

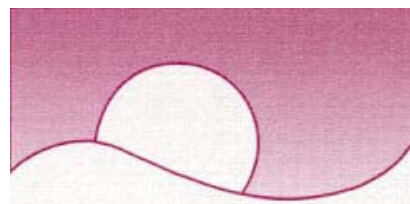


The Sunrise 'I'm Able to Work' Project: A Proposal by the
Center for Assisted Living Innovation



CALI Proposes to Provide Consultative Research, Development and Integration of a Multimedia Pre-Vocational Instruction System and Program for the Developmentally Disabled

To be conducted under the direction of and in cooperation with
Sunrise Community of Collier County





Project Overview

Introduction

The Center for Assisted Living Innovation (CALI), a public service and research institute at Florida Gulf Coast University, has been approached about collaborating on a project with Sunrise Community of Collier County, a non-profit corporation that provides assistance and support to people with developmental disabilities. Sunrise was recently awarded a grant to develop a multimedia prevocational education program designed to improve the employability of, and ultimately see employed, up to 15 of its clients within one year. The program, called “I’m Able to Work”, aims to help people experience for the first time the benefits of meaningful employment, such as a heightened sense of self-sufficiency and self worth. Accomplishing this requires giving these individuals effective instruction in basic life skills and values such as rudimentary math, basic oral and written language, personal presentation, and workplace etiquette and ethics. Sunrise has found that computer based and multi-media instruction programs have shown great potential for consistently and cost-effectively providing the level of one to one engagement and interaction these individuals need to learn such skills, while also helping to stretch limited staff resources and reduce staff burn out and turnover.

Sunrise seeks CALI’s participation in putting together the program—specifically in evaluating, adapting, developing, and integrating the various hardware, software, and instructional components of the system and program.

About CALI and FGCU

The Center for Assisted Living Innovation at Florida Gulf Coast University is a recent joint initiative of the colleges of Health Profession, Business, and Professional Studies, housed under the Center for Leadership and Innovation at the College of Business. As such, CALI has access to FGCU resources and facilities, shares its nonprofit status and raises funds through its Research and Sponsored Programs arm and via the FGCU Foundation. CALI conducts research and other activities aimed at promoting innovations in assistive systems and practices to improve quality of life for people who—because of physical or cognitive disabilities related to advanced age, affliction, or injury—require assistance with activities of daily living. Along with the goal of helping ensure that people with disabilities can lead productive and meaningful lives, CALI’s mission includes helping a proportionately shrinking pool of caregivers—and, more broadly, a rapidly aging society with finite resources—more effectively cope with the needs of this burgeoning population.

CALI is currently seeking funding to initiate research, as well as funded projects requiring research. Grant applications have recently been submitted, for example, to conduct research for a CALI-organized coalition (of which Sunrise Community is a member) of human services agencies in Southwest Florida aimed at assessing and cooperatively addressing an acute shortage of appropriate, affordable housing and basic services for disabled people on limited incomes. (See www.CALI-FGCU.org for more information on CALI; see www.HALCoalition.org for more information on the coalition).

About Sunrise Community

Sunrise Community of Collier County in Naples, Florida serves the area of Southwest Florida with primary employment services, adult day training (ADT), supported living, nonresidential support services and companion services in Collier County. Sunrise Community in Collier is an operational component of Sunrise Community of Southwest Florida. Sunrise seeks to provide people with disabilities the assistance and support necessary to enable them to live valued lives in the community. Sunrise believes that people

with disabilities have the right to a full and productive life that includes a home, family, work and community participation.

Individuals served have conditions such as cerebral palsy, Down syndrome, seizure disorder, traumatic brain injury and hearing and visual impairment. They frequently have multiple conditions. For more information on Sunrise, see <http://home.naples.net/go.cfm?go=SB&SB=61&Pg=20>.

Sunrise Community's "I'm Able to Work" Program

Made possible primarily through the generosity of the Able Trust, Sunrise Community's **I'm Able to Work** program highlights one of the areas where people place the most "value" in their lives: employment. One of the first questions we ask of others is, "What do you do?" Through employment, individuals served by Sunrise will be full participants in their community, exhibiting the productivity associated with having a job and achieving personal independence.

People with disabilities in Collier County want to work. Because of physical and/or behavioral limitations and need for specialized training needs, many of these individuals have not had the chance for meaningful employment or advancement. Many lack the requisite pre-employment skills necessary to approach or impress employers favorably, complete applications or interview for available positions.

With the assistance of The Able Trust, Sunrise Community of Collier County is beginning an exciting program that will be the foundation of future jobs for people with disabilities in Collier County. The project centers on an innovative multimedia approach using audio/video and computer hardware and software to help instruct individuals in pre-employment skills. Sunrise's own experience with its computer lab, augmented with a literature survey on the subject, amply demonstrates that computer-based instructional technology holds great promise in helping provide the kind of hands on, one-to-one interactivity through which people with developmental disabilities tend to learn most effectively. The **I'm Able to Work** program will leverage this technology within a focused pre-vocational curriculum and employment services system. The program will:

1. Identify, develop and implement software and media materials and instruction protocols that will assist individuals in securing job interviews, preparing for interviews, finding the right employment opportunities, and succeeding in employment situations. Examples include training in basic math and time-telling skills; oral and written language skills; personal grooming and etiquette; and workplace values and behavior.
2. Provide computer-assisted, video, and other multi-media instruction to a minimum of 15 individuals.
3. Secure employment in enclave, entrepreneurial, mobile work crew or individual permanent or temporary positions at or above the minimum wage for a minimum of 7 of the 15 participants.

I'm ABLE to Work will serve a minimum of fifteen individuals with developmental disabilities recruited for the project. All participants will receive individualized instruction using developed multi-media materials. A minimum of 7 of the 15 participants will secure community-based employment.

The project plan includes four phases.

- Phase I will address the review, assessment, acquisition and development/implementation of multi-media equipment, technology, and content. This phase involves assessment of available computer hardware and software, video and other multi-media materials.
- Phase II will see the development and implementation of an instructional protocol using multi-media materials. The focus of developed curricula will be on preparing individuals to secure job interviews, be able to interview successfully and secure community-based employment. Training conducted will include instruction in areas such as ADL (activities of daily living), social skills, communication skills and employability skills such as how to secure and retain employment, resume creation and job interviewing techniques. Near the end of phase II, a full time staff person will be hired to assist in participant recruitment, instruction, assessment and job placement.
- Phase III will identify and enroll 15 participants and see creation of a “training plan” for each individual served based on consumer assessment, information from support plans, consumer satisfaction surveys and interviews. Review of strengths and weaknesses and stated preferences will be used to tailor individual training plans. Participants will be provided computer-assisted, video and other multi-media instruction. This phase will in addition to pre-employment skills training, focus on pre-vocational counseling with a goal of “best-fit” job matching.
- Phase IV will consist of data analysis and qualitative assessment of the training programs and pre-vocational counseling, job placement in appropriate enclave or individual employment and on-the-job training. This phase will also include the design of appropriate follow along services for maintenance of successful employment and assessment of satisfaction with job placement using a consumer satisfaction survey and interview techniques. Employer satisfaction will also be assessed.

CALI Role in the “I’m Able to Work” Program

In its grant proposal, Sunrise budgeted for one full time position to administer the instructional program, and one half time position to help research, evaluate, develop, integrate and assess the efficacy of the technological and instructional components of that program. Sunrise and CALI now propose that the funds originally designated for the half time position be put to more effective use by applying them toward leveraging the many resources of a university research and public service center. Instead of having to recruit a single individual with the requisite broad range of skills and experience and willingness to accept part time employment, this approach allows as-needed access to faculty, students, and staff across all relevant disciplines, departments, and programs. (Sunrise will select and fund the fulltime position as originally proposed; a CALI research project manager and volunteer assistant will work closely throughout the project with the person Sunrise hires or appoints to this position.)

CALI will draw upon leading talent and knowledge in information systems, education, health professions, instructional technology and human services, by employing and consulting with faculty, staff and top students in these fields, both at FGCU and at other universities. Much of this contribution will occur at no expense to Sunrise Community, but rather through volunteerism and as part of the normal operating function of a public university mandated to serve its community. Funding will be directed at research and project coordination carried out by a dedicated research project manager (a Master’s level graduate) under the guidance of one or more faculty advisors (PhD’s) fulfilling the role of project director. This funded research may also trigger extending, expanding or augmenting the program through encouraging cooperative development of additional grant proposals and other resource-identifying efforts if the

opportunity and need present. (Sunrise will, at the very least, need to find additional resources to extend the program beyond the first year.)

For instance, Sunrise's preliminary survey found very few packaged multi-media and computer-based instructional programs specifically and comprehensively designed for developmentally disabled adults. One of the most important features of any such program, for example, is automated progress and performance tracking. While there exist many excellent educational packages designed for children, these are not age-appropriate for developmentally disabled adults, even when the material covered is equivalent. If further research confirms this paucity, especially in the area of effective in-built progress tracking, it may reveal opportunities to address the need by participating in the development of such packages. This participation would likely be funded through agency and possibly corporate grants and involve research and vendor alliances. The development of instructional products custom-fit to model curricula within an easily replicable program has the potential to help make employable (and thus radically improve the lives of) tens of thousands of developmentally disabled people across the country.

CALI Project Deliverables

CALI will provide to its sponsor, Sunrise Community, benefit of and access to data, training, conclusions, consulting services, and any other products or services resulting from investigations pertaining to the evaluation, development, and assessment of a pre-employment skills instruction system and program targeted at the developmentally disabled. These deliverables will include results (in the form of reports, consultation, and published original research) of investigations into:

- The availability, suitability, and costs of instructional software packages, as well as evaluation of vendors in terms of support, value, and viability;
- The availability, suitability, and costs of instructional non-computer based multimedia materials, as well as evaluation of vendors in terms of support, value, and viability;
- The availability, suitability and costs of adaptive computer hardware platforms and devices;
- The availability and suitability of existing curricula models.
- Deliverables will also include the results of efforts toward:
- The adaptation or development (within the scope of the funding; see below) of software, hardware, and curricula to meet the needs of the program, specifically the pre-vocational needs of the developmentally disabled people the program is designed to serve;
- Program efficacy and outcomes in terms of individual learning and employability metrics.

It is understood by both Sunrise and CALI that the limited scope of this project precludes original development or extensive modification of specialized software, content or hardware. Instead the approach will entail a practical "off the shelf" and "use what works" emphasis on adaptation and minor reprogramming of existing hardware and software systems specifically selected for their applicability and adaptability to the special requirements of the program. Development efforts will focus on evaluation, selection, customization and integration—the mixing and matching of various system, content, curricula and instructional protocol elements into a coherent, effective, and cost-effective instructional program

customized to the needs of a small group of special people (a group that nevertheless epitomizes thousands more people across the state and country with similar needs).

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