves with support.
- ▲ **Level 4:** Students in being able to identify three qualities about themselves.

### Materials:

Levels 1◆ and Level 2\*

Handouts

“Who Am I?” worksheet (p. 19-20)

Word Suggestions handout (p. 21-22)

- Pencils/Pens

Levels 3● and Level 4▲

Handouts

“Who Am I?” survey (p. 23 - 30)

“Who Am I?” poster (p. 31)

“Who Am I?” choice cards (p. 32 - 39)

- Glue Sticks or Tape  
(glue dots as an accommodation)
- Zip lock bags for choice cards
- Pencils/Pens

Prior to the class, photocopy each of the handouts based on the number of students in each instruction level.

Photocopy and cut out the “Who Am I?” Choice Cards and place them into the Ziploc bags and add to the binders of the level 3● and 4▲ students.

Print the “Who Am I?” Posters for 3● and 4▲ on legal size paper to provide enough space for students to use the choice cards.

**Time: 120- 180 minutes**



# Trainer Instructions

**"Who Am I?" Worksheet** (p. 19 - 20)

**"Who Am I?" Word Suggestions** (p. 21 - 22)

- 1. Explain** to the group that this exercise will challenge the students to begin thinking about who they are and what is important to them.  
*Explain that this exercise does not have any right or wrong answers.*
- 2. Distribute** the pens/pencils and handouts for level 1 and 2 students. While level 1 and 2 students do not have to use the Word Suggestions handout, provide it as an option to identify possible answers for the "Who Am I?" worksheet.
- 3. Complete** the **"Who Am I?" Worksheet**. Have the students read and complete the worksheets themselves if they are able.  
*As an alternative, work with students individually and read each question aloud. Have the students respond orally and then write their answers down on the worksheet, assisting if necessary. Move about the room and check in with students to see their progress and help as needed.*
- 4. Group Discussion.** After the students have completed the worksheets, bring the group back together to discuss what they wrote.  
**Ask** the group if anyone would like to share their answers with everyone and repeat with 2-3 more students.  
*As an alternative, read the question aloud to the group and have students share their answers. This can be done by asking for volunteers or going around the room and asking everyone to share.*
- 5. Explain** to the group that they are all valuable and unique. While there are many people who may have the same characteristics as they do, there is no one exactly like them.
- 6. Acknowledge** Thank the students for sharing what they wrote and thank those that participated in the activity but did not want to share.
- 7. Ask** students if they think their friends and family see them the same way or differently than they see themselves. Explain that students will get to see how these people see them in a later session.



# Trainer Instructions

**“Who Am I?” Survey** (p. 23 - 30)

**“Who Am I?” Poster** (p. 31)

**“Who Am I?” Choices** (p. 32 - 39)

- 1. Explain** to the group that this exercise will challenge the students to begin thinking about who they are and what is important to them. Explain that this exercise does not have any right or wrong answers.
- 2. Distribute** either the “Who Am I?” Survey or the glue sticks and “Who Am I?” Posters and “Who Am I?” Choice Cards to level 3 and 4 students based on the level of support needed.
- 3. Complete** the “Who Am I? Survey. Work with students in small groups or individually and read each question aloud. Have the students respond out loud and then voice or circle their answers on the “Who Am I? Survey worksheet. They can add more to the Survey by drawing a picture. Or, they can use the “Who Am I?” Poster to select and attach “Who Am I?” Choice cards on their poster. Move about the room and check in with students to see their progress and provide help as needed.
- 4. Group Discussion** After the students have completed the survey, ask if anyone would like to share their answers with everyone and repeat with 2-3 more students.  
*As an alternative read the question aloud to the group and have students share their answers. This can be done by asking for volunteers or going around the room and asking everyone to share.*
- 5. Explain** to the group that they are all valuable and unique. While there are many people who may have the same characteristics as they do, there is no one exactly like them.
- 6. Acknowledge** Thank the students for sharing what they wrote and thank those that participated in the activity but did not want to share.
- 7. Ask** students if they think their friends and family see them the same way or differently than they see themselves. Explain that students will get to see how these people see them in a later session.



## WHO AM I ?

Please answer the following questions by finishing the sentences below.

1. I enjoy...
2. I would be a great friend to have because I am...
3. One thing I am really good at is...
4. One thing I have done that makes me feel proud is...
5. A few words that best describe me are...
6. When I feel sad, what I do to be happy again is...



## WHO AM I ?

Please answer the following questions by finishing the sentences below.

7. When I am hired for a job, my employer will be happy to find out that I am...
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
8. The three words that describe a workplace that I would like to work in are...
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
9. If I could tell people only one thing about myself, I would say I am...
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
10. The thing that I would most like to learn is...



## WHO AM I ? : WORD SUGGESTIONS

1. I enjoy... (describe) my hobbies:
  - Talking
  - Reading
  - Drawing
  - Writing
  - Telling stories
  - Telling jokes
  - Creating
  - Analyzing
  
2. I would be a great friend to have because I am ...
  - Fun
  - Loyal
  - Forgiving
  - Caring
  - Dependable
  - Good at sharing
  - Kind
  - Understanding
  - A Good Listener
  - Trustworthy
  - Respectful
  - Fair
  
3. One thing I am really good at is ...
  - Working with others
  - Talking to people
  - Fixing things
  - Working by myself
  - Helping people
  - Being on time
  - Finishing things I start
  - Making people feel better
  - Video games
  - Solving puzzles
  
4. One thing I have done that makes me feel proud is ...(describe)
  - Finishing something I did not know I could finish
  - Failing but not giving up and trying again
  - Helping someone
  - Having a good friend



## WHO AM I ? : WORD SUGGESTIONS

5. A few words that best describe me are...
- Active
  - Curious
  - Helpful
  - Careful
  - Independent
  - Funny
  - Confident
  - Dependable
  - Happy
  - Thoughtful
  - Shy
  - Ready to go
6. When I feel sad, what I do to be happy again is...
- Talk to a friend or family member
  - Play games
  - Have a good cry and I feel better
  - Laugh and smile
  - Try to do something new to take my mind off it
  - Look at the things that are good in my life
7. When I am hired for a job, my employer will be happy to find out that I am...
- Hard-working
  - Honest
  - Kind
  - On time
  - Motivated
  - Respectful
  - Organized
  - Positive
8. The three words that describe the kind of workplace that I would like to work...
- Inside
  - Working alone
  - Working with things
  - Checked on occasionally
  - Outside
  - Working with others
  - Closely supervised
  - Slow paced
9. If I could tell people only one thing about myself, I would say I am...
- Smart
  - A leader
  - Talented
  - Thoughtful
  - Strong
  - Creative
  - Unique
  - Loyal
10. The thing that I would most like to learn is...
- How to make new friends
  - How to save my money
  - How to be independent at work
  - How to be independent at home
  - How to live on my own
  - How to ride the bus by myself
  - How to be a good employee
  - How to tell others how I'm feeling





## 1. I enjoy...(describe) my hobbies are...



Image 1-1



## 2. I would be a great friend because I am...

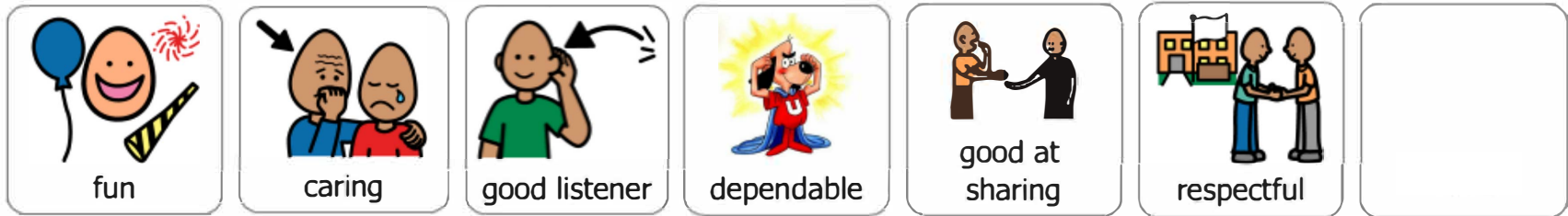


Image 1-2



## 3. One thing I am really good at is...



Image 1-3



## 4. One thing that makes me feel proud is...



Image 1-4



## 5. A few words that describe me are...



Image 1-5



6. When I feel sad what I do to be happy again is...

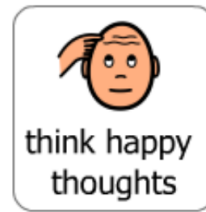


Image 1-6



## 7. When I have a job, my boss will be happy that I am...



Image 1-7





## 8. The kinds of places I would like to work in are...



Image 1-8



Hobbies...	Friends...
Good at...	Proud of...
Describes me...	Makes me happy...
Happy boss...	Workplace..

Image 1-9



## 1. I Enjoy...

talking

reading

arts and crafts

sports

video games

watching tv

Blank choice box

Blank choice box

Blank choice box

Blank choice box

Blank choice box

Blank choice box

Image 1-10



## 2. I would be a great friend because I am...

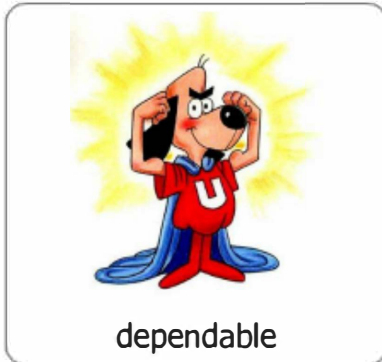


Image 1-11



### 3. One thing I am really good at is...


 <p>video games</p>	 <p>talking to people</p>	 <p>puzzles</p>
 <p>helping</p>	 <p>working</p>	 <p>being on time</p>
		
		

Image 1-12



## 4. One thing that makes me feel proud is...

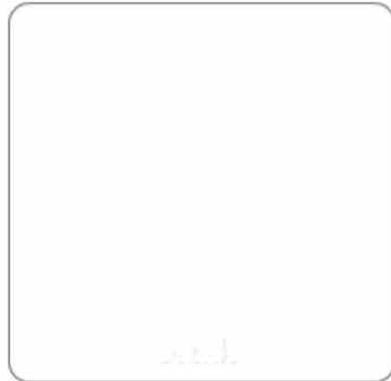
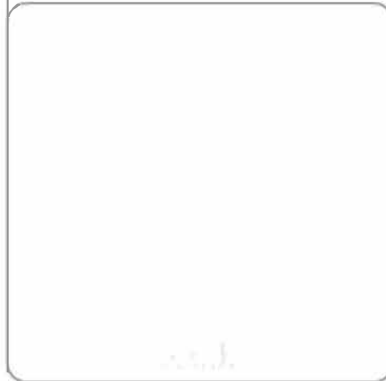
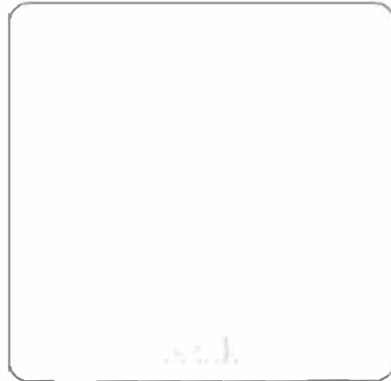
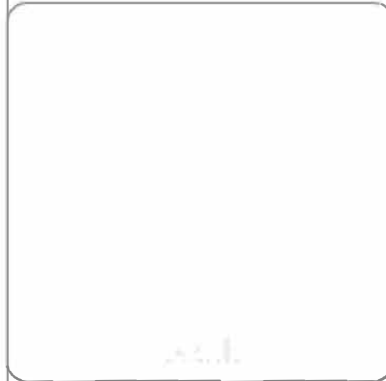
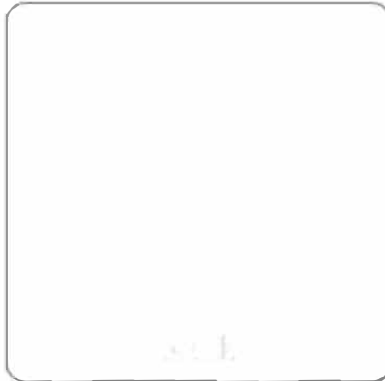
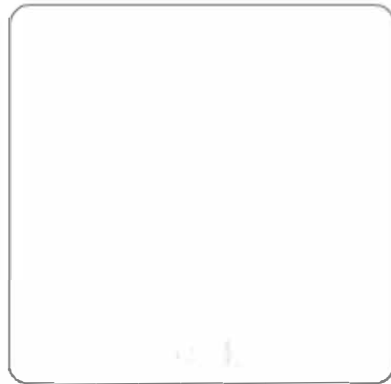
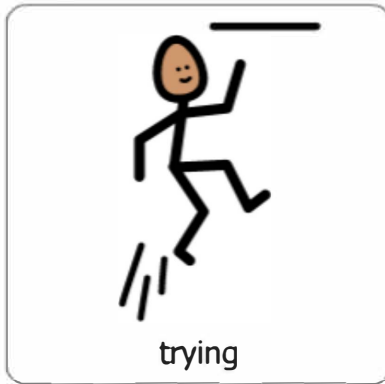
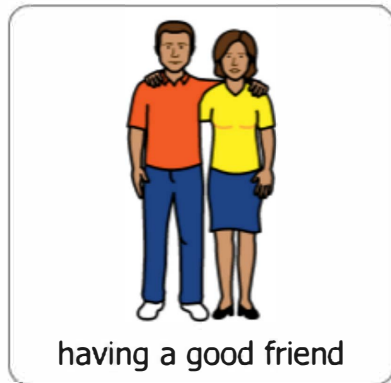
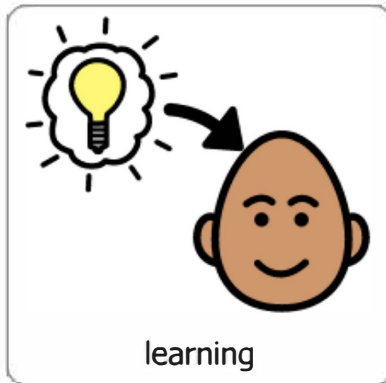


Image 1-13



### 5. A few words that describe me are...

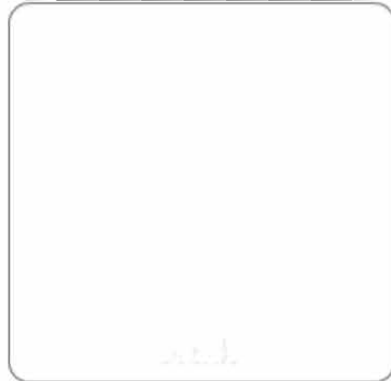
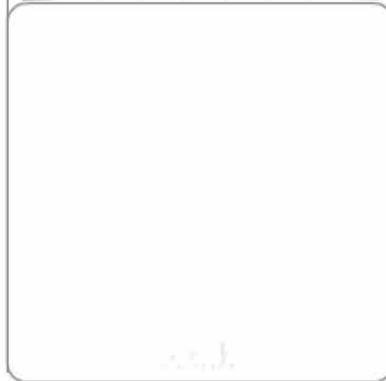
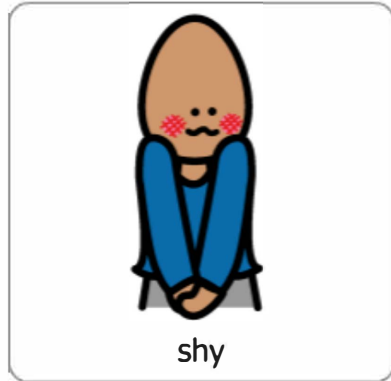
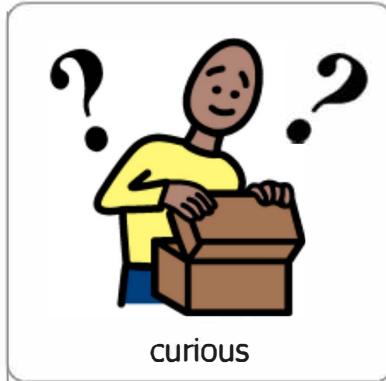
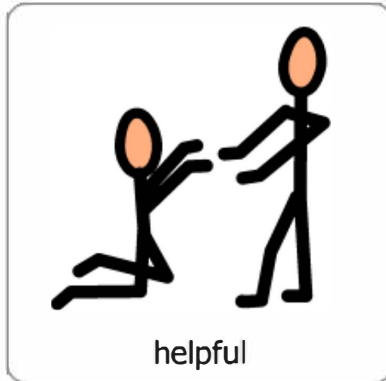
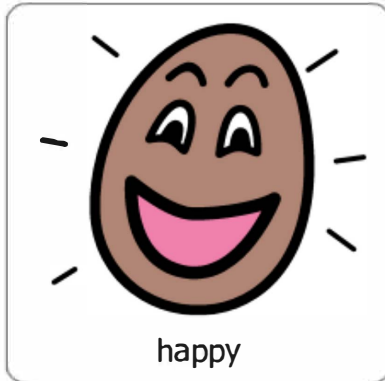
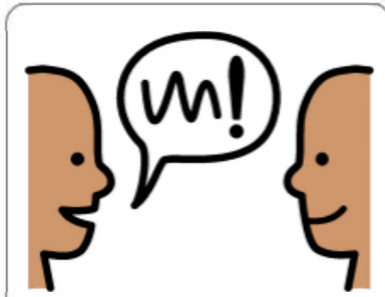


Image 1-14

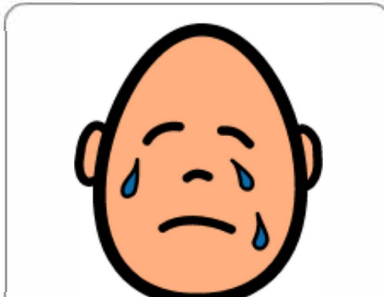




## 6. When I feel sad, what I do to be happy again is...



talk to family or friends



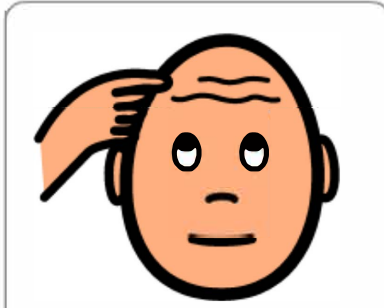
cry



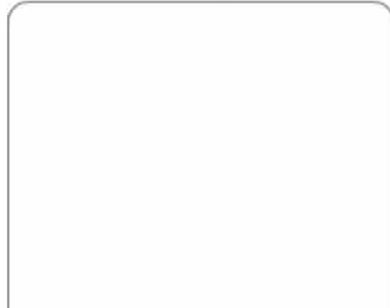
laugh and smile



exercise



think about good things



think about good things



Image 1-15



## 7. When I have a job, my boss will be happy that I am...

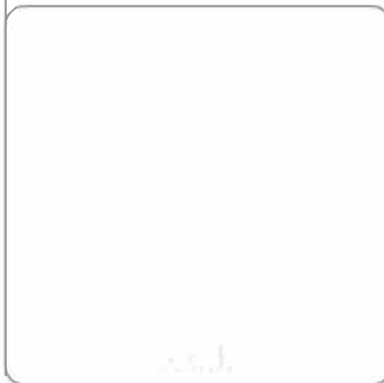
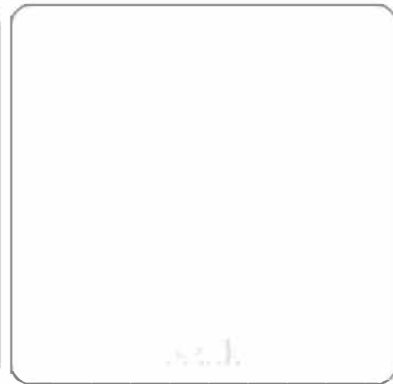
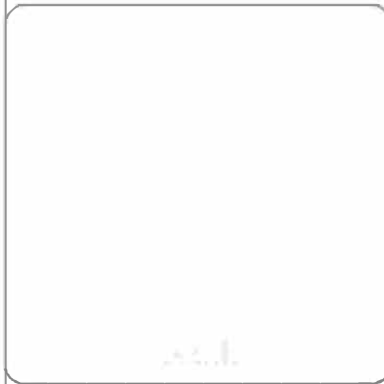
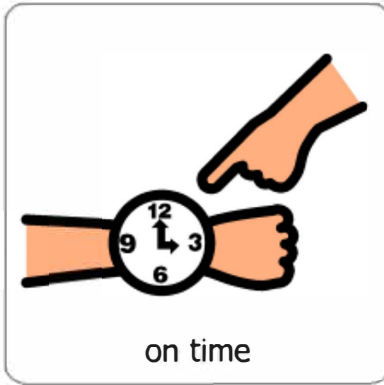


Image 1-16



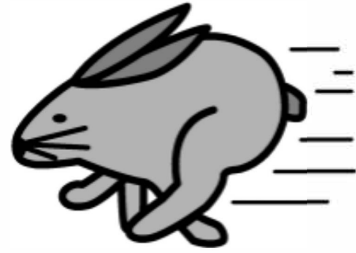
## 8. The kinds of places I would like to work are...



inside



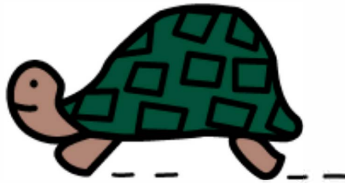
with lots of people



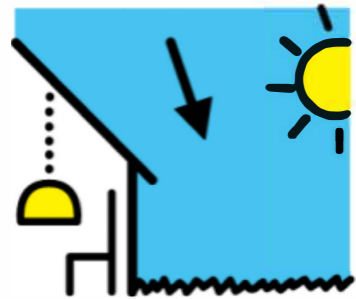
fast paced



working alone



slow paced



outside

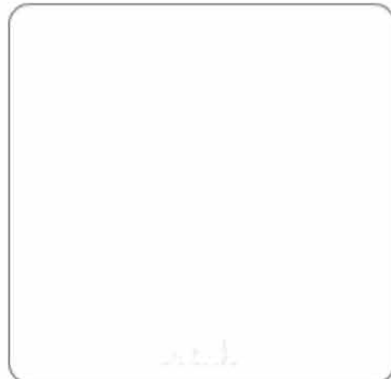
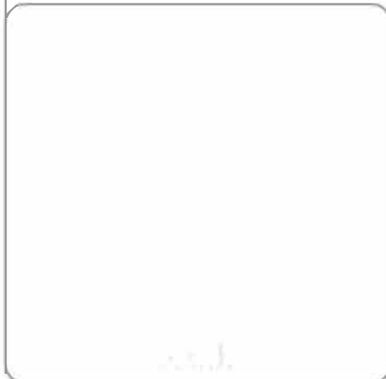


Image 1-17