

Think College Wyoming

STUDENT/FAMILY INFORMATION HANDBOOK

think  COLLEGE!
WYOMING



UNIVERSITY OF WYOMING
Wyoming Institute for Disabilities

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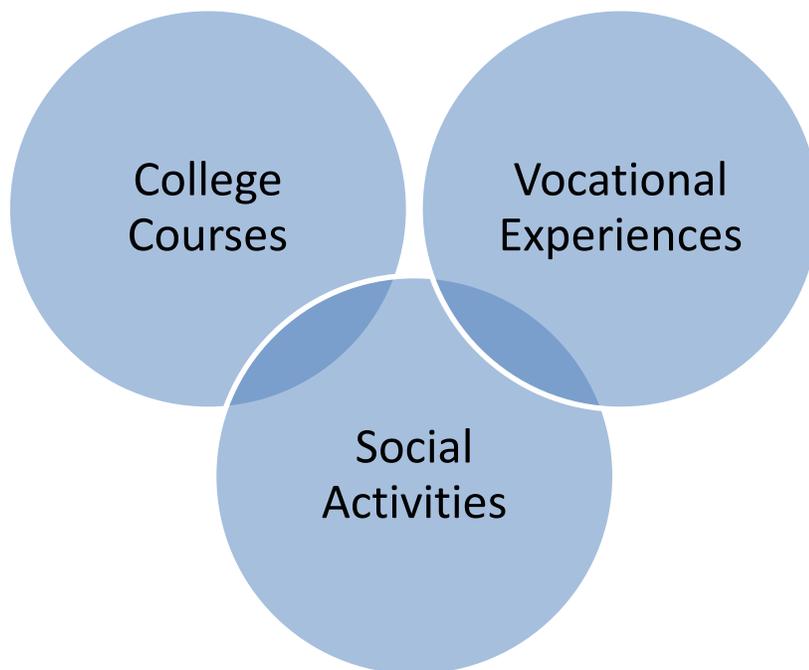
Purpose of this document

This guide is offered to provide information to Wyoming young adults with intellectual disability and their families or supporters, who are considering making application for participation in a college experience through Think College Wyoming (TCW). We hope you will familiarize yourself with this information along with the application packet and other information from the Think College website and consider it carefully when making the decision to participate in TCW.

Introduction

Why go to college? Students with intellectual disability choose to attend college for the same reasons other young people do. College is a place to learn new skills, explore interests, meet new friends, transition into adult life, and launch a career. Think College Wyoming is designed to provide an academic, vocational and social college experience for young people in a challenging campus environment with supports that are individualized.

What does a TCW college experience look like? A Think College Wyoming college experience involves more than taking classes on campus. Each college experience will look a little different, but all will focus on academics, campus activities, and vocational experiences that prepare students for employment.



Guiding Principles of Think College Wyoming

Think College Wyoming is a program that focuses on:

- Students decide their classes, job, and campus activities and have control in the decision making process
- Settings and experiences with other college-aged people
- No special programs or special classes
- Supports based on each students needs
- Agencies working together to support a student

Selection Process

In order to ensure **Think College Wyoming** is the best match for our applicants, we require the application packet to be completed by each student. This program of study is for unique learners who are highly motivated young adults with intellectual disability. Applicants will have received extensive special education services in their secondary schools, graduated with a special certificate or aged-out, and would have considerable difficulty succeeding in a traditional college degree program. Students who complete the program will receive a certificate from Think College Wyoming

Applicants must have a strong desire to become an independent adult and demonstrate sufficient emotional stability and maturity to participate successfully in the program.

Step 1-Application Packet

- Complete and submit the Student Application Packet
- Submit high school transcripts
- Submit disability documentation
- Submit letters of recommendations

Step 2-Selection Interview

- When requested, schedule and attend a personal interview with Think College Wyoming Selection Committee accompanied by a parent/family/guardian/support person.

Selection Criteria

Applications will be screened based on the following criteria. Applicants must:

- Be between the age of 21-26 at the start of the program
- Have a significant intellectual disability that interferes with his/her academic performance. Intellectual disability is characterized by significant limitations both in

intellectual functioning and in adaptive behavior as expressed in conceptual, social, and practical adaptive skills (AIDD definition).

- Have sufficient emotional and independent stability to participate in all aspects of the TCW coursework and campus environment. *Note: TCW does not have the personnel to supervise students or dispense medications.*
- Demonstrate the desire to cooperate with TCW and adhere to the college attendance and participation for classes.
- Have the potential to successfully achieve his/her goals with the context of the TCW mission.
- Have completed high school with a modified standard, special diploma, or certificate of completion.

After the TCW Selection Committee reviews the application packet, select students will be contacted to schedule an interview. The interview must include the prospective student and his or her parent/family/guardian/support person.

After interviews, **Think College Wyoming will select limited number of applicants for admission each year.** The decision to offer or deny admission to Think College Wyoming will be made by the Selection Committee in their best judgment and in the best interest of the applicant. Please note, final admission to Think College Wyoming does not mean a student is admitted to his or her college of choice. Final admission will include acceptance to community college and will be in collaboration with the community college administration.

The College Experience

Applying the principles of inclusion and self-determination, Think College Wyoming offers a college experience for young adults with intellectual disability. Students enrolled in Think College Wyoming will follow the inclusive individual support model that facilitates access to and participation in college courses. There is no program base on campus. Students participate in the campus community just like all college students. The focus is on establishing a student-identified future vision and career goal that directs the course of study and employment experiences.

College Experience Elements

Think College Wyoming designs a college experience for students based on the following elements:

- Person-centered planning to discover career goals and inform class selection
- Individualized academic program consisting of up to two classes selected from the college class schedule per semester
- Individualized supports for education and work experience

- Access to campus events
- Certificate upon completion of program elements

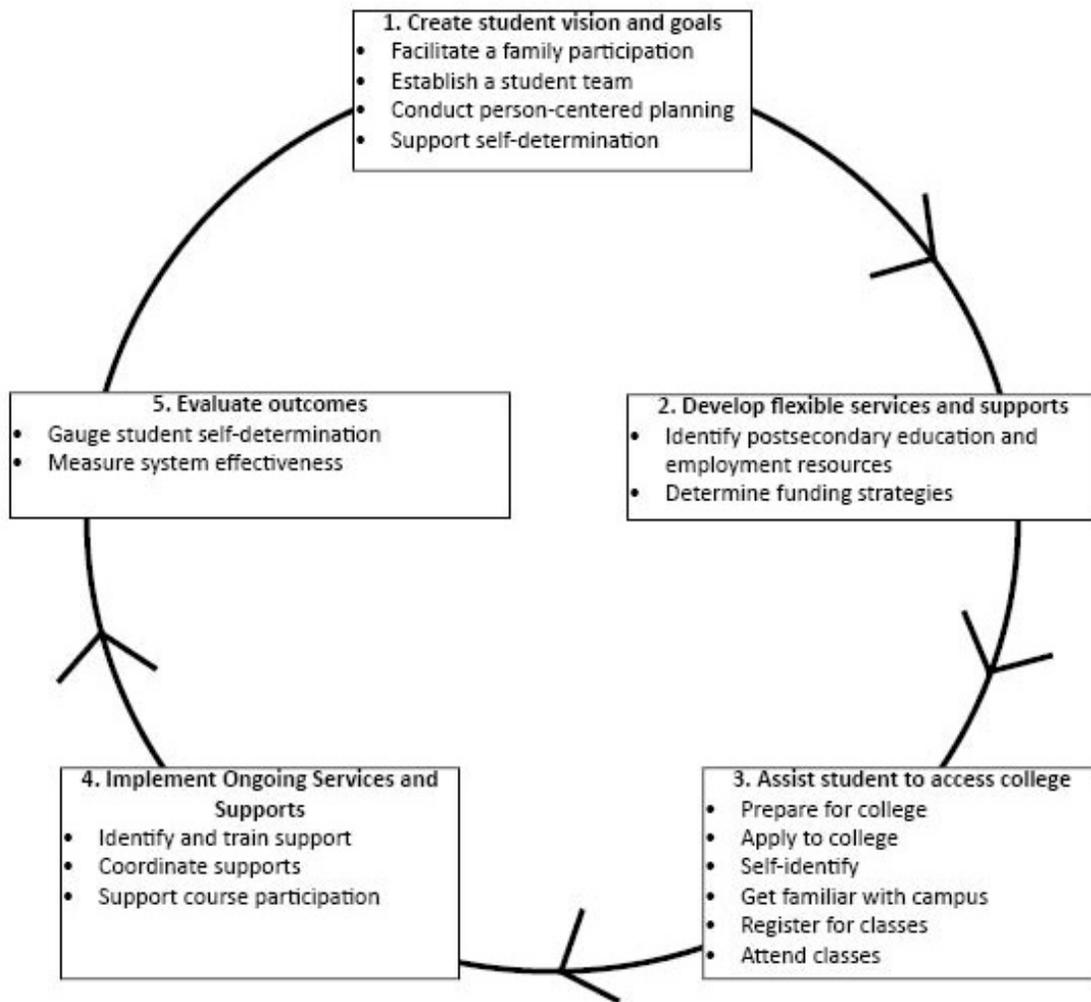
Working Together – Applying steps of the Inclusive Individual Support Model

The student is the focus and his or her family is paramount in creating a vision and goals for postsecondary outcomes. Just as important as having a vision, however, is having necessary means to make that vision a reality. Collaboration with family, friends and community agencies is a key to successful Think College Wyoming experiences. Agencies in your area that may offer services to support college. For example, Vocational Rehabilitation may support college goals that are related to work outcomes. Adult developmental service agencies may be able to provide support on the college campus. Community Rideshare programs may assist with transportation needs. Medicaid dollars may be available to support individuals in postsecondary education. Knowing the resources and being creative about their use can go a long way to supporting college experiences. Think College Wyoming helps to coordinate these services and supports for each student.

The following are the steps to applying the **Inclusive Individual Support Model**:

1. Create student vision and goals – Facilitate family participation. Establish a student team. Conduct person-centered planning. Support self-determination.
2. Develop flexible services and supports – Identify postsecondary education and employment resources. Determine funding strategies.
3. Assist student to access college – Prepare for college. Apply to college. Self-identify. Get familiar with campus. Meet with advisor. Register for classes. Attend classes.
4. Implement ongoing services and supports – Identify and train support. Coordinate supports. Support course participation.
5. Evaluate outcomes – Gauge student self-determination. Ongoing consideration of model effectiveness.

INCLUSIVE INDIVIDUAL SUPPORT MODEL



Person Centered Planning

After selection each participant in Think College Wyoming will engage in a Person Centered Plan (PCP) process to organize and coordinate individualized services.

The goal of the PCP process are to identify the student's own vision of the future and then to identify the steps needed to make that future a reality. This process includes gathering input from the student, family members, and others who have a vested interest in the student's future and developing an action plan that identifies goals services and supports and the people who will assist the student.

Individualized Supports/Services

The following is a list of possible supports that may be needed and arranged for TCW students. Interagency collaboration, family, and natural supports are essential for supplying these. Think College Wyoming helps families and students determine these needs and helps to coordinate the services for the student.

- Assistance with planning and organizing
- Liaison to college professors, administration, and staff
- Educational coaching and tutoring
- Employment related coaching and supports
- Social and recreational supports
- Networking and technology
- Development of natural supports

Family and Students Responsibilities

To participate in Think College Wyoming, the family and student are expected to:

- Move through a Think College Wyoming selection process (application, interviews, etc.)
- Commit to four semesters of college that include work experiences (a job)

With coordination support of the TCW Coordinator and Person Centered Plan team:

- Determine financing for college tuition and fees
- Provide or make arrangements for transportation
- Provide or make arrangements for housing

References and Resources

To learn more about Think College Wyoming:

1. Download our [brochure](#) to learn about the project
2. Download our handout [Tell me more about Think College Wyoming](#)
3. Read our [Think College Report and State Plan](#)

Wyoming Community Colleges

- [Casper College](#)
- [Central Wyoming College](#)
- [Eastern Wyoming College](#)
- [Laramie County Community College](#)
- [Northern Wyoming Community College District](#)
- [Northwest College](#)
- [Western Wyoming Community College](#)

National Resources

- [Think College program](#)
- ["Statewide Strategic Planning: Promoting Postsecondary Education Options for Individuals with Intellectual Disabilities"](#)-An issue of *INSIGHT, A Think College Brief on Policy, Research, and Practice*

General College Resources (appendix)

[What is the difference between high and college?](#)

THINK COLLEGE WYOMING PROCESS TIMELINE

- ✓ Identify interests & learning style.
- ✓ Begin career exploration.
- ✓ Practice self-advocacy & social skills.
- ✓ Listen & appropriately respond to directions from teacher/coach/etc.
- ✓ Communicate effectively (with support if necessary).
- ✓ Participate in IEP meeting to learn about disability, support needs, etc.

- ✓ Clarify interests & goals re TCW.
- ✓ Gain experience in a work environment.
- ✓ Participate in community, college, or technical classes.
- ✓ Spend time on college campus with family or friends.
- ✓ Move through a Think College Wyoming selection process.

- ✓ Utilize independent skills (cell phone, clock, & calendar) to plan activities and begin to coordinate personal services.
- ✓ Self-identify to disability support services office at college.
- ✓ Attend class, work & campus activities.
- ✓ Meet with education coaches and others on a regular basis to review class work & other challenges.

Junior High Years High School Years 1+ Year Ahead 6+ Months Ahead Year 1 College Year 2 College

Age 14 – 16 Age 17 – 19 Age 20 Age 21 Age 22 Age 23

- ✓ Maintain good conduct in class & community.
- ✓ Continue self-advocacy & communication development
- ✓ Gain independent skills like using a cell phone, clock, & calendar
- ✓ Plan activities & prepare to take care of self and belongings
- ✓ Attend & participate in general education classes (50-90 min).
- ✓ Acquire legal form of identification.
- ✓ Spend time in a work environment (school, volunteer, &/or paid work).
- ✓ Apply for services through DVR &/or Workforce Services

- ✓ Participate in TCW Person Centered Planning & resulting action plans.
- ✓ Apply for Adult Rehabilitation Agency (adult waiver services).
- ✓ Work with TCW Coordinator to complete college application/access process.
- ✓ Work with VR or employment agency.
- ✓ Plan for financing for college tuition and fees (apply for etc. as needed).
- ✓ Provide or find financing for transportation and develop or hone transportation skills and resources.
- ✓ Provide or find financing for housing if necessary.

- ✓ Continue & consider expanding work hours or move to more career oriented employment.
- ✓ Explore and try enhanced independent living activities.
- ✓ Continue campus membership activities.
- ✓ Plan with providers & support team next steps for after TCW experience.
- ✓ Participate in closing Person Centered Plan meeting.

TIPS FOR PARENTS: PREPARING FOR THE TRANSITION TO COLLEGE

Work with your child and high school staff and to plan steps in transition based on:

- Interests
- Aptitude
- Values
- Level of independence

Connect with adult services partners:

- Find out what services are available at the college and in the community to develop relationships in advance
 - E.g.: College: counselors, mentors, student services, disability services
 - E.g.: Community: Voc. Rehab., SILS worker, Social Services
- Get needed services in place in advance

Practice advocacy:

- Guide student in making decisions
- Encourage problem solving
- Teach appropriate ways to ask for help
- Teach student to be proactive
- Model appropriate self-advocacy behavior
- Ensure supports are in place to continue the learning process

Learn about differences between high school and college:

High School

- “Free”
- Supports find you
- Little independence
- Same schedule daily
- Students the same age
-

College

- Tuition and expenses
- You find your needed supports
- Total independence
- Classes vary each day
- Students vary widely in ages

Develop a financial plan for college: for tuition, spending money, housing costs:

- Practice budgeting
- Talk about the difference between needs and wants

Talk about boundaries:

- Assist youth in finding that “trusted person” they can safely talk with
- Teach what information should be shared and with whom
- Teach safety practices for new places
- Teach appropriate boundaries in a variety of settings and people

Transition Checklist

This checklist is designed to give the family members an easy to use list of topics that should be taken into consideration when discussing transition from high school to college.

- Help your student know what choices they have. Visit programs, talk to other students, families, watch videos, etc.
- Set post-secondary education & career goals through the use of person-centered planning.
- Ensure that your son/daughter is enrolled in academic courses throughout high school, which will prepare him/her for college courses. While not a requirement, experience tells us that students with more inclusive academic experiences in high school do better once in college.
- Know the difference between the laws that govern education at the secondary level (IDEA = entitlement) and at the college level (ADA = otherwise qualified). (See the *Differences Between HS and College* on this site.)
- Encourage your daughter/son to attend and participate in their own Individual Plan. Participation means planning the meeting, working with a teacher to identify their own goals and supports, presenting about their goals at the meeting, welcoming the team, learning about the forms.
- Help your son/daughter learn to advocate for him/herself while in high school, which will prepare him/her for when it needs to be done in college.
- Obtain college catalogue and review them carefully with your son/daughter and with support from high school staff (e.g., guidance counselor, transition coordinator), as needed. Visit campus activities while in middle or high school, sports, recreational, entertainment activities. Have a currently enrolled student get involved in the campus visit or activity.
- Ensure that documentation of your son or daughter's disability is up-to-date. This may be required by the college.
- Discuss with your son/daughter the nature of their disability and how it affects their school work. Practice how they refer to their disability and identify what supports they need.
- Encourage teachers to document what accommodations and technology your son/daughter uses now and what they may need in college (e.g., reader, note taker, scribe, books-on-tape, speech-to-text software, screen reader, tape recorder, personal data assistant (PDA)). Create a list of these accommodations and supports.
- Visit colleges together so that your son/daughter has good information to make a final choice.
- Your son/daughter should meet with college Disability Services Office (DSO) staff to talk about documentation and learn about how accommodations in college are different from high school.
- If there is a specific program on the campus for students with intellectual disabilities on campus, arrange to meet with the staff. Find out how participants in the program participate in general college life and academics.

- Discuss goals, learning needs, and how to access specific accommodations, including academic supports that are available for all students (e.g., tutoring, writing support) with your son/daughter and DSO staff **before** classes begin.
- Figure out and set-up transportation **prior** to the start of school (e.g., driving car-pooling, learning to use public transport, travel vouchers).
- Be aware of financial aid resources available to your family and make sure that funding for all costs is arranged before school starts (e.g., tuition, books, fees, transportation).
- Identify how financial support your child may receive impacts other benefits (e.g., SSI, SSDI).
- Know what services are available through adult human service agencies (e.g., vocational rehabilitation – tuition, books transportation, employment supports; One-Stop Career Centers – Individual Training Accounts, Development Disability agencies). Representatives from these groups should be at the transition IEP, PCP, etc. Your son/daughter should have the phone numbers for relevant agencies in their cell phone.
- Be prepare for the fact that you, the family member, need written consent form the student to obtain access to their records at the college level.

Promoting Self-Determination in Youth with Disabilities: Tips for Families and Professionals

<p>Promote Choice Making</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identify strengths, interests, and learning styles;• Provide choices about clothing, social activities, family events, and methods of learning new information;• Hold high expectations for youth;• Teach youth about their disability;• Involve children and youth in self-determination/self-advocacy; opportunities in school, home, and community;• Prepare children and youth for school meetings;• Speak directly to children and youth;• Involve children and youth in educational, medical, and family decisions;• Allow for mistakes and natural consequences;• Listen often to children and youth. <p>Encourage Exploration of Possibilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Promote exploration of the world every day;• Use personal, tactile, visual, and auditory methods for exploration;• Identify young adult mentors with similar disabilities;• Talk about future jobs, hobbies, and family lifestyles;• Develop personal collages/scrap books based on interests and goals;• Involve children and youth in service learning (4H, AmeriCorps, local volunteering). <p>Promote Reasonable Risk Taking</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Make choice maps listing risks, benefits, and consequences of choice;• Build safety nets through family members, friends, schools, and others;• Develop skills in problem solving;	<p>Promote Self Advocacy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Encourage communication and self-representation;• Praise all efforts of assertiveness and problem solving;• Develop opportunities at home and in school for self-advocacy;• Provide opportunities for leadership roles at home and in school;• Encourage self-advocates to speak in class;• Teach about appropriate accommodation needs;• Practice ways to disclose disability and accommodation needs;• Create opportunities to speak about the disability in school, home, church, business and community. <p>Facilitate Development of Self-Esteem</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Create a sense of belonging within schools and communities;• Provide experiences for children and youth to use their talents;• Provide opportunities to youth for contributing to their families, schools, and communities;• Provide opportunities for individuality and independence;• Identify caring adult mentors at home, school, church, or in the community;• Model a sense of self-esteem and self-confidence. <p>Develop Goal Setting and Planning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Teach children and youth family values, priorities, and goals;• Make posters that reflect values and are age-appropriate;
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- Develop skills in evaluating consequences.

Encourage Problem Solving

- Teach problem solving skills;
- Allow ownership of challenges and problems;
- Accept problems as part of healthy development;
- Hold family meetings to identify problems at home and in the community;
- Hold class meetings to identify problems in school;

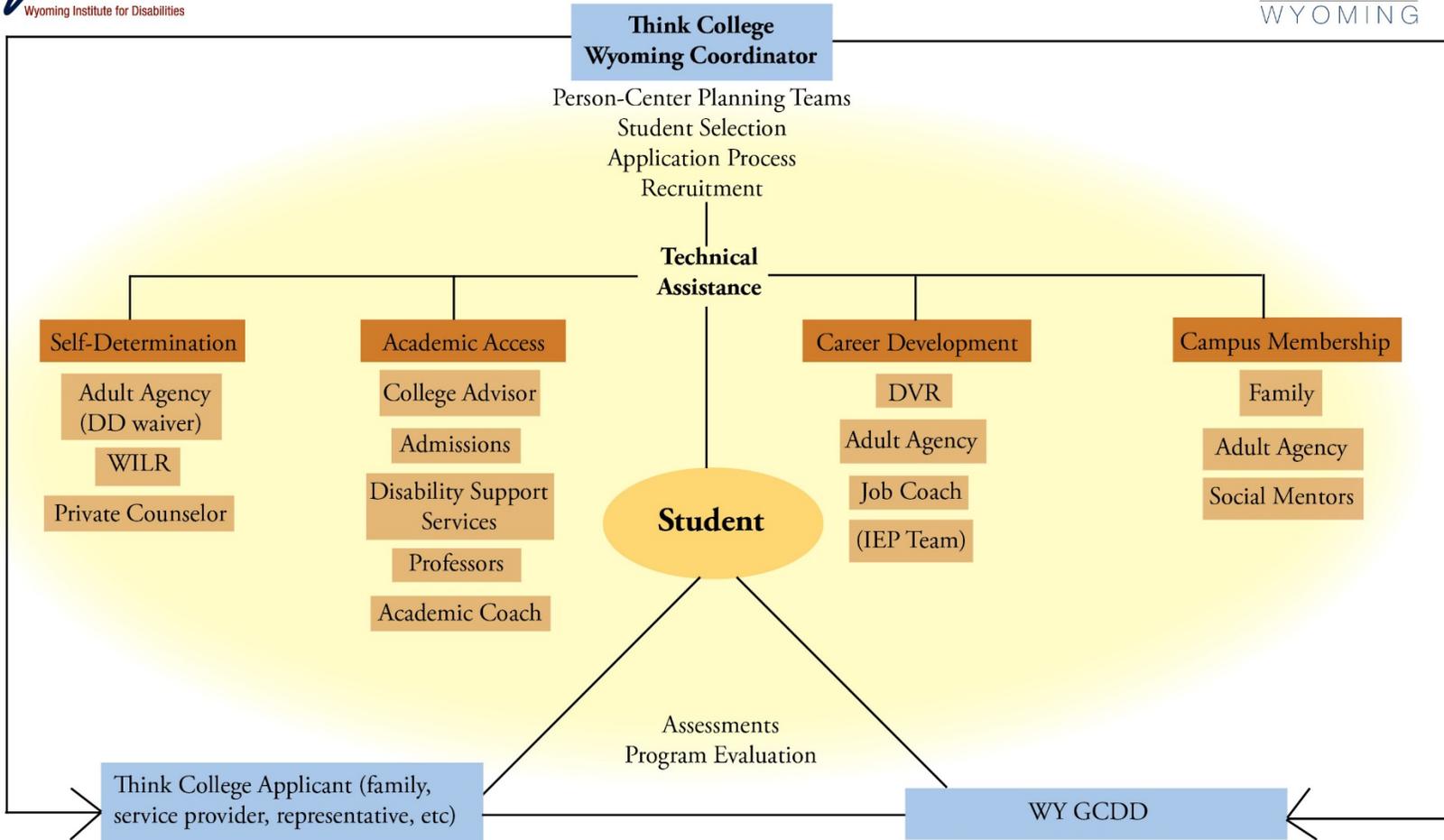
Allow children and youth to develop a list of self-identified consequences.

- Define what a goal is and demonstrate the steps to reach a goal;
- Make a road map to mark the short-term identifiers as they work toward a goal;
- Support children and youth in developing values and goals;
- Discuss family history and culture--make a family tree;
- Be flexible in supporting youth to reach their goals; some days they may need much motivation and help; other days they may want to try alone.

Help Youth Understand Their Disabilities

- Develop a process that is directed by youth for self-identity: Who are you? What do you want? What are your challenges and barriers? What supports do you need?
- Direct children and youth to write an autobiography;
- Talk about the youth's disability;
- Talk about the youth's abilities;
- Involve children and youth in their IEP;
- Use good learning style inventories and transition assessments;
- Identify and utilize support systems for all people.

Think College Wyoming Organizational Chart



Wyoming Institute for Disabilities (WIND)

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