**WORKING WITH A SUPPORT SPECIALIST**

Julie lives in New Jersey and she finished High School a few years ago. She lives at home with her parents and her younger brother, Derek. During the week, her parents go to work Monday through Friday, and Derek goes to school. He is a senior and her parents keep saying that they can’t believe he will be going off to college soon. When her parents go to work, she stays with her Aunt. They have a lot of fun some days, but her Aunt has grandkids so most of the time, she is busy with them. Some days she helps her grandmother by helping around the house and in the garden.

Seeing her family work so hard makes Julie want to work too. She dreams of working, but doesn’t know where. Here are some things she likes to do: She enjoys talking to her friends, watering the plants in the garden, and meeting new people. She wonders what kind of job would be right for her.

|  |
| --- |
| **What are some things Julie can do to help her figure out what kind of job is right for her?** |

 Julie tells her mom that she wants to work. Julie’s mom agrees that a good job will make Julie happy. Julie’s mom thinks that they need some help finding a position right for Julie. Julie agrees. They sit down together and try to think of a solution. They ask Julie’s aunt to help them. Julie’s aunt has an idea. She tells them that there are support specialists who help people find jobs. Julie wants to give this a try. Julie and her mom call a support specialist and set up a meeting.

 Julie is excited when she goes to meet the support specialist. The specialist does activities to get to know her. Sometimes they just chat, and other times they go into the community. Julie loves getting coffee at Dunkin Donuts, so sometimes, the support specialist meets with Julie there. The specialist also observes her at home and notices that Julie can do so much!! She also notices that Julie always keeps music on, and it helps her focus. The support specialist also talks to her aunt and her brother. Her aunt says that Julie always remembers to water the plants.

|  |
| --- |
| **Do you think an employer cares that Julie has a great memory?** |

Her mom says Julie is great at meeting new people. Derek says that Julie often helps him organize his binder.

|  |
| --- |
| **Organizing students’ binders might not be a job that Julie can get. But let’s brainstorm some jobs where being organized would be helpful.**  |

Julie and the specialist work together to find a job that’s just right for her.

|  |
| --- |
| **What kind of job do you think the support specialist will help Julie find?****If you were the specialist, what kind of job would you recommend?**  |

 Now that the specialist knows Julie so well, the specialist has a few ideas about what jobs Julie might like. They decide that Julie should work at an office. She will get to meet new people, and will be able to use her organizational skills. Julie is so excited to have a plan!

The support specialist meets with different businesses trying to find a good match. She knows Julie works best with some music in the background, so she wants to make sure that the noise level in the office would work well for her.

|  |
| --- |
| **One office she visits is REALLY quiet, and they have a no cellphone policy. Would that be a good match? Why or why not?**  |

The support specialist also knows all the tasks that Julie can do and strategies to use to help Julie even learn new tasks! There’s a business called “Racon Inc.” that seems to be a great match. They are looking to hire someone who can do all of the tasks that Julie can do!! It’s also a great environment for Julie. They are really friendly and are willing to let Julie listen to music using headphones, as long as it is what she needs to get the job done! The support specialist helps Julie understand the information about how much she will get paid, the hours she will work, and more. Julie feels ready for work! She’s excited, but a little nervous. She tells her support specialist that she is nervous, and the support specialist reminds Julie that she will be working with a job coach, so she feels better! The support specialist works with the job coach to help Julie succeed.

|  |
| --- |
| **Do you enjoy working with a job coach? Why or why not?**  |

It’s Julie’s first day at Racon Inc.! She is so excited to meet her new coworkers. The job coach works with Julie a lot at first. The job coach makes sure that Julie knows how to do all the tasks that she is responsible for. The job coach can answer Julie’s questions and help her. Eventually, the job coach helps Julie learn who else she can go to for support. One of Julie’s coworkers, Kate, sits near Julie and is extra helpful.

|  |
| --- |
| **What are some traits of people that you like working with?**  |

Julie knows Kate is a great person to ask questions! Once Julie feels confident about the tasks she’s doing and about working at Racon Inc., the job coach doesn’t really need to be there as much. Julie loves her job, and enjoys going to work.

Julie got her first paycheck!! What an exciting day!! Julie met her friend Sam at Rita’s and bought Sam a watermelon Italian Ice -- Sam’s favorite!!

|  |
| --- |
| **What do you want to buy with your first paycheck??** |

Julie has now been working for Racon Inc. for a month and is really happy! Julie’s job coach still comes in to support her, but does not come every single day anymore. When she does come, she checks in with Julie to see how it’s going. She also checks in with the boss to see what Julie is doing well with and what, if anything, she can improve. It’s hard to get feedback from your boss, so it’s helpful when the job coach can help!

The support specialist also checks in with Julie and the boss and the job coach. The support specialist is so happy to hear that Julie loves her job!! The support specialist also wants to know how she is doing with saving her money. Julie has been saving her money for an iPad. She tells the support specialist that she still has work to do before she can buy one!!

|  |
| --- |
| **Is there anything you want to buy that you’d like to save your money?**  |

**Let’s recap:**

1. The Support Specialist works with you because you attended WSP. The support specialist will do activities to get to know you and will also spend some time observing you and talking to your family and other people that know you well.
2. The support specialist will create some things like a brochure and a visual resume for you. The support specialist will also think of types of jobs you might enjoy and share them with you and your team (your VR Counselor, your job coach if you have one, your family, etc.).
3. The support specialist and the job coach will both talk to bosses at different worksites and see if there are any matches.
4. The support specialist will work with you for about 90 days. Unfortunately, we don’t know if a business will end up hiring you within that time. However, if that doesn’t happen, the job coach will still be able to continue job developing and will use the resources that the support specialist created.