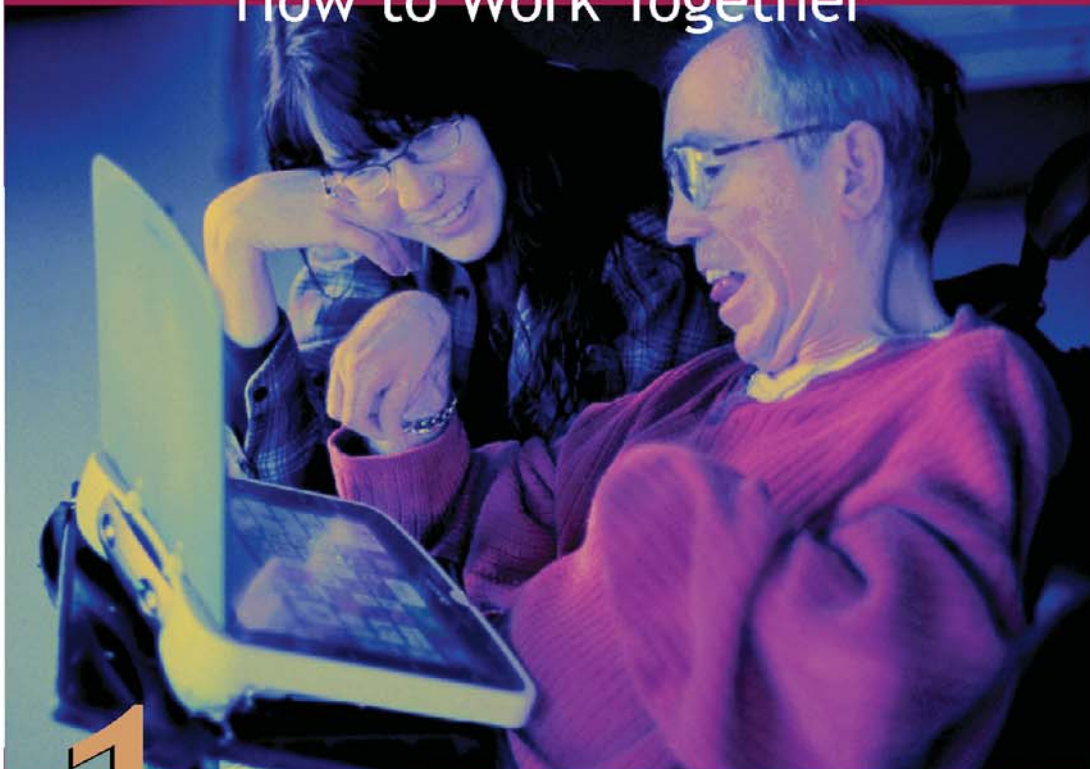


# Consumer Direction <sup>in</sup> Personal Assistance

How to Work Together



1 Consumer Direction - What is it?

LEARNING GUIDE

Distributed by:

 **Program Development Associates**

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# Table of Contents

Introduction .....	2
How to Use the Video and Learning Guide.....	3
UNIT 1- CONSUMER DIRECTION: WHAT IS IT? .....	5
LESSON 1: Consumer Direction: What is it? .....	6
FACTS .....	6
QUESTIONS.....	8
QUESTION FEEDBACK.....	10
LESSON 2: Consumer Direction: Job tasks and assistive technology .....	12
FACTS .....	12
QUESTIONS.....	14
QUESTION FEEDBACK.....	16
LESSON 3: Consumer Direction: Who’s the boss? .....	17
FACTS.....	17
QUESTIONS .....	19
QUESTION FEEDBACK.....	21
Credits .....	24

## Introduction

Welcome to Consumer Direction in Personal Assistance: How to Work Together. This program is made up of a video series along with Learning Guides. Consumer Direction in Personal Assistance: How to Work Together is also available as a CD-ROM. Go to <http://www.infouse.com> for more information.

Consumer Direction in Personal Assistance: How to Work Together is intended for people who are personal assistants or who are training to become personal assistants. Four units prepare personal assistants for being on the job as a crucial element in the independence of people with disabilities:

- Unit 1 – Consumer Direction: What Is It? introduces the person with a disability as the boss in the personal assistance relationship.
- Unit 2 – Health and Safety provides information about how a personal assistant can stay healthy and safe on the job while reinforcing the leadership of the person with a disability.
- Unit 3 – Communication reviews real world communication techniques that can help personal assistants and the people with disabilities that they work for to work together more effectively.
- Unit 4 – Rights and Responsibilities details a roadmap to what the personal assistant and the person with a disability are each entitled to as well as what each has a responsibility to do.

Each unit contains three lessons. The program presents each lesson in this order:

1. Introduction (video)
2. Facts (Learning guide)
3. Perspectives of Consumers, Personal Assistants, and Agency Representatives (video)
4. Questions (Learning Guide)
5. Question Feedback (Learning Guide)

This learning guide contains Facts and Questions for each Lesson within an Unit. These are designed to enhance your understanding of the material. The video will ask you to stop and review the learning guide when it is appropriate to review. The Questions sections also contain explanations of the correct answers (feedback).

**Note on Language:** This video shows people using several different ways of referring to people with disabilities and the people who are hired to do work for them. That language may be confusing. Below we list the different terms used:

Person with a Disability = Consumer = Employer =  
Person with a Disability = Client

Personal Assistant = Attendant = Worker = Personal Care Attendant =  
Aide = Chore Person = Home Care Worker

## How to Use the Video and Learning Guide

Each Lesson is structured in the same way. Begin with the video. The video will play an introduction to the lesson. When the introduction has completed, the video will ask you to stop and review the Facts listed in this Learning Guide.

This Learning Guide has Facts for each of the three lessons in Unit 1. Turn to the appropriate Facts pages and review. When you have completed the Facts pages, restart the video from where you had paused it.

The next part of the video plays interviews with consumers, personal assistants, and agency representatives for their perspectives on issues raised by the lesson. When the Perspectives section has completed, you will again be asked to stop the video and turn to the Learning Guide.

The Learning Guide also contains Questions for review in each lesson. The Guide also provides answers to the questions and the Feedback about those answers. When you have finished reviewing the Question Feedback in this Learning Guide, you are done with the Lesson.

**Note:** If you are viewing this in a group, we recommend having a discussion after each video section on what has been shown.



# UNIT 1

## CONSUMER DIRECTION: WHAT IS IT?

This Learning Guide accompanies Unit 1. Unit 1 has three lessons:

1. Consumer Direction: What is it?

This lesson teaches the viewer what consumer direction is and how it affects the personal assistant.

2. Consumer Direction: Job tasks and assistive technology

This lesson teaches about what kinds of job tasks are included in personal assistance services. It also summarizes what assistive technology is and what kinds of assistive technology a personal assistant might expect to find on the job.

3. Consumer Direction: Who's the Boss?

This lesson clarifies how an agency is involved in consumer direction. Who does the personal assistant turn to for issues on the job, the consumer or an agency (if an agency is involved)?

Begin by starting the video.

## Lesson 1

# Consumer Direction: What is it?

## FACTS

### Why do some people use personal assistant services?

People who have different kinds of disabilities are not able to perform tasks that they must be able to do to live in the community. These people have different forms of disabilities and are different ages. Sometimes a disabled person could perform a task alone. But he uses a personal assistant because it takes so much time or energy that it affects other parts of his life.

You may be working for someone who has one or more disabilities.

### What is consumer direction?

The disabled person chooses the services he needs. He shows the personal assistant how he wants the services done. The help given by the personal assistant lets the disabled person live an active life. He can attend school, work, and socialize with friends and family. He can be an active community member. This is called consumer direction. Sometimes consumer direction is called self-direction. Either way, it means that the disabled person decides what is needed to live independently.

### How does consumer direction affect you – the personal assistant?

Your direct boss will be a disabled person. It is your responsibility to treat your employer with respect, follow directions, and perform your tasks the way your boss wishes. Your employer expects you to be on time and to ask questions when you are unsure of what to do. He expects you to keep his private information private and not to give it to anyone, including family. If in doubt, talk to your employer. Some tips include:



1. Do your tasks when and how you agreed to do them. The consumer has a life and a schedule, too. Honor that.
2. Be dependable and on time. Call if you will be late.
3. The consumer's relatives and friends often mean well. But they can interfere with consumer direction. They may ask you to do something against the consumer's wishes. Unless you, the disabled person, and the family agree that family members can give directions, politely remind them that your job is to follow the consumer's directions.

## Lesson 1

### Consumer Direction: What is it?

#### QUESTIONS

1. A disabled person's independence and control is reinforced by consumer direction in personal assistance services.  
True or False
  
2. You must follow the directions an employer's relative gives you, even if the directions are different from the employer's.  
True or False
  
3. It doesn't matter if the personal assistant is late; the disabled person isn't doing anything important anyway.  
True or False
  
4. It's OK for you, the personal assistant, to rearrange things in the home in a way that makes sense to you.  
True or False
  
5. Which of these is not self direction?
  - A. The employer decides what services he needs.
  - B. The employer decides how those services should be provided.
  - C. The personal assistant decides how to do each task.
  - D. The personal assistant prepares meals or does the laundry.

6. Your employer has asked you to remind her when she needs to take her medication. Which of the following should you never do?
  - A. Place the pills in her mouth when asked to by her.
  - B. Leave the pills on her bed-stand.
  - C. Hide the pills in her food without her knowledge.
  - D. Tell her it's time to take her medication.
  
7. The consumer's sister comes for a visit while you are cleaning. Which of these should you do?
  - A. Tell the sister in a friendly way that the consumer spends too much on junk food.
  - B. Ask the consumer if she would like some privacy for her visit with her sister.
  - C. Make tea and join them for conversation.
  - D. Go back to work but keep finding excuses to be part of the conversation.
  
8. Which of the following actions support self direction the most?
  - A. Becoming friends with people with disabilities outside of work.
  - B. Doing everything the consumer's friends and family ask you to do.
  - C. Learning about medicine so that you can take care of disabled people better.
  - D. Being dependable and on time, and doing your tasks when and how you agreed to do them.

## Lesson 1

## Consumer Direction: What is it?

### QUESTION FEEDBACK

1. True.

The consumer has the right to make life decisions for himself. He chooses which services he needs to live independently, and how to work, play and participate in the community.

2. False.

Your boss is the disabled person. Unless you, the disabled person, and the family agree that the family can give directions, politely remind the relatives that your job is to follow your employer's directions.

3. False.

A dependable personal assistant shows up to work on time or calls ahead to say he or she will be late.

4. False.

It is the disabled person's home. It is his decision how things should be arranged. Before you rearrange anything, be sure to discuss it with the consumer.

5. C.

Always ask the employer if there are any special instructions or ways he prefers to have tasks done.

6. C.

Don't deceive or trick your employer. Hiding pills in food is disrespectful to your employer, and may be harmful.

7. B.

Remember, your job is to respect the rights of the consumer in all parts of her life, especially privacy.

8. D.

Your job is to help employers become more independent. You help the disabled person to live more freely and independently when you do your duties as agreed.

You are now done with Unit 1, Lesson 1.

## Lesson 2

### Consumer Direction: Job tasks and Assistive

# Technology

## FACTS

### Job tasks

Here are some typical job tasks that personal assistants do for disabled people. Each person has personal tastes and preferences. Be sure to ask how the consumer would like each task performed.

- Grooming  
Bathing, hair care, face and body care, dental care, dressing and undressing.
- Health and hygiene  
Toileting, bladder care, bowel care, skin care, wound care, medications, help with breathing
- Mobility  
Helping with exercises, positioning, transfers and lifts, driving and escorting
- Nutrition  
Meal preparation, eating meals, special diets, kitchen chores.
- Household  
Laundry, cleaning, shopping, errands, housekeeping, gardening, possibly other chores.
- Other  
Communication, childcare (not babysitting), bill paying, care for service animals and pets.

### Assistive Technology

People with disabilities use many different kinds of technology. Here are some examples of devices people use.

- **Mobility**  
Wheelchairs, canes, walkers, scooters, lifting mechanisms for the home, lifts on cars and public vehicles, computers that follow speech commands, rubber stamp signatures.
- **Seeing**  
Special eyeglasses, magnifiers, systems that change text to speech, Braille and other methods of using touch to communicate.
- **Hearing**  
Telephones that work with hearing aids; teletype telephones (TTY), which send and receive text messages over phone lines; fire alarm alerts that can be seen; captioning of video.
- **Learning and remembering**  
Telephone auto-dialers; words, sounds and pictures to help people remember things; picture boards; grammar checking and word-completion software; wandering detector.
- **Smell and Touch**  
Smoke and carbon dioxide detectors, furniture with extra padding to protect the skin.
- **Speech impairment**  
Machines that change typewritten words into speech.
- **Psychiatric disabilities**  
Room dividers to reduce noise or distractions; using video or audio conferencing for meetings

## Lesson 2

### Consumer Direction: Job Tasks and Assistive

# Technology

## QUESTIONS

1. Care for service animals, shopping, childcare, and other housekeeping tasks could be part of your job.

True or False

2. The disabled person you work for now has the same disability as your last employer. So you do not have to discuss details or how to do things with your current employer.

True or False

3. A person can live on her own even if she needs help with bathing, dressing, toileting, and eating.

True or False

4. There is one proper way to perform each job task.

True or False

5. Assistive technology can be low-tech devices.

True or False

6. Which of these job tasks is not a personal assistance job task?

- A. Laundry
- B. Bathing
- C. Help with exercises
- D. Family counseling

7. What device are you more likely to see in the house of a person who is deaf?

- A. A wandering detector



- B. A TTY machine
  - C. Special eyeglasses
  - D. A wheelchair
8. Which of these is not assistive technology?
- A. Canes, walkers
  - B. Magnifiers for enlarging type
  - C. Medication for preventing seizures
  - D. Grammar-checking and word completion software

## Lesson 2

# Consumer Direction: Job Tasks and Assistive Technology

## QUESTION FEEDBACK

1. True.

Your duties will vary according to the needs of the consumer and will be outlined by the consumer in a task checklist or work agreement..

2. False.

Always ask how your employer would like a task performed. Each person has different tastes and preferences.

3. True.

Help with daily living tasks allows people with disabilities to live as they wish, in their homes near family and friends, working and playing in their communities.

4. False.

Ask the consumer how he likes to have a task done. Do it that way.

5. True.

Assistive technology is any device that consumers use. It can be as simple as a cane, a walker, a built-up spoon or plate so the consumer can feed himself, or a rubber stamp signature.

6. D.

Family counseling is not a personal assistance task.

7. B.

People who are deaf most likely have a TTY machine to send and receive text messages over the phone.

8. C.

Medications are medical treatments, not assistive technology.

You are now done with Unit 1, Lesson 2.

### Lesson 3

## Consumer Direction: Who's the boss?

### FACTS

## Who's the boss?

Some consumers may hire you directly without using an agency. In that case, he is responsible for paying, supervising, evaluating and dismissing you and reporting taxes.

If you are employed through an agency or public program, those responsibilities are divided between the consumer and the agency. How the responsibilities are divided is different for each agency. You need to know how it works in your job. Here is one example.

- Hiring - both agency and consumer
- Recommendation of a personal assistant - agency
- Selection of personal assistant - consumer
- Defining job tasks (within available financial resources) - consumer
- Supervising job tasks - consumer
- Evaluation – both agency and consumer
- Scheduling (within available financial resources) - consumer
- Payment, salary negotiations - agency
- Benefits, insurance - agency
- Tax reporting - agency
- Dismissal from assignment - consumer
- Dismissal from agency - agency

## When the consumer is not fully competent

Some consumers may have trouble thinking, learning or remembering. This is called a cognitive disability.

When a consumer has a cognitive disability, a responsible adult or guardian will tell you what kinds of decisions the consumer can manage safely. Ask them to write it down to avoid confusion later.

- If a consumer's request is not one of the decisions the consumer can manage safely, talk it over with the consumer's family or guardian.
- If any request is a health or safety risk for you, the consumer, or anyone else, talk it over with the consumer's family or guardian.
- Small choices mean a lot. Even if the consumer asks for something that seems silly or unreasonable, it can be important to that person. Respect individual choice.

## Lesson 3

### Consumer Direction: Who's the boss?

#### Questions

1. Consumers who have problems with thinking and remembering can make choices about your tasks.

True or False

2. When an agency is paying you, you only follow agency directions, and not the consumer's directions.

True or False

3. You have been trained in how to lift and do transfers, but the consumer wants you to do it another way. You should refuse because you have been properly trained.

True or False

4. Consumers cannot fire personal assistants who they get through an agency.

True or False

5. When a consumer gets a personal assistant through an agency, which of these is the boss?

A. The agency

B. The personal assistant

C. The consumer

D. Both the agency and the consumer

6. You work as a personal assistant through an agency. The consumer wants to change the time you come to work and the number of hours. You should

A. Make the change if it works with your schedule.

B. Ask him to discuss the change he wants with the agency.

C. Tell the consumer there is nothing you can do.

D. Refuse to make the change.

7. You work for a consumer who has problems with thinking and remembering. The consumer asks to do something that you are not sure you should do. What is the least important thing for you to consider before doing what he asks?
  - A. Are the requests covered under your job tasks?
  - B. How happy the consumer would be if you followed the request.
  - C. How easy it would be to meet such a request.
  - D. Are there health or safety risks for either you or the consumer?
  
8. You are working for Alice, a woman with Alzheimer's. You are concerned about the decisions she is making. In which of these situations should you intervene?
  - A. Alice wants to wear her pink dress with an orange sweater.
  - B. Alice insists on having a brownie at lunch every day.
  - C. Alice wants to go for a long walk barefoot and without a jacket when it's snowing.
  - D. Alice says she just wants only coffee for breakfast today.

## Lesson 3

### Consumer direction: Who's the boss?

### Question Feedback

1. True.

Consumers who have learning, thinking and remembering problems and their family or guardian should decide on a range of choices that the consumer can make safely.

2. False.

The consumer decides the job tasks and supervises your work. The consumer and the agency share some duties like evaluating your work.

3. False.

You have been trained to lift and transfer properly so you can avoid injury. This consumer may need to be handled another way. Follow her directions to learn the safest way to help her using what you know about lifting and transferring safely.

4. False.

The consumer has the right to choose who works for her. If she fires you, the agency usually will send you to another job and send the consumer a new assistant.

5. D.

If you work for a consumer through an agency, you are working for both the consumer and the agency. The agency AND the consumer have duties regarding you and your job.

6. B.

Both the agency and the consumer are your employers. Because the request concerns the scheduling of your hours, the consumer should approach the agency first to make sure such a schedule change is possible.

7. C.

How easy a task is to do is often least important. You always want to make sure a request is safe, is on the list of tasks you are to do, and supports a consumer's independence.

8. C.

Alice enjoys making decisions that help her feel that she is in control of her life. You should only be concerned if you think Alice's decision might cause her harm. Going out unclothed in the snow could make her seriously ill.

You are now done with Unit 1, Lesson 3.







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## Unit 1 – Consumer Direction: What is it?

**UNIT 1** introduces the person with a disability as the boss in the personal assistance relationship.

- Covers:
- The right approach
  - Who is boss
  - Adapting to the person
  - Typical tasks

This training series, along with the accompanying videos, is intended for people who are personal assistants or who are training to become personal assistants. The series focuses on the concept of the person with a disability as the “boss” who manages the services he or she wants. Other units in this series include:

- Health and Safety • Unit 2
- Communication • Unit 3
- Rights and Responsibilities • Unit 4

**Learn from insiders.** You’ll get tips, viewpoints and experiences from people who need your services, from personal assistants and from placement agencies.

**Learn at your own pace.** Use printed Learning Guides for facts presented in each unit. Review lessons, stop-and-start the

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