

Employment Works!

The Vocational Rehabilitation Issue



Vocational Rehabilitation

IPS Supported Employment Collaboration

Oregon

Zoe Ann Northcutt, Supported Employment Coordinator for Options for Southern Oregon, and Pete Karpa, Branch Manager for Southern Oregon Office of Vocational Rehabilitation Services, discussed what it takes to develop a collaborative partnership that works well for their mutual clients.

The supported employment team meets monthly at the VR office to do the following: review the progress of shared clients; brainstorm strategies for clients who are facing problems; share job leads; and celebrate successes. The group also reviews timeframes for VR counselors and they work together to provide information for VR's six-month, nine-month, and one-year case reviews.

What is most impressive about this partnership has been the commitment to

streamline the intake process by doing away with the duplication of paperwork and unnecessary barriers. The goal was to only do the required forms that were most needed for VR policy. For example, the Options Initial Vocational Consultation form for Supported Employment met the necessary criteria for VR's intake. Options' employment specialists there-

fore, will make sure to take care of the client releases of information and deliver mental health background information in order to expedite VR eligibility.

Pete stated, "IPS is different from the traditional VR model—if there's a

chance that someone will be successfully employed tomorrow, you have to respond quickly." As a result, he eliminated lengthy assessing and testing to determine a person's vocational goal and in-



Zoe Ann Northcutt and Pete Karpa

Illinois

Gene Oulvey, Coordinator of Psychiatric Rehabilitation Services, Illinois Division of Rehabilitation Services, reports that as of July 2009, a new version of the Illinois Vocational Rehabilitation Program Casework Procedures Manual includes a chapter that is specific to working with IPS programs.

"After four years of implementing IPS in Illinois, we were thinking about the roles, responsibilities and contributions of VR to IPS. We wanted to eliminate anything we might be doing to impair a full commitment to the IPS model."

The IPS principle of "rapid job search" is one of several areas that the manual addresses. Gene reports, "Our policies say that the VR counselor has up to five months from referral to rehabilitation plan development, but that flies in the face of rapid job placement. The new manual shortens the maximum time for plan development from five months to ten days. This works because the VR counselor is meeting with the IPS team regularly and, in some cases, is hearing about people prior to their referral to VR.

Changes in the manual encourage counselors to ensure that IPS programs are receiving the funding that they need throughout the vocational process. A



Gene Oulvey

Continued on page 2

In This Issue

- 1 Vocational Rehabilitation - Illinois and Oregon
- 2 Vikki's Story
- 3 Missouri Vocational Rehabilitation
- 3 Oregon VR Closure Rates for IPS Supported Employment
- 4 Johnson & Johnson - Dartmouth Program

Continued on page 2

Vikki's Story

Working gives me a reason to get up in the morning. And that's the best medicine.

It is a long bus ride home but it feels good to work. I don't hear the voices that much when I am working.

The bottom line is that it gives me an opportunity to socialize, to leave my apartment and to not be 'that poor guy who doesn't work'.

After 10 years of unemployment, Vikki is now working full time and reports that things are going well. An employment specialist helped Vikki find a position as a pharmacy technician, though in order to keep her job, Vikki needed to obtain a license. At that point, help from the Maryland Division of Rehabilitation Services was crucial for Vikki to stay employed. Anne Wheeley (VR) worked with the local community college and helped Vikki pay for tuition, books and transportation so that she could complete training courses for the licensure exam.

Vikki reports that she found working with both a VR counselor and an employment specialist was helpful. "Anne (VR) made sure that I had everything I needed. I like my job now. I take prescriptions, give them to the pharmacist, count out the pills (which

are then checked with the pharmacist), and ring up customers. I would even like to continue in school to become a pharmacist."

Vikki's employment specialist, LeTicia, reports that in the beginning, her role included helping Vikki stay positive about the job search. "Initially, she had a little difficulty believing in herself but now she is doing wonderfully. Her boss likes her work and continues to give her more responsibilities. I can see her becoming more confident."

Anne thinks that Vikki's success has paid off, not only for herself, but for other people as well. "She's doing a great job. It is a very positive experience and others look at

her and begin to think about different types of jobs—not just entry-level jobs. Her experience has helped others to feel hopeful." ♦

Vikki reports that she found working with both a VR counselor and an employment specialist was helpful.

Individual Placement and Support (IPS)
is the evidence-based practice of supported employment for people with serious mental illness.

Illinois continued from page 1

milestone payment approach specific to IPS allows for payments at 15 days employment, 45 days and 90 days.

Another change is a mandate that there is a formal meeting including the VR counselor and the rest of the IPS team at least once a month. For all programs other than IPS, the counselor must meet with the customer every eight weeks, but is not necessarily mandated to meet with anyone else." In early 2010, training in all five regions of Illinois will help counselors think about strategies to use the new practices and act as full participants of local IPS teams.

Manual changes were crafted by Douglas Morton, Manager of Strategic Planning, and Gene with the approval and support of Robert Kilbury, Director of the Division of Rehabilitation Services, and Jeff Standerfer, Bureau Chief for Field Services. To obtain a copy of the Illinois Vocational Rehabilitation Program Casework Procedures Manual, contact: Gene.Oulvey@illinois.gov ♦

For a longer and more comprehensive version of this article, please go to: http://dms.dartmouth.edu/dsec/voc_rehab/illinois.pdf

Oregon continued from page 1

stead chose to focus on a few potential categories such as on-the-job training, transportation expenses and clothing. This not only allowed him to put clients into plan status more quickly but also enabled him greater flexibility to revise the plan when clients changed their vocational goal.

Pete and Zoe Ann can't say enough about how their partnership has allowed each of them to access resources that increase the quality of services and level of support that clients receive. ♦

The Supported Employment Website

is a rich source of information and tools to facilitate the

implementation of evidence-based supported employment.

This will allow you to download a variety of materials including the

2008 fidelity scale,

posters, videos,

pamphlets and

newsletters. In addition, you can subscribe to our newsletter, Employment

Works!, and order

additional books and materials.

Visit our website at
[http://dms.
dartmouth.edu/prc/
employment/](http://dms.dartmouth.edu/prc/employment/)

Claire Beck, LPC, CRC Assistant District Supervisor Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, Missouri

When Missouri began using the IPS supported employment approach, it meant that, as a VR counselor, I needed to try some new approaches. Rapid job search and working with people who aren't "stable" has been more positive than I would have guessed, although intimidating at the start!

Experimenting with the rapid job search approach

I'm a mental health counselor with VR and one source of my referrals is our state hospital. People are incarcerated there because of forensic issues and they are usually people who also have a lot of barriers to employment. After I attended a state meeting about IPS supported employment, I received three new referrals from the state hospital. I thought I would try an experiment with rapid job search. Each person wanted to work and had a job goal, so I suggested that we just try job development and skip the assessment. I was surprised when two of the three people got jobs within a few months. The third person got job offers but turned them down due to his psychosis.

Until a few years ago, we used evaluations routinely, but since that experiment I've continued to use the rapid job search approach for almost everyone. I find that people are happier with the service. In the past, people complained about assessments because they didn't see how that was getting them a job. Rapid job search works well for me and my clients.

Working with the mental health team

As a VR counselor, I've always thought it was important to talk with the mental health clinicians. For 14 years I have had a caseload of about 170 people, but I still made a point of spending at least a half a day each week at the mental health center. While there, I spoke with clients, community support workers and psychiatrists so that everyone was on the same page.

Practicing "zero exclusion"

Supported employment means working with people even if they are still having symptoms or using sub-



Claire Beck, LPC, CRC
Assistant District Supervisor

stances like alcohol or drugs. In the past we thought we had to remove all barriers before moving ahead with a job. But now I am thinking that if someone works, that will be an asset and help them control their drinking or their symptoms. People who are employed relapse much less frequently than people who are unemployed. If you aren't working and your time isn't busy, your only social outlet might be hanging out

with people who use drugs. It's also the incentive of a paycheck. People want to fit in with their co-workers. They will try to do well.

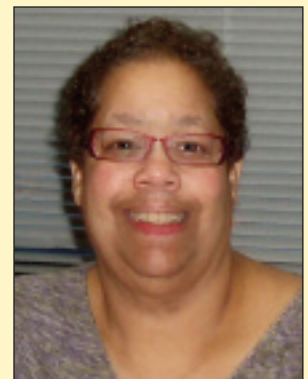
Staying positive

My advice to other VR counselors trying to use the IPS supported employment approach is to try to avoid arbitrary rules such as closing cases for missing three appointments or requiring 90 days sobriety. Throw those rules out the window and work with people individually. It's important to be flexible and positive. Help each person learn from experience and focus on moving forward. I know that it takes time and patience but I also know that it works. We're in the fortunate position of being able to use resources to help people. That's what I want to do. ♦

Oregon VR Closure Rates for IPS Supported Employment

Stephaine Parrish Taylor, Administrator Oregon Office of Vocational Rehabilitation Services

In fiscal year 2008, successful closure rates for IPS supported employment programs were 65%, while successful closure rates for other VR clients were 58%. The federal standard is 55%. The take-away message for me is that, as a consequence of IPS, we exceeded our target with this population and outperformed our overall outcomes.



Stephaine Parrish Taylor

Staying positive

Employment Works!

Dartmouth Psychiatric Research Center
Rivermill Commercial Center
85 Mechanic Street, Suite B4-1
Lebanon, NH 03766

Non Profit Org
US Postage
Paid
Cleveland OH
Permit #1723

J&J-Dartmouth Updates

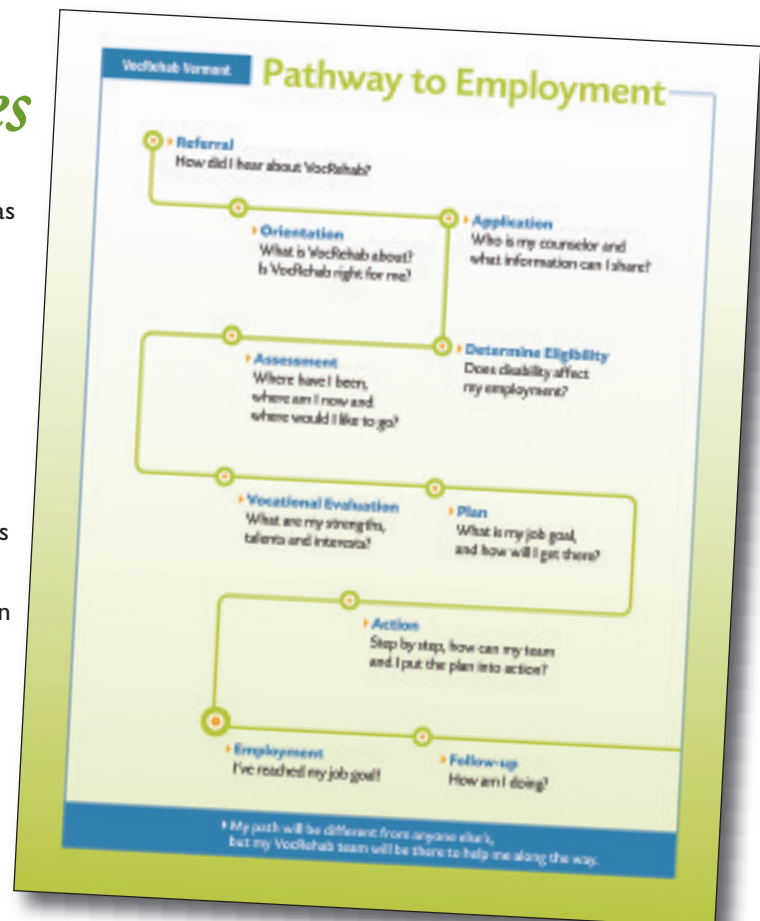
Welcome Kentucky. In October 2009, Kentucky joined the Johnson & Johnson-Dartmouth Community Mental Health Program as the 12th state in the project.

Peer-Operated Services Implement IPS Supported Employment. In response to growing interest about strategies to involve consumer-led services, the Johnson & Johnson-Dartmouth Program has a new partner in New Jersey. Collaborative Support Programs in New Jersey (CSPNJ) is a statewide agency that will convert their current employment services to the evidence-based approach. We anticipate that the agency's expertise in wellness education, fighting stigma, and disclosure of disability will help the learning collaborative enhance IPS supported employment services.

Family Project Grows. In September 2009, four additional states joined the Family Advocacy for IPS Supported Employment Project. Family representatives from Missouri, Ohio, Oregon, and South Carolina traveled to Dartmouth Psychiatric Research Center to begin working on advocacy plans for their respective states. Other states in the project include Connecticut, Illinois, and Vermont.

IPS Supported Employment Online Course. The Dartmouth Psychiatric Research Center has developed an online training course for practitioners who are not yet familiar with IPS supported employment, or for those who are interested in enhancing their skills. The 13-week course will be available to practitioners this summer. ♦

Please watch our website for more information about these projects.



Vermont VR poster illustrates the pathway of services for VR customers.