

Teamwork Makes the Dream Work: Maximizing Success with the Integrated Resource Team (IRT)

The George Washington University

Center for Rehabilitation Counseling Research and Education (CRCRE)

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Objectives

After participating in this session, attendees should be able to:

- Describe the Integrated Resource Team (IRT) model as a collaborative intervention across multiple systems that aims to enhance traditional vocational rehabilitation services for individuals with disabilities.
- Explain how the IRT model aims to promote participant autonomy, self-determination and increased engagement in the VR process through strategies such as active resource coordination and community collaboration.
- Examine how the Virginia Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services (VA DARS) has implemented IRT through several Federally funded projects.

The Integrated Resource Team

Introduction and Overview

Historical Background

- Born from the Disability Program Navigator (DPN) Initiative and its successor, the Disability Employment Initiative (DEI), the Integrated Resource Team (IRT) model was developed in response to the need to reduce duplication and take a more coordinated approach to service delivery for participants who needed to access programs and supports across multiple service systems.
- Through the work of the Targeted Communities Technical Assistance Center (TC-TAC), also known as Project E3, the IRT model was adapted to explicitly be implemented by state Vocational Rehabilitation programs and piloted in three states (KY, OR, VA), upon which it was further refined.

What is an Integrated Resource Team?

- Designed to support an individual participant who experiences multiple challenges to employment
 - Multiple Resource Needs
 - Brings together multiple programs across multiple systems
 - Focused on a specific employment goal

What an Integrated Resource Team Is/Is Not...

What an IRT IS:

- An approach focused on a specific individual participant who is present and an integral part of the team
- Each IRT is unique and members will change with each new IRT that is formed
- The main purpose of an IRT is EMPLOYMENT

What an IRT is NOT:

- An interagency committee consisting of various disability/community agencies who focuses on systemic or community-level issues where membership and participation is consistent and static
- A multi-stakeholder group who comes together to talk about and/or “staff” current or potentially shared participants
- Business as usual (i.e., VR Counselor, VR-paid Provider, and Participant)

Goals & Benefits of the Integrated Resource Team (IRT)

Goals

Enhances and promotes:

- Relationship Building
- Communication
- Coordination
- Collaboration

Benefits

Promotes:

- Core rehabilitation values
- Shared accountability
- Cross-agency education
- Shared outcomes

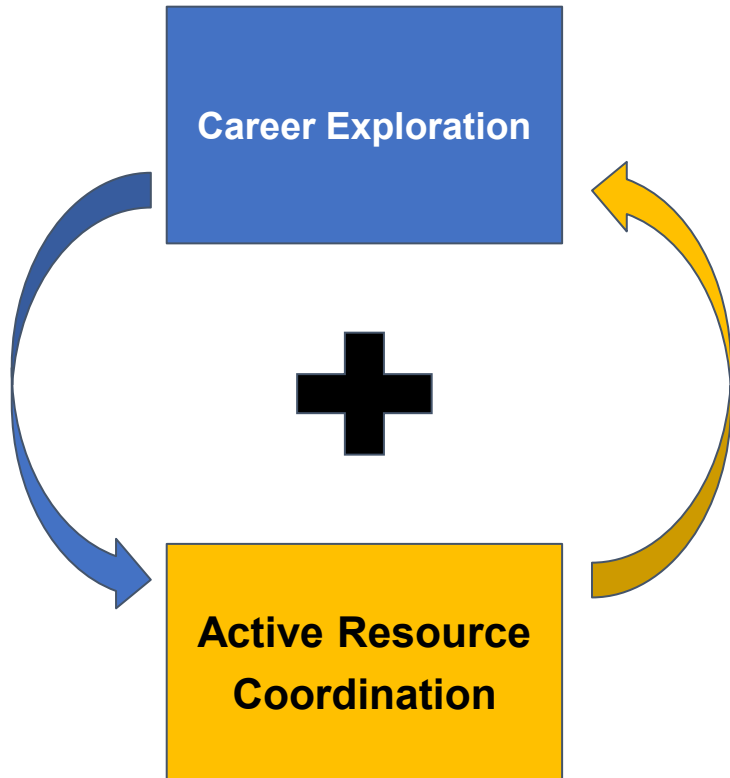
Who *Might* Participate in an IRT?

In addition to the participant (who is always present at an IRT meeting), an IRT may consist of a wide range of community partners, contracted providers, and/or others based on the participant's individual and unique needs and preferences.

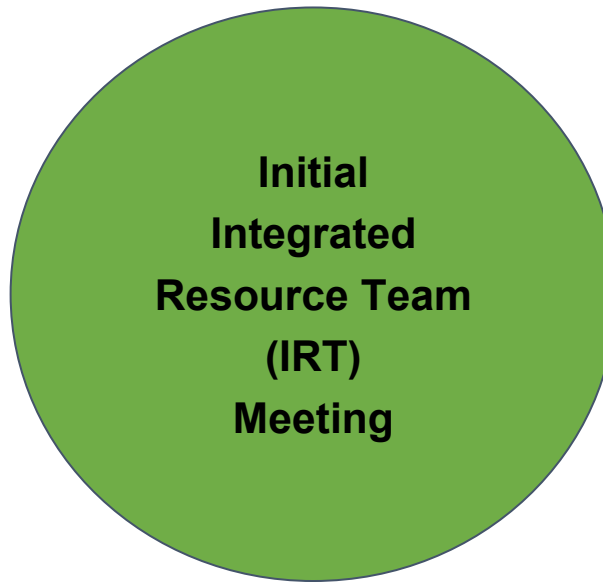
- Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor
- Natural Supports/Family
- Developmental Disability Specialist
- Behavioral Health Specialist
- Medicaid Waiver Case Manager
- Supported Employment Specialist (including contracted providers)
- Local School District
 - Special Education Coordinator
 - Special Education Teacher
 - Paraprofessional
- Small Business Administration
- Self-Employment Specialist
- Community Work Incentive Coordinator
- Housing Provider
- Independent Living Center
- Workforce Partners
- Community Rehabilitation Providers
- Faith-Based Organization
- Volunteer Network
- Representative Payee
- Peer/Family Mentor

**This is not an exhaustive list*

Phase I



Phase II



Phase III



Career Exploration & Active Resource Coordination

- The purpose of an IRT is to help the participant attain their specific competitive integrated employment goal.
- Career exploration and active resource coordination (ARC) work hand-in-hand to help inform the formation of the IRT.
- The career exploration helps to develop a specific and concrete employment goal while the active resource coordination identifies the supports and resources needed in order to help the participant to reach their specific employment goal.

Forming the Integrated Resource Team

- Once the participant has identified their employment goal, and the VR Counselor and participant have conducted the necessary active resource coordination, discuss with your participant and/or their natural supports their role as an active member of the IRT.
- After establishing the participant's role, whenever possible, a face-to-face (whether virtually or physically) meeting should be convened with the partners engaged during active resource coordination and the participant.
- The purpose of the meeting is to reach consensus around three key parameters:
 - The participant's employment goal
 - Lines of communication
 - A sequence of services

The IRT Meeting: A Multi-Partner Agreement

- After reaching consensus around the employment goal and the lines of communication and using what is learned about the different services providers during the discussion around sequence of services, agencies agree to provide specific supports and resources based on what is available through their programs in support of the participant obtaining their employment goal.
- Agreement around a timeline or need for further IRT meetings should also be discussed.
- Each agency completes their own specific plan/required documentation and either indicates support provided by other agencies in their MIS system (if the MIS has that functionality) or case notes partner involvement.

Virginia Department of Aging and Rehabilitative Services (VA DARS)

Targeted Communities - Project E3

Real Pay for Real Jobs: Education & Outreach,
Partnership Development, Individualized
Services, and Capacity Building (EPIC)
Approach

Project E3/Targeted Communities ⁽¹⁾

Geographic Areas

- Martinsville/Henry County
- Hampton Roads

Targeted Populations

- Participants with substance use disorders and/or
- Mental illness

Project E3/Targeted Communities (2)



Strategies

- Adapted community-based participatory research approach
 - Local Advisory Council & Annual Participant Focus Groups
- Outreach and Engagement/Partnership Development
 - Professional Development
 - Community Academy
- Addressing Poverty and Disability
 - Bridges Out of Poverty & Getting Ahead
 - Financial Literacy Training - Your Money Your Goals
- Comprehensive Support Systems and Capacity Building
 - Integrated Resource Team

VA DARS EPIC Approach Objectives ⁽¹⁾

Geographic Areas

- Capital District
- SW District

Targeted Populations

- Individuals currently employed at subminimum wage
- Individuals recently/previously employed at subminimum wage
- Transition-age students and youth at risk of entering non-integrated settings



VA DARS EPIC Approach Objectives (2)

Goal

- Effectively eliminate subminimum wage employment (SWE) in Virginia

Objectives

- Transition individuals with disabilities in SWE to competitive integrated employment (CIE)
- “Shut the front door” for youth at risk of entering SWE or sheltered employment
- Support employers who hold 14(c) certificates to transition to a model that supports CIE
- Develop a value based purchasing system that aligns financial incentives for direct service providers with the achievement of outcomes linked to increasing CIE in supported and customized employment



Charting the Life Course

The Life Domains



Daily Life & Employment

What a person does as part of everyday life—school, employment, volunteering, communication, routines, life skills.



Community Living

Where and how someone lives – housing and living options, community access, transportation, home adaptations and modifications.



Healthy Living

Managing and accessing health care and staying well – medical, mental health, behavioral health, developmental, wellness and nutrition.



Safety & Security

Staying safe and secure – emergencies, well-being, guardianship options, legal rights and issues.



Social & Spirituality

Building friendships and relationships, leisure activities, personal networks, and faith community.



Advocacy & Engagement

Building valued roles, making choices, setting goals, assuming responsibility and driving how one's own life is lived.

The Life Domains

People lead whole lives made up of specific, connected, and integrated life domains that are important to a good quality of life. Life domains are the different aspects and experiences of life that we all consider as we age and grow. Individuals and families plan for the present and future life outcomes that take into account all life domains and have opportunities for life experience that build self-determination, social capital, economic sufficiency, and community inclusion.

The life domains help us think about the current realities in our lives while also thinking about what life experiences we want to have, which leads us to the good life that we want.

[Exploring the Life Domains](#)

Resources

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Q & A

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