Addressing Family and Professional's Obstacles in Pre-Employment Transition Services

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By the end of this session, we will be able to…

- Convey the importance and needs of building collaborative relationships with families in the transition process

- Share resources to support family-professional collaborations

Agenda

- Introductory discussion
- Pre-assessment
- Background
- Method
- Findings
- Resources
- Reflection
- Post-assessment
- Q&A

- Teachers?

- Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Counselors?

- Administrators?

- Families?

- Others…?
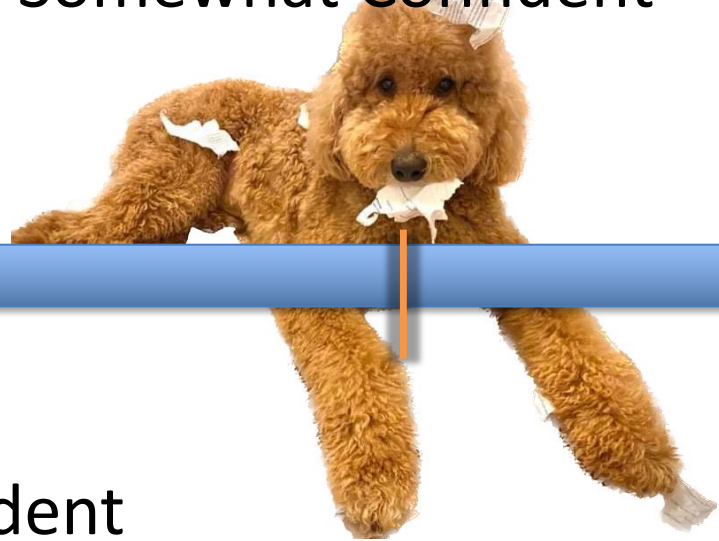
1

Not Confident

3

Somewhat Confident
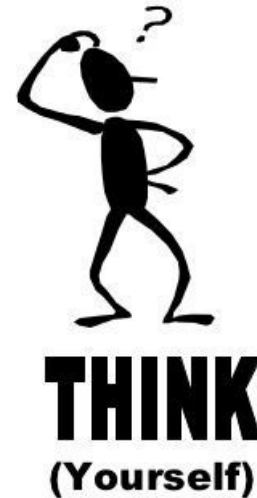
5

Confident

2

Slightly Confident

4

Fairly Confident

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What was the most **challenging family collaboration** that you were part of?

What made it **the most challenging**?

PAIR
(With a partner)

THINK
(Yourself)

SHARE

Image resource
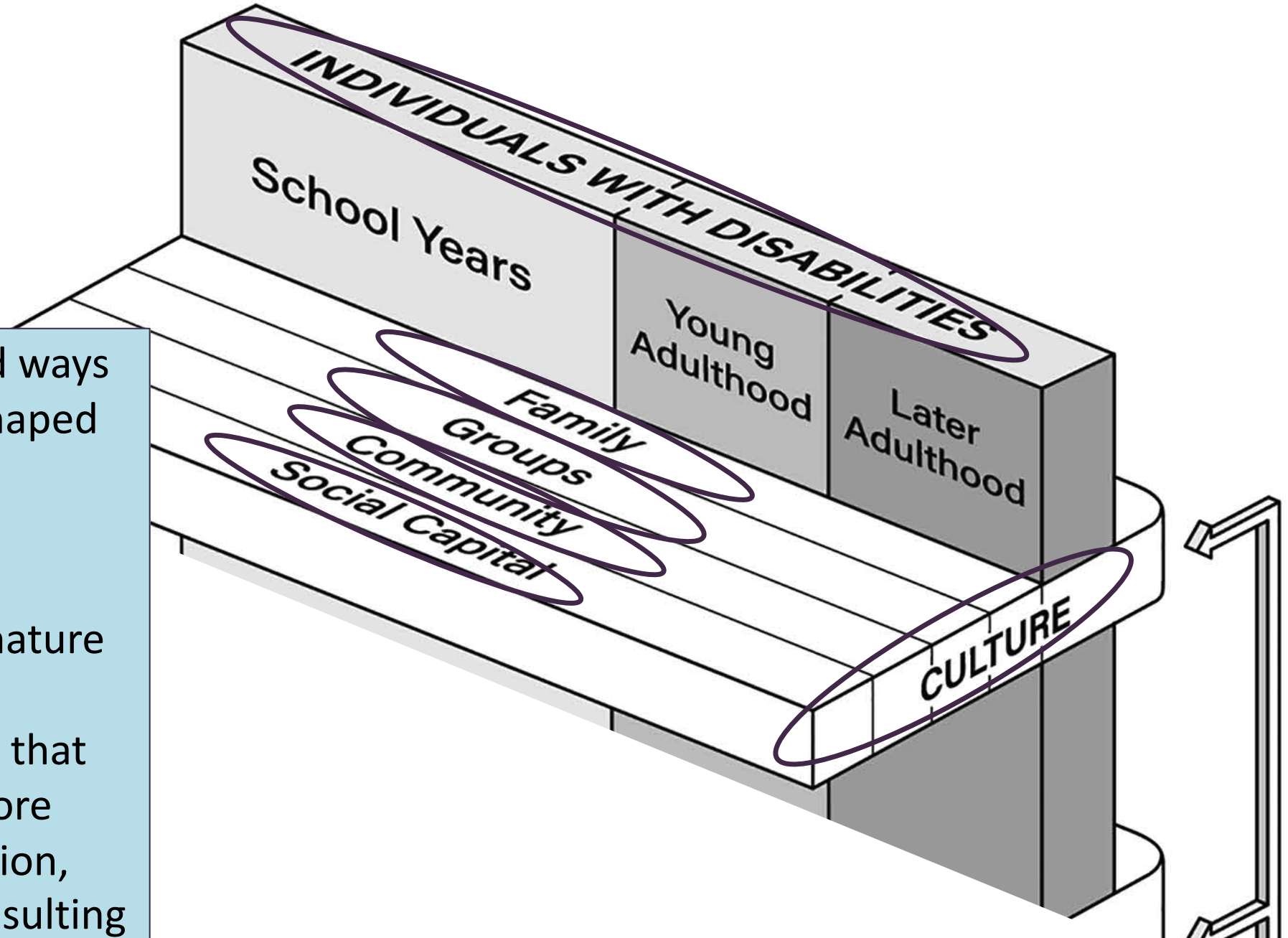
Background-
Why This Matters?

This is a framework depicting aspects of transition warranting additional research attention.

It presents an individual with a disability as the central element interconnecting various layers representing culture, services and supports, levers, and quality of life. Each of these layers contains crucial components influencing the transition process.

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Trainor et al. (2020)
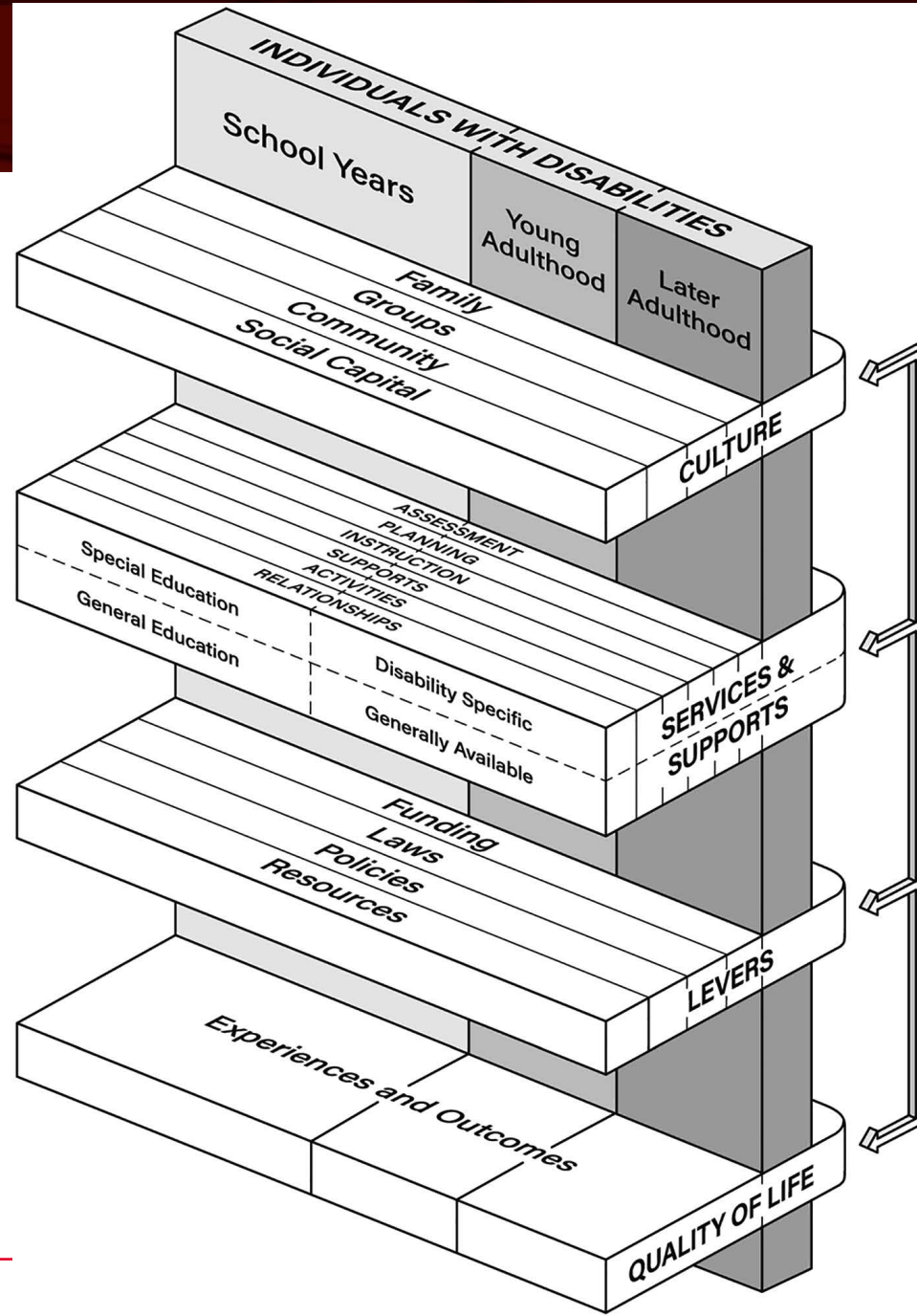
Culture refers to learned ways of knowing and doing shaped by group membership.

Theoretical frameworks underline the dynamic nature of cultural identity and affiliations, emphasizing that culture encompasses more than identity and affiliation, including experiences resulting from interactions.

INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES

School Years

Young Adulthood

Later Adulthood

Family

Groups

Community

Social Capital

CULTURE

Trainor et al. (2020)

- Only 17.9% of individuals with disabilities were employed, whereas 61.8% of those without disabilities were employed (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2020).

- The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) of 2014 mandated the implementation of pre-employment transition services (pre-ETS) throughout the country.

- Family, as one of the key collaborators, remains a consistent presence across various stages (Hirano & Rowe, 2016; Mazzotti et al., 2016; Papay & Bambara, 2014). Under the IDEA (2004),

- Parent involvement in transition planning is associated with improved postschool outcomes for youth with disabilities (Mazzotti et al., 2015; Papay & Bambara, 2014), including competitive employment (Wehman et al., 2015).

- Transition teams are mandated to include parents in transition planning meetings and secure parental consent for transition services (Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act [IDEA], 2004; WIOA, 2014).

- Meaningful collaboration between educators and parents is limited (Schutz et al., 2022).

The study particularly concentrates on the perspectives of pre-ETS providers, aiming to investigate hindrances and successful strategies in overcoming potential family and professional obstacles associated with providing pre-ETS.

Research questions
1. What family-related barriers did providers identify as affecting the implementation of pre-ETS?
2. What family-related facilitators did providers identify as important to enhance pre-ETS to students with disabilities?

Method-
How Are We Trying to Know
What We Don't Know?

Setting & Participants

In total, we recruited 162 pre-ETS professionals (82 educators, 58 counselors, and 22 others) from six regions in Texas, USA (i.e., Tyler, Lubbock, Houston, Austin, Arlington, Corpus Christi).

Of the respondents, a majority identified as educators (51%), with counselors being the second most common group (36%). Over half of the participants reported having more than five years of experience in transition services (52%), and nearly a third reported over ten years of experience (28%). The majority of participants reported receiving either formal or informal transition training (87%). With respect to gender, the sample was predominantly female (84%). The racial and ethnic composition of the sample revealed that the majority identified as non-Hispanic White (55%), followed by Hispanic (26%) and non-Hispanic Black (19%).

Setting & Participants

A total of 24 focus group interviews were conducted.

In each location, two focus groups took place in the morning and two in the afternoon. In the morning, one focus group with educators and another with TWC counselors, were conducted simultaneously. In the afternoon, half of educators joined half of TWC counselors in one focus group and the reaming half/half joined together in another mixed group.

The afternoon mixed groups provided opportunity for educators and TWC counselor to have cross-role interactions while providing answers to the same set of questions. The interactions between the two roles enriched the information that they shared. The focus group interviews ranged from 60 to 111 minutes, with a mean duration of 94 minutes.

Based on your experiences, what are the barriers or needs in family-professional collaborations?

Findings –
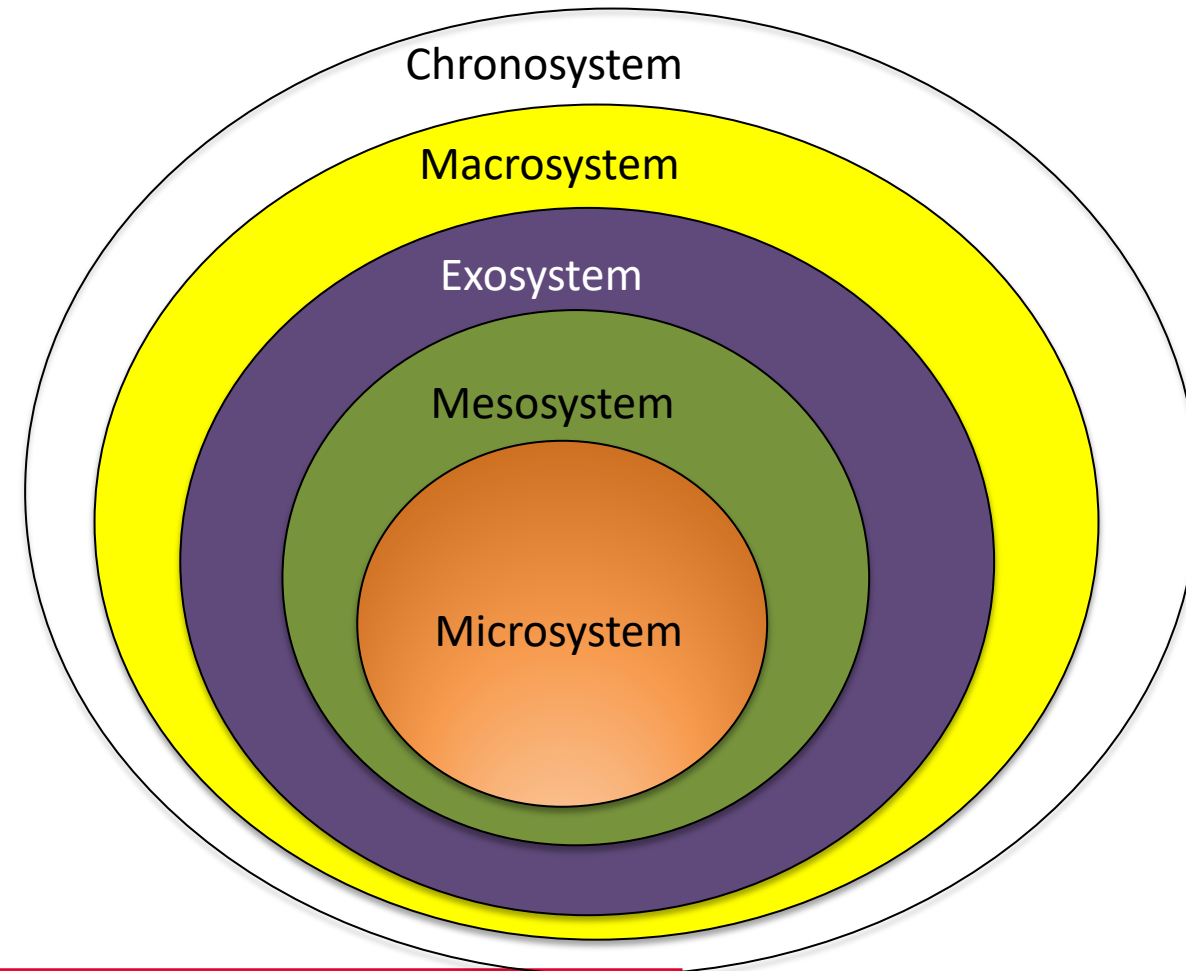What Have We Heard and Learned from 24 Focus Groups Across 6 Regions of Texas?

Four Primary Needs

- **Need 1 - The Need to Support Family Directly**
- **Need 2 - The Need to Promote Family-Professional Communication**
- **Need 3 - The Need to Promote Community Support**
- **Need 4 - The Need for Support from Policies**

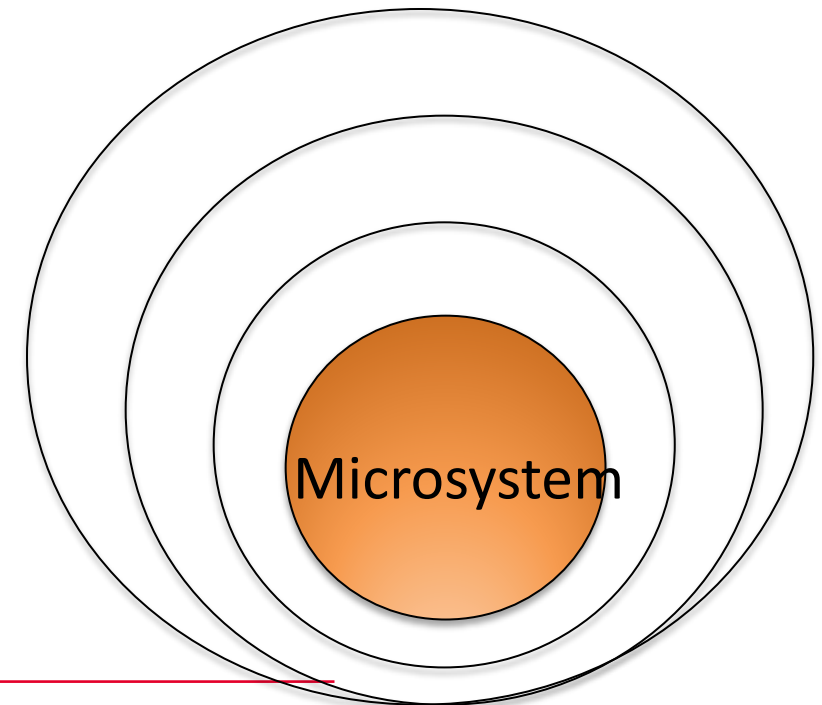A framework that explores the complex interactions between an individual and their environment.

It consists of several key systems:

- Microsystem

- Mesosystem

- Exosystem

- Macrosystem

- Chronosystem

This refers to pre-ETS providers shared challenges and facilitators providers experience when directly assisting families. Recognizing the central role of families in enabling successful transitions, providers emphasize the importance of tailoring assistance to meet their diverse needs, including:
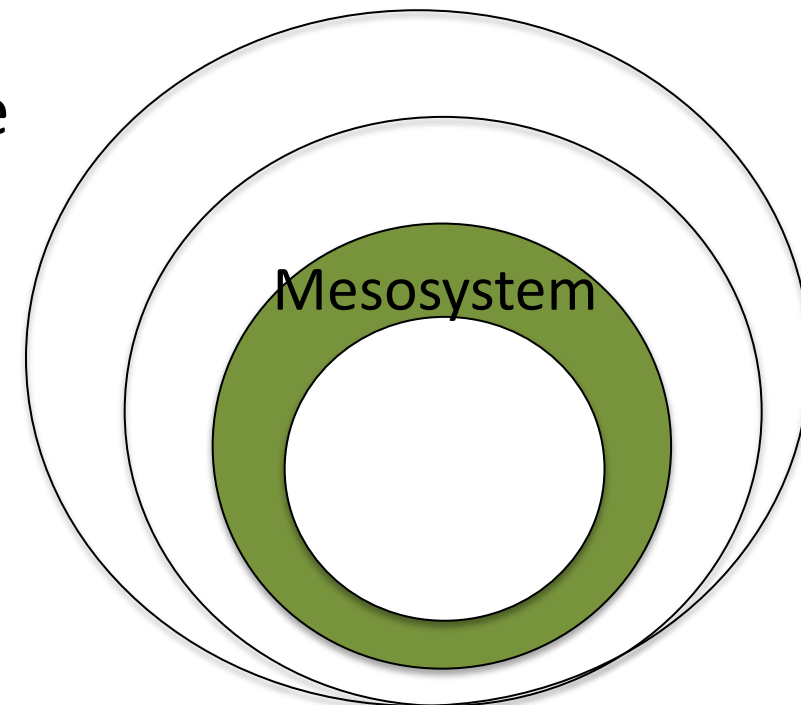
- **family's financial difficulties**,
- **family's emotional/psychological needs**, and
- **family's knowledge related to pre-ETS.**

Microsystem

- This refers to pre-ETS providers shared challenges and facilitators regarding family-professional communication, including the needs to identify and promote effective

- **path to reach the families** (e.g., email, text, phone call, mail),

- **supporting families for whom English is the second language, and addressing**

- the divergence in beliefs and expectations among family-providers due to **cultural and background differences**.

Mesosystem

This refers to pre-ETS providers shared challenges and facilitators regarding the necessity of fostering and enhancing available resources, services, and networks within the community to provide assistance, guidance, and a supportive environment for individuals and families, including the needs of addressing

- accessible **transportations** and

- promoting **community attitudes** toward the families and children.
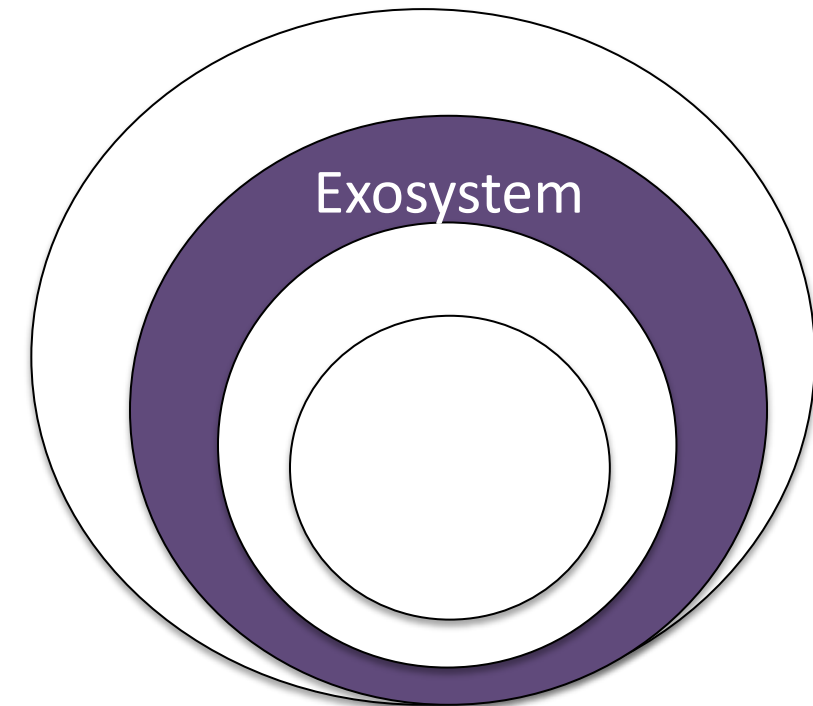
Exosystem

This refers to pre-ETS providers shared challenges and facilitators regarding the existing school, local, or state policy barriers, as they may not sufficiently address the unique needs of SPED youth and their families during the transition process, including the need for addressing

- **unclear or inaccessible transition guidelines**, specialized services, vocational training, job placement programs, and post-secondary education support.

Macrosystem & Chronosystem
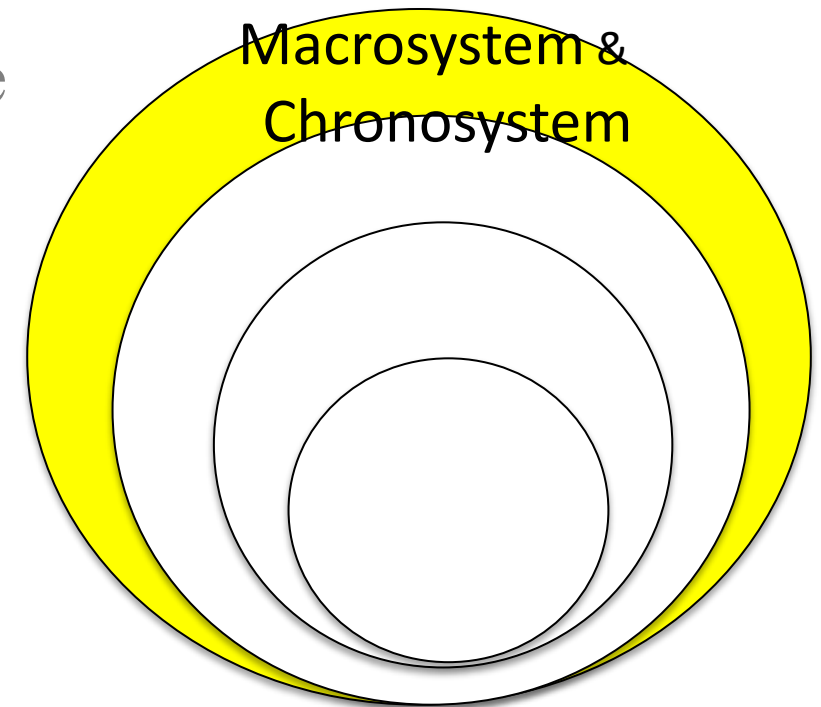
Resources

Resource List

- What is it?

- How to use this list?

Knowledge of Overall Pre-ETS services and qualifications

- **Texas Workforce Commission**

- **Texas SPED Support**

- **SPEDTx**

- Pre-Employment Transition Services Catalog

- Vocational Rehabilitation Services Manual

- Laws, Policies, Rights & Regulations Resources

- Common Transition Acronyms

- Pre-ETS Transition Services Flow Chart - Pg.10

Knowledge of Social Security Benefits

- **[Find Help - Ticket to Work - Social Security](#)**

- **[FAQ about SSI](#)**

- Disability Benefits Counseling Services

- Applying for Disability Benefits or Supplemental Security Income for Children with Disabilities

- "What You Need to Know About Earning Money and Supplemental Security Income (SSI)"

Knowledge of Financial Requirements

- [NTACT:C](#)

- Financial Responsibilities

Emotions and Feelings Support

- [Texas Parent to Parent](#)
- [Navigate Life Texas: Parents Connect](#)
- Accepting, Grieving, and Adapting to Life
- Parents Connect
- Dealing with Ourselves while our Children Grow up!

Effective Path to reach and engage families

- [Family Engagement Training](#)

- [Strategies for Equitable Family Engagement](#)

- Supporting Families to Focus on Student Self-Determination

- How to Engage Youth and Families Webinar

Translation and Interpretation Services

- Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) services
- [Texas Council for Developmental Disabilities: Translation & Interpretation Stipends](#)
- Stipend Request Form

Knowledge and Skills to Work with Diverse Families

- PACER Center: Getting Off to a Good Start: Positive interactions with diverse families
- Working with Immigrant and Refugee Families
- Designing Transition Programs for Culturally & Linguistically Diverse Students with Disabilities
- Latin Families Beliefs and Expectations - "From School to Adult Life: Transition Needs for Latino Youth with Disabilities and Their Families"
- Transition Planning Tips for Linguistically and Culturally Diverse Youth with Disabilities

Transportation Services

- [211 Texas](#)
- City Public Transportation Websites

Need 4 - The Need for Support from Policies

- [Texas Workforce Commission](#)

1. Which resources from the list have you used to promote family-professional collaborations? Were they helpful?

2. Are there any resources that you wish to have but have not identified?

3. What are the resources that's not been listed above but you've tried and found it helpful?

Discussion & Reflection

Discussion Points

- Collaborating with family is multi-facet

- Unique family needs, including financial struggles, require attention.

- Benefits planning might help families understand the impact of employment on benefits.

- Emotional well-being is a vital aspect, often overlooked in transition planning.

Discussion Points (cont.)

- Differing expectations between families and providers are significant.

- Understanding diverse family dynamics is crucial.

- Culturally responsive practice should be integrated into pre-ETS training.

- Transportation barriers are a recurrent challenge for individuals with disabilities, especially in rural areas with limited public transportation.

- Comprehensive discussions about transportation within IEP meetings are essential.

- Collaboration with local entities and employers can help overcome transportation challenges.

Discussion Points (cont.)

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- Vague roles and duties hinder effective collaboration.

- The impact of pre-ETS professional training and legislation (WIOA) needs examination.

- Novel collaborative models with clear role delineation can aid pre-ETS providers in overcoming persistent barriers.

Reflection

- We've discussed multiple needs in family-professional collaborations. What do you consider the priority needs in your settings?

- Which resources would you like to explore further to address these needs in your settings?
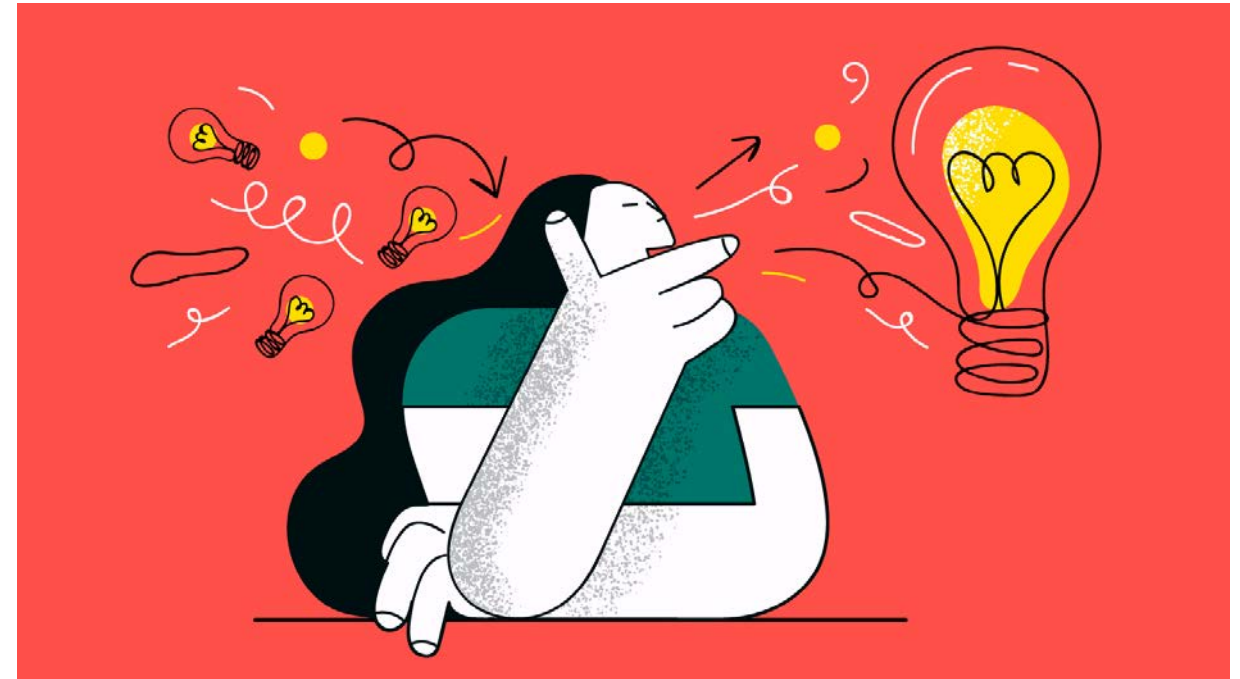
Final Thoughts

What new information have you learned?

How can you apply this information to your setting?

How can you collaborate with families?

What will your first step be?

People thinking image resource
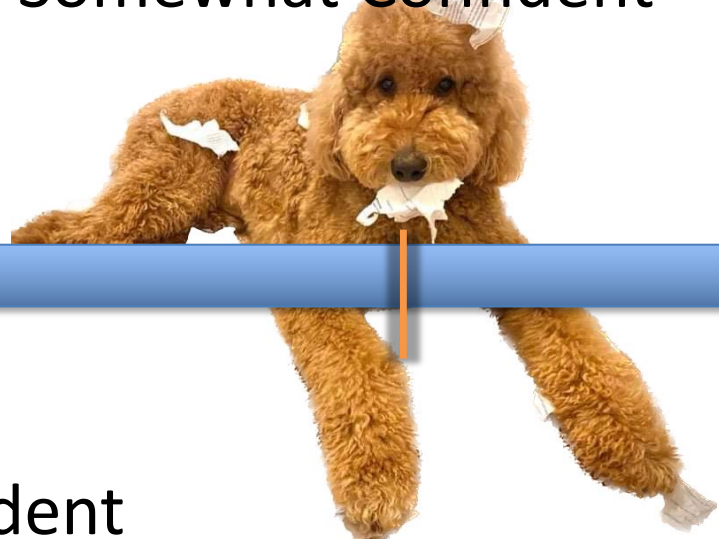
Questions?

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Purpose-

In this one-hour breakout session, we aims to foster creative solutions for addressing current needs and construct a forward-thinking plan to enhance family-professional collaborations within your specific setting.

Breakout Session

Instruction:

- In this session, each group will have **10 minutes** to discuss **each** of the following **4 questions** (questions in next slide).

- Please use both the large and small post-it notes to organize your group's ideas and responses.

- After these discussions, there will be a **20-minute** session **for all groups to share** their findings and insights with the larger group.

Questions

1.Concern: Fear of how work will impact benefits and services for my child. Question: In what ways have you supported families to better understand how work will impact their child's services/benefits so that there is <u>trust</u> instead of fear about Pre-ETS services and their child working? (i.e., SSI, Medicaid)

2.Concern: Parents seem to lack knowledge about Pre-ETS and how these services will benefit their child Specifically the agency "language," eligibility, and more. Question: In what ways have you (or your team) provided knowledge/information about Pre-ETS and included parents in the Pre-ETS process?

3.Concern: Transition Professionals identified barriers (i.e., geographical, cultural, language, technological, etc.) when attempting to communicate with families about services. Question: How have you (or your team) worked to address the cultural, geographical, language, and other barriers when communicating with families? This might include (but not limited to) families who identify as non-English speakers live in rural/frontier communities, immigrant families, and also parents who have self-disclosed that they have a disability.

4.Concern: Evidence of bias, negative attitudes, and stereotypes about disability in the Workforce Among Employers. Question: In what ways have you (or your team) been able to change/encourage change in the negative attitudes, bias, and stereotypes of employers related to disability in the workforce your area?

Questions?

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