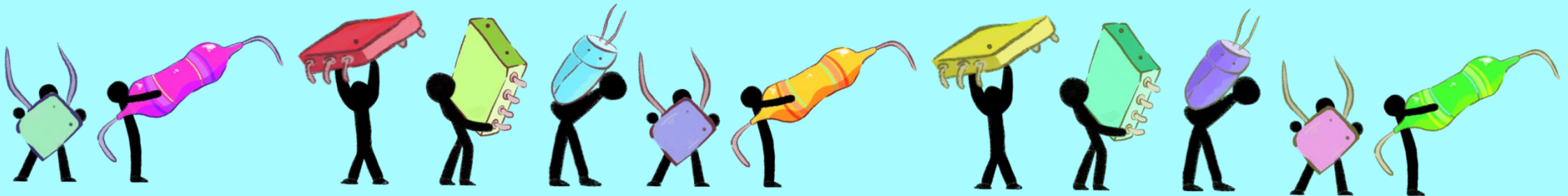


Washington Transition Program: Results and Lessons Learned from a WA-DVR Model Demonstration Project

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Artwork by Nessa Ankney

Welcome!

Our Team!

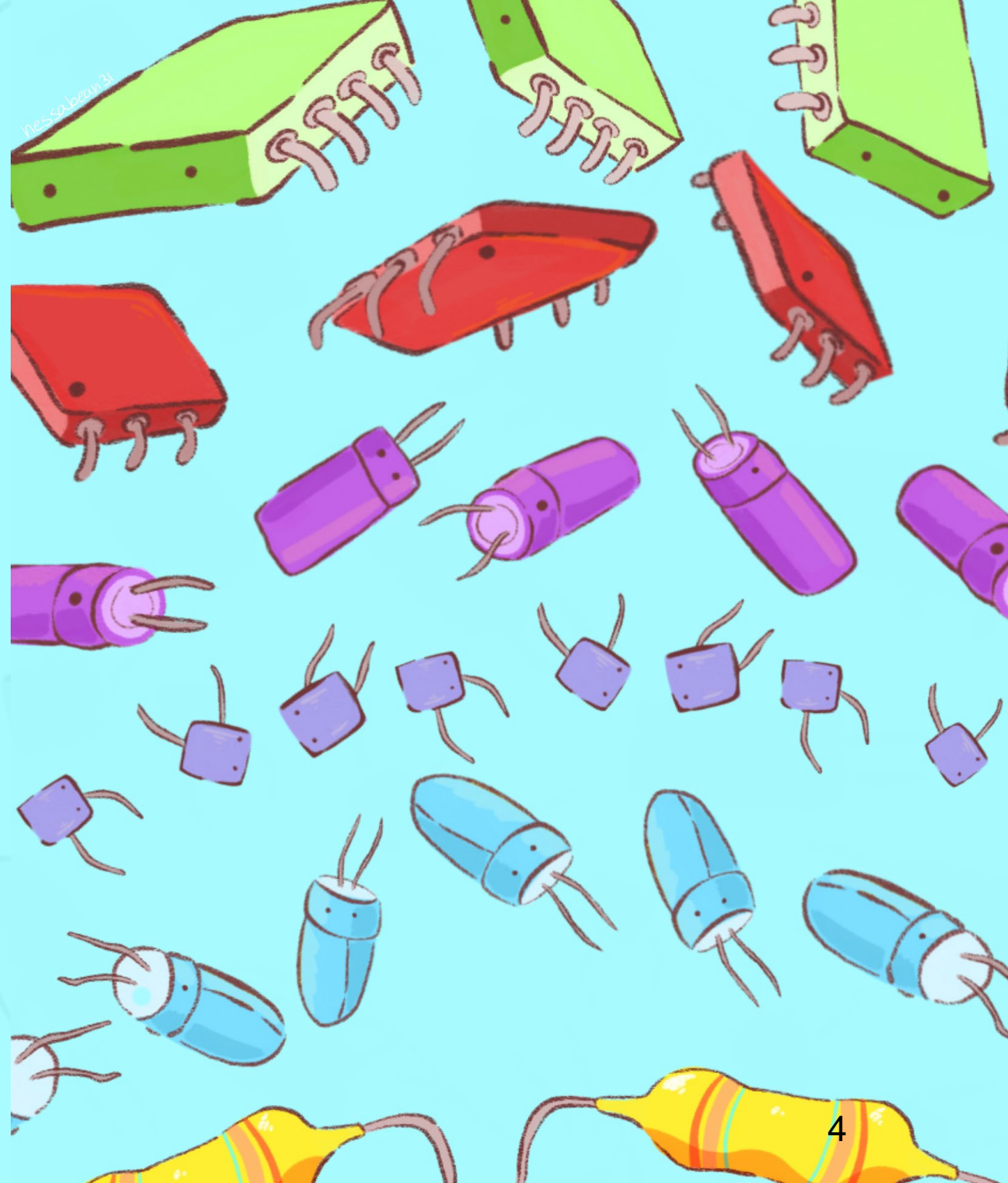
- Marcus Poppen, Ph.D.
- Holly Whittenburg, Ph.D.
- Anya Sheftel, Ph.D.
- Lauren Bruno, Ph.D.

Agenda

- Importance of School and Vocational Rehabilitation Collaboration
- Key Features and Implementation of the Washington Transition Program
- Evaluating the Impact of the Washington Transition Program
- Summary and Conclusion

School-VR Collaboration

Rainbow by Nessa Ankney



Collaboration between School and DVR (1 of 2)

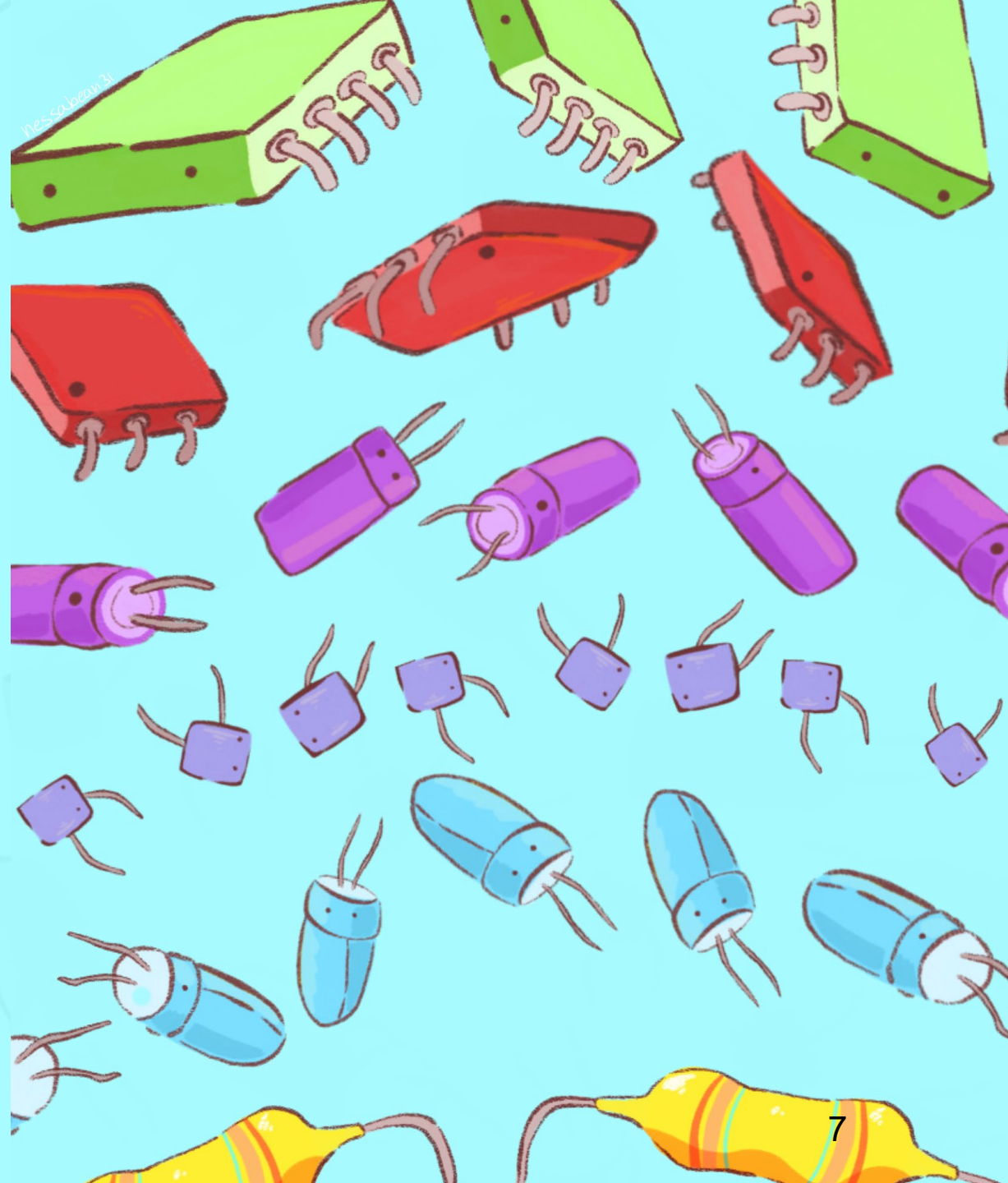
- Despite decades of targeted interventions, young adults with disabilities continue to experience poorer post-secondary employment outcomes than young adults without disabilities
- The *Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014* (WIOA) increased the level of involvement of VR agencies with schools and students with disabilities
- WIOA Requires VR agencies to provide or arrange for the provision of five required Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) to students and potentially eligible students with disabilities who have and have not applied for VR services

Collaboration between School and DVR (2 of 2)

- State VR agencies, including in Washington, continue to face an uphill battle in coordinated service delivery
- Educators express limited familiarity with what kinds of services VR can provide to their students, how their students can access these services, and describe the partnerships between schools and VR as uneven and limited
- Our team has been working with Washington DVR since 2017 to help understand and address barriers to the coordination and delivery of pre-employment transition services

Washington Transition Program (WTP)

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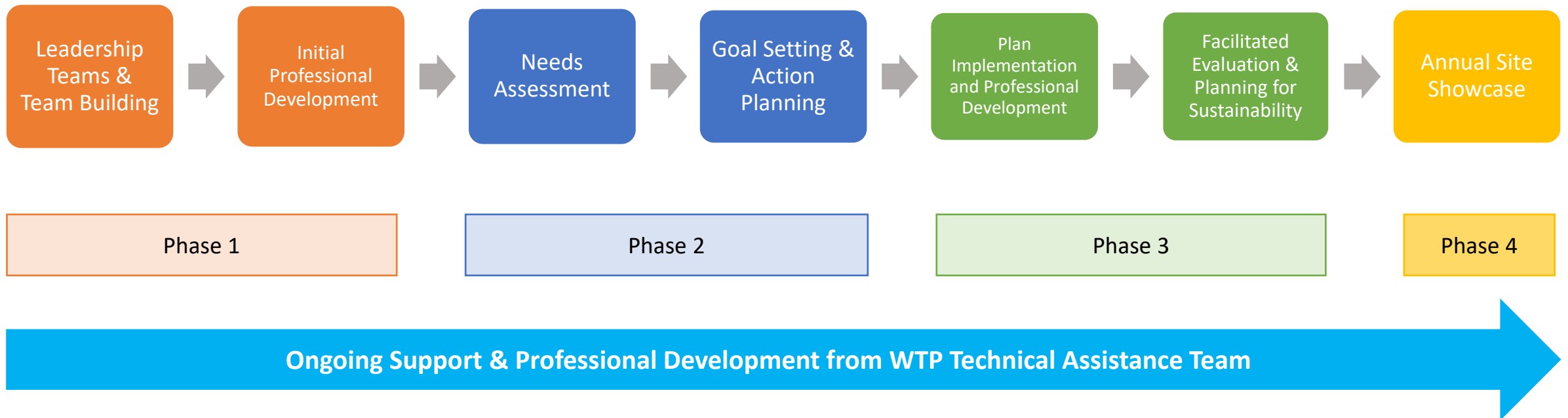


Washington Transition Program

- Post-secondary outcomes **improve** for students with disabilities when agencies like Vocational Rehabilitation are involved with students while they are still in school
- In collaboration with Washington DVR, we developed and piloted a model demonstration project in 2021/2022, based on:
 - a series of in-depth evaluations on the coordination and delivery of pre-employment transition services in Washington state
 - best-practice in school and VR collaboration from research and national guidance

Essential Features of the Washington Transition Program (WTP)

Student Focused and Culturally Responsive Transition Planning



Student-Focused and Culturally Responsive Transition Planning



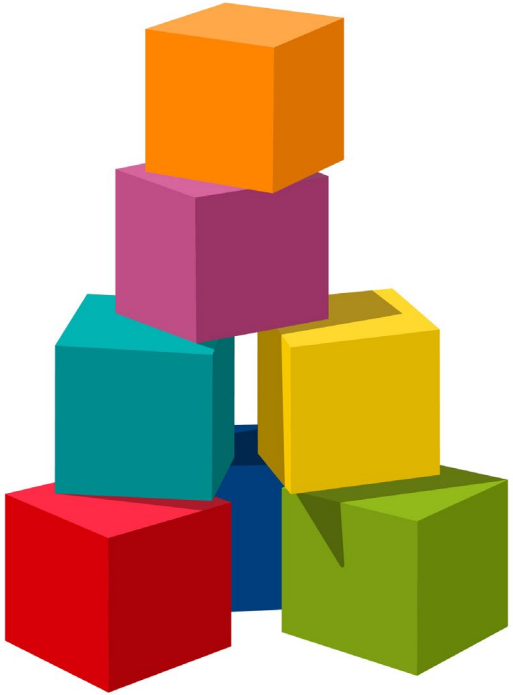
- Within a student-focused and culturally responsive approach, the individual and other key stakeholders are involved in the planning process and the individual is in the driver's seat

Leadership Teams and Team Building

- Leadership Team Members
 - Special Education Teacher
 - Transition Specialists/Paraprofessionals who provide transition services
 - Section 504 Plan Coordinator
 - Career and Technical Educator
 - School Psychologist/Counselor
 - School Administrator
 - DVR Counselor Liaison
 - DVR Regional Transition Consultant
 - Other?



Initial Professional Development



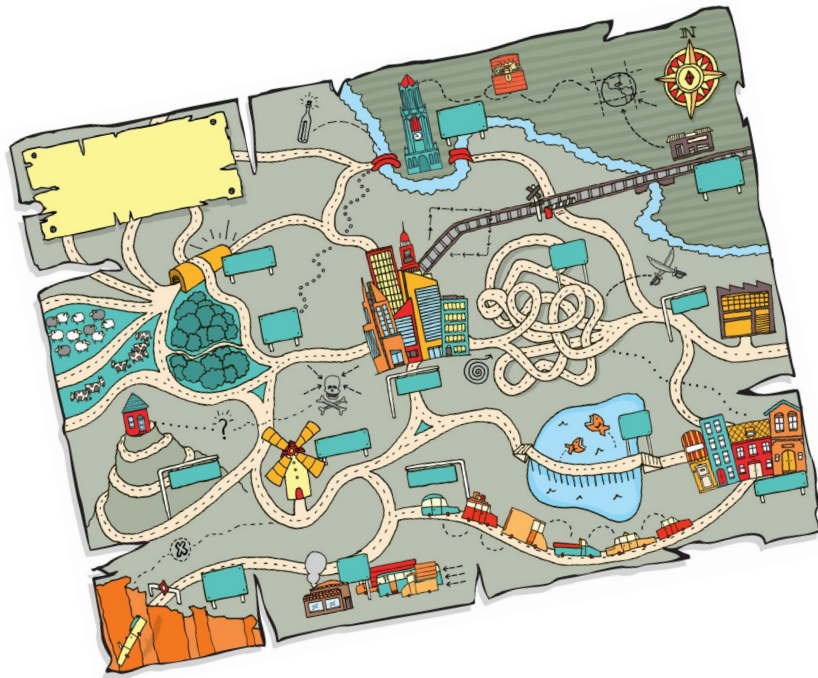
- Transition 101
- State and national policies and regulations
- Effective strategies for School and VR collaboration

Needs Assessment: Transition Self Assessment Tool (TSAT)

- Team members complete a needs assessment of current school-based transition services:
 - Availability
 - Accessibility
 - Coordination



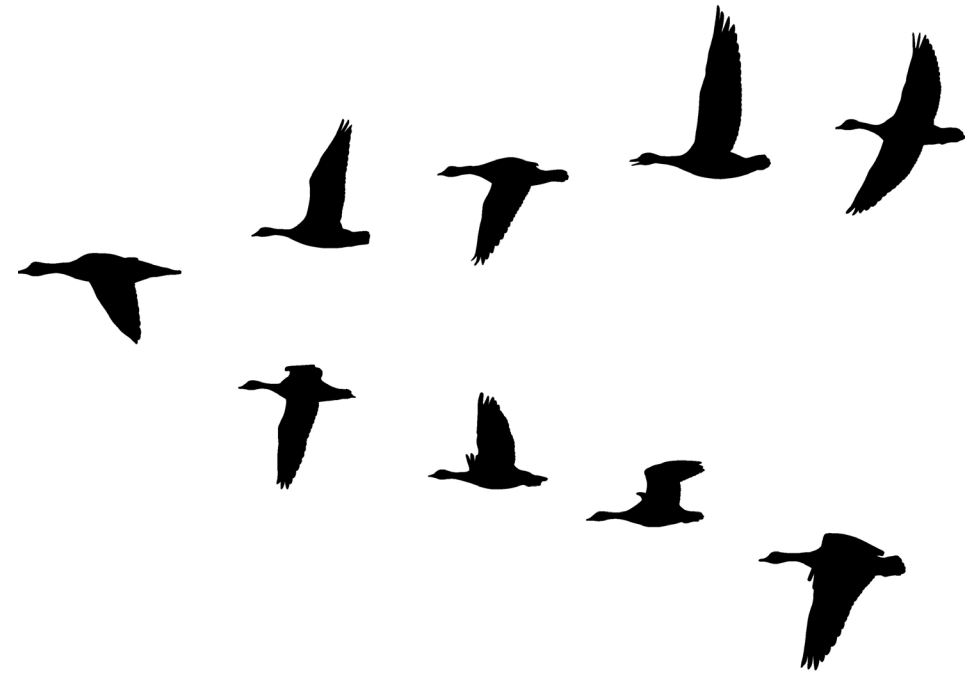
Goal Setting and Action Planning



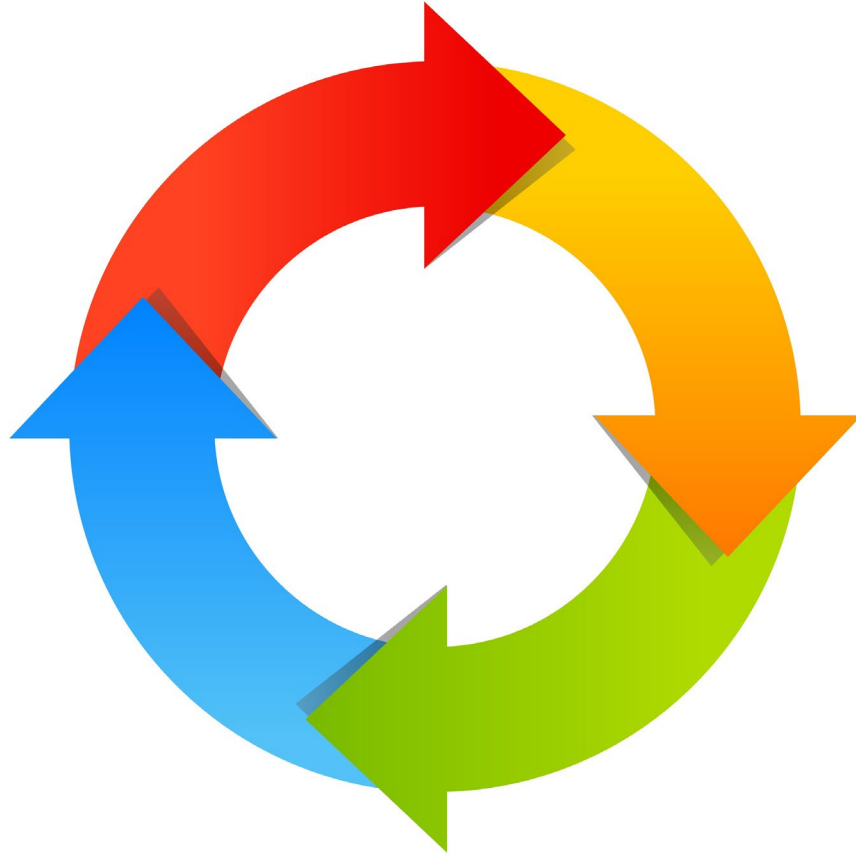
- Collaboratively review needs assessment data to identify gaps in services that can be addressed through coordinated with DVR
- Build an Action Plan that supports the team in addressing those goals

Plan Implementation and Progress Monitoring

- Monthly team meetings as a team to review and discuss progress towards their Action Plan
- Independent and small group work to carry out the next steps identified during each monthly team meeting



Updating Goals and Maintenance



- Continuous updates to goals and action plans based upon what's already been accomplished and future goals
- Maintenance of monthly team meetings and independent work
- Problem solving, onboarding new team members, and developing processes and procedures for continuation of service delivery

Ongoing Professional Development and Support

- Support from WTP Technical Assistant Providers to facilitate professional development opportunities based upon team's needs and goals





Model Site Activities

Professional Development

- Knowledge building
- Targeted needs assessment
- Information and resources
- Site-based training

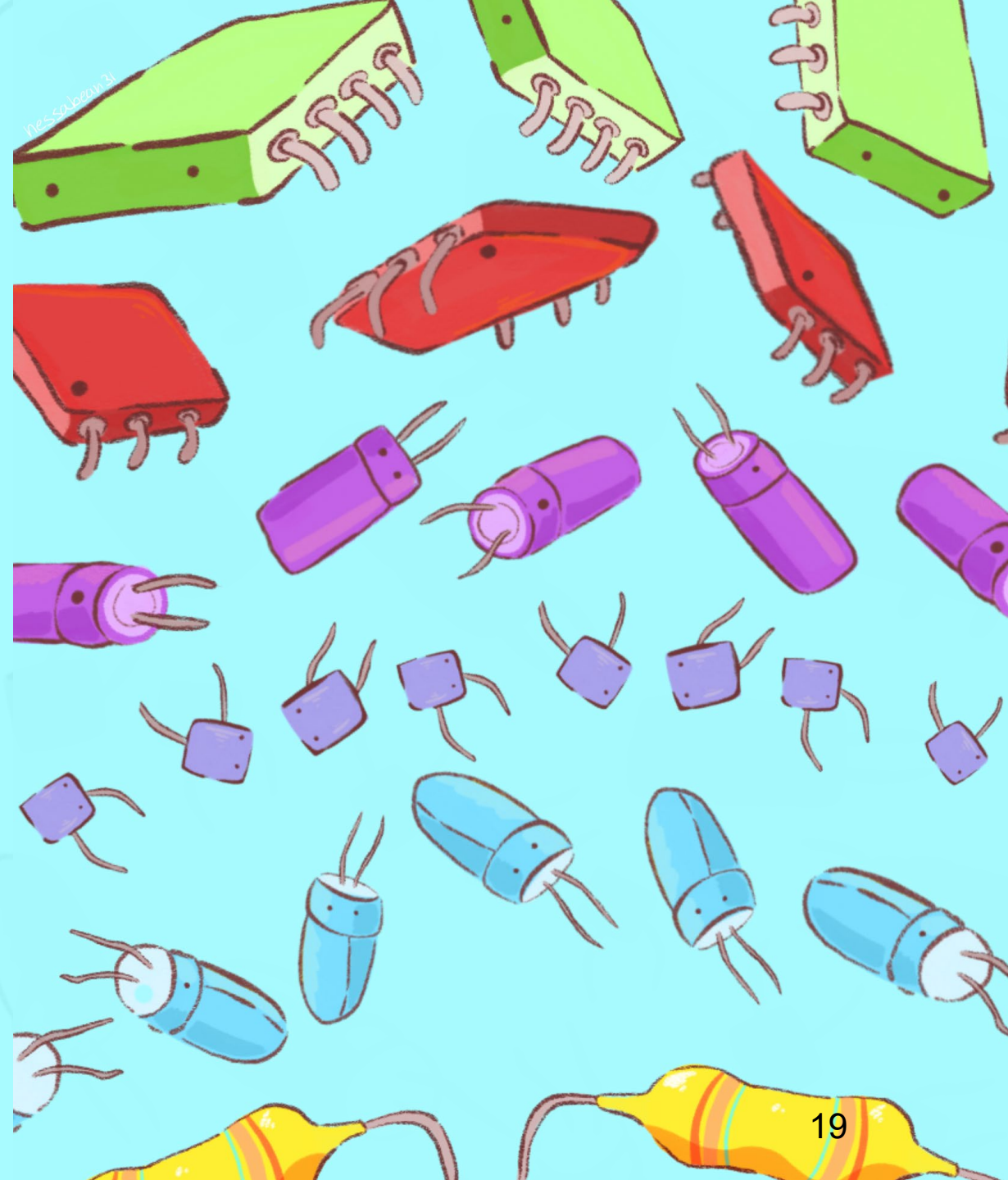
Collaboration

- Relationship building
- Regular meetings
- Goal development
- Progress monitoring
- Problem solving
- Outreach to families and students

Coordinated Activities

- Pre-ETS workshops
- Guest speakers
- Informational interviews
- Building business partnerships

Evaluating the Impact of WTP





2021-2022 WTP Evaluation: Survey Data





WTP Evaluation Data: Pre-Post Survey



WTP Evaluation Data: Pre-Post Survey (1 of 2)

Benefits

- Services to Students
- Resources for Families
- Understanding and Communication
- New Collaborative Relationships

What worked?

- Facilitation and Regular Meetings
- Getting on the same page
- Working as a team toward a goal
- Diversity of thoughts

WTP Evaluation Data: Pre-Post Survey (2 of 2)

Challenges

- Knowledge of DVR
- Time for meetings & work
- Having the right roles
- Values

Suggestions

- Continuation
- Clarifying Team Member Roles
- More Goal Setting & Action Planning
- More Professional Development



2021-2022 WTP Evaluation: Focus Group Data



WTP Evaluation Data: Qualitative

- **Five participants across four WTP sites**
 - High school special education teacher
 - School principal
 - Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor
 - Regional Transition Consultant
 - Middle school transition teacher
- **One hour interview/focus group**
 - Focused on experience of being part of 2021-2022 WTP cohort



Theme: Supports for Coordinated Service Delivery

- Collaborative Teams

“[T]he parent night ... was definitely a collaborative partnership, and it wouldn't have happened without everybody ... doing their part.” (RTC)

- Starting Early

“I find that really important...connection with the family, and maybe educating the family a little earlier gives them a better understanding of what to expect ...It gives them informed choice.” (VRC)

- WSU Support

“I think you guys at WSU really did a great job of facilitating and supporting those conversations so that we could ... get to where we needed to be and have those opportunities to talk.” (Special Educator)

Theme: Barriers to Coordinated Service Delivery

- Limited Transition Knowledge

“I think this, the people, the teachers in [school] didn't know anything really about transition at that point.” (Special Educator)

- Staffing

“All of a sudden, somebody steps out, and it's like, they, all that, all that knowledge went with them.” (VRC)

- Unequal Partnership

“We started relationship building, which was a tough road to hoe ...just getting the relationships even established with the school administration has been challenging.” (RTC)

Theme: Strategies for Coordinated Service Delivery

- Scope and Sequence of Services

“Personally, I just think that that is so important, um, the consistency of clear procedures as to if we were to go away ... what are those steps, and what does the next person coming in need to do, and consider, and think about, and those kind of things?” (School Administrator)

- Student Centered Services

“...the students are important, and this is a service that can benefit them, as well as support the school, I think that's the message that needs to get out. ...I think that yours is, is really the first very successful connection that we've had, that we've seen such good response, and I think we'll continue to do this.” (VRC)



Theme: Sustainability

- Expanding Out

“I've been kinda putting the bug in the ear of a couple of newer teachers that I think would really benefit, at least to try and get on board.” (Special Educator)

- Logistics

“We need sufficient staff. DVR needs sufficient staff.” (RTC)

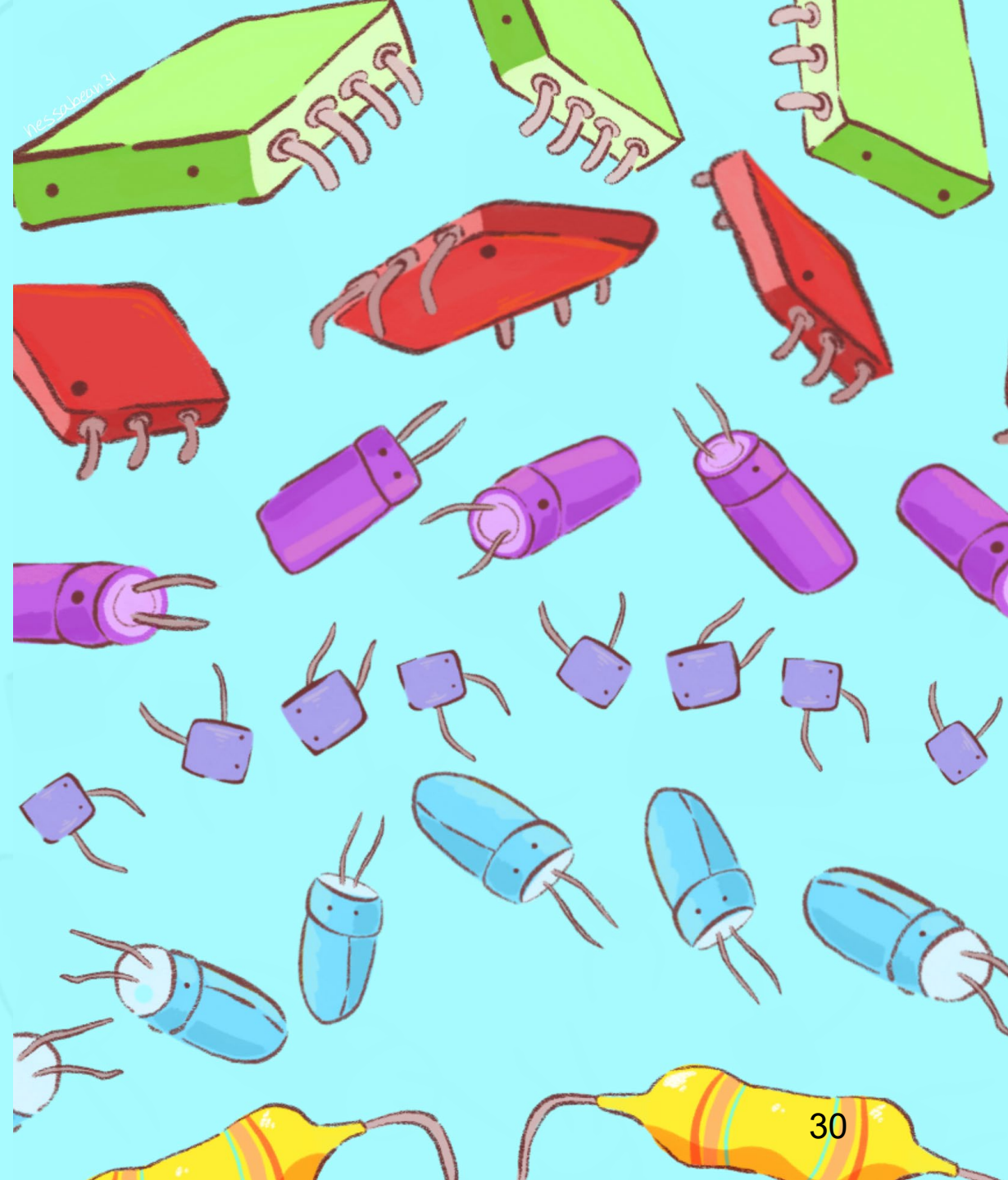
- Repository of Resources

“[M]aking sure that ...all students had resources ... to get to where they wanted to be.... They needed those resources.” (School Administrator)

- Smart Change

“Whatever we're doing, it needs to be adaptable and amenable to growth.” (RTC)

Summary & Conclusion



Summary & Conclusion

- We can improve post-school outcomes for students with disabilities by supporting collaboration between schools and Vocational Rehabilitation
- The Washington Transition Program is a research-informed model demonstration project funded by Washington Division of Vocational Rehabilitation
- The model demonstration project was successfully implemented in five sites during the 2021/2022 school year, and has continued into the 2022/2023 school year
- Participants report positive experiences and increased services to students because of their participation in the project and have offered tips and suggestions for improving the project in the future



Questions and Reflections





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