**Session Nine:**

**Visual Supports**

**Overview**

Visual Supports can be powerful instructional strategies for students when customized for a student’s learning styles and a specific environment or task. Participants will see many examples of how visual supports can be used for organization, communication, preparing for new situations and task completion. Visual supports also act as cues and supports which contribute to the independent functioning of the student in school and at work. The activity in this section provides an opportunity to create a plan for visual supports for a student using a task or activity in the classroom or at a work site. Visual supports are often used with other evidence based practices such as self-monitoring, chaining and prompting.

**Materials to Enhance Learning and Activities**

1. [**04: Evidence Based Practice (Handout).**](https://www.ocali.org/up_doc/evidence_based_practices_for_transition_youth_2018_-_accessible.pdf) Ohio Employment First Evidence Based Practices for Transition Youth. Download from Session 9 website or at this link: https://www.ocali.org/up\_doc/evidence\_based\_practices\_for\_transition\_youth\_2018\_-\_accessible.pdf
2. **05: Worksheet for Adapting Visual Supports Activity (Handout).** Worksheet for Adapting Visual Supports Activity.
3. **06: VCU Visual Supports School to Work (Handout).** VCU School to Work Series. Visual Supports
4. **07: Planning the Use of Communication Supports (Handout).** Download from Session 9 website.

**Activities Overview**

Several of the resource materials listed above will be used in some of the suggested activities in this module. While there are multiple options for activities, in most situations, the facilitator should prioritize those activities that are most important and be prepared to eliminate or streamline the other activities.

**Slide #3**. REVIEW. Locate Visual Supports overview in [**04.Evidence Based Practice (Handout).**](https://www.ocali.org/up_doc/evidence_based_practices_for_transition_youth_2018_-_accessible.pdf), Ohio Employment First Evidence Based Practices for Transition Youth.

**Slide #5**. GROUP DISCUSSION. After review of slide #4, have participants make a quick list of what they use to maintain attention, communicate, remember, organize thinking and complete tasks.

**Slide#5-#10** REVIEW and COMMENTS. This is introductory material on visual supports.

Slide #9. The facilitator can talk about the importance of the visual factor- Research supports that many persons with complex needs, especially those on the autism spectrum, learn best with visual and tactile supports. Visual components for strategies remain constant, are available when the person needs them, and stay consistent across environments Strategies that include visual components are schedules, written/picture directions, and video modeling. If a strategy/intervention doesn’t have a visual/tactile component, this might be something to add in the revision if the individual responds well to this factor. Source is NPDC (National Professional Development Center), 2010; Melching, 2007; Simpson, 2005.

**Slide #12**. REVIEW and DISCUSS. **06: VCU Visual Supports School to Work (Handout)​.** If time permits, have participants review the 3 ½ page brief from VCU on Visual Supports. A quick way to do this is to have the participants each take a different section, read it, identify 1 or 2 important points and share with the others in the group. Sections include: What are Visual Supports? What Does the Research Say about Visual Supports? How can Visual Supports be Used in Work Settings? What Supplies are Helpful to Have on Hand When Creating Visual Supports? Are There Other Considerations When Using Visual Supports at Work?

**Slide #19**. COMMENT. The different color containers, recycle bins or shelf units, act as cues and guidance for remembering the types of materials that are stored in each. For example, items for a particular job task may be found in the same color bins. Or the same type of materials may be grouped in the same color bin, such as cleaning products, dishes, office supplies, etc.

**Slide #21.**GROUP DISCUSSION. **05: Worksheet for Adapting Visual Supports Activity (Handout).** Review the previous **slides #17-#20**: Store Signs and Building Directories, Menus and Building Guides, Color Coding, Package Recipe/Instruction. How could these types of supports be adapted for the individual with a visual impairment? Download and use worksheet to guide discussion and make notes.

**Slide#22.** COMMENT.The visual schedule section is lengthy with examples. The intent is to provide the learner with varied examples to meet different needs and different learning styles. Slides that review familiar types of schedules can be quickly reviewed. Slides with schedules that are unfamiliar can be discussed.

**Slide#25.** COMMENT. Take time to highlight that the object schedules are also ‘tactile’ and can be used for individuals with visual impairments. Ask if anyone has used object schedules for those with visual challenges?

**Slide #27.** COMMENT. These pictures can be shown before an activity to orient an individual to a new activity and relieve anxiety about trying something new. Pictures or a short video can also be used to introduce an individual to a new environment, such as a work situation so they know what to expect and ask questions before hand. These pictures are from Picture This, Silver Linings Multimedia, 2001.

**Slide #31**. COMMENT**.** Sometimes depending on the individual, a visual support can be as simple as writing down a few steps that are needed to complete a task. Different individuals need different visual supports—find what works for each individual. Maybe the words help, or maybe just the pictures or maybe both.

**Slide#36.** COMMENT and DISCUSS. Ask if anyone has had to make a visual support in the moment?

**Slide#38.**  COMMENT. This schedule along with the pictures for each step and the picture on the right of Casey show how he is able to use the picture schedule to complete his work tasks. This schedule builds independence since he can use the pictures as a prompt or visual reminder to complete a task rather than having a job coach at his side telling him what to do for each step. As he becomes more familiar with the tasks he may choose not to use the checkbox and mark it off as he completes a task. Checklists can be designed without this box depending on the individual and what works best for them.

**Slide #44.** DISCUSS. Facilitator may take a break from the slides and survey the group to see what apps participants have used with individuals they teach or support. The facilitator may also ask if anyone has used the apps highlighted in the slideshow. Question on slide: Is anyone using an app that is effective to support an individual for scheduling or to understand routines?

**Slide #45.** COMMENT. These pictures all show how dry erase boards can be used to write a schedule so a task can be accomplished, or list things or objects needed to accomplish a task. The dry erase board allow for quick writing of steps or lists or needed information to help with organization but can readily be erased and used again for a new set of tasks.

**Slide #51.** COMMENT. Depending on the individual, this simple visual might be the most effective visual support for them. If you look at the session six on mobile technology, you will see examples of apps that help with visual schedules such as Can Plan and other resources to find out more about other apps.

**Slide #64** COMMENT. The placemat and the clothing labels on the clothes rack both act as organizers and visual supports for setting the table or hanging up clothes.

**Slide #71**. COMMENT. These timers can be helpful for students to maintain a steady pace when performing a task or focus their attention on the need to complete the task before time runs out. Available to borrow from the [OCALI Lending Library](https://www.ocali.org/project/lending_library) in the Organization Kit. Feel free to connect with the OCALI lending library to set up an account, free of charge for you. The lending library can be reached at 614-410-0321

**Slide #73.** COMMENT. Ask participants to share the types of timers they have used other than the typical ‘kitchen timer’ and why they selected to use those timers.

**Slide #77.** COMMENT. AS you move into this section, remind participants that many social-emotional visual supports were reviewed in session five on *Self-monitoring and Self-management.* Examples included here offer a reminder of those strategies. For more detailed information on social-emotional, review Session 5 materials.

**Slide #83.** DISCISSION. Ask the group to share examples of visual strategies they have used to support social-emotional learning and skills.

**Slide #84.** GROUP DISCUSSION. Provide time for a brief whole group or small group discussion to allow reflection on the range of materials covered. Ask for feedback and ideas from the group.

**Slide #85. 07: Planning the Use of Communication Supports (Handout)**. ACTIVITY. is a format for the educator to use to consider some of the elements needed to design and implement an effective visual support with a student that communicates clearly what to do, in what order or preparation and materials needed to do a task. This may also be an opportunity to rethink a visual support you have been using with a student and to make any necessary changes.

**Slide #87- Survey/ Certificate of Attendance**

Please take a few minutes to complete a short survey and provide feedback on the What Works for Work session information and resources.

Need CEUs? Complete an[eight-question survey](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/7FP7MC3)with 75% accuracy to receive a certificate of attendance.