**Navigating Through Life: Attending College or Technical School**

**Types of Schools**

College is a smaller educational institution that offers Associates or Bachelor degrees. University is a larger educational institution that offers Bachelor’s and Master’s degrees. Technical school is where you would learn about a skill like welding, electrician, or another trade.

**The Right Fit**

* When thinking about post-high school, it’s important to find the right college for you, whether it is a technical school, a community college, or a 4-year university.
* When making these decisions you may talk to your parents, a guidance counselor, a friend, or someone else about going to college or technical school.
* Determine if you have the right kind of diploma and credits from high school to attend a technical school, community college, or university that you are interested in.
* When selecting a college, think about what your interests are and try to find a school that has a program that matches your interests.
* Make sure you check out all of your options before you decide what path to take.
* Just because the school offers some things you may need, that does not mean it is the right school for you.
* Do not do what everyone else is doing, do what is right for you.
* Ultimately, you need to make the final decision because you are the one going to school.
* Do not be afraid to make mistakes, and do not be afraid of what people think of you. You will learn from all experiences.
* If you don’t go to college, that is ok, you need to trust your gut and do what you want to do and not what you have been told to do.

**Accessibility and Accommodations**

* If possible, visit the school before you apply or commit to attending. Make sure it is accessible for you. Some accommodations are braille, ramps, elevators, wheelchair access, or academic support.
* Know how your disability affects you and what accommodations you need in order to be successful.
* You should contact the Disability Support Office to find out what documentation you need to register BEFORE school starts. The sooner you can start this process the better!
* Do not be afraid to fight for the accommodations you need to be successful.
* Sometimes you are going to have to fight for things that you need. You really should not have to fight for these things - like equal access and opportunities. It is worth the fight. It will pave the way for so many others behind you.
* It is important to know if you need assistance with schoolwork or personal care. You should ask for assistance before you find yourself in a situation where you need help. Do not wait until the last minute to get your schoolwork done, learn to manage your time.

**Living on Campus**

* Know your limitations and understand where you would be more comfortable living, on or off-campus.
* When living with someone, it is harder to live with strangers. You might try to find someone you know and live with them.
* When you are living off-campus, you should think about transportation and
how you will get to class.
* Make sure you take the time to look at all of your options at your school. Use the available resources they have in order to live more independently.

**Resources**

[Department of Aging and Rehabilitation Services](https://www.vadars.org/office.html#gsc.tab=0v)
[Job Accommodation Network](https://askjan.org/)
[Virginia Employment Commissions local offices](https://www.vec.virginia.gov/find-a-job/vec-local-offices)- Virginia Career Works
[Community College Workforce Alliance](http://ccwatraining.org)

Info Sheets were developed through interviews with young people with disabilities as part of the Inclusion Project.

**VCU, School of Education, Partnership for People with Disabilities**

**Virginia Department of Education**