

# EmployAbility

## **FY 2019 SERVICES HANDBOOK**

**1249 Eisenhower Drive ▪ Savannah, GA 31406**

**EmployAbilityGA.org**

**(912) 644-7500**



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### **The FY19 EmployAbility Services Handbook**

is available in the following formats:

Complete Text, Regular

Complete Text, Large Format

EZ to Read Text, Large Format

EZ to Read, Audio

For more information, contact Case Management at 912-644-7500.



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**GETTING TO KNOW US**

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**EMPLOYABILITY SERVICES HANDBOOK**

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**WELCOME TO EMPLOYABILITY**

The purpose of this handbook is to acquaint new individuals with the overview of each service area, to learn about individual Rights and Responsibilities, get familiar with EmployAbility’s formal complaint and grievance procedure, review health and safety practices, discuss benefits and provide information pertaining to EmployAbility’s policy and procedures. The agency also provides information on other advocacy groups and activities.

EmployAbility is a private, non-profit 501(c)(3), non-faith based agency that prepares adults with developmental disabilities for employment and community integration.

We envision a community where people with disabilities are more broadly valued, hired by employers, receiving support, and participating in ordinary activities.

From our humble beginnings as a series of small local programs for children with special needs to our work empowering adults with developmental disabilities today, EmployAbility has made a steadfast commitment to quality care and innovative programs for individuals with disabilities in our community for more than 60 years.

**MISSION**

Prepare individuals with developmental disabilities for employment and community integration.

**VISION**

Empower adults with developmental disabilities to live full, meaningful lives.

**VALUES**

Our staff is committed to upholding the following seven values, not only within the walls of our buildings, but within the community as well. These values echo the unity and dedication exhibited by our staff in leading our agency through change, and success in fulfilling our mission.

**INDIVIDUALS FIRST**

We place the needs and wants of the individuals we serve as our first priority and ensure the highest quality of service.

**PURSUIT OF EXCELLENCE**

We continually strive for excellence, never stopping or settling for mediocrity.

**INTEGRITY**

We encourage an open and honest atmosphere, upholding the highest level of integrity.

**INNOVATIVE CHANGE**

We promote innovative, positive changes and actively seek out new opportunities.

**DIVERSE STAFF**

We respect our unique staff and value them as one of our most important resources.

**TEAMWORK**

We support unity by using teamwork as a core practice.

**STEWARDSHIP**

We maintain a strong and developing foundation of management and board of directors to lead and direct us.

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## **Services**

### **SERVICE DESIGN**

Our policy regarding entrance into services is driven by the centralized intake system and our contract. If an individual has a documented developmental disability and has been determined to be eligible for EMPLOYABILITY' services by the Region 5 Office of DBHDD, the EMPLOYABILITY Intake Coordinator initiates the internal intake process.

Individuals referred, accepted, and served is a process jointly implemented between EmployAbility and the DBHDD Regional Office. When EmployAbility reaches capacity in any designated service area, a waiting list will be established for that area; individuals will be accepted on a first-come, first-served basis in the appropriate service area. The Director of Day Services is responsible for maintaining contact with individuals and DBHDD who have been referred for services.

### **AREAS OF SERVICE**

- **Prevocational Services**  
Pre-vocational training in various business functions.
- **Community Employment Services**  
Assists adults with developmental disabilities to find and maintain employment in the community, through customized job development, individual job placement, and on-going long term support.
- **Case Management Services**  
Promoting valued roles for each person served while being responsive to their unique, multiple, and changing needs.

- **Day Habilitation Program**

Comprehensive services and supports for adults with multiple and severe disabilities/needs.

### **ADDITIONAL SERVICES**

Additional services at EmployAbility include health, transportation and self-advocacy.

### **DURATION OF SERVICES**

Once enrolled in services, individuals will be supported for as long as they are satisfied and choose to stay with our services. In the event of an individual infringing on the rights or safety of other participants, EmployAbility may choose to discontinue services. If this action is necessary, the individual / family will be given notice and a coordinated effort among family, support coordinator, and DBHDD will be initiated.

### **COST OF SERVICES**

Funding for services provided by EmployAbility is available through a variety of sources to include, but not limited to, the State of Georgia, Medicaid Waiver, GVRA, and other organizations. Funding sources are identified during the Intake and Evaluation process at the Regional Office. Each individual must have an identified funding source prior to receiving services from EmployAbility.

### **ENTERING SERVICES THROUGH OTHER ORGANIZATIONS AND SELF PAY:**

In addition to entering into EmployAbility's services by way of The Region 5 Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities, Individuals may receive funds for services offered with special state funds through other Organizations to include, but not limited to B & B Care Services and Easter Seals.

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**Individuals also have the opportunity to self-pay.** The process for self-pay follows the DBHDD guidelines for services and is found below.

- 1) Have an intellectual disability since birth or before age 18, or another closely-related condition since birth or before age 22, which requires similar services to those needed by people with an intellectual disability.

You must provide:

- a) A copy of the individual's current I.D.
  - b) A copy of the individual's social security card
  - c) A copy of the individual's birth certificate
- 2) Once it is determined there is space available in the service program that is recommended for the individual, the pay structure will match that of DBHDD's funding and its current reimbursable rate. Below is the cost per year for each program offered through EmployAbility:

- a) **Community Access Individual (CA-I):**  
\$7.41/unit x Max units: 1440=  
\$10,670.40
- b) **Community Access Group (CA-G):**  
\$3.10/unit x Max units: 5760= \$17,856.0
- c) **Prevocational (PV):** \$3.10/unit x Max units: 5760= \$17,856.00
- d) **Supported Employment Individual (SE-I):** \$7.41/unit x Max units: 1440=  
\$10,670.40
- e) **Supported Employment Group (SE-G):**  
\$1.84/unit x Max units: 3840= \$7065.60

**These rates are subject to change by DBHDD.**

- 3) Payment for services will be expected monthly. (Families can pay more upfront if

desired- i.e., for the year) The Intake Coordinator will work with families to determine when the payment will be due each month according to individual financial circumstances and what options would work best. If a payment is missed, the individual's service/s will be pended until payment is made, and EmployAbility can ensure that subsequent payments will be made for services rendered.

## **Leadership**

### **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR and BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

The Board of Directors is comprised of an individual who receives services, a family member, and area business leaders. The Executive Director leads a team of professionals (Directors) each responsible for a major unit of the organization.

### **STAFF**

EmployAbility employs a team that includes:

- Executive Director
- Administrative Staff
- Department Managers
- Case Managers
- Instructors / Aides
- Employment Specialists
- Nurse
- Drivers

Staff members have had appropriate training according to their field and receive additional training on an annual basis. More information is available through the Human Resources office.

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### **CONFLICT OF INTEREST / CODE OF ETHICS**

Board Members, staff members, and family members cannot benefit financially from business transactions with the agency. Services provided by these parties are on a pro bono basis.

EmployAbility adopted and implemented a Corporate Compliance Plan designed to prevent and detect illegal or unethical activity and/or fraud, waste, and abuse. A “No-Reprisal” (*no retaliation*) system has been implemented to establish an atmosphere that promotes reporting suspicious activities.

The *EmployAbility Policies and Procedures Manual* contains detailed policies on the Code of Ethics and Corporate Compliance Plan followed by the Board of Directors and staff. Human Resources may be contacted for more information.

### **Basic Information**

#### **HOURS OF OPERATION**

EmployAbility provides coverage 24 hours daily, 7 days per week. The facilities are open:

- Monday – Thursday:  
8:00 AM – 5:00 PM
- Friday:  
8:00 AM – 4:00 PM

Individuals receiving services at the agency are on site from 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM daily.

EmployAbility operates an after-hours on-call service for emergencies. This service can be accessed by dialing the main telephone number.

#### **LOCATION**

- The Administration and Training Center buildings are located at 1249 Eisenhower Drive in Savannah, Georgia.

### **HOLIDAY SCHEDULE**

EmployAbility is closed for the following holidays:

- New Year’s Day
- Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
- Good Friday
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving
- Christmas (closed from Christmas through New Year’s Day)

A list of holiday dates is provided each January.

### **PHONE NUMBERS**

- Main: (912) 644-7500
- Fax: (912) 644-7525

### **EMAIL AND INTERNET ACCESS**

General requests for information or contact can be sent to [info@EmployAbilityGA.org](mailto:info@EmployAbilityGA.org) and they will be addressed promptly.

### **INTERNET ACCESS**

You can find us online at [www.EmployAbilityGA.org](http://www.EmployAbilityGA.org). Our website provides program information, job openings, stories of success, and ways for the community to be more involved.

### **SOCIAL MEDIA**

Follow us on social media!

- Facebook: @BeEmployAbility
- Twitter: @ BeEmployAbility
- Instagram: @ Be.EmployAbility
- LinkedIn: /company/ BeEmployAbility /



# PRE-VOCATIONAL SERVICES

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**Pre-vocational Services** provides individualized training for people with developmental disabilities. This training focuses on workforce skills. The end goal of Prevocational Services is community based employment. Staff ratios do not exceed 1:10 for these businesses or 1:6 for our community based groups.

### COMMUNITY BASED GROUPS

The Community Based Learning Program provides individuals with the opportunity to experience community based training while receiving on-site support and supervision from EmployAbility staff.

**Program Goal:** The goal of this program is to help individuals develop increased independence and new skills. Successful completion of this program will enhance the opportunity for individuals to be placed on the community based job of their choice.

### ENTRANCE AND EXIT PROCEDURES:

Individuals requesting Prevocational Services must have a developmental disability diagnosis and meet the criteria for "most in need status."

Once an individual has been determined to be eligible for EmployAbility's services by the Region 5 Office of DBHDD, the EmployAbility Intake Coordinator initiates the internal intake process. The process includes completion of required paperwork and obtaining background information, current physical, Tb screening, psychological testing, etc. Individuals will tour the organization and will indicate their program preference. Participants will be accepted based upon the completion of intake paperwork and space availability. *The EmployAbility Services Handbook* which explains agency policies, procedures, programs, and services is also given to individuals served.

The Intake Coordinator invites staff from the requested programs to an intake meeting and a decision regarding entry into the program is made. Placement will be made according to individual choice and space availability. At any time, individuals may request a transfer to or from any of EmployAbility's programs utilizing the *Transfer Protocol*. (For more information on the Transfer Protocol, see Chapter 5 ▪ Case Management in this handbook.)

Individuals may exit the program in one of two ways, by their request or services may be terminated by EmployAbility. The procedure for EmployAbility terminating services for an individual is:

1. The immediate discharge of an individual from EmployAbility's service due to medical or behavioral needs of individuals will be implemented if:
  - A. The safety of the individual, other individuals, and/or staff in the facility would be endangered;
  - B. The health of the individual, other individuals, and/or staff in the facility would be endangered;
  - C. An immediate transfer or discharge is required by the individual's urgent medical needs;
  - D. An individual has not been successful with a trial arrangement (the individual was on a previously approved 10 business day trial agreement).
2. EmployAbility will provide in writing prior to discharge a copy of the request to a representative of the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental

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Disabilities (DBHDD) and appropriate Support Coordination.

3. The written notice will include the following:
  - A. The reason for discharge;
  - B. The effective date of discharge;
  - C. A statement of the individual's appeal rights, if applicable;
  - D. The name, address (mailing and email) and telephone number of the office of Region 5, Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities.
  - E. If the information in the request changes prior to the affectivity date, the facility will update the recipients of the notice as soon as practicable once the updated information becomes available.
4. If the facility determines that an individual who is currently in an approved "pending" status, with an expectation of returning to the facility, and now cannot return to the facility, the facility will initiate the above outlined discharge procedure.
5. The above procedure follows the DBHDD FY 2019 Provider Manual for Community Developmental Disability Providers, effective July 1, 2018.

### ATTENDANCE

**All individuals are encouraged to attend five days per week. Arrival time is 9am and departure time is 3pm, Monday through Friday.** An element of our mission within Prevocational Services is training individuals for community employment. One of the subjects of learning is being on time and present at the job. *We ask that all appointments, such as with a doctor or dentist, be scheduled outside of 9am to 3pm if at all possible.*

Individuals arriving late or leaving early need to follow the department supervisor's attendance policies (sign-in book or verbal notification). Case Managers will need to be notified for extended absences.

### ANNUAL PHYSICAL POLICY

An initial health assessment is required for all persons entering services at EmployAbility. ***Everyone receiving services through EmployAbility must have an annual health assessment.*** (See Section 7 • Health & Safety for more information.)

# COMMUNITY EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

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**Community Employment Services (CES)** offers individuals the opportunity to work in the community while receiving support and supervision from staff. These services include customized job development through the discovery process, individualized job placement, and on-going long-term support. Prior to initiating job placement, CES staff gains knowledge about the individual's strengths, needs, abilities, and preferences. All individuals employed in community jobs are paid by the employer.

### ENTRANCE AND EXIT PROCEDURES:

Individuals requesting Community Employment Services must have a diagnosis of a developmental disability and meet the criteria for "most in need status". Individuals seeking supported employment may reside in Bryan, Chatham, or Effingham Counties.

Once an individual has been determined to be eligible for EmployAbility's services by the Region 5 Office, the EmployAbility Intake Coordinator initiates the intake process. The process includes completion of required paperwork and obtaining background information, current physical, Tb screening, psychological testing, etc. Interviews will be held to determine work preference. Participants will be accepted based upon the completion of intake paperwork and space availability. *The EmployAbility Services Handbook* which explains agency policies, procedures, programs, and services is also given to individuals.

The Intake Coordinator invites staff from the requested programs to an intake meeting and a decision regarding entry into the program is made. Placement will be made according to individual choice and availability. At any time, individuals may request a transfer to or from any of EmployAbility's programs utilizing the *Transfer*

*Protocol*. (For more information on the Transfer Protocol, see Chapter 5 • Case Management in this handbook.)

Individuals may exit the program in one of two ways, by their request or services may be terminated by EmployAbility. The procedure for EmployAbility terminating services for an individual is:

1. The immediate discharge of an individual from EmployAbility's service due to medical or behavioral needs of individuals will be implemented if:
  - A. The safety of the individual, other individuals, and/or staff in the job site would be endangered;
  - B. The health of the individual, other individuals, and/or staff in the job site would be endangered;
  - C. An immediate transfer or discharge is required by the individual's urgent medical needs;
  - D. An individual has not been successful with a trial arrangement (the individual was on a previously approved 10 business day trial agreement).
2. EmployAbility will provide in writing prior to discharge a copy of the request to a representative of the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities (DBHDD) and appropriate Support Coordination.
3. The written notice will include the following:
  - A. The reason for discharge;
  - B. The effective date of discharge;

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- C. A statement of the individual's appeal rights, if applicable;
  - D. The name, address (mailing and email) and telephone number of the office of Region 5, Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities.
  - E. If the information in the request changes prior to the affectivity date, the facility will update the recipients of the notice as soon as practicable once the updated information becomes available.
4. If the facility determines that an individual who is currently in an approved "pending" status, with an expectation of returning to the facility, and now cannot return to the facility, the facility will initiate the above outlined discharge procedure.

The above procedure follows the DBHDD FY 2019 Provider Manual for Community Developmental Disability Providers, effective July 1, 2018.

### TYPES OF WORK

CES develops customized jobs for individuals based upon skills and preferences. This includes, but is not limited to, jobs in areas such as medical, technical, administrative, hospitality and/or warehousing.

### ANNUAL PHYSICAL POLICY

An initial health assessment is required for all persons entering services at EmployAbility.

***Everyone receiving services through EmployAbility must have an annual health assessment.*** (See Section 7 • Health & Safety for more information.)

# COMMUNITY INTEGRATION

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### DAY HABILITATION

The Day Habilitation program is a compilation of comprehensive services, supports, and community access provided to adults with severe and multiple disabilities/needs. Staff ratios do not exceed 1:10. Day Habilitation assists individuals with daily living skills relating to self-care, communication, self-direction, and other areas that expand opportunities for community inclusion and increased self-sufficiency.

A variety of creative methods are incorporated to achieve the goal of enabling each individual to reach his or her potential and have a valued role in the community. Examples of these methods include staffing patterns, therapeutic services, community leisure activities, and community volunteering. Music and art therapies are also integrated into scheduled activities.

Services provided in Day Habilitation are customized to meet the individual needs and preferences of each person. Staffing patterns are specifically designed to maximize the success of the individualized programming. At the agency, individuals and staff work in small groups. Community activities are scheduled and staffed accordingly.

Community inclusion services incorporates recreational and leisure activities as well as community volunteering for individuals. Based on their interest, individuals have participated in numerous leisure activities such as shopping, going to the beach, bowling, manicures and picnics. Valuable services are provided to the community by volunteering. Some examples of services are: Senior Citizens (delivering meals), Union Mission (assisting with the Community Garden of Hope), Second Harvest Food Bank (stocking shelves), Humane Society (feeding the

animals), and Grace House (assisting with set up and clean up at lunch time). Individuals may also take part in community-based painting and cooking classes when available.

### COMMUNITY ACCESS GROUP

Community Access Group offers a range of programs from teaching daily self-care and communication skills to self-direction and other training to expand an individual's opportunities for inclusion in the community and to become more self-sufficient.

The Community Access Group program works diligently to offer activities and new experiences to its participants. The program also partners with other agencies and charities in the area to give back to the community, adding a unique and fulfilling experience for participants.

With the assistance of instructors, Community Access Group provides a variety of daily life skills training and experiences to participants. From self-care to art to communication and community outings, the program expands the horizons of participating individuals, fostering inclusion and self-sufficiency.

### ENTRANCE AND EXIT PROCEDURES:

Individuals requesting Day Habilitation or Community Access Group services must have a diagnosis of a developmental disability and meet the criteria for "most in need status".

Once an individual has been determined to be eligible for services at EmployAbility by the Region 5 Office of DBHDD, the EmployAbility Intake Coordinator initiates the internal intake process. The process includes completion of required paperwork and obtaining background information, current physical, Tb screening,

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psychological testing, etc. Individuals will tour the organization and will indicate their program preference. Participants will be accepted based upon the completion of intake paperwork and space availability. The EmployAbility Services Handbook which explains agency policies, procedures, programs, and services is also given to individuals served.

The Intake Coordinator invites staff from the requested programs to an intake meeting and a decision regarding entry into the program is made. Placement will be made according to individual choice and availability. At any time, individuals may request a transfer to or from any of the agency's programs utilizing the Transfer Protocol. (For more information on the Transfer Protocol, see Chapter 5: Case Management in this handbook.)

Individuals may exit the program in one of two ways, by their request or services may be terminated by EmployAbility. The procedure for EmployAbility terminating services for an individual is:

1. The immediate discharge of an individual from EmployAbility's service due to medical or behavioral needs of individuals will be implemented if:
  - A. The safety of the individual, other individuals, and/or staff in the facility would be endangered;
  - B. The health of the individual, other individuals, and/or staff in the facility would be endangered;
  - C. An immediate transfer or discharge is required by the individual's urgent medical needs;

- D. An individual has not been successful with a trial arrangement (the individual was on a previously approved 10 business day trial agreement).
2. EmployAbility will provide in writing prior to discharge a copy of the request to a representative of the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities (DBHDD) and appropriate Support Coordination.
  3. The written notice will include the following:
    - A. The reason for discharge;
    - B. The effective date of discharge;
    - C. A statement of the individual's appeal rights, if applicable;
    - D. The name, address (mailing and email) and telephone number of the office of Region 5, Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities.
    - E. If the information in the request changes prior to the affectivity date, the facility will update the recipients of the notice as soon as practicable once the updated information becomes available.
  4. If the facility determines that an individual who is currently in an approved "pending" status, with an expectation of returning to the facility, and now cannot return to the facility, the facility will initiate the above outlined discharge procedure.

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**COMMUNITY INTEGRATION**

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The above procedure follows the DBHDD FY 2019 Provider Manual for Community Developmental Disability Providers, effective July 1, 2018.

### **ATTENDANCE**

**All individuals are encouraged to attend five days per week. Arrival time is 9am and departure time is 3pm, Monday through Friday.**

An element of our mission within Prevocational Services is training individuals for community employment. One of the subjects of learning is being on time and present at the job.

*We ask that all appointments, such as with a doctor or dentist, be scheduled outside of 9am to 3pm if at all possible.*

Individuals arriving late or leaving early need to follow the department supervisor's attendance policies (sign-in book or verbal notification). Case Managers will need to be notified for extended absences.

### **ANNUAL PHYSICAL POLICY**

An initial health assessment is required for all persons entering services at EmployAbility.

***Everyone receiving services through EmployAbility must have an annual health assessment.*** (See Section 7 ▪ Health & Safety for more information.)



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**CASE MANAGEMENT**

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Case Management provides a pro-active system of support to individuals and their families through advocacy, coordination, and linkage to community resources and support services. The design of this service is to promote valued roles of each person served and to be responsive to their unique, multiple, and changing needs.

Case Managers maintain a vigilant focus on each individual served to ensure that their well-being is respected and supported in a holistic manner. Case Managers will ensure individuals who are in crisis are referred to crisis intervention services through the Georgia Crisis Access Line (GCAL) when needed.

**THE ROLE OF THE CASE MANAGER IS TO:**

- Maintain frequent and regular contact with individuals and families
  - Assist in identifying the individual's needs and interests along with practical ways to meet them.
  - Maximize the health and safety of each individual served by self-preservation education and monitoring them for changes.
  - Ensure individual choices are respected.
  - Participate, develop, and help coordinate the Individual Service Plan, Supports Intensity Scale and Health Risk Screening Tools.
  - Monitor the individual's on-going needs and assures the quality services outlined in the ISP.
  - Assist in specific individual training/recreation such as: travel training, money management skills, health issues, education of advocacy & individual rights, agency-sponsored Recreation Nights etc.
  - Ensure continuous and coordinated care with the agency.
- Advocate for and assists in the development of Natural Supports.
  - Provide linkage and referrals to services and supports.
  - Organize and maintains individual files to insure compliance of all standards.
  - Maintain on-going communication with support coordinator to ensure all supports are in place for individual and their families.
  - Understand and is able to explain individual waiver budgets and the services the budgets can purchase.
  - Qualify for and maintain Developmental Disabilities Professional designation.
  - Provide Community Access for those who desire.

**INDIVIDUAL SERVICE PLANS**

The Individual Service Plan (ISP) is a yearly, organized statement of the goals used to guide the provider and individual throughout the year. ISP's are facilitated by support coordination and developed with a person-centered approach for all individuals receiving services through EmployAbility.

The ISP planning involves the individual, case manager, support coordinator, staff members who have evaluated the individual, staff who deliver services to the individual, and, within the limits of confidentiality, family or representative. People who best know the individual outside the service system, other agencies and resources are included as deemed appropriate, with the consent of the individual or legal representative.

**TRANSFER PROTOCOL**

A transfer can happen within the various programs.



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**CASE MANAGEMENT**

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A request for a change in program placement is made either by the individual, a family member or a staff person. This request is then brought to the case manager. A meeting is held with a committee of support people to include: the individual, case manager, transfer committee chairperson, supervisor of the current service, supervisor of the requested service, family/ guardian on an as-needed basis.

The committee considers all information given, including any barriers (e.g. transportation and specific hours) or concerns (behaviors or lack of support). Final recommendations are made and a transfer date is scheduled.

### **SSI AND SOCIAL SECURITY BENEFITS**

**Individuals who receive Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or Social Security benefits are responsible for reporting earned income / training stipends to Social Security.** Failure to report this information may result in complications with benefits. The local Social Security Administration office is located at 430 Mall Blvd. Savannah, GA, and representatives can be reached by phone at 1-866-294-7410 for further information. EmployAbility also works with GVRA and their Work Incentive Navigators who specialize in wage earnings and navigating benefits.

# RIGHTS, GRIEVANCES, AND CONFIDENTIALITY

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### INDIVIDUAL RIGHTS & INDIVIDUAL RIGHTS & RESPONSIBILITIES

While you are receiving services, your rights and responsibilities include:

- Having your health and safety protected.
- Prompt and confidential services in the least restrictive environment available.
- Being treated with respect and dignity.
- Receiving services without regard to race, sex or age.
- Knowing the benefits and risks of your services.
- Taking part in planning your services.
- Being free of restraints or seclusion or “time out”, except as a last resort for safety.
- Being free of any mental, physical, sexual, or verbal abuse.
- Being free of neglect or exploitation.
- Pursuing employment, education and religious expression.
- Participating in social, religious and community activities of your choice.
- Being protected from financial exploitation.
- Requesting access to your file.
- Freedom from discrimination, humiliation, and retaliation due to any complaint or report made.
- It is your responsibility to come to work on time, dressed appropriately, and be ready to work.
- You are responsible for informing

EmployAbility staff of any illness or injury that requires a doctor’s visit or hospitalization. You are also responsible for informing your case manager of any medication changes or new medications.

- It is your responsibility to provide all documentation required to be able to work (e.g. if you are hospitalized for any reason, you will provide a letter releasing you from care from your provider or hospital staff signed by an RN, NP or DR.)
- You are responsible for transportation to and from your program or worksite.
- You are responsible for keeping your contact information current and available for EmployAbility staff.

Whenever an individual’s communication skills limit effective communication, EmployAbility assesses and develops alternatives to ensure that the wants and the needs of the individual are conveyed. For example, the use of sign language, a communication book, computer, or a communication device may be utilized.

You are encouraged to ask questions about your services and your rights.

Your EmployAbility Individuals’ Rights Representative is the Director of Day Services. The contact number is 912-644-7490. A full copy of the *Regulations* and a summary of the *Individuals Rights Complaint Process* are available to you on request.

### PROTECTION OF INDIVIDUAL RIGHTS

EmployAbility is committed to the promotion and protection of an individual’s rights and dignity of persons served. The principle of positive management of individual behavior is given major emphasis at EmployAbility. The methods used to implement this are based upon the staff’s

# RIGHTS, GRIEVANCES, AND CONFIDENTIALITY

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knowledge of the individuals' rights and understanding of human development and their ability to organize the individuals' efforts into meaningful and rewarding activities. This is consistent with the essential idea of normalization and the overall goal of optimum individual functioning.

After review and demonstration of informed consent, a determination is made regarding a complaint and appropriate measures are taken.

The individual of EmployAbility is an integral part of the individual planning process, informed consent, and when or if rights are restricted.

To promote the physical, emotional, intellectual, and social well-being of all individuals EmployAbility explicitly prohibits the following:

- **Corporal punishment:** Discipline involving any methods that may be physically harmful or injuries to an individual.
- **Psychological abuse:** Any explicit or implied communication or fear-eliciting procedure or action by a staff member which is intentionally belittling or humiliating to an individual and/or which undermines his individual dignity, self-esteem, or personal autonomy.
- **Seclusion:** Placement of an individual in an unsupervised and/or locked room.
- **Food denial:** Depriving an individual of a meal or any part of a meal for purposes of behavior control or otherwise.
- **Harmful ingestion:** Intentionally giving an individual food or any chemical substance that is detrimental to his health or well-being.

### INDIVIDUAL RIGHTS COMPLAINT AND GRIEVANCE PROCESS

A formal complaint or grievance is designated as a written problem, issue or complaint that cannot be resolved informally through working with the appropriate manager(s) and Human Resources.

Any individual, guardian, parent or staff may submit a formal written complaint or grievance alleging that an individual's rights have been violated. A simplified outline of that process is provided below. A full procedure appears in the Rules and Regulations for Individual's Rights (Chapter 290-4-9-4) and is available to you upon request from the Director of Day Services.

#### Step 1

- You should file the complaint or grievance with your Rights Representative. Your representative's name is listed on a poster at your program service site. A form for this process is available upon request.
- The Rights Representative will take it to the Risk Management Committee for review. The Risk Management Committee will act on your complaint or grievance within five (5) business days. You will be notified of the action taken.

#### Step 2

- If your complaint or grievance is not resolved to your satisfaction, you may file a written request for a meeting with the Executive Director of EmployAbility. to review it. This request must be made within fifteen (15) business days after receiving notice of the action taken on your complaint or grievance (in Step 1).
- You will be informed of the outcome of your meeting with the Executive Director within ten (10) working days from the date of your meeting.

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### Step 3

- If your complaint or grievance continues to be unresolved to your satisfaction, you may file a written request for a meeting with a committee appointed by the Board of Directors of EmployAbility. This request must be filed within fifteen (15) business days after you receive notice of the outcome of your meeting (in Step 2).
- You will be informed of the committee's decision within ten (10) business days from the date of your meeting.

### Step 4

- If your complaint or grievance is still not resolved to your satisfaction, you may file a written request for a review of your complaint with the Region 5 Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities (DBHDD) Office.
- A "No-Reprisal" system has been implemented to establish an atmosphere that promotes reporting suspicious activities.

## CONFLICT RESOLUTION

The following procedures will be utilized when a conflict arises between an individual and:

- **Instructor, Aides, or Employment Specialist:** The supervisor will be notified and attempt to resolve the conflict. If the situation cannot be rectified to the individual's satisfaction, then the case manager will be notified. A meeting will be held to examine the situation and if the situation cannot be rectified to the individual's satisfaction, it will then be taken to the Executive Director.
- **Case Manager:** When there is a conflict that cannot be resolved between a case manager and an individual, the situation is taken to the Director of Day Services. If

the situation cannot be rectified to the individual's satisfaction, the issue is then taken to the Executive Director.

An annual review of complaints and trends will be conducted by the Director of Day Services.

### OFFENSES SUBJECT TO SUSPENSION:

1. Repeated engagement in verbal assault including threatened violence, ethnic racial slurs, derogatory or profane language or gestures directed toward anyone, including distribution of obscene materials
2. Fighting or instigating a fight (see simple assault and simple battery)
3. Hazing (harassment, initiations)
4. Bullying/Cyberbullying
5. Criminal/delinquent acts of theft or attempted theft
6. Engaging in conduct that violates EmployAbility's Drug Free and Workplace Violence Policy relative to, drug possession or use, including inhaling (huffing) abusable glue, paint, or chemicals and possession of any type of weapon or item that could be considered a weapon
7. Physical assault against anyone
8. Battery against anyone
9. Terroristic threat
10. Threatening bodily harm or property damage
11. Vandalism, damaging or destroying EmployAbility equipment or property or the property of any other individual on the property.
12. Any other conduct considered by the Executive Director to be substantially

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disruptive, to the point it affects the orderly operation of EmployAbility Programs and related activities.

### VIOLATIONS WHICH MAY RESULT IN REQUEST FOR TERMINATION AND/OR POLICE INTERVENTION:

The Police will be called for any individual who exhibits the following behavior(s):

1. Aggravated assault
2. Arson or attempted arson
3. Assault or battery of an employee or another individual
4. Bomb threats, or other false reports to 911 or the Administrative Office
5. Commission of any act which constitutes a felony
6. Criminal/delinquent acts of extortion or attempted extortion, harassment, or intimidation
7. Fireworks stink bombs, or other explosives: Possession, distribution, use, or lighting of such materials
8. Possession or use of any dangerous instrument which may be used to inflict bodily harm including a firearm, knife with a blade of any length, razor blade, box cutter, and/or starter pistol
9. Possession or use of mace, pepper gas, tear gas, or like materials
10. Public lewdness or indecent exposure
11. Retaliating against an employee, either on or off EmployAbility property
12. Severe false accusation of employee by individual
13. Severe violent behavior on EmployAbility property or at an organizational function
14. Sexual harassment or misconduct
15. Terroristic threat
16. The use of illicit drugs and the unlawful possession and use of alcohol are wrong, harmful and illegal; therefore, no individual shall possess, sell, use, transmit, handle, display, distribute, or otherwise use or be under the influence of any narcotic, hallucinogenic drug, amphetamine, barbiturate, marijuana, any other controlled substance, drug paraphernalia, over the counter or prescription medication, alcoholic beverage, intoxicant of any kind or any substance represented to be illegal drugs or imitation controlled substance while on EmployAbility property, on the way to and from EmployAbility, or at an EmployAbility-sponsored function.
  - Any offense (even those not listed) may be referred to the police.
  - Individuals placed on suspension or Terminated will be prohibited from attending or participating in any EmployAbility-sponsored or EmployAbility-related activities.
  - Please see EmployAbility's Policy on Immediate Discharge of Services.

### PROCESS FOR SUSPENSION:

1. Once the infraction has occurred, the instructor will notify case management and all appropriate entities such as, but not limited

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to, The Nurse, C-Team, Supervisor, Director of Program.

2. Once the situation is contained, the infraction will be taken to the Executive Director who will determine the appropriate amount of time for suspension or if it meets criteria for a request for termination. The time frames in consideration for suspension are 24-72 hours for lesser infractions or up to a week (5 days) for severe infractions. The Executive Director will review all the evidence and reports to determine the severity of the situation, and has the final say on determining how long suspensions will be and if the infraction requires a request for termination.
3. The Case Manager will contact the Support Coordinator (SC) or State Coordinator (STC) to inform him or her of EmployAbility's decision to Suspend an individual. Case Manager will also notify parent, guardian, or caregiver.
4. Once the course of action has been determined, a suspension form will be filled out (located in the "y" drive) and will be signed by the Individual, Staff, Case Manager, Director of Day Services and the SC or STC. The Executive Director will be the final signature. Completed form will be appropriately distributed and placed in the Individual's Permanent Record.

### DEFINITIONS:

**"Aggravated Assault"** A person commits the offense of aggravated assault when he/she assaults:

(1) with intent to murder, to rape, or to rob

(2) with a deadly weapon or with any object, device, or instrument which, when used

offensively against a person, is likely to or actually does result in serious bodily injury

**"Battery"** A person commits the offense of battery when he or she intentionally causes substantial physical harm or visible bodily harm to another. As used in this Code section, the term **"visible bodily harm"** means bodily harm capable of being perceived by a person other than the victim and may include, but is not limited to, substantially blackened eyes, substantially swollen lips or other facial or body parts, or substantial bruises to body parts.

**"Bullying"** means any willful attempt or threat to inflict injury on another person, accompanied by an apparent present ability to do so; or any intentional display of force such as would give the victim reason to fear or expect immediate bodily harm.

**"Cyberbullying"** are acts of bullying that involve electronic communication, whether or not such electronic act originated on EmployAbility property or with EmployAbility equipment, if the electronic communication (1) is directed specifically at an individual or EmployAbility personnel, (2) is maliciously intended for the purpose of threatening the safety of those specified or substantially disrupting the orderly operation of EmployAbility Programs and/or activities, and (3) creates a reasonable fear of harm to the individuals or to the organization's persons or property or has a high likelihood of succeeding in that purpose.

**"Fight"** means mutual participation in a physical conflict involving two (2) or more persons. It does not include verbal confrontations. (see Simple Assault, Simple Battery.)

**"Simple Assault"** A person commits the offense of simple assault when he or she either: (1) attempts to commit a violent injury to the person of another

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(2) commits an act which places another in reasonable apprehension of immediately receiving a violent injury O.C.G.A. § 16-5-20

**“Simple Battery”** A person commits the offense of simple battery when he/she either:

(1) Intentionally makes physical contact of an insulting or provoking nature with the person of another

(2) Intentionally causes physical harm to another O.C.G.A § 16-5-23

**“Terroristic Threat”** A person commits the offense of a terroristic threat when he threatens to commit any crime of violence or to burn or damage property with the purpose of terrorizing another or of causing the evacuation of a building, place of assembly, or facility of public transportation or otherwise causing serious public inconvenience, or in reckless disregard of the risk of causing such terror or inconvenience. No person shall be convicted under this subsection on the uncorroborated testimony of the party to whom the threat is communicated O.C.G.A. § 16-11-37.

**“Verbal Assault”** is an intense, extreme or severe attack transmitted by speech intended to threaten and/ or intimidate another person.

### NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

EmployAbility does not discriminate on the basis of race, gender, color, national origin, age (18 and older), religion, sexual orientation, genetic profile or any other trait protected by law.

Everyone is encouraged to apply for posted job openings at EmployAbility if they meet the qualifications within the parameter of reasonable accommodations. People wishing to be considered for a position should obtain a copy of the job description and complete the application.

Individuals should be aware that employment may impact their benefits.

### HIPAA / EMPLOYABILITY PRIVACY POLICY

**Adopted November 10, 2015**

**THIS NOTICE DESCRIBES HOW MEDICAL INFORMATION ABOUT YOU MAY BE USED AND DISCLOSED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF BEHAVIORAL HEALTH AND DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES (DBHDD) AND HOW YOU CAN GET ACCESS TO THIS INFORMATION. PLEASE REVIEW IT CAREFULLY. This notice is effective November 10, 2015. It is provided to you under the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 and related federal regulations (together referred to as “HIPAA”) and provides some additional information about other federal and state confidentiality protections. If you have questions about this Notice please contact the facility where you receive services (your treatment provider or services provider) or DBHDD’s Privacy Officer at the address below.**

DBHDD is an agency of the State of Georgia responsible for certain programs which deal with medical, mental health, developmental disabilities, addictive disease, and other confidential information. DBHDD must comply with strict requirements of federal and state laws regarding confidential information. For situations where stricter disclosure requirements do not apply, this Notice of Privacy Practices describes how DBHDD may use and disclose your “protected health information” for treatment, payment, health care operations, and certain other purposes. This notice also describes your rights regarding your protected health information. **Protected health information** is information that may personally identify you and relates to your past, present or future physical or mental health or condition and related health care services, and payment for services. DBHDD is also required to provide you this Notice of Privacy Practices, and to abide by its terms. DBHDD may change the terms of this notice at any time. A new notice will be effective for all protected health information that DBHDD maintains at the time of issuance. DBHDD will provide you with any revised Notice of Privacy Practices by posting copies at its facilities, publication on DBHDD’s website, in response to a



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telephone or facsimile request to the Privacy Officer, or in person at any facility where you receive services.

**1. Your Rights:** The following is a statement of your rights about your protected health information and how you may exercise these rights. If you have a court-appointed guardian, your guardian may exercise these rights for you; if you are a minor, your parent or court-appointed custodian may exercise these rights for you; your healthcare agent in a valid advance directive may exercise these rights for you if your advance directive says so. To exercise any of these rights, you may contact the staff person named in Section 7 below, at your treatment provider's location, or your treatment provider's HIPAA Coordinator.

**a. You have the right to inspect and copy your protected health information:** You may inspect and obtain a copy of protected health information about you for as long as DBHDD maintains the protected health information. This information includes medical and billing records and other records DBHDD uses for making medical and other decisions about you. A reasonable, cost-based fee for copying, postage and labor expense may apply. Under federal law you may not inspect or copy information compiled in anticipation of, or for use in, a civil, criminal, or administrative proceeding, or protected health information that is subject to a federal or state law prohibiting access to such information. While you are hospitalized, your physician may restrict your right to review your records if it may endanger your life or physical safety. If your protected health information was obtained or created in the course of research that includes treatment, your right to access that protected health information may be restricted while the research is in progress, if you agreed to this restriction in advance.

**b. You have the right to request restriction of your protected health information:** You may ask DBHDD not to use or disclose any part of your protected health information for the purposes of treatment, payment or healthcare operations, and not to disclose protected health information to family members or friends who may be involved in your care. Your request must be in writing, and it must state the specific restriction you are requesting and to whom you want the restriction to apply. DBHDD is not required to agree to a restriction you request, and DBHDD may not prevent disclosures to the Secretary of Health and Human Services or any disclosure that is required by law. If DBHDD believes it is in your best interest to permit use

and disclosure of your protected health information, your protected health information will not be restricted, except as required by law. If DBHDD does agree to your request, DBHDD may not use or disclose your protected health information in violation of that restriction unless it is needed to provide emergency treatment. DBHDD must agree to a restriction if you request to restrict disclosure of your protected health information to a health plan when: (1) the disclosure is for the purpose of payment or health care operations and is not otherwise required by law; AND (2) the protected health information is about only a health care item or service for which you, or a person other than a health plan on your behalf, have paid DBHDD in full.

**c. You have the right to request to receive confidential communications from us, including billing and payment information, by alternative means or at an alternative location:** If you request it in writing, DBHDD will agree to reasonable requests for alternative means for sending confidential information to you. Your request must tell us how or where you wish to be contacted, or provide an alternative means of payment if necessary. DBHDD will not ask you the reason for your request.

**d. You have the right to request amendment of your protected health information:** If DBHDD created your protected health information; you may request an amendment of that information for as long as it is kept by or for DBHDD. DBHDD may deny your request, and if it does so will provide information as to any further rights you may have about the denial.

**e. You have the right to receive an accounting of certain disclosures DBHDD has made of your protected health information:** You have the right to receive legally specified information about disclosures of your protected health information that DBHDD made in the six (6) years before your request, with certain exceptions, restrictions and limitations. This right applies only to disclosures for purposes other than treatment, payment or healthcare operations, and does not apply to any disclosures DBHDD made to you; to family members or friends or representatives, as defined in the Georgia Mental Health Code, who are involved in your care; to anyone based on written authorization by you (or by your guardian, parent or court-appointed custodian, or healthcare agent as applicable); or for national security, intelligence or notification purposes.

**f. Notice of Breach.** DBHDD has put in place reasonable policies and procedures to protect the privacy and security



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of your protected health information. DBHDD will notify you, as required by law, if there is an unauthorized acquisition, access, use or disclosure of your protected health information. The law may not require notice to you in all cases.

**f. You have the right to obtain a paper copy of this notice from DBHDD**, upon request at any time. You can also find this Notice on our website, <http://dbhdd.georgia.gov/>.

### **2. Uses and Disclosures of Protected Health**

**Information:** DBHDD, its administrative and clinical staff and others involved in your care and treatment may use and disclose your protected health information to provide health care services to you, and in obtaining payment of your health care bills.

**a. Treatment:** DBHDD may use and disclose your protected health information to provide, coordinate, or manage your health care and any related services, including coordination of your health care with a current, former, or identified future third party provider. For example, we may disclose your treatment or services plan to a health care professional who is treating you, or who is named in your Individualized Recovery Plan or Individualized Service Plan and will be your provider upon your discharge or transition; to a jail or corrections facility if you are under criminal charges and discharged to jail or corrections; or to another health care provider such as a specialist or laboratory.

**b. Payment:** DBHDD may use and disclose your protected health information to obtain payment for your health care services. For example, your health insurance plan may require protected health information about you to make a determination of eligibility or coverage, or to review services provided to you for medical necessity, before your health insurance plan approves or pays for your health care services. Your protected health information may be shared with third party “business associates” who perform various activities that assist us in obtaining payment; business associates and any subcontractors they may have are also required by law to keep your protected health information confidential.

**c. Health Care Operations:** DBHDD may use or disclose your protected health information for the business activities of DBHDD, including, for example, but not limited to, quality assessment activities, employee review activities, training, and licensing activities. We may also use

your protected health information to contact you about appointments or for other operational reasons. DBHDD may also use or disclose your protected health information to third party “business associates” who perform various activities that assist us in providing services to you. Some examples of our business associates might include, but are not limited to, the Georgia Collaborative ASO for care management, the Georgia Crisis Access Line for access to crisis or non-crisis services and referrals, Beacon Health Operations for quality management and outcomes review, and the Delmarva Foundation for utilization management. Business associates and any subcontractors they may have are also required by law to keep your protected health information confidential.

**d. Your Representatives:** If you are in a DBHDD hospital, you are allowed to name a representative to receive certain protected health information about you, or DBHDD must name a representative for you if you do not name one. DBHDD will also name a second representative for you, according to Georgia law. DBHDD is not required to seek your authorization in order to inform your representatives of your admission to the hospital, and of your discharge. Unless there is an emergency, you will have a chance to object to other disclosures to your representatives about the development of your Individualized Recovery Plan (IRP) for behavioral health treatment or services, your treatment under the IRP, and certain substantial changes to your IRP.

**3. You may Authorize or Object to certain other Permitted or Required Uses and Disclosures of your protected health information:** Your protected health information, including clinical records of treatment for mental illness or addictive disease or services relating to developmental disability, is protected by confidentiality under state law. DBHDD is permitted to make certain disclosures described in Section 2 above and in Sections 4 and 5 below, without your authorization or opportunity to object. Other uses and disclosures of your protected health information will be made only if DBHDD has written authorization signed by you (or if you have one, your guardian, parent or legal custodian if you are a minor, or your healthcare agent if you have an advance directive currently in effect). Your written authorization may be revoked at any time. DBHDD will not be able to retract any disclosures of your protected health information that were previously authorized. DBHDD may disclose all or part of your protected health information when authorized in writing.

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**a. Confidentiality of Alcohol and Drug Abuse Patient Records:** The confidentiality of patient records which disclose any information identifying you as an alcohol or drug abuser is protected by federal law and regulations. This information generally will not be disclosed unless you consent in writing, the disclosure is allowed by a court order, or the disclosure is made to medical personnel in a medical emergency or to qualified personnel for research, audit, or program evaluation. Violation of these federal laws and regulations by the facility, treatment or service provider, or DBHDD, is a crime. You may report violations to appropriate authorities in accordance with the federal regulations. Federal regulations do not protect any information about a crime committed by you either at a facility or program or against any person who works at a facility or program, or information about any threat to commit such a crime. Federal regulations do not protect any information about suspected child abuse or neglect from being reported under State law to appropriate State agency and local law enforcement authorities.

**b. HIV/AIDS confidential information:** Although HIV infection is required to be reported or disclosed in some circumstances under state law, AIDS confidential information, including HIV status or testing information is generally confidential under state law. Other than required disclosures listed at 4.d. below, DBHDD will not disclose AIDS confidential information without your authorization.

**c. Psychotherapy notes:** Authorization is required for use or disclosure of psychotherapy notes not maintained in your medical record. This authorization may not be required for disclosure of psychotherapy notes about you to the criminal court and attorneys if a DBHDD hospital or its outpatient team is evaluating your mental status to go to trial on criminal charges, or evaluating your mental status at the time you committed a criminal act.

**d. Health Information Networks or Exchanges:** Health information exchanges allow health care providers, including DBHDD, to share and receive health information about individuals receiving our services, which helps in the coordination of your care. DBHDD participates in health information networks that can make your protected health information available electronically to your other providers who are members of the networks. For individuals who have signed an authorization to allow sharing of their protected health information (including alcohol or drug treatment or services information they may have) with their other providers, DBHDD shares protected health

information electronically with those other Health Information Exchange members through the Georgia Health Information Network (GaHIN).

**e. Complaints about Your Treatment:** If DBHDD receives a complaint about your treatment or services, such as from your representative or family member, DBHDD will not disclose your protected health information to that person in response to the complaint, unless you have signed an authorization for us to disclose your protected health information.

**f. Marketing and Fundraising:** If DBHDD wishes to use your protected health information for fundraising (for instance, to put your name on a mailing list for requesting a donation to patient benefit funds), or for marketing (for instance, to advertise our treatments and services by using your protected health information) we will first request your authorization.

**4. Permitted or Required Uses and Disclosures without Your Authorization or Opportunity to Object:** DBHDD may use or disclose your protected health information without your authorization when the law allows it or requires it.

**a. Persons involved in your care:** DBHDD can use or disclose your protected health information without your authorization, to your court-appointed guardian, if you have a guardian; to your parent or court-appointed custodian if you are a minor, or to your healthcare agent that you have named in an advance directive that is currently in effect.

**b. Regarding your health care:** DBHDD can use or disclose your protected health information without your authorization, to a health care professional or facility that is named in your Individualized Recovery Plan or Individualized Services Plan, for continuity of your care; to an emergency services provider when clinically required; and in hearings regarding your hospitalization or commitment to the hospital. If you were admitted to a DBHDD facility involuntarily, DBHDD can give notice to the healthcare provider or court that referred you to the hospital, if you transfer to voluntary status or when you are discharged. DBHDD can disclose your protected health information to a health oversight agency, for instance, for audits, investigations, inspections and licensure of a DBHDD facility or program.

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**c. Legal requirements:** DBHDD may use or disclose your protected health information without your authorization when required to do so by law, to a law enforcement authority or other state agency authorized to receive reports of abuse or neglect. DBHDD may be required by law to use or disclose your protected health information such as by court order in a lawsuit. If we receive a subpoena for your protected health information, we will either notify you of the subpoena, or we will ask the attorney seeking your records to get a protective order for the confidentiality of your protected health information. In the event of your death, DBHDD may use or disclose your protected health information to a coroner or medical examiner in Georgia, an organ or tissue donation organization, and to the legal representative of your estate.

**d. HIV/AIDS confidential information and other reportable diseases:** Georgia law requires DBHDD to report to the Georgia Department of Public Health if you have a disease that is reportable for the protection of public health. This includes HIV infection and other diseases. If you are HIV-positive, DBHDD may also disclose this information in certain circumstances to protect persons at risk of infection by you, including your family and health care providers. DBHDD may also disclose HIV testing or diagnosis information in certain circumstances if we petition the court for an order committing you for involuntary hospitalization or in related legal proceedings. Otherwise, HIV/AIDS information is confidential. See also section 3.b., above.

**5. Required Uses and Disclosures:** Under the law, DBHDD must make certain disclosures to you, and to the Secretary of the United States Department of Health and Human Services when required to investigate or determine DBHDD's compliance with HIPAA requirements.

**6. Practices not followed by DBHDD:**

**a.** DBHDD does not sell protected health information of any individual.

**b.** DBHDD facilities do not maintain directories of admissions.

**7. Complaints and Additional Information:** You may complain to DBHDD and to the United States Secretary of Health and Human Services if you believe your privacy rights have been violated. You may file a complaint in writing with your DBHDD facility or program, or with your treatment provider or services provider under contract or

agreement with DBHDD which maintains your protected health information at telephone \_\_\_\_\_, fax number \_\_\_\_\_, or by mail to \_\_\_\_\_.

You must state the basis for your complaint. Neither the facility, the provider, nor DBHDD will retaliate against you for filing a complaint. You may also obtain additional information about privacy practices from this contact person.

You may also contact DBHDD's Privacy Officer by telephone at (404) 657-2282, fax number (404) 657-2173, or by mail to 2 Peachtree Street NW, Room 22.240, Atlanta, Georgia, 30303-3142, for further information about the complaint process or about this notice.

[Notice updated by DBHDD on 10/27/2017; current as of 3/22/2018]

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION**

If you have questions or need further assistance regarding this Notice, you may contact the Director of Human Resources or the Director of Day Services at EmployAbility at P.O. Box 13607, Savannah, GA 31416 or by calling 912-644-7500.

All complaints must be submitted in writing, you will not be penalized for filing a complaint.

**OTHER USES OF PERSONAL INFORMATION:**

Other uses and disclosures of personal information not covered by this notice or the laws that may apply to use will be made only with your written authorization. If you provide us permission to use or disclose personal information about you, you may revoke that permission, in writing, anytime.

# HEALTH AND SAFETY

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### RISK MANAGEMENT

EmployAbility is dedicated to providing a safe and healthy environment for all individuals and staff. The Risk Management Committee is comprised of a staff representative from each department and an individual receiving service. This committee implements and continually monitors the effectiveness of health, safety and loss control practices of the agency.

### ANNUAL PHYSICAL POLICY

An initial health assessment is required for all persons entering services at EmployAbility. All persons receiving services through EmployAbility must have an annual health assessment. A licensed health professional should document medications, allergies, and physical conditions/limitations. Anyone who does not provide an annual health assessment may be subject to removal from his or her program. EmployAbility is a provider for DBHDD and receives funding from Medicaid Waiver and is required to follow their policies. Annual Health Assessments are required for these funding sources. For Day Habilitation a Doctors or Nurse Practitioners prescription is needed for therapy, evaluation, follow-ups, or nutritional needs (i.e. blended diets).

A Tuberculin (Tb) screening or chest x-ray is also necessary before entering EmployAbility and is required annually thereafter for all individuals receiving services. Also suggested is a tetanus booster (if the individual has not had a tetanus booster within the last 10 years). EmployAbility has an annual Flu Clinic conducted by the Department of Health.

EmployAbility is committed to keeping our individuals healthy and free from contagious illness. If an individual is visibly ill, (i.e. fever, vomiting, cough, and excessive mucus) the

individual will be asked to stay home until free from symptoms to ensure the spread of illness is limited.

It may be the nurse's recommendation that individuals are seen by a doctor for their identified symptoms. If this is the case, when they return to work, they must have documentation showing they have been examined and are cleared to come back to their work program.

### MEDICATION MONITORING POLICY

EmployAbility staff supervises self-administration of oral medications. Epipen is the only injectable given by staff. EmployAbility does not administer PRN medications or controlled substances. These include aspirin, Tylenol, heartburn medicine, or any over-the-counter medications.

Medications must be under lock and key when not being self-administered.

All medications prescribed for and provided by the individual **MUST** be in a container prepared by a pharmacy with appropriate *labels* and *dated* within the past 12 months. The label *must* include:

- the individual's name
- prescribing doctor
- the medication's name
- date prescribed
- dose and frequency
- expiration date of medication

Expired medications will be sent home with the individual to be disposed of at home.

### USE OF PHYSICAL INTERVENTION

It is the explicit policy of EmployAbility that physical intervention will only be used in an emergency situation to protect the individual and/or others from bodily harm and will follow Crisis Prevention Institute (CPI) standards. All

## HEALTH AND SAFETY

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### EMPLOYABILITY SERVICES HANDBOOK

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EmployAbility staff members receive nonviolent CPI training and may use positive behavioral interventions as described by CPI.

It is the agency's philosophy that *the least restrictive intervention* will be used. An emphasis is placed on building positive relationships with persons served. Staff is taught to evaluate the environment and personal stressors for each individual served. Appropriate intervention between staff and individuals served promotes de-escalation and socially acceptable behavior. Individuals served are empowered to change their own behavior. At no time would an individual be placed in seclusion or a "time-out" as it is EmployAbility's policy that those interventions are strictly prohibited.

If an individual becomes aggressive, staff will need to intercede. They will use verbal and/or nonverbal de-escalation techniques, including strike aversion and blocking. The physical restraint is utilized according to CPI standards when all other techniques have been exhausted, and when the individual presents a danger to himself and to others.

When a restraint is used, the Executive Director is notified, and an EmployAbility incident report and State of Georgia Critical Incident Report is completed. The Risk Management committee reviews the incident and makes recommendations to the Executive Director. If necessary, the decision to activate 911 services can only be directed by the Executive Director or a designee.

— Chapter 8 —  
**AGENCY PRACTICES**

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**EMPLOYABILITY SERVICES HANDBOOK**

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### **ABSENCE / LEAVE POLICY**

Individuals are expected to participate in services based on what is stated in their Individual Service Plan. When absences are necessary please make prior arrangements with case manager when possible. In the case of excessive absences, tardiness, or early departures, the Case Manager will be notified and review the circumstances on an individual basis to determine the continuation of services.

### **MEDICAL RELEASE POLICY**

EmployAbility requires any individual who has been hospitalized to return WITH a signed release stating the individual has medical clearance to attend programs at EmployAbility. This release must come from the physician or hospital. Hospital discharge papers can only be used if a return notice is included in the summary.

### **SMOKING POLICY**

EmployAbility has a policy of smoke-free buildings, smoke-free vehicles, limitation of smoke breaks, and designated smoking area.

Smoke breaks are at 10:00 a.m. (break time), lunch, and at 2:00 p.m. and must be taken in the designated smoking area.

### **CELL PHONES**

Individuals may use personal cell phones but only during the designated break and lunch times.

### **BREAKS AND LUNCH**

Individuals receive a 30-minute lunch break each day.

Lunches may be brought in or may be purchased through the Cafeteria. The monthly menu, which is provided to individuals and families each month, offers a variety of healthy choices including a daily hot lunch special. Other items available every day include chicken, salads,

sandwiches, vegetables, and drinks at varying costs.

Individuals also get a 15-minute break each morning that is usually taken in the dining area. Snacks may be brought from home or may be purchased through “Richard’s” (the snack bar) which offers a variety of items for purchase during breaks and lunch.

In Day Habilitation, individuals enjoy lunches and afternoon snacks from home or may purchase them from EmployAbility for a small charge. Blended foods are available with a doctor’s orders. Individuals incapable of self-feeding are fed by staff.

### **DRESS CODE**

The Dress Code is reviewed annually. Any individual inappropriately dressed will not be allowed to participate and may face the possibility of being sent home.

- When deemed appropriate, safety gear - such as earplugs and goggles will be issued as needed for specific training. Certain areas may require safety equipment.
- Individuals are required to wear closed toe shoes. Beach shoes, sandals, sling back shoes or thongs are not allowed. Canvas style, slipper-style shoes and loafers are not acceptable. All shoes must have a non-skid sole.
- **NO SHORTS ARE ALLOWED.** Men’s pants with below-the-knee hemlines may be worn. Skirts or split skirts must also have below the knee hemline. Capri pants (pedal pushers) may be worn, but please see supervisor for approval.
- Short shorts, tight pants, tank tops, leggings, mini-skirts, midriffs, and sun dresses are not permissible in any area.
- No strapless, spaghetti straps or halter tops allowed without a jacket or sweater over the garment.



— Chapter 8 —  
**AGENCY PRACTICES**

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**EMPLOYABILITY SERVICES HANDBOOK**

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**TRAINING STIPENDS**

In the pre-vocational areas, individuals will be given a stipend when participating in training opportunities. Stipends are issued every two weeks. If there are any questions, please see your case manager.

**PARENT MEETINGS**

Parent Meetings are held monthly at EmployAbility as an opportunity for staff to share and discuss topics involving EmployAbility services. Individuals in services, family members, and caregivers are encouraged to attend. Parents are encouraged to provide email addresses so current information can be disseminated.

**SEVERE WEATHER PROCEDURES**

Coastal Georgia sometimes experiences to severe weather that ranges from flash flooding of neighborhoods to tornados and hurricanes. In conjunction with the Chatham Emergency Management Association (CEMA), EmployAbility

has developed plans in the event of such emergencies.

Local TV and radio stations typically list closings or delays during the news or morning programs. We recommend that you also check their respective **websites** which tend to have more complete listings than are announced on air.

- WJCL-TV [www.wjcl.com](http://www.wjcl.com)
- WSAV-TV [www.wsav.com](http://www.wsav.com)
- WTOC-TV [www.wtoc.com](http://www.wtoc.com)
- Facebook: @beemployability
- Twitter: @beemployability

If severe weather develops during the day, family members *will receive a phone call from EmployAbility staff*, but may also be alerted by listening to the media throughout the day. EmployAbility typically follows the decision of the Savannah-Chatham Public Schools concerning closing due to severe weather. Please contact the case managers with any questions.

## BENEFITS FOR INDIVIDUALS

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### EMPLOYABILITY SERVICES HANDBOOK

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#### GROUP LIFE INSURANCE

EmployAbility offers group life insurance at *no cost* to all individuals. Upon entry, individuals and their families/representatives will be given information about the policies and enrollment.

**Beneficiary information is required and must stay current. *The Employee Association can be designated as a beneficiary in the absence of one.***

#### IMMUNIZATIONS

All individuals may receive the Hepatitis B vaccine series and a yearly flu shot regardless of the ability to pay.

#### TRANSPORTATION

Transportation services are available as a courtesy for individuals enrolled in our onsite programs. Determination of eligibility for this service will be offered on an individual basis. Each vehicle is staffed with a driver only.

Each EmployAbility vehicle is radio-equipped and can be in contact with the organization at any time. Vehicles are also equipped with emergency items such as first aid kits, fire extinguishers, seatbelt cutters, and traffic triangles.

All EmployAbility drivers receive driver orientation when hired. Drivers are CPR and First Aid certified, and must attend mandatory annual training in defensive driving and wheelchair transportation.

For individuals who utilize public transportation, EmployAbility provides assistance with determining the most appropriate route to be taken. Individuals attending onsite programs and choosing public transportation rather than EmployAbility transportation receive a bus swipe card weekly to cover the cost of transportation to and from the agency. EmployAbility staff is

available to assist with travel-training on public transportation. Community agencies that provide residential services for individuals also receiving EmployAbility services are responsible for providing daily transportation to and from the agency. Onsite programs end at 3:00 p.m. No individual should be picked up earlier than 3pm unless an appointment has been scheduled and pre-arranged with case management.

**Individuals/families should notify case managers as soon as possible for any reason (e.g., moving, illness, appointments or tardiness) that may affect transportation.**

#### TRAINING

Each year, individuals attend mandatory fire safety training conducted by staff or outside trainers. Other regular training includes Universal Precautions and Back Care/Injury Prevention. Health and Safety training on a broad range of topics is provided based on individual needs..



## GROUPS AND ACTIVITIES

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### EMPLOYABILITY SERVICES HANDBOOK

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#### EMPLOYEE ASSOCIATION

The Employee Association, Inc. is a non-profit organization composed of program participants who promote self-advocacy through community outreach.

The group has a Board of Directors who has been chosen annually by their peers, the Canteen Manager, and two non-voting staff members who are involved in an advisory capacity.

The Employee Association generates funds through the sales from “Richards” Canteen. These proceeds help to pay for recreation night activities and individual loans (see case manager for further information).

The Employee Association has three purposes: (1) Fund and plan recreational activities; (2) Fund emergency needs of EmployAbility participants; (3) Serve the community through outreach projects.

Employee Association can be designated as a beneficiary for EmployAbility Life Insurance should an individual receiving service not have a relative or other person to designate as his or her beneficiary.

Meetings are held on a monthly basis.

#### RECREATION NIGHTS

Rec Nights are held quarterly (March, June, September, and December) and are sponsored by The Employee Association. Most events are held offsite and may cost a small fee.

#### JOB SEEKERS

A monthly one hour workshop is hosted for individuals interested in supported employment. Small group discussions led by Community Employment staff focus on topics such as interviewing, hiring practices, work place culture, job retention, and a variety of other employment related topics. These workshops provide information about issues that impact employment opportunities.

— Chapter 11 —  
**SELF ADVOCACY**

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**EMPLOYABILITY SERVICES HANDBOOK**

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**SELF-ADVOCACY OPPORTUNITIES**

EmployAbility promotes self-advocacy through a variety of groups. Individuals served by the agency are invited to participate in hiring committees, the Board of Directors, the Risk Management Committee, the Employee Association, and People First. Participation in these groups allows individuals to have a voice in shaping their services.

**PEOPLE FIRST**

This group serves as a voice in the community for support, change, and recognition of people with disabilities as “people first.” Meetings are monthly and held at EmployAbility as a host site.

This group is a chapter of the state and national organization and is open to all people with disabilities within the community. To meet their purpose of being a voice in the community, the People First members focus on self-education and fund raising. This goal is accomplished by having guest speakers at meetings. Some topics have included public transportation, jury duty, personal safety, disaster recovery, and accessibility.

People First also provides voter education and registration opportunities in coordination with the Chatham County Voter Registration. Representatives from CCVR explain the registration process and provides opportunities for individuals to register.



