How are we doing with implementing employment supports good practices?

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Today’s agenda

❖ Background on employment consultant research
❖ Model of comprehensive employment support
❖ Daily activity survey
❖ Experiences from the field
What is an Employment Consultant?

- Employment Consultants (EC) are professionals who assist job seekers with disabilities explore, find, and secure employment.
  - Their activities often include: getting to know job seekers, finding job openings, engaging employers to hire, and facilitating the transition to a job.

- Other common titles for ECs:
  - Job Developer
  - Employment Specialist
  - Employment Navigator
  - Business Consultant
  - And MORE!
Why look at Employment Consultants?
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“...Regardless of the job seeker’s level of motivation, skill, experience, attitude, and support system, his or her ability to get a job will often depend on the effectiveness of employment specialists. Simply stated, if they are good, job seekers get jobs. If they are not, the barriers to employment for job seekers can become insurmountable...”

How are we researching ECs?

- Employment consultants (EC) survey (2009)
- Pilot activity log (2013)
- Community Rehabilitation Programs survey (2014)
- Employment consultants Interviews (2015)
- Daily survey (2016)
- Daily survey intervention study (2017)
A model of employment support

- Interviews with employment consultants, supervisors, job seekers, & family members.

What did we want to know?

- What specific employment support strategies are implemented by effective employment consultants when assisting job seekers with IDD?
- How do consultants make decisions about which support strategies meet the unique individual circumstances, preferences, and support needs of job seekers?
Comprehensive model of employment support

Get to know job seeker
- Job search criteria

Build trust
- Engage job seeker/family

Supports planning
- Smooth job entry

JOB MATCH

Find jobs/tasks
- Job offer

HIRE

Support after hire
- Retain/advance

ThinkWork!
“...I’ve got to establish some ground rules from the beginning: number one ground rule is ‘I’m not here to find you a job. You and I together as a team are going to find a job’...”
Quotes from the field

“...So always listen to the individual first and make sure that their voice is heard because it's very easy for that voice to get lost amongst agencies, the family, the state, the employer, if they're employed, other various community members and team members... Their voice needs to be weighed more than any other.”
"... we've done a better job at matching people in their jobs, now the job coach’s role has really shifted to sort of connecting the person directly with the employer... they're there to make connections so that they can back out of the job pretty quickly..."
What matters most?

- Build **trust** with the job seeker and their family
- Find out what **the job seeker wants** out of life and seek out employment that fits their vision for themselves
- Make decisions about your support strategies based on the JSs’ **individual preferences** and support needs
- **Be creative** in your job search. Look for tasks, not jobs
- **Network** with employers and community business partners
- **Involve the job seeker** in every step of the process and maintain contact after hire
A first step toward effectiveness is to record actual time use…” Peter Drucker

“If you don’t know where you are going, you’ll end up somewhere else” Yogi Berra

“Without data, you are just another person with an opinion” Sir Ken Robinson

Daily survey on employment supports
Research questions

• **What** support activities are implemented?

• **Who** is the primary interaction with?

• **Where** do these interactions take place?
Source of data

- Through an APSE call, 96 employment consultants (ECs) recruited from 41 employment programs in 17 states
- ECs supported job seekers with intellectual and developmental disabilities in gaining paid individual jobs
- After one year, 62 ECs in the study (35% attrition rate)

Paid individual employment means work that pays at least minimum wage, paid for by an employer, and in workplaces where the majority of co-workers do not have disabilities. Ongoing support may or may not be provided.
Response rate: 80-90%

Daily: June 1\textsuperscript{st}, 2016 to May 31\textsuperscript{st}, 2017
Monthly community of practice

- June: Overview of the preliminary findings.
- July 29: Getting to Know Job Seekers.
- September: Supports Before Hire.
- October: Finding Jobs.
- November: Support after Hire.
- January: Job interviewing.
- February: Meeting Employers.
- March: Job Negotiation.
- April: A Comprehensive Model for Support.
- May: Tying it All Together.

Summary and slides were sent to all participants and posted on a project website after each event.
Introducing three participants

• Fred Swanson, Madison West HS, WI
• Casey Ann Serquinia, Trillium Employment Services, WA
• Peter Boardman, The Olean Center, RI

Questions

• What motivated you to join the study and stick with it until the end?
• Can you talk about challenges and benefits of tracking the activities with the daily survey?
Demographics (N=62 ECs)

- **Gender:** Female 68%; Male 32%
- **Education:** High school 16%; Undergraduate 49%; Graduate 35%
- **Race:** White 89%, Black or African American 10%; Asian 2%
- **Ethnicity:** Non-Hispanic or Latino 97%; Hispanic or Latino 2%
- **Age:** 21 to 63 years old (Average 43 years old)
- **Tenure:** Up to 30 years (Average 6.3 years)
- **Supervisors:** Supervised 1 or more staff: 39%
Outcomes at baseline (N=62 ECs)

- **Adults with IDD hired**: Up to 30 (Mean=6.4)
- **Adults with other disabilities hired**: Up to 12 (Mean 1.4)
- **Time from job search to hire**: Up to 38 months (Mean=5.8)
- **Weekly hours**: 4 to 40 hours (Mean 18.7)
- **Hourly earning**: $7.25 to $14.00 (Mean $9.00)
Support before hire (The blue zone) was only 32%  
(N=72 ECs, Jun 2016 to Feb 28, 2017)
Time investment was about the same overtime
(N=72 ECs, Jun 016 to Feb 28, 2017)
The blue zone (supports before hire) varied across employment consultants (N=72 ECs, Jun 016 to Feb 28, 2017)

The percentage of time spent on different tasks varied across employment consultants. The blue zone represents getting to know, finding jobs, and other support before hire. The orange zone represents support after hire. The grey area represents administrative and not-employment related tasks.

- Job coaches
- Managers
- Job developers

Individual employment consultants

Percentage of time
From the participants...

Questions:

• Is there anything that you would change in the way you invest time in the blue zone (i.e. Getting to know JSs, Finding jobs, other supports before hire)?

• If yes, why, and what would it take to make the change?

• In what ways did the survey influence how you think about your work?

• If you had the power to change how employment programs operate, what would be the first thing that you would change?
(Preliminary) correlation between the blue zone and number of hires (N=72 ECs, Jun 016 to Feb 28, 2017)

![Graph showing the correlation between percentage of time in the blue zone and number of hires. The R² value is 0.0959.](image-url)
72% of the blue zone (supports before hire) was spent interacting with job seekers.
Almost half of the blue zone (supports before hire) was spent in office (N=72 ECs, Jun 016 to Feb 28, 2017)
Food for thought

• What would it take to increase the time invested in the blue zone (supports before hire)? Only about a third of the time was invested in the blue zone.

• Time investment in the blue zone varied substantially across employment consultants. What’s the most effective approach?

• What could be done to increase the time spent in community settings? Almost half of the blue zone time was spent in office.
Would you like to join a similar research project?

You are eligible if you meet ALL of the following:

- You provide direct services to job seekers with disabilities, leading to paid individual employment
- You have at least one year experience in this role
- You work full time
- At least 50% of job seekers on your caseload are people with intellectual or developmental disabilities
- You have a smartphone that you can use for this project

Enroll by June 25, 2017 here: Blsurvey.org

Find out more: http://www.thinkwork.org/s22

A participant said: “...It makes me think about my work day and allows me to put extra goals into perspective...”
More from our team about employment supports


Find the slides here: http://www.thinkwork.org/strand2

Questions?

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