

VR/IRT FACILITATOR TIPS

INTEGRATED RESOURCE TEAM (IRT) OVERVIEW

An IRT is initiated on behalf of an individual participant who is experiencing multiple challenges to employment and who will likely need to access multiple resources, supports, and programs across multiple systems, to address that one individual's specific needs.

It brings together a team of diversified service providers, including community and partner agencies, and other traditional and non traditional partners, who work together with the individual participant to strategize on how services, resources, and supports can be coordinated around that individual to help reach and maintain an employment goal.



BEFORE YOU BEGIN - REMEMBER THIS

The participant, along with the team of service providers, comes together to reach consensus around three main components:

- **Employment Goal**
- **Lines of Communication**
- **Sequence of Services**

Facilitation

As a counseling facilitator, key tips include: **actively listening to participants, maintaining objectivity in discussion, establishing clear expectations, managing team dynamics, encouraging diverse viewpoints, using open-ended questions**, and adjusting your facilitation style to suit the group's needs while ensuring a safe and supportive environment for everyone involved.

KEY STRATEGIES TO REMEMBER AS A VR/IRT COUNSELING FACILITATOR:

• **Active listening:**

Pay close attention to what the individual and partners are saying, using verbal and non-verbal cues to demonstrate understanding and encourage further sharing. **IRT- Listen to any concerns expressed by the individual. Listen to partners in relation to identified needs concerning their field of expertise*

• **Neutrality:**

Avoid taking sides or expressing personal judgments; instead, focus on facilitating open dialogue and exploration of different perspectives. **IRT- focuses on the individual client's needs*

• **Clear Expectations:**

Communicate the individual goals, ground rules, and desired participation level upfront to set the tone and manage group

dynamics. **IRT-Identify how partners will be informed of progress or needs.*

- **Group Dynamics Management:**

Be aware of power imbalances within the group and actively work to ensure everyone has a voice and feels comfortable sharing. **IRT- Discuss what resources are available and needed and what the prospective outcomes are expected based on accessing a certain resource.*

- **Open-Ended Questions:**

Ask questions that encourage thoughtful responses and deeper exploration of topics rather than leading questions with yes/no answers. **IRT-Discussion should be open around career exploration, identity/goals of the individual, challenges/barriers*

Facilitation

- ⇒ **Build Rapport:** Create a safe and trusting environment by showing genuine interest in participants' experiences and validating their feelings.
- ⇒ **Remain Confidential:** Emphasize the importance of confidentiality within the group and uphold ethical boundaries.
- ⇒ **Be Flexible:** Be prepared to adapt your approach based on the group's needs and dynamics, adjusting activities and discussion points as necessary.
- ⇒ **Utilize Positive Reinforcement:** Acknowledge and appreciate participants' contributions to foster a supportive and encouraging atmosphere.
- ⇒ **Review Self-Awareness:** Be mindful of your own biases and how they might impact your facilitation, actively working to remain objective.