

# TRANSFORMING IMPOSSIBLE INTO POSSIBLE (TIP)<sup>®</sup>

A HUMAN-CENTERED MODEL FOR BUILDING PSYCHOLOGICAL SELF-SUFFICIENCY



The Transforming Impossible into Possible (TIP)<sup>®</sup> model is a curriculum framework developed by the Center for Research on Self-Sufficiency (CROSS) at Loyola University of Chicago that can be used to address a variety of social issues often faced by low-income or hard-to-serve individuals and their families.<sup>1</sup> Grounded in 12 years of research and practice, the TIP<sup>®</sup> model for promoting psychological self-sufficiency (PSS) provides the theoretical foundation for the development of the TIP<sup>®</sup> curriculum framework. TIP<sup>®</sup> uses a human-centered approach to strengthening character, identity, and motivation that enhances grit, resilience, and executive functioning. It includes the key process-based theoretical ingredients individuals need in order to overcome the various challenges they face when seeking success outcomes such as those related to economic self-sufficiency (e.g., employment, retention, earnings, and financial stability).

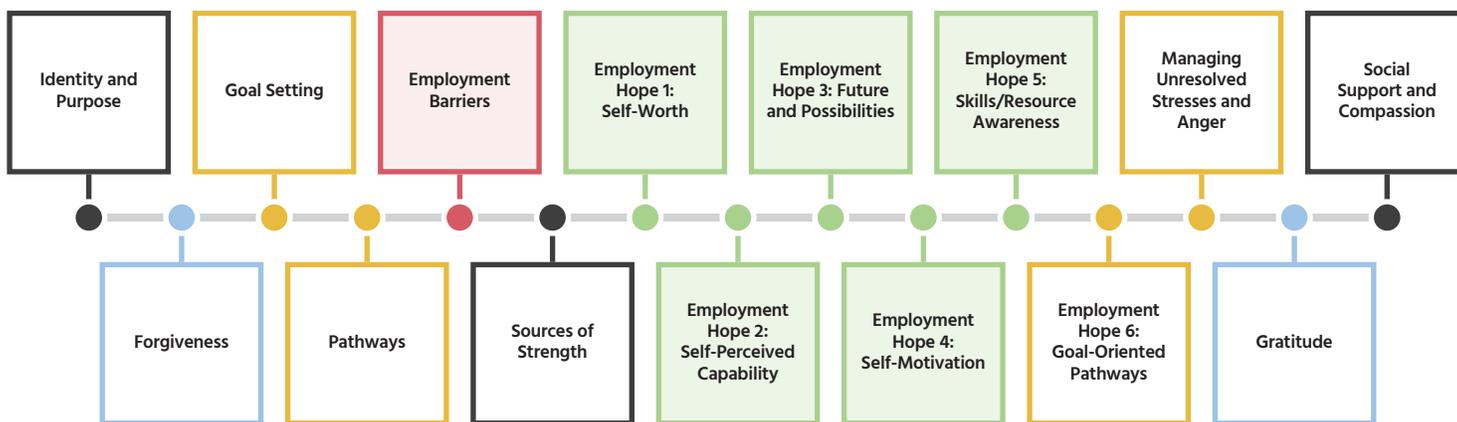
## Psychological Self-Sufficiency is:

- An individual goal-directed process, when one's outlook shifts from **seeing barriers** to success to **building and sustaining hope** toward achieving goals.
- The force inside someone that **drives cognitive and non-cognitive change** by transforming barriers into hope actions.

## Innovation

The innovative TIP<sup>®</sup> model encourages individuals participating in training or workforce development programs to rediscover the power within themselves to recognize and overcome employment barriers, ultimately transitioning these barriers into hope during job search or in the workplace.

The TIP<sup>®</sup> curriculum contains 15 transformative employment readiness modules (shown below) designed to help job seekers move from chronic unemployment—resulting from welfare receipt, homelessness, substance abuse, mental health issues, prison sentencing, or other experiences—into long-term, sustainable employment.



**About HPOGUP:** This research is funded in part through the Health Profession Opportunity Grants (HPOG) program. HPOG funds demonstration projects that provide training and education to low-income individuals for occupations in the healthcare field that pay well and are expected to experience labor shortages or be in high demand. The HPOG University Partnership Research Grants (HPOGUP), part of the comprehensive evaluation of the HPOG program, fund studies conducted by university researchers partnering with one or more HPOG programs to answer specific questions about how to improve HPOG services within local contexts.

<sup>1</sup> Loyola University of Chicago is conducting a study titled the Evaluation of Goal-Directed Psychological Capital and Employer Coaching in Health Profession Opportunity Development, which is funded by the Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation (OPRE) in partnership with Chicago State University (CSU) in Chicago, Illinois. The TIP<sup>®</sup> model is an integral component of this study.

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## Where are practitioners applying TIP®?

- Workforce training and employer engagement
- Youth empowerment
- Fatherhood and family strengthening
- Violence prevention
- Tribal nations
- Financial literacy and capability
- Returning citizen re-entry
- Health prevention and promotion

The TIP® model is unique because the associated learning resources and supportive services are anchored in the development of various psychological capital attributes through PSS. Other popular program models for hard-to-serve job seekers do not yet include formal program components that develop PSS. Further, employers find TIP® to be different from other workforce services because it provides tools for engaging newly hired and incumbent workers. The model offers a non-traditional collaborative “teaching and learning” environment, focused on participant-centered inside-out development.

## Results

TIP® simultaneously addresses the needs of both participants and employers—it represents **the missing link** between workforce development research and practice. Preliminary research has yielded some promising qualitative and quantitative process evaluation findings, although impact findings are still forthcoming. For example, the Lloyd A. Fry Foundation in Chicago and the Korea Foundation funded the implementation and impact evaluation of TIP® for the Greater West Town Training Partnership (GWTP) in Chicago and the national randomized controlled trial (RCT) demonstration of TIP® integration into the Self-Sufficiency Program in South Korea. Employer focus groups have indicated that the TIP® at GWTP project has the potential to reshape the structure and focus of workforce development programs to be more human-centered.



I was surprised to see the changes in candidates who were sent by the agency. We used to think that we are doing a favor or something good for society by hiring people from this organization but new employees started to bring in leadership and motivation skills that I have not seen before—he comes in everyday asking his co-workers, “How are you TIPPING?” I think employers benefit with candidates like this. We can teach these types of people to do any kind of work in our company.

—Employer Partner



## Application

One of the greatest strengths of TIP® lies in its rapidly expanding interdisciplinary applications. The TIP® target population has included ex-offenders, welfare-eligible single parents, limited English speakers, high school dropouts, and teen parents. The model is not only being applied in workforce development settings for employment outcomes, but is also being implemented (or considered for implementation) in other areas, such as fatherhood and family strengthening, tribal nation social and economic development, financial literacy and capability, human resources practices, adults re-entering from the criminal justice system (returning citizens), youth empowerment, violence prevention, police education and community peace building, health prevention and promotion, and social entrepreneurship. By applying the PSS theory to other developmental goals, TIP promises to have a positive personal and system-level impact at multiple levels, including:



Self-sponsored goals in other domains of individual’s lives due to PSS contributing to improved executive functioning and self-regulation (e.g., stability of housing, decreased likelihood of engaging in high-risk behavior, decreased likelihood of recidivism for those with criminal backgrounds, and increased likelihood of improvement in health status/care).



Generational and community impact for those who are parents and community members on their ability to follow through and support persistence in their children (e.g., school attendance, homework, and active participation in community activities).



An increased focus on holistic, human-centered engagement practices by employers and other system-level partners as they implement programs and policies. This could lead to reduced turnover/disengagement costs, while improving productivity and innovation as a result of increased leadership, ownership, and investment from employees, program participants, and other community members.