

## DWP/MFIP ES - Operational Definition

<b>Effective Date:</b>	June 16, 2017
<b>Operational Definition:</b>	Person-Centered Services and Guided Self-Determination
<b>Contact Person:</b>	MFIP/DWP Employment Services Division Manager

Self-determination is defined as the personal decision to do something - the right to decide for oneself; it is the unique individual pursuing own independent a uniquely self-determined path – with support from the counselor.

The self-determination concept is informed by person-centered practices in human services. These practices put the participant in the center, which is a move from what’s-the-matter with the participant approach to a what-matters-to the participant approach.<sup>1</sup> Person-centered service replaces an MFIP rules/authority centered system with one that revolves around the participant and driven by the participant. Person- centered practices are about the sharing of power between the counselor and the participant. Person-centered practices recognize each participant as a whole individual with unique strengths, assets, interests, expectations, cultures and goals. Person-centered practices use a “power with” approach rather than a “power over” approach to support pursuing what is important to the participant.

Self-determination is about a participant making decisions for oneself, planning for his or her own future and taking responsibility for making these decisions. At the point of services between a counselor and participant, the participant’s choice fuels the conversation. Workforce Solutions added the word “*guided*,” to clearly designate the assistance and support provided to the self-determining participant by the employment counselor, and to highlight that the participant is not in this journey alone.

WFS does not believe that power is ours to give out. The participant already has power; WFS aims to assist the participant to recognize and unleash their own power – making their own choices, pursuing their future.

Self-determination and goal achievement work best when the counselor supports the participant in using their power.

**Why is this important?**

“In a randomized control study of mothers in a welfare-to-work program, participants with internal loci of control performed significantly better than those with external loci of control, even when controlling for IQ scores and other factors (Leininger & Kalis, 2008). A feeling of control over one’s life was more

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<sup>1</sup> Person-Centered, Informed Choice and Transition Protocol, Minnesota Department of Human Services February 10, 2016

important than any other factor, including prior educational attainment, in determining how successful low-income women were in adult education programs.”<sup>2</sup>

“For a participant to reflect upon and decide what they want to do, they need to see themselves as having power, as being an individual capable of making their own decisions and of successfully acting upon and shaping their environment”.<sup>3</sup>

WFS expects employment counselors to support the participant’s self-determination as the participant envisions their desired future, sets goals, identifies strengths, builds upon those strengths, and when they implement the employment plan.

Opportunity starts with participant identifying the dream(s) she or he wishes to pursue to achieve self-sufficiency and financial stability for the family. The participant makes the choices, takes the steps, all the while supported and assisted by the counselor and the MFIP system.

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<sup>2</sup> Guare, R., Dawson, P., Guare, C. (2011). *Smart but Scattered Teens*. New York, NY: The Guilford Press.

<sup>3</sup> Babcock, E. (2014). *Using Brain Science to Design New Pathways Out Of Poverty*. Boston, MA: Crittenton Women’s Union.