

## **Lou's Transition Plan**

Lou, a gregarious 18-year-old, was born in the United States to parents who had immigrated 10 years before his birth. Lou was diagnosed in elementary school with an intellectual disability and has been in a life skills program since he was 10. He is on track to remain in school, in his current life skills program, through 21. However, each year at his IEP meeting, discussions of transition planning become more and more involved. For cultural and religious reasons, Lou's family believe strongly in segregation of genders. They are adamant that his transportation training, job training, and similar activities ought to occur in single-sex environments, as they explained to the team that Lou would likely remain in their neighborhood and their religious community after completing school. For that reason, they want his transition planning to prepare him for that environment. Lou himself wants to remain in his home community after completing school, but he also wants to have work and transportation experiences similar to those of other students in his program. Lou's team have a strong relationship with his parents, built over many years of shared planning. As this discussion becomes more complex, they engage in multiple conversations with Lou and his parents, ultimately designing a plan that will allow him to experience, and succeed in, the more diverse world of the school system while also preparing him to transition back to his home community, where the cultural framework might be quite different. In doing so, school personnel are careful to express respect for the values and beliefs that Lou's family bring to the process, even as they are also mindful of the school system's institutional preference for equity and gender equality. In accord with best practices for transition planning and facilitating self-determination for students with disabilities, the team take time to explain their rationale to Lou's family and carefully consider their viewpoints; they also provide Lou himself equally detailed explanations and take the time to hear and consider his wishes.