

## **IDVR Counselor Training Series**

### **Comprehensive Assessment of Vocational Needs Part 1**

#### **Welcome**

Welcome to the Idaho Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor Training. This training is provided by New Hampshire Department of Education, Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation, and Interwork Institute of San Diego State University. It is part of the Agency's effort to provide readily available training support to vocational rehabilitation counselors. For further information contact: [shannon.wilcox@vri.idaho.gov](mailto:shannon.wilcox@vri.idaho.gov).

#### **Introduction**

This module will focus on the assessment of the participant's vocational rehabilitation needs.

Once eligibility has been established, the participant and counselor work on developing a plan of services designed to lead to a successful employment outcome. This plan is called an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) and is the road map for the participant's rehabilitation process.

#### **Assessment of Vocational Rehabilitation Needs**

An assessment of vocational rehabilitation needs is more commonly known as a comprehensive assessment. The counselor and customer engage in the comprehensive assessment process to determine an appropriate vocational goal and services needed to achieve that goal. To the extent possible, the comprehensive assessment should use existing information whenever possible. However, in cases where additional information is needed, other assessment activities can take place to determine vocational abilities and needs.

The comprehensive assessment process is ongoing throughout the life of a VR case. It is generally most intensive when a customer is determined eligible and before the participant and counselor are developing initial IPE. Counselors and participants work jointly to develop a plan that offers a reasonable promise of success and is consistent with the abilities and circumstances of the participant. During this phase of plan development, counselors are expected to provide counseling and guidance to help customers identify appropriate strategies to address barriers to reach their vocational goal.

## **Counseling and Informed Choice**

### **Purpose of Counseling**

One of the primary purposes of counseling is to assist participants understand and choose options that will assist them in overcoming, accommodating, eliminating, or diminishing the barriers to employment created by the disability. This component is a large part of why VR counselors are unique and distinguishes them from general placement and career coordinators. As a VR counselor, you are provided opportunities to utilize your unique skills and abilities to assist individuals with disabilities to overcome impediments to employment.

### **Applying Informed Choice**

Counselors are responsible for ensuring that IDVR customers are provided the opportunity for full engagement and participation in decisions regarding the services they receive. Full participation in decision making is not the same as the ability to make any choice. Agreeing to a participant's choice without providing counseling and guidance regarding the potential implications of those choices may be counterproductive.

Let's look at some examples and determine if sufficient counseling was provided to assist the participant in making informed decisions that have a reasonable chance of success.

### **Case Study – John**

Please review the case study of John and decide which example (1 or 2) best promotes the welfare of the participant and is most likely to result in successful employment.

#### **Case Study – John (Example 1)**

John informs his counselor he wants to learn computers and pursue employment in the clerical field. The counselor agrees to this choice and completes an IPE for John to take computer classes and for job placement.

#### **Case Study – John (Example 2)**

- John informs his counselor he wants to learn computers and pursue employment in the clerical field. Upon exploring this request with John, the counselor finds that John does not have a passion for clerical work. John cannot think of any other type of work that he can physically perform since becoming injured.
- The counselor asks John if he would like to participate in a vocational assessment to explore other options. John is excited that there might be other opportunities,

particularly since he enjoys interaction with others and was not looking forward to being isolated at a computer all day.

- His vocational testing results indicate both a low interest and aptitude for conventional clerical duties but a high interest and aptitude for sales and influencing others.
- The counselor encourages John to complete additional research and further explore various sales occupations. Together they identify sales opportunities that are within his physical abilities and will meet his income needs. They also explore employers' expectations when making hiring decisions. They identify accommodations that will address his functional limitations and allow him to successfully perform required job tasks. Using this information, they jointly agree to and develop his IPE.

### **Case Study – Sally**

Please review the case study of Sally and decide which example (1 or 2) best promotes the welfare of the participant and is most likely to result in successful employment.

#### **Case Study – Sally (Example 1)**

Sally informs her counselor she wants to be a social worker since she likes to help others. Although Sally has never worked in this field, she does have a high school diploma. She also appears to have the aptitude to complete college, so the counselor proceeds to complete an IPE for Social Work.

#### **Case Study – Sally (Example 2)**

- Sally informs her counselor she wants to be a social worker since she likes to help others. Although Sally has never worked in this field, she does have a high school diploma and appears to have the aptitude to complete college. However, Sally has a poor work history. She either left or was terminated from jobs because she was not able to deal with the stress of working with others.
- The counselor asks Sally to do some additional research on social work occupations, including interviewing social workers or social worker supervisors in order to get a better idea of the stressors involved in the job.
- Sally discovers there is more to the occupation than just meeting with others and telling them what to do. Sally's counselor encourages her to complete some activities aimed at helping Sally determine whether there are accommodations, selective job placements, or techniques that she can use to manage stress.
- Sally decides to begin stress management counseling and social skills training to see if she can develop the coping mechanisms needed to succeed in this field. Meanwhile Sally decides she wants to pursue less stressful employment at the current time with the possibility of reconsidering the social work field at a future date.

## **Case Study – Frank**

Please review the case study of Frank and decide which example (1 or 2) best promotes the welfare of the participant and is most likely to result in successful employment.

### **Case Study – Frank (Example 1)**

- Frank indicates he wants to pursue employment as an accountant. He has good math and analytical skills. The counselor completes an IPE for Frank to attend college to obtain an accounting degree.
- Frank has limited use of his arms and hands resulting in the inability to write. However, he has learned how to access a computer if someone else turns it on, and he uses the back of a pencil to push keys one at a time.
- As this is slow and cumbersome his counselor encourages him to go to the college's disability resource center to get a note taker and other accommodations, he will need to be successful in college.

### **Case Study – Frank (Example 2)**

- Frank indicates he wants to pursue employment as an accountant. He has good math and analytical skills.
- He has limited use of his arms and hands resulting in the inability to write. However, he has learned how to access a computer if someone else turns it on, and he uses the back of a pencil to push keys one at a time.
- The counselor recommends they complete an assistive technology evaluation to determine if there are more efficient ways for him to access the computer. Although Frank felt he would enjoy being an accountant he did worry that he might be too slow to be competitive in the field, and he readily agrees to the evaluation.
- Together he and his counselor review the results of the evaluation and the requirements of his desired position. They are able to identify technology that would allow him to successfully complete college and perform the job duties at a competitive rate. They complete the IPE and include these services.

## **Lesson Completed**

You have completed the first part of the lesson for this module. Continue with the second lesson of this module.