

# The Journey To Independence

We all deserve the chance to live an independent, self-directed life. This book was created as a guide for your journey into that life. Together with your desire, determination and spirit, the information in these pages will take you through the process of achieving your goals.

## Welcome Home!



# What Are Centers for Independent Living?

Centers for Independent Living (CILs) are consumer-driven organizations, owned and operated by individuals with disabilities. New Jersey has a network of 12 CILs that provide the core services of Information and Referral, Peer Support, Independent Living Skills Training and Advocacy. These services are offered to people with a wide range of disabilities with the goal of promoting self-choice, self-direction and self-reliance in an inclusive society that offers equal rights to all.

## **CILs Promote Self: Choice, Direction and Reliance**



# The Nursing Facility Transition Program

The New Jersey Association of Centers for Independent Living (NJACIL) has partnered with the NJ Department of Health and Senior Services (DHSS) to identify and transition people with physical, psychiatric, and developmental disabilities from Nursing Facilities into the Community.

Using the unique “roundtable” format, these individuals meet with CIL workers, DHSS social workers (serving as Community Choice Counselors under the Community Choice Program), and any family, friends, or other advocates they choose. In this consumer-driven process, options and ideas are explored, with each advocate contributing his or her own specialized knowledge to the creation of a transition plan. As the plan moves forward, this team serves as a support system for the transitioning individual, as well as a constant source of information. Once the consumer has moved into the community, the CIL will follow up for the period of one year, in order to ensure full and successful integration.

Our goal is to empower people with disabilities. We want to give hope and help to those who feel trapped and are unaware of their options, and to provide individuals with the tools that they need to live a self-determined life.



# Introduction

Moving into a more independent way of life can be hard. There will probably be many ups and downs as you work through the transitioning process. There may be times when you feel overwhelmed, exhausted, frustrated or depressed. There may even be times when you feel like giving up. **Remember: you are not alone!** Often it is when we are closest to our dreams that things look the worst. Stay strong and push through these difficulties, and you will find that you can achieve things that you thought were impossible!

In order to make it through the rough patches, it is very helpful to create a personal support system. This team of people may consist of:

- **Family and Friends**
- **Support Groups**
- **Peer Mentors**
- **Disability Advocates**
- **Anyone Else Who Helps in the Transition Process**

Enjoy your independence, but always remember that everyone else is trying to enjoy theirs too! Part of being a member of the community is being respectful and considerate of others.

Your local Center for Independent Living is here for you. If you have any questions or concerns, please call (see pages 34-35 for a list of local CILs).

Being disabled does NOT mean you have to settle for second best!

**You Are  
Your Best  
Advocate!**

