Customized Employment Handbook for Previously Incarcerated Individuals with Disabilities:

A Handbook for Rehabilitation Counselors and Community Rehabilitation Providers

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Vocational Rehabilitation Technical Assistance Center for Targeted Communities (VRTAC-TC)
Project E3: Educate, Empower, and Employ

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Table of Contents

Chapter 1 -- Customized Employment: What is it?
How did we get here? Who is it for? 1

Chapter 2 -- Discovery 9

Chapter 3 -- Job Development 25

Chapter 4 -- Employment Supports: On and Off the Job Site 43

Chapter 5 -- Extended Services 69

Chapter 6 -- Customized Employment for Previously Incarcerated
Individuals with Disabilities 89

Chapter 1

Customized Employment:
What Is It? How Did We Get Here? Who Is It For?

Hudson

Hudson is a 19 year old high school student with an intellectual disability. He has a great smile and loves to talk with anyone he meets, participate in an after school athletic club and watch sports as well as collect sports memorabilia. Hudson lives in a suburban setting where he attends high school, and there are a multitude of businesses and activities close to his home and school. He lives with his father who is very supportive of him finding employment but is concerned about transportation to and from a job as his father works full time.

Hudson's teacher helped the family connect with the state department for rehabilitative services to begin transition planning for employment. The vocational rehabilitation counselor assigned to his case met with the family and referred them to a local employment provider for customized employment services. The employment specialist has been trained in customized employment practices and has provided these services for two years to a number of individuals. The customized employment process began by the employment specialist scheduling a meeting with Hudson and his father at Hudson's home. During this meeting, the employment specialist asked dad and Hudson questions about how Hudson spent his time, activities he participated in both on the weekends and at school, likes, dislikes, and important people in his life. This was an informal conversation, and throughout, the employment specialist was taking note of cues in the home. The employment specialist learned that Hudson enjoyed sports, collecting sports memorabilia, and organizing items both at home and at school.

Discovery activities consisted of taking Hudson to familiar and unfamiliar settings to learn more about his strengths and interests. The employment specialist went with him to the local roller skating rink he frequents to both observe and participate. Hudson was excited to introduce the employment specialist to all of his friends and to tell his friends that the employment specialist would be helping him find a job! Another activity the employment specialist set up was to go to a sporting goods store to shop as well as discuss jobs that occur in that business. Hudson loved this and stated he would enjoy working in a similar store. Next, the employment specialist observed Hudson at a community-based training site with his school classmates. This site was a local gym, and Hudson was responsible for wiping down athletic equipment, folding towels, and lightly cleaning the locker rooms. The employment specialist noticed that Hudson was very detail oriented and enjoyed chatting with the staff of the gym but had less social interactions with the gym members. The last observation that occurred was at Hudson's high school. The employment specialist observed Hudson as he assisted in the front office where he sorted mail, made photo copies and delivered materials to classrooms. Hudson shared that he liked to stay busy and wanted a job where he got paid so he could buy sports jerseys and t-shirts from his favorite teams.

Once the discovery activities were completed, the employment specialist met with Hudson, his dad, a close family friend, and Hudson's teacher. These were all individuals Hudson invited to the meeting. The team discussed themes for Hudson's employment path. With his guidance, they came up with three themes: Sports, Clerical, and Retail. Then the team began to brainstorm a list of businesses for each of those themes. Some of the businesses included: sporting goods stores, small offices, sports memorabilia shops, printing shops, athletic facilities, and gyms. They also discussed the conditions of employment that were important to Hudson, including work hours, days of the week, geographic locations of businesses, as well as environment of the business and support of coworkers. Finally, they discussed who each team member knew that worked in those types of businesses. The employment specialist wanted to use the larger network and social capital of the team rather than just her own.

With all of the information that had been gathered, the employment specialist set out to conduct interviews with businesses. Using a contact from within her office, the employment specialist met with a local gym. She was able to discuss the needs of the business and identify tasks that matched Hudson's skills. An employment proposal was developed and submitted to the gym manager. The gym hired Hudson part-time to assist with setting up for workout classes, cleaning the gym equipment and the indoor pool, and washing and folding towels. After several weeks of working, the team met to discuss Hudson's progress. During his employment, Hudson had mentioned to his employment specialist and his father that he didn't like the job. It was too hard and he didn't feel well and needed to leave work early. During the team meeting, Hudson was encouraged to share how he felt about the job and what he liked and disliked. Hudson shared that he liked the job tasks but didn't like that he worked by himself with very little social interaction. The gym was fairly quiet during his shifts with members quietly working out or listening to headphones, and the staff remained to themselves. This was a learning experience for the team and for Hudson. While he had been exposed to gym activities previously, they were short and the staff of the gym was outgoing, friendly and constantly chatting with the students. This job was requiring that he be alone 80% of the time, which he did not like. In addition, the hours were minimal. Hudson and his father were looking for more hours to fill his time, since he was no longer attending school. It was determined that while they had learned a lot, this was not the best job fit. He would resign from the position, and the employment specialist would begin looking for other opportunities.

With this additional experience and information, the employment specialist set out on a new search. She began looking for environments where Hudson would have interactions with coworkers and potentially work as a part of a team for at least a portion of his day. Using Hudson's social capital, the employment specialist met with a local plumbing company. She inquired about the needs of the business and discussed Hudson's abilities and great organizational skills. The employment specialist submitted an employment proposal and then brought Hudson in for a working interview. Hudson was able to perform some of the tasks the manager and employment specialist had negotiated if he were hired. The manager was thrilled with Hudson's enthusiasm for organization and vast knowledge of sports teams. Hudson was hired and works five days a week, six hours each day. He is a "plumber's assistant" where he sorts parts on the plumbers' trucks, washes the trucks, makes copies of invoices and files the documents, and on occasion does light landscaping activities. Today, Hudson says that he is happy and loves his job. He loves that he gets to talks sports with all of the plumbers while they organize and wash their trucks!

The above case study is an example of how customized employment can work to help a young person who wants to have a real job, but because of unique needs, benefits from this special help. This guide will show, in everyday language, how to develop and implement customized employment programs for persons with significant challenging disabilities. We believe customized employment is best utilized for those persons with more serious challenges that make them hard to place into competitive integrated employment. ◆

What Is Customized Employment?

So, then, just what is customized employment, and how is it different from the many other rehabilitation approaches for job placement?

Customized employment has shown promise in helping individuals with significant disabilities, including transition-aged youth with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) to find and maintain competitive integrated employment. Customized employment first appears in federal law in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014 (WIOA) and is defined as "... competitive integrated employment, for an individual with a significant disability, that is based on an individualized determination of the strengths, needs, and interests of the individual with a significant disability, is designed to meet the specific abilities of the individual with a significant disability and the business needs of the employer …" (p. 1634). WIOA also describes the basic strategies used in customized employment, including:

1. exploring jobs with the individual with a disability;
2. working with businesses to customize positions by examining employers' unmet business needs; determining the individual's job duties, work schedule, job arrangement, and supervision requirements; working with employers during job placement; and
3. providing workplace supports and services after the person is hired (Riesen & Morgan, 2018).

Customized employment significantly differs from traditional supported employment. First, customized employment focuses primarily on the relationship between the person with a disability and the employer and actively seeks to meet the needs of both (Jorgensen Smith, Dillahunt-Aspillaga, & Kenney, 2017). This is done by identifying the job seeker's strengths and interests and then matching those strengths and interests with the unmet business needs of an employer. In other words, customized employment does not rely on existing job descriptions or current job openings. This approach contrasts with traditional supported employment, where job development is driven by the local labor market and relies heavily on current job openings to find employment opportunities for youth with disabilities (Griffin, Hammis, Geary, & Sullivan, 2008). In customized employment, the discovery process drives the identification of strengths and interests; it uses naturalistic interviews with people who know the person well and in-depth observations of the individual with a disability in multiple community settings to identify employment strengths and interests (Inge, Graham, Brooks-Lane, Wehman, & Griffin, 2018). Customized employment also utilizes entrepreneurship models as a way to create jobs for individuals with disabilities who may not be interested in traditional job openings (Ouimette & Rammler, 2017). ◆

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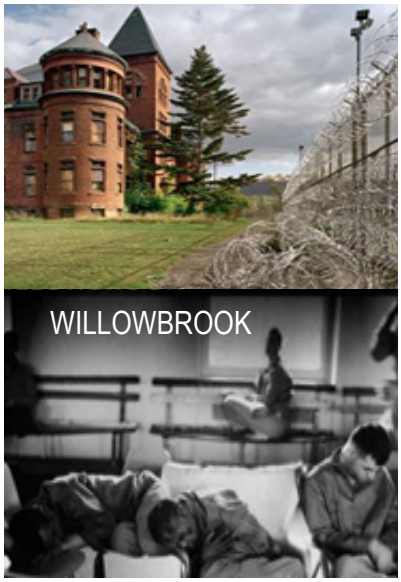
How Did We Get Customized Employment?

In order to understand customized employment, one needs to have some historical perspective of where vocational rehabilitation services have come over the past 50 years. We can present this in terms of several time periods.

The Dark Ages ◆ There was a time in the not too distant past that persons with significant disabilities and vocational challenges were not given the opportunity to have a real job. They stayed home or in a state institution, or they went to adult day care programs or sheltered workshops. Usually these hundreds of thousands of people with severe disabilities were viewed as inept and incompetent all over the world. This not only included person with physical, intellectual and psychiatric disabilities, but also those who had been in prison for years or passed from foster home to foster home. This era could be considered the ***Dark Ages Era*** where program staff meant well but did not see the vocational or community living potential that most of these individuals had. Terms like "moron" or "idiot" were regularly used to describe persons with intellectual disabilities. This pattern of thinking and service occurred from 1950, and well before, to into the late 1960s. Few or no laws existed focusing on helping individuals with severe disabilities get real jobs.



During the "Dark Ages" era, program staff meant well but did not see the vocational or community living potential of individuals with disabilities. Derogatory terms were regularly used to describe this population into the late 1960s. Little to no laws existed that focused on real employment for individuals with severe disabilities.

The Enlightenment Era ◆ As we moved into the 1970s, there began to be an increasing turn in the country toward civil rights, and some writers began to promote the concept of "deinstitutionalization" and a "free and appropriate public education for all children." This can be considered as the beginning of the ***Enlightenment Era***. Some researchers began to demonstrate the power of applied behavior analysis as a way to teach persons with severe intellectual disabilities how to become more independent and even learn a few basic vocational skills. The merging of more progressive thinking and the demonstration of skill competence led lawmakers to construct the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the entitlement program Education of All Handicapped Children Act of 1975. The latter program especially put the full weight of the federal government behind every child in the country no matter how severe their disability being entitled to a free and appropriate public education by their local school district.

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Power of Supports Era ◆ In the 1980s, things began to move quickly. There was a true paradigm shift in how services were provided from day program training to support on the job in a real business, with supports becoming a key aspect of rehabilitation providers. This can be considered the Power of Supports Era. This era really evolved from 1989 through the 1990s, over about 20 years. For so many decades, persons with significant disabilities received services in segregated environments like state institutions or church basements or sheltered workshops. **Then in the early 1980s supported employment was born, essentially a program that combined the beliefs that all people with disabilities could work and should be given an opportunity to be placed into a job as soon as possible.** In order to be successful a trained employment specialist, one who knew how to do applied behavior analysis training and work with business went on site with the person after the individual was employed and helped them become to increasingly competent. This idea became adopted rapidly throughout the 1980s initially in the US and then in the 1990s throughout the world.

This approach gave great hope to millions of families and persons with disabilities that they could have a real job. At the same time more and more people were living in supported community homes. In the 1990s, the Americans with Disabilities Act (1991) was passed by Congress and provided sweeping civil rights liberties for all people with disabilities as well as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in 1994, which expanded the right to education for all children. These 20 years would set the foundation for the birth of customized employment. ◆

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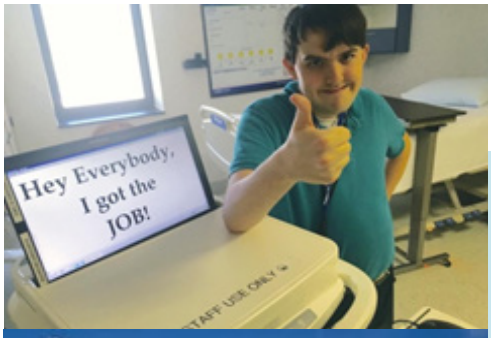
The Competitive Integrated Employment Era

With the dawn of the 21st century would come the ***Expanding Competitive Employment Era***. In 2001, the concept of customized employment was first introduced at the U.S. Department of Labor. **Customized employment was seen as a new and valuable addition to supported employment with a much greater focus on helping the individual with the disability identify their unique strengths and weaknesses through a process called Discovery**. In this process much more time was spent analyzing the true passion for a given type of job. Additionally, more emphasis was placed on identifying the employer's needs and potentially identify new jobs that could help the employer's bottom line. Customized employment is still being researched and understood in the rehabilitation field, but it is seen as highly promising means of helping those with the greatest challenges to work.

During this time the U.S. Department of Justice decided to enforce Title I, the employment part of the ADA, and work with or sue states to close their sheltered workshops and provide competitive employment for those individuals with disabilities. Then Congress passed a law called the Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act in 2014.

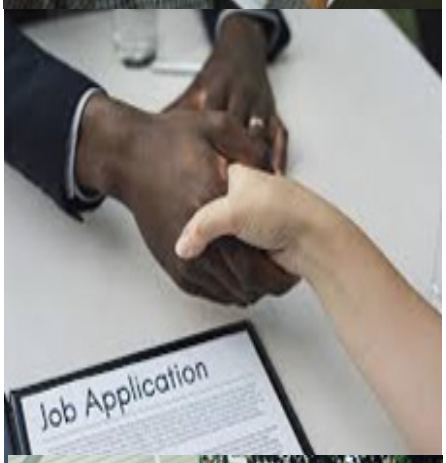
This law squarely puts the focus on young people with disabilities gaining access to supported employment and customized employment. So as one can see, things rather dramatically changed in the past 50 years. While there is still so much work to do, there is greater hope than ever for persons with disabilities to be part of the nation's labor force.



Customized employment was seen as a new and valuable addition to supported employment with a much greater focus on helping the individual with the disability identify their unique strengths and weaknesses through a process called Discovery. With Discovery, more time was spent analyzing the true passion for a given type of job, and more emphasis was placed on studying the employer's needs and potentially identify new jobs that could help the employer's bottom line.

Who Can Benefit from Customized Employment

As we saw in the introduction to this chapter, Hudson is a 19 year old with an intellectual disability who is benefiting from a customized employment approach to work. But are there many other underserved populations of persons with disabilities such as previously incarcerated young adults, transition age youth with disabilities, those with physical and multiple disabilities or psychiatric disabilities who could also benefit. We think there are some people in these populations who could greatly find this approach beneficial.



The rehabilitation counselor must decide if the techniques in customized employment are essential for placement. Let's consider a young man, Jamal, who enters the halfway house upon release. He is angry, he did not do well in high school. He was labeled as having a combination of "mild intellectual disability" and "behavior disorder". He has come from a family without a father. Could customized employment help him? And how?

Well, Jamal may not think that he is able to work or he may not want to work. Yet, he will be placed in some vocational preparatory classes to get him ready. The question is -- What happens in these preparatory "classes?" Are they unique to Jamal's issues or do they simply cover a set of activities that everyone who has been released from incarceration blanketly receives? While some of these activities (i.e., how to fill out a job application) are of course valuable, Jamal could benefit from a highly individualized approach called Discovery. Later in this handbook we describe in more detail how Discovery could work to help Jamal. Essentially, this is a highly intensive process to do informational interviewing and engage in a comprehensive search on what his interests and abilities are, well beyond the traditional vocational aptitude test. This Discovery process can take weeks to discern what his employment specialist and Jamal feel could be a great match for a job in the community. Even better than that, let's assume the employment specialist is unable to find a position that matches Jamal's unique needs. Well, there is another choice through Customized Employment. The employment specialist and Jamal could construct a negotiated work opportunity with an employer who might have a need, but has not yet constructed a job description. In this case, Jamal, is essentially offering his services for something he knows he has a passion for and can do well and will also meet a unique need the employer has to expand his business.

Let's now shift to Miranda, a young lady in her early 20s who has been in multiple foster homes since being a toddler. She has mild cerebral palsy and some speech challenges. She has always done domestic chores successfully and seems to like doing them but has consistently been unable to gain employment in a real job. Miranda also would be an excellent candidate for customized employment. Together with her employment specialist and vocational rehabilitation counselor, Miranda could begin the Discovery process in similar fashion. Miranda already has demonstrated some interest in making beds, cleaning, and doing general housework, but she does have a challenging issue with speed to completion. It will be up to her and her employment support team to identify which tasks she is the best at, likes to do the most and then try and identify an employer who is willing to work with these strengths and possibly modify some of the jobs. This can clearly take time. But there should be no reason that Miranda should remain unemployed when she wants to work and when she has a skill set that might meet the needs of numerous employers. ◆

Conclusion

In this introductory chapter, we place customized employment in the historical context of how millions of people with disabilities at one time, not that long ago, had no work opportunity. As the decades have passed, new innovations, new practices, new policies and eventually new laws have evolved to a point where Hudson, Jamal and Miranda should absolutely be in the workforce and not in sheltered workshops or hanging out in the streets or sitting at home with grandparents and doing nothing.

In the chapters ahead, we describe exactly how to help individuals like Hudson, Jamal, and Miranda and so many others who have similar challenges enter employment. There is a definite sequence of events and this manual will walk practitioners through this process. The next five chapters will take the reader through specific "how-to" techniques very frequent short case studies of how this process is implemented. ◆

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Chapter 2 Discovery

Discovery is the foundation of customized employment and is one of the elements that differentiates it from other employment services. Discovery is a fluid process in which a number of core practices are used to identify an individual's strengths, interests, and preferences including support needs that the person may have in order to become successfully employed. Discovery should be descriptive and does not include administering standardized tests or assessments, using checklists, or ranking competencies of the individual with disabilities. Discovery is a necessary step before job negotiation and subsequent employment.

Discovery is capacity-based, not deficit-based.

Discover: to make known or visible, to obtain knowledge of for the first time, find out, to make a Discovery, to find out what one did not previously know.
(Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary)

Self-determination and person-centered planning values guide Discovery. Dr. Michael Wehmeyer, one of the leaders in self-determination, defines self-determination as "acting as the primary causal agent in one's life and making choices and decisions regarding one's quality of life free from undue external influence or interference." The core values of person-centered planning include the following:

1. Services are directed by the individual with a disability.
2. Focus is placed on the individual's abilities and aspirations.
3. Emphasis is placed on supports rather than the person's disabilities.
4. Planning is individualized and not driven by the service system.
5. Community participation and membership is the outcome.

Table 1 lists a number of core practices that have been identified as important to providing customized employment services. There is no specific sequence to completing these core practices although there may be a logical order to assisting an individual in finding employment. For instance, meeting with the person is a logical first step to providing services as is finding out about the person's interests, skills, and abilities. Some of these core practices occur throughout providing customized employment services such as mindfully listening to the person and building rapport. In addition, some of the practices may occur simultaneously such as observing a person in daily activities and conducting in-depth interviews with family and friends concerning the person's interests, skills, and preferences. While this chapter may describe practices in a specific order, Discovery is "individualized" and varies for each job seeker. ◆

Table 1

Customized Employment Practices

1.	Physically meet at a location of the individual's choice.
2.	Build rapport and get to know the individual.
3.	Mindfully listen to the person.
4.	Identify the individual's interests, skills, and abilities.
5.	Conduct in-depth interviews with family and friends concerning the person's interests, skills, and abilities.
6.	Observe the person in daily activities in a number of different community settings.
7.	Arrange for the job seeker to observe at local businesses that potentially match job seeker's interests, skills, and abilities.
8.	Conduct informational interviews with employers at local businesses that are representative of the job seeker's interests, skills, and abilities.
9.	Observe the job seeker engaging in job related tasks.
10.	Assist the job seeker in identifying a work experience(s) to refine / identify job interests, skills, and abilities.
11.	Collaborate with the job seeker, family, and friends in confirming the job seeker's interests, job interests, skills and abilities.
12.	Negotiate a customized job description.

Inge, Graham, Brooks-Lane, Wehman, & Griffin, 2018. (Reprinted with permission from the Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation.)

Identifying a Person's Interests

Some job seekers can tell you what they want to do for a job, and they have some or many of the skills to do the preferred job. These individuals may not need customized employment or all of the core practices of Discovery. However, there are others who have job preferences but may not have the skills for the preferred job. Still other job seekers will have no idea what they want to do and what they can do. This last group of job seekers are typically the ones who will benefit most from customized employment services and all the core practices of Discovery. The individualized Discovery

process starts with the employment specialist beginning Discovery where the job seeker participates and who they participate with: in the community with family, friends, and other people who support the job seeker's interests, preferences, and abilities.

It is important to meet people as we find them. Not everyone has a helpful family. Not everyone has friends. Not everyone is part of the community. Not everyone can articulate what they want to do or has an idea of what they want to do. These may be the individuals that will benefit most from Discovery.

Conducting In-Depth Interviews with Family and Friends Concerning the Person's Interests, Skills, and Abilities

Conversation: an informal, usually private, talk between two or more people in which thoughts, feelings, and ideas are expressed, questions are asked and answered, or news and information is exchanged.
(Source: Cambridge Dictionary)

Conducting interviews is usually a part of providing employment services to individuals with disabilities. Typically, there is an intake interview during which people seeking services are asked about their goals for employment and other relevant information. Interviewing should not be used to "evaluate" the job seeker with disabilities, which is a very important distinction when using interviewing as part of Discovery. In the context of Discovery, interviewing is a way to learn about a person's life story and experiences. What meaning do these experiences have for the person, and how will they impact employment?

Interviews can take a variety of forms such as structured with a list of pre-determined questions to more informal conversations with open-ended questions. Typically, interviewing for employment services has involved having a list of questions that the interviewer uses with little deviation from the "script." When attempting to learn about a person's life experiences during Discovery, a more informal conversational approach may be most effective. However, talking with someone does not necessarily lead to a ***meaningful*** conversation. How questions are asked and how follow-up questions are phrased will impact whether the answers provide any insight to assisting a person in finding a job. The right questions may lead to "discovering" information that will assist in getting to know the job seeker. They can help the employment specialist uncover factors that facilitate employment as well as issues that may be barriers. ***"Being interested in others is the key to the basic assumptions underlying interviewing techniques."***[1] Being interested in the job seeker is fundamental to providing effective customized employment services. This involves putting aside any preconceived notions or assumptions about the individual and listening to the person.

[1]Seidman, I. (2013). Interviewing as qualitative research: A guide for researchers in education and social sciences (4th ed.). (pg. 9). New York: Teachers College Press.

Asking the Right Questions

Taking into account the individual's life experiences, the person may have very limited information on which to base their answers to questions. It is not unusual for an employment specialist to ask a job seeker, "what do you want to do for a job?" Some job seekers are verbal and know what they want to do and will immediately tell you. However, many job seekers, for whom customized employment will be the most effective intervention, will have no idea what they want to do. The only experience this person may have is adult day programs or facility-based services or – "nothing." As an example, everyone in Mrs. Smith's class goes to the fast food restaurant to clean tables and help with stocking the condiment containers. Or, everyone at the sheltered workshop goes to the local diner for a situational assessment cleaning the dining area. The person with disabilities who only has experiences with janitorial tasks may respond that they want to clean at the fast food restaurant. Or, individuals who have only participated in facility-based programs may answer "no" when asked if they want to work in the community. These individuals simply may not know how to answer the question: "what job do you want?"

When conducting interviews, don't fall into the trap of talking too much. Don't rush to fill up silent pauses. Waiting for the other person to answer a question is important. Don't assume if the person pauses that he or she does not have an answer. The person may simply be thinking about the response. Rushing ahead to another question may be a missed opportunity to learn more. Also, don't interrupt the other person, which may be interpreted as lack of interest in what the individual is saying.

Probe Questions

Having a list of questions to ask during an interview may help in getting the conversation started. However, sticking to a scripted set of questions could result in a "stiff" discussion that does not yield much information. The employment specialist should be prepared to listen and ask follow-up questions as the person talks. These follow-up questions or "probe" questions may produce some of the most useful information. A follow-up question usually involves asking the person to provide more detail about what has been said.

For instance, a person might say that she likes to play with her dog. This response really doesn't provide much information. Following up with additional questions might provide insight into whether "pets" or "working with animals" is an employment theme for the individual. Or, it simply might be that the person likes to spend her free time with her dog. Many people say that they like pets or have pets, but this does not mean that they want a job that involves working with pets. Asking ***"What do you like to do?"*** provides a place to start a discussion but is only the beginning of getting to know the individual. The employment specialist must be cautious, because some people have interests that they don't want to do for pay. Some people have interests that they do want to do for pay. Making sure whether a person's interests relate to the tasks they want to do for a job is incredibly important. Table 2 on the following page presents some ideas about asking follow-up probe questions for the person who said she likes to play with her dog.

Table 2

Sample Follow-up Questions

The person states that she likes to play with her dog.
• Tell me more about playing with your dog. What do you do when you are playing? • What do you like about playing with your dog? • Have you ever played with other people's dogs? Tell me about that. • What else do you and your dog do? Can you give me an example? • Tell me about other animals that you like or have. (etc.)
The person responds that she walks her dog. Additional probe questions about walking the dog may reveal information on the person's skills.
• Does anyone help you? How does (person's name) help you? • Can you tell me more about where you and your dog go for a walk? • Have you ever walked the dog by yourself? Where did you go? • What is the best thing about taking your dog for a walk? (etc.)

Closed Ended and Open Ended Questions

Another consideration is to ask questions that are open ended rather than those that can be answered with a "yes" or "no." Questions that can be answered with a yes or no are referred to as closed ended questions. For example, asking "what do you do in your free time" may provide more information than asking, "do you have any hobbies?" Open ended questions may include words such as describe, explain, give me examples of, tell me about, and so forth. Consider using the words: who, what, where, when, how, or why when asking open ended questions. The questions in Table 2 offers some examples of asking open ended questions. Table 3 below compares closed ended questions to open ended questions.

Table 3

Comparing Closed and Opened Questions

Closed-Ended Questions (Yes/No)	Open-Ended Questions
Do you have any hobbies?	What do you do in your free time (on the weekends)?
Do you like to go to the soda shop?	Tell me what you like to do at the soda shop.
Do you play games on your iPad?	Describe how you use your iPad to play games? Tell me about the games that you play on your iPad.
Do you spend time with friends?	Tell me about your friends. What do you do when you get together?

Questions About Life Experiences

Employment specialists new to customized employment may wonder why asking job seekers about their life experiences or daily activities is relevant to employment. As previously mentioned, the person may have little experience with work and asking questions about work may yield very little information. For instance, an employment specialist might ask the person what time of day he or she would like to work and not receive an answer. Alternative questions may include asking what time the person gets up in the morning, goes to bed, or participates in regularly scheduled activities. If the person always meets friends at the gym on Thursday and Saturday from 2:00 to 4:00 pm, then scheduling work at that time may be contra-indicated. As another example, the person may say that he likes to play

games on an iPad. "Playing games" requires a wide variety of skills from simply looking at the iPad to interacting with other people such as playing scrabble word games that require reading and spelling skills (or perhaps the person uses technology). Learning about the job seeker's daily activities can provide a great deal of valuable information about the person's skills as well as about the supports that people in the person's life provide. ◆

Selecting the Best Location

Where an interview takes place may have as big of an impact as how the question are asked. If the person is not comfortable, the employment specialist may ask questions but not get useful answers. It is not unusual for meetings to take place in the agency's office. But this might not be the ideal location for putting the person at ease and having a conversation about work. When providing customized employment services it is recommended that the employment specialist meet with job seekers in their homes. There are a number of reasons for this recommendation besides making sure that the individual is at ease. Meeting in the person's home may provide as much information as the interview itself. Photographs or items in the home can provide a way to start a conversation and get the person talking about something familiar. Observing what is in the home also may reveal interests and skills that develop into an employment theme. For instance, an employment specialist noticed audio equipment in the home that stimulated a conversation on the person's musical interests. Seeing the equipment prevented the employment specialist from assuming that listening to music is "just a hobby." As another example, an employment specialist learned by going to a job seeker's home that he spent a great deal of time in his grandfather's woodworking shop assisting with projects. This may never have come up in conversation if there had not been a meeting scheduled in the home.

When providing customized employment services it is recommended that the employment specialist meet with job seekers in their homes.

Sometimes an employment specialist may not feel safe going to the neighborhood or home where the job seeker lives. Alternative locations where the person participates can be discussed or perhaps two employment specialists can meet with the individual, family members, or advocates. If the person asks to meet at a location other than home, the setting should be one where a confidential conversation can occur. Typical integrated community settings are recommended rather than segregated programs. As another example, a job seeker might suggest meeting at a restaurant, but that may not provide a confidential setting. Try to identify a place where the person participates in activities that can also provide a confidential area to meet. As the employment specialist becomes trusted, the job seeker and the family may be comfortable with having a meeting in the home. ◆

Selecting Who to Interview, How Long, and How Many

When conducting interviews, it is important to interview individuals in the person's life that can provide detailed information. The goal is to gather a range of opinions and perspectives of the job seeker's interests, skills, and preferences. Interviewing should focus on collecting "rich" information rather than how many interviews are conducted. The number is not as important as the quality of the information collected for identifying the job seeker's employment preferences, interests, and skills.

Consider the following when deciding who to interview.

Where does this person participate in activities? What family members and friends does the person spend time with daily or at least regularly? This may include family members, friends, neighbors, case managers, vocational rehabilitation professionals, teachers, and advocates. As in interviews with job seekers, employment specialists should go to the people being interviewed. In addition, be sure to confirm with the job seeker who is to be interviewed and obtain permission. Most agencies have release of information consent forms, and employment specialists should not contact people for interviews without following the agency's protocol and getting the consent of the job seeker.

How long an interview lasts is also an important consideration.

Arrange in advance the length of the interview and stay within that time. Typically, the recommendation is to schedule in-depth interviews for one hour to 90 minutes. This is a reasonable amount of time to keep the person being interviewed engaged. During the interview, it is recommended that the employment specialist record brief notes to help remember what is discussed. Immediately after, more detailed notes can be recorded. Writing down everything during the interview, may appear that the employment specialist is not listening to the person being interviewed. The length of the interview also should reflect the length of time the employment specialist is able to remember the details discussed to record immediately afterwards.

Consider how many people should be interviewed.

There is no "cookbook" answer as to how many interviews need to be conducted and exactly who should be interviewed when providing customized employment services.

Employment specialists may wonder if the information that they obtain from the job seeker is accurate and representative of the person's skills and interests. The purpose for interviewing more than one or two individuals in the job seeker's life is to confirm information from multiple sources. In addition, different people may have very different experiences with the job seeker and participate in different activities that provide valuable information on the person's skills and interests. Interviewing multiple people also helps the employment specialist know when to stop interviewing. In other words, after conducting several interviews, the employment specialist may begin to hear the same stories and stops learning new information. It is important not to prolong the interviews. The goal is to collect quality information for identifying and exploring employment themes.

Employment Themes

Ideally, once the employment specialist and the job seeker have spent time together, themes should be emerging that can be explored for employment. These themes may begin to appear during the initial interviews and observations of the individual in familiar environments. Employment themes have also been referred to as vocational themes and are not the same as job descriptions, job duties, or skills. They are overall categories under which interests, skills, and work types can be grouped. Employment themes should be broad such as transportation versus cars, which facilitates brainstorming on possible businesses to target. Too often, employment specialists have made their "best guess" as to what a person might be interested in based on the local labor market. Because of this, people with disabilities have been directed to stereotypical jobs and entry level positions. Discovery is intended to facilitate the identification of employment themes that will guide job development in integrated businesses with the outcome of competitive integrated employment.

At this point in Discovery, the purpose of developing employment themes is to provide focus for conducting observations and informational interviews in businesses. Social capital is a way to identify businesses on behalf of a specific job seeker. Social capital are resources acquired from interactions between people or networks of people. Employment specialists may use their own social capital to identify businesses and should not forget that the family and friends of the job seeker have social capital as well. This extends to coworkers within an agency or other social networks that people belong to in their communities. Identify friends, neighbors, acquaintances that are associated with businesses that match the person's employment themes. These connections create opportunities to learn more about potential work tasks within businesses that meet the employment needs of job seekers.

The question is often asked as to how many employment themes should be identified. One recommendation has been to identify at least three themes for each job seeker. Clearly, one theme is not sufficient, since pursuing only one employment path may limit the person's options. For example, the person may decide that the one theme targeted is not really of interest after observations and informational interviews within businesses are conducted. Considering multiple themes initially may facilitate Discovery rather than slow it down. The following table provides a list of sample categories that could be employment themes.

Table 4

Sample Employment Themes

Art	Health services	Recreation
Construction	Information technology	Religion
Clerical	Leisure	Retail
Education	Hospitality	Sales
Fashion	Manufacturing	Service
Farming / Horticultural	Mechanical	Trade
Food service	Production	Transportation

Table 5 below provides a case study example of a young woman's emerging employment theme who met with an employment specialist in her home. During the interview, the employment specialist asked if she had any hobbies. The mother went into another room and brought out a box that contained various art projects. The art projects were simple, and it would be easy to assume that art was her hobby and not an employment theme. However, it is important to dig deeper and ask more questions. ◆

Table 5 Interview Case Study Example

Case study:	Mary met with her employment specialist at home for their first meeting. She talked about liking "art." Her mother brought out a box of projects to show the employment specialist, which included simple ceramic pots and abstract watercolors.
Assumption: Mary might like art, but this appears to be a hobby.	
Putting Assumptions Aside by Asking Follow-up Open Ended Questions	Show me the last art project you made in this box? When did you make it? What is your favorite thing about making / painting _____? Tell me about where you made/painted the _____ (picture or pot)? When was the last time that you went there? What is your favorite thing about going to the ceramic/art studio? Tell me about the people you have met there? Describe what you do with the other people who go there. Does anyone help you when you make your art? How do they help you? Describe other things that you do in the art studio other than making pots. Etc.
Comments:	These sample questions demonstrate how having a conversation may lead to learning more about this young woman's skills and interests. In this example, the employment specialist learned that the young woman regularly went to a ceramic studio. It would be important to pursue whether the owner of the studio could be a connection to other businesses (social capital) for this young woman. Typically, this may have otherwise been overlooked or left uncovered. Discovering her art interest led to observing the young woman at the studio and an informational interview with the studio owner. There the employment specialist learned more about possible job tasks that matched the young woman's skills. Employment specialists cannot be familiar with all the possible work tasks within businesses and observing and conducting interviews within business can lead to expanded job opportunities.

Informational Interviews

An informational interview is a business term, and the purpose is to learn about a potential career. It is an information seeking process. A job seeker who wants to learn more about a chosen field identifies people who are willing to talk about their careers or jobs. Think about an informational interview for Discovery as a conversation with an employer to learn more about the work that is done at this type of business. The employment specialist is not going to the business to ask about available jobs. Earlier information in this chapter on conducting in-depth interviews should be applied to the interviews that the employment specialist and job seeker conduct with businesses.

When used for Discovery, informational interviews are a way to get to know a business in a similar way that Discovery activities focus on getting to know the job seeker.

Discovery considers who the individual is first, and then businesses are identified where informational interviews can be conducted. Employment specialists may conduct informational interviews on behalf of the job seeker, or the job seeker may choose to participate as much as desired. Obviously, if they choose to participate, job seekers can learn about the work that is done related to a particular employment theme first hand. The job seeker should be the one to make the decision to participate and to what extent or if the individual prefers to have the employment specialist represent him or her.

Informational interviews could help the job seeker and the employment specialist learn more about how and if the person's interests and skills meet the needs of businesses. Businesses are selected based on what was learned about a specific job seeker during interviews with the individual, family, and support network, as well as during observations of the job seeker. Identifying employers to interview using the social capital of the job seeker, family, friends, acquaintances, as well as those of the employment specialist may facilitate informational interviews rather than relying totally on "cold calling" businesses.

Informational interviews may be a natural precursor to observing a job seeker completing job related tasks matching an employment theme. Observations of job seekers engaging in job tasks that fit their employment themes may provide more information. There are two goals in having the job seeker engage in job related tasks. One is to identify the person's skills, and the other is to assist the job seeker in deciding if he or she is interested in doing the job tasks.

The purpose of conducting informational interviews during Discovery is not job development or asking if the businesses have open positions.

After the informational interview is completed, the employment specialist may ask to observe in the business. Perhaps, the employer or business owner offers a brief tour, and the employment specialist returns at a later appointment for a more in-depth observation. Whether the observation occurs immediately after the information interview or at a later time is something that must be arranged with each business.

The opportunity for the job seeker to observe or "shadow" an employee doing work that is of interest may be invaluable in confirming employment themes. It is important to remember that the employment specialist should not make value judgements regarding whether the person can be employed in this type of business based on one job shadow or informational interview experience. This is not intended as an assessment but as a learning opportunity about the person's interests for Discovery.

Observing the job seeker participating in familiar activities and informational interviewing in businesses can take place simultaneously. As soon as employment themes begin to emerge from interviews and observations in familiar places, informational interviews can begin. Simultaneously conducting core Discovery practices can be helpful in completing Discovery in a timely manner: not spending more weeks or months on Discovery than necessary by completing core practices in a set, one at a time sequence. ◆

Job Seeker Observations

Observing the job seeker will provide more information than interviewing alone. This includes observing the job seeker in familiar and unfamiliar places as well as in businesses that reflect the individual's employment themes. Observations should not be used to evaluate the job seeker's skills or limit access to services in the way that assessments have been traditionally been used by employment programs. The intent is to observe skills in a variety of settings, where the skills are used, and document what is found without value judgements. In addition, the job seeker should know of the observation in advance and permission obtained from the person and others involved as needed.

Sometimes the observation may be conducted to "hanging out" with the job seeker.

Observation confirms what was reported during the interviews and may uncover more of the job seeker's skills than what was discussed during interviews. For instance, one young man seemed to have very limited social skills as reported by the people interviewed. During an interview he mentioned that one place that he liked to go was a community center with a pool table near his home. The employment specialist decided to observe him in this familiar environment. The pair walked to the community center, and the job seeker independently crossed a four lane highway with a traffic light. When they arrived, they were greeted by friends that he regularly met there. A totally different opinion of the individual's social skills emerged by going to a familiar place where he enjoyed participating. Without this observation, the employment specialist may have assumed that the job seeker needed a workplace that required minimal social skills.

An important issue to consider when observing is the extent and how the employment specialist participates in the activities. It should be obvious that the employment specialist wants to be as inconspicuous as possible during any observation. For instance, taking notes of the observation for everyone to see would certainly draw attention to the employment specialist. As with interviewing, the length of an observation should match the amount of time that the employment specialist can remember details to record immediately afterwards.

There is a range of possible roles the employment specialist can assume from no participation (observation only) to total participation. Common sense dictates that in some environments the employment specialist will only be able to observe, while in others total participation is possible. Determining in advance how much the employment specialist is going to participate and how should be negotiated when the observation is scheduled. For instance, if the employment specialist is going to an individual's school or day program, the person in charge may assign a task that can be completed by the employment specialist to blend into the setting.

Employment specialists should consider how their presence will detract from the purpose of the observation. Too much participation may prevent the typical activities from taking place. For instance, the job seeker may wait for prompts and cues from the employment specialist if too much assistance is provided. The correct amount of participation and how the employment specialist participates must be considered based on the unique needs of each person.

Observations should not be used to "screen" the job seeker and limit access to services in the way that formal assessments have been traditionally used.

Developing the Discovery Profile

Review of formal records is recommended at the end of Discovery rather than in the beginning. Reviewing formal records and assessments in the beginning or early stages of Discovery may keep the employment specialist from "keeping an open mind" about the job seeker's skills and employment outcomes. Having said this, it is always important to ask about a person's medical history and any potential concerns (e.g., seizures) that would impact the Discovery activities described in this chapter. In addition, there may be important information that is not identified during Discovery that would be helpful for job development.

How long Discovery takes, is individualized to each person but has been estimated to be 30-40 hours. Currently, there is no evidence-based research that confirms this amount of time or how many weeks Discovery lasts. What is important is facilitating a positive competitive employment outcome for each job seeker based on documented information of the person's skills, interests, and employment preferences. In many ways, Discovery is an evolving process. Once employed, workers with disabilities will develop skills that will dictate additional customization of their negotiated job descriptions. Employment agencies should keep this in mind when supporting individuals with disabilities to find and maintain competitive integrated employment that has been customized.

Once the Discovery core practices are completed, a Discovery profile is developed summarizing the various Discovery activities. As mentioned throughout this chapter, on-going documentation must occur immediately after each Discovery activity takes place. If this does not, the profile may not accurately reflect the person's interests, skills, and preferences limited by what the employment specialist remembers.

Keep in mind that the Discovery Profile should be descriptive and positive. It should provide documentation on the employment themes selected for job development and why they were selected as well as describe the individual's needed services and supports. Finally, the Discovery Profile must be approved by the job seeker and should be considered a confidential document similar to any other formal report.

The template at the end of this chapter is offered as a guide to what may be included in the Discovery Profile. This is only a guide and should be modified as needed. There are other forms available and agencies are encouraged to review other options that best matches their needs. Remember, the order of the Discovery activities is flexible and does not necessarily occur in sequence as may be implied by the Discovery Profile template. Employment agencies are encouraged to check with the funder of their services to determine if there are specific guidelines or forms that must be used. ◆

Discovery Profile Template

Job Seeker:	**Date Discovery Completed:**
Contact Information (phone, e-mail)**:**	
Person Completing the Profile:	**Contact Information** (phone e-mail)**:**
Individual(s) Completing Discovery Activities with the Job Seeker if Different than Person Completing the Discovery Profile (Include relationship to the job seeker.):	
Person:	**Contact Information:**
Person: (Add additional people as needed.)	**Contact Information:**
Family Contacts (Include relationship to the job seeker.)**:**	
Name:	**Contact Information:**
Name: (Add additional family members as needed.)	**Contact Information:**
Information Gathered During the Initial Home Visit (Include who participated and relationship to the job seeker; the person's interests, skills, and preferences as reported or observed; activities; hobbies; people in the person's life; social capital information; etc. If the visit did not occur in the home, explain where it occurred and why.)	
Information Gathered During In-depth Interviews (Include information on people interviewed and relationship to the job seeker; the person's interests, skills, and preferences as reported; activities; hobbies; people in the person's life; social capital information; etc.)	

Person Interviewed:	**Findings:**
Person Interviewed: (Add additional interviews as needed.)	**Findings:**
Summarize Information that Emerged from the In-depth Interviews (Include information on tasks, special interests, skills, or talents and possible employment themes.)	
Information Gathered During Observations in Familiar Settings (Include information on where the observations occurred and why this setting was selected; person's interests, skills, and preferences observed; etc.)	
Observations / Settings:	**Findings:**
Observations / Setting: (Add additional observations as needed.)	**Findings:**
Summarize Information that Emerged from the Observations in Familiar Settings (Include why this is important information for employment.)	
Information Gathered During Informational Interviews (Include information on where the informational interview occurred and the vocational theme that is represented; describe the work completed at this business and relationship to the person's interests, skills, and employment preferences; etc.)	
Person Interviewed Name:	**Findings:**
Person Interviewed Name: (Add additional interviews as needed.)	**Findings:**

Summarize Information that Emerged from the Informational Interviews
(Include information on tasks, special interests, skills, or talents and employment themes.)

Information Gathered During Business Observations/Job Shadow Experience
(Include information on where the observation occurred and the vocational theme that is represented; describe the work observed or opportunity to participate in job duties; relationship to the person's interests, skills, and employment preferences, etc.)

Business Description:	**Findings:**
Business Description: (Add additional observations/job shadow experiences as needed.)	**Findings:**

Summarize Information that Emerged from Business Observations/Job Shadow
(Include information on tasks, special interests, skills, or talents and employment themes.)

Business Description:	**Findings:**
Business Description: (Add additional interviews as needed.)	**Findings:**

Vocational Themes
(Include information on the themes identified for the job seeker that are recommended for job development. Include how these themes were identified. Describe how the individual's skills, interests, and preferences match these vocational themes.)

Additional Information on the Job Seeker's Support Needs Impacting Employment
(Include any information here related to the review of formal records. Describe the supports in a positive way rather than including what the individual cannot do.)

Chapter 3 Job Development

A defining feature of customized employment is that job duties are individually negotiated resulting in a job description that did not exist prior to the negotiation. Negotiations with employers to identify a job of choice for an individual with disabilities can include a number of different strategies. The employment specialist may work with a business to develop a position through job restructuring that matches the job seeker's interests and skills, as well as meets the business's needs or a new job description may be developed including job duties that were not part of any current employee's position but would benefit the business. Negotiation also can involve creating different work schedules, customizing the way a job duty is performed, and providing workplace accommodations. These are just a few examples and are only as limited as the needs of the business and job seeker. It is important to remember that employment specialists are not attempting to "fit" job seekers into open, existing positions. The goal of customized employment is "real work" for competitive wages in a community business that meets the needs of business as well as the needs of the job seeker. Employment negotiations may involve compromise between the job seeker and employer but results in a positive outcome or both.

One definition of negotiation is to discuss with the goal of finding a mutually acceptable agreement.

Discovery is the precursor to job development with the identification of employment themes as the outcome. The next step after discovery is to develop an individualized plan for employment that is guided by the employment themes of the individual. The plan for employment should include identifying businesses in the community where people work who have similar interests and skills as the job seeker, developing a timeline for conducting informational interviews and other job development activities, as well as referring the job seeker for a Benefits Analysis if one has not been completed already. The plan is developed in collaboration with the job seeker including the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Counselor or representatives from other referral or funding agencies. Job seekers should identify and invite others who are important in their lives if they choose to do so. In addition to having input regarding the job seeker's interests and preferences, these individuals may also provide social capital for identifying businesses in the community for job development activities. ◆

Job Seeker Involvement

Job seekers should be supported and encouraged to exert control over their own career searches.

Customized employment emphasizes involving job seekers as much as possible in all aspects of the process of identifying and finding competitive integrated employment. Job seekers may choose to lead, direct, actively participate, or simply stay informed during job development. Job seekers may assume different roles during job development depending on the activity and their level of comfort. For instance, a job seeker may need support from the employment specialist to develop informational interview questions, but take the lead on asking the questions during the interview. As another example, the job seeker may talk with neighbors to determine if they know someone with connections to a business representing an employment theme. After identifying possible contacts, the job seeker may ask the employment specialist to take the lead in contacting businesses.

The employment specialist must be mindful of providing the least amount of support, being careful not to provide more assistance than the job seeker needs. It stands to reason that individuals who have been actively involved in obtaining the jobs of their choice will have a greater sense of success and a stronger commitment to their jobs. Supporting a job seeker in taking on some of the job search activities has many benefits beyond individual ownership. For instance, the job seeker may be demonstrating to the employer skills such as initiation and determination that may not have been readily identified. These types of interactions may begin to build a relationship between the job seeker and the business.

Social Capital

One of the first ways to involve a job seeker in the career search is to tap into the social capital of the individual as well as friends and family members. Social capital refers to all of the connections that people have to other people in their lives, throughout a person's lifetime. Other words to describe social capital are relationships and networks. Social capital includes three different types of networks[1].....

1. bonding networks,
2. bridging networks, and
3. linking networks.

Bonding networks are characterized by the close ties that people have on a daily basis. They are primarily connections with family, friends and neighbors who an individual knows well. A bridging network includes connections to people that the individual doesn't know well. As an example, a person may go to the gym and know individuals that they see there but do not know them well. The advantage of a bridging network for job seekers is that it opens up access to more opportunities. A bridging network is valuable to a person looking for

[1]Tilson, G., and Ward, M. (2016). Q & A on employment of people with physical disabilities: Using social capital to access opportunities and contribute to our communities. Richmond, VA: Virginia Commonwealth University Rehabilitation Research and Training Center. Available at: https://vcurrtc.org/resources/viewcontent.cfm/1200.

job contacts, ideas, and leads. It provides access for the person to gain new experiences. Linking networks provide an individual with access to organizations and systems that help people obtain resources or create change. These can include foundations, non-profit organizations, government agencies, and financial institutions. Although these groups are very different from one another, each may have valuable connections to offer to the job seeker when developing a plan for job development.

Social capital is found in friendships, neighborhoods, communities, clubs, groups, civic associations, and other places. Social capital is a way to identify businesses on behalf of a specific job seeker for job development. Employment specialists may use their own social capital to identify businesses and should not forget that family and friends have social capital as well. This extends to coworkers within an agency or other social networks that people belong to in their communities.

> ***Social capital refers to the collective value of all social networks [who people know] and the inclinations that arise from these networks to do things for each other.***
>
> *Robert Putnam*

These connections create opportunities to learn more about potential work within businesses. In trying to identify connections, the job seeker and employment specialist could ask themselves the following questions. Where does the job seeker participate in activities? Where do family members, friends, neighbors, and their acquaintances spend time and participate? This may also include case managers, vocational rehabilitation professionals, teachers, advocates, or others in a larger network of connections. Subsequently, every interaction should be considered a building block for capitalizing on social capital that can be used for job development. Table 1 provides some examples of social capital for job development. ◆

Table 1

Social Capital Examples

Example #1:

During discovery, a theme of small engine repair emerged for Bob. He liked to work with his father "tinkering" with the family's lawn mower. After observing him at home, the employment specialist discovered that he was very adept at fixing the mower. In talking with the mother, the employment specialist learned that the family went to a small engine repair shop in town. Using the family's social capital / connection, the employment specialist conducted an informational interview at the repair shop, which led to a job shadow experience. This allowed Bob and his employment specialist to learn more about the job duties associated with small engine repair to expand Bob's job search.

Example #2:

One of Mary's employment themes was identified during discovery as clerical. Her employment specialist knew that her cousin worked at a law firm in town. Mary used her social capital with her cousin and asked for a contact at the law firm. Her cousin invited the employment specialist and Mary to come for an informational interview and to observe. Mary saw several clerical job duties that a temporary intern was doing for the firm that she found of interest. On another day, she had the opportunity to try the tasks for a few hours with her employment specialist's assistance. Negotiations followed, and a job description was created for Mary who began working in a new customized position.

Example #3:

An employment consultant was working with an agency to implement discovery with several individuals in an agency's sheltered workshop. The consultant was not familiar with the area; however, she had a friend who lived in town (social capital). When one of the job seeker's employment themes was identified as air transportation, she emailed her friend for a contact at the airport. Her friend did not know anyone but remembered that she knew someone taking flying lessons at a small airfield. Using her social capital, she put the consultant in touch with the person taking flying lessons. A connection was made at the airfield for an informational interview.

Business Networking

Some job seekers and their families may not participate to any extent in their communities. They also may have received services exclusively in segregated programs and only know people who are paid to support them. Other job seekers may participate more in community activities and have social capital, but the connections do not result in job development opportunities. These job seekers may need support to identify businesses that match their employment themes identified during discovery, since their own social capital is limited. Employment agencies should explore their social capital both with the employees of the agencies and the businesses that interact with them. This social capital may include businesses that have hired workers with disabilities from the agencies as well.

The purpose of business networks is not to find available jobs but to establish relationships and social connections that can be used once employment themes have been identified for specific job seekers.

Networking and organizational marketing is a component of other employment services such as supported employment. The goal of these partnerships is to establish a meaningful relationship where trust and rapport are built and education between the business and community rehabilitation agency occurs. Networking can include belonging to the community such as belonging to local business organizations: Chamber of Commerce, Kiwanis, Rotary Club, etc. The purpose is not to find available jobs but to establish relationships and social connections that can be used once employment themes have been identified for specific job seekers. Employment specialists who have built solid and trusting relationships with the business community will be able to assist their job seekers in connecting for informational interviews as well as for other job development activities.

Defining the Geographic Area for the Job Search

The members of the job seeker's employment support team should be a great deal of assistance in defining the geographic location that best suit an individual's preferences. Another rich source of information regarding the geographic area for career search activities is to determine where people in the general public and/or community work who have the same interests (employment themes) as the job seeker. This is especially true in rural areas, although trends are also typically identified in inner-city and suburban neighborhoods. It will be very important for the employment specialist to respect and value the individual's right to self-sufficiency and independence. This will be critical when addressing the location of potentials job and the available mode of transportation.

Some communities may have elaborate specialized transportation systems. However, if the individual feels stigmatized by accessing this transportation option and prefers a job in walking distance to her/his home, this choice must be respected. In addition, the family may feel that there is more risk involved for the individual to take a city bus or cab

as compared to riding with a family member. However, if the individual prefers not to ride with a family member, then the employment specialist should respect the job seeker's preferences and assist in arranging for comprehensive bus training and support. The opposite could also be true; the individual may choose to work a significant distance from home, possibly at the same location or vicinity as a neighbor, friend, or family member. This would provide an opportunity for the job seeker to car pool with a familiar person.

The employment specialist should not become discouraged if a job opportunity presents itself when there is difficulty arranging transportation options. Nothing should be ruled out. Explore additional resources for transportation: co-workers, as well as their knowledge of friends traveling in the same direction at the same time of day; riding to work with one person and returning home with another; advertising for a driver by contacting community churches or civic organizations; utilizing other transportation options such as cabs, Uber, Lyft, or UZURV; negotiating with the employer for the shift that is most compatible for the individual. An employer who is invested in customizing a job for an applicant most likely will be willing to be flexible to accommodate the individual's needs. ◆

Informational Interviews for Job Development

Informational interviews for job development are different than those completed for discovery.

Informational interviews for job development is different than those completed for discovery. At this stage, job seekers and their employment specialists are targeting businesses that match the person's employment themes for a potential job. Businesses can be selected using social capital as well as through business networks as previously described. The focus is on matching a specific job seeker's preferences, skills, and interests for employment rather than targeting businesses with job openings. It may be easy to fall into the trap of identifying open positions and customizing existing job descriptions rather than customizing a job for a specific individual. Table 2 provides two case study examples to help further explain job development for customized employment.

Table 2 Targeting Existing Job Descriptions

Case Study Example #1

A job developer learns that there is an open position at a retail store stocking women's fashions. He goes to the store and finds that the business is open to removing a job duty from the position and hiring someone to unpack merchandise and hang the clothing on racks. This would allow the employee who will be hired in women's fashions to do other job duties. The job developer goes back to the agency and asks if anyone is interested in this "customized position."

While the job description was negotiated and "customized", the example DOES NOT MEET the definition of customized employment.

Why? Because, an existing job description was targeted prior to knowing if anyone in the agency wanted this type of work. This is an example of the labor market driving the job search rather than the needs and interests of the job seeker.

Case Study #2:

An employment specialist has several job seekers on her caseload that have completed discovery. One of the individual's employment themes is clerical, and he has specifically expressed an interest in being a receptionist. The employment specialist, using her social capital with a family friend, connects with a company that manufactures mechanical parts that are shipped all around the country.

She sets up an informational interview with the business's receptionist to learn more about what a receptionist does. (There isn't an open position. This is a "fact finding" mission.) During the interview, she learns that the front desk receptionist is responsible for compiling sales binders for the national sales force. The receptionist also mentions that she is unable to keep up with the demand and works overtime to compile the binders. A second visit was completed where the job seeker was able to observe the receptionist and the sales binder task. Negotiations began with the company and a proposal was submitted leading to a customized job for the job seeker.

This job development example DOES MEET the definition of customized employment.

The employment specialist completed discovery with her job seeker and knew that one of his themes was clerical. During the interview, she uncovered job duties that the company was paying overtime to be completed. A new job description was negotiated for a specific job seeker that matched his employment needs while also meeting the needs of the business.

Informational interviews can lead to customizing a position that meets the needs of the job seeker and the business.

Employment specialists should think about an informational interview as a conversation with an employer to learn more about the work that is done at the business. The goal is to gain information on the types of work that employees complete in order to determine if a specific job seeker's vocational goals potentially match the business. The employment specialist is not going into the business to ask about available jobs. Informational interviews can lead to customizing a position that meets the needs of the job seeker and the business. Refer to the information in chapter 2 on how to conduct interviews; however, there are additional things to consider when meeting with employers.

First, conducting interviews with business (really anyone) requires that the interviewer has good listening skills. When meeting with an employer focus on what the other person is saying. Turn off that inner voice that may be planning the next question rather than attending to what is being said. Checking what has been heard may also prove useful. For example, ask, "I understood you to say…...am I correct?" This type of active listening encourages understanding. It also assures that the other person is heard, accepted, and respected. The ability to actively listen supports open, ongoing, conversation.

When a person puts full attention to listening, the interviewer is less likely to miss important nonverbal messages such as facial expressions and voice inflections that provide valuable cues. Nonverbal communication reveals attitudes and feelings. This can consist of messages sent by the distance between people, body posture and orientation, expressions of the face and eyes, movement, and vocal characteristics. Interpreting non-verbal messages plays an important role in reading an employer's point of view.

Employment specialists should consider the messages that they are sending through their own body language as well as appearance. For example, sitting up straight and leaning slightly toward the person speaking shows confidence and interest. The eyes communicate another message. When someone looks the other person in the eyes with the proper facial expression, a clear message of interest is sent. At the same time, when eye contact is avoided disinterest may be communicated. Employment specialists also should consider matching their appearance / dress to the business. In general, business casual is appropriate. The following is a list of helpful tips when conducting an interview in businesses.

Employment specialists should consider the messages that they are sending through their own body language as well as appearance.

1. Dress appropriately to match the business attire of the company.
2. Be sincerely interested in the business.
3. Learn about the products, services, etc. provided by the business prior to the interview.
4. Take a deep breath and relax.
5. Maintain eye contact.
6. Speak clearly and purposefully.
7. Use the other person's name.
8. Have a checklist of items to discuss but be careful not to read off the list.
9. Take brief notes.
10. Relax and let the employer talk.
11. Listen carefully and organize your thoughts.

Developing a set of questions to guide the conversation can be helpful. Questions should be open ended requiring a response from the employer using information that he or she has. However, it is not recommended to use a checklist of questions by going down the list, reading the questions, and writing down the answers. This type of exchange may inhibit the conversation. Take a few notes on what is discussed but pay attention to the conversation rather than writing down everything that is said. A more detailed documentation of the interview should occur immediately afterwards. Table 3 provides some suggestions for questions.

Table 3

Informational Interview Sample Questions

What are you the most proud of in your business operations?
What keeps your business operating smoothly? • Probe questions: ○ Can you think of anything that would improve the workflow in your business? ○ Are there times of day when the workflow does not go smoothly? What would improve the situation?
Is there a product or service that you would like to provide that you aren't currently? • Probe questions: ○ What is limiting/keeping you from providing _____ (state the product or service)? ○ Do you have a target date for when for providing _____(state the product or service)?
What is innovative about your business? • Probe questions: ○ Who is leading the innovations? ○ What resources do you need to continue _____ (state the innovation that the employer has described.)
How are you making improvements? • Probe questions: ○ Who is leading the improvements? ○ What resources do you need to continue _____ (state the improvements that the employer has described.)
What plans do you have to grow your business? • Probe questions: ○ What is your biggest barrier to growing your business? ○ What can be done to remove the barrier to growing your business?
What stress are you or your employees experiencing? • Probe questions: ○ Can you think of ways that the stress could be reduced?

Inge, K., Brooks-Lane, N., & Graham, C. (2018). Q & A on customized employment: informational interviews. Richmond, VA: Virginia Commonwealth University. Retrieved from: https://drrp.vcurrtc.org/resources/content.cfm/1310. (Reprinted with permission.)

It is important to keep notes on what is learned during an informational interview. These notes are specific to the person who is being represented to the business as interested in this type of work. Documentation should be kept regarding where the interview was conducted, contact name/ person interviewed, findings from the interview, opportunities for follow-up observation or work experience, possibilities for job negotiations, and so forth. As was discussed in the chapter on discovery, the employment specialist wants to record brief notes during the actual interview and follow up immediately afterwards writing more extensive notes on what was discovered. Technology can be very helpful for keeping notes such as using a cell phone to record information immediately afterwards. These notes should be transcribed and kept with the job seeker's job development records.

Sometimes moving from the informational interview to a job site observation or job development occurs naturally. An employer may be willing to have the job seeker shadow an employee who is completing work that the person is interested in doing. Once the employment specialist learns about the business operations, he or she can make suggestions on how a specific job seeker may contribute to the workplace. In addition, informational interviews conducted during discovery should be revisited especially if a business seemed promising for customizing a position for the job seeker. If there are no opportunities in a particular business after an informational interview, employers may be able to recommend other businesses to contact. Networking can be viewed as a job development grapevine! These "warm" contacts demonstrates networking in the business community and are typically much easier to schedule as opposed to making "cold calls."

Networking can be viewed as a job development grapevine!

This is not to say that a "cold call" cannot lead to an informational interview though sometimes more difficult to connect with employers using this strategy. A cold call is one in which the employment specialist and job seeker as well as others on the team have not had any previous contact with the business. If the business is small, (i.e., a neighborhood garage, gift shop, etc.) a cold call may be a way obtain an informational interview to learn more about the business. Even when cold calling, it is best to try to get the name of a contact person before visiting. This extra effort demonstrates that the employment specialist has an interest in the business and is serious about establishing a relationship. It is important to remember that under the best circumstances, an employment specialist must be prepared for rejection when cold calling. Try to optimize the possibility for success by judging what might be the best time of day to visit the business. For instance, going to a restaurant during prime lunch or dinner hours would not be a good time to make a cold call.

All of a job seeker's employment themes should be explored concurrently in order to maximize the time spent in job development.

Informational interviews should be conducted across each job seeker's employment themes rather than one theme at a time. For instance, it has been recommended for the employment specialist to generate a list of businesses that match each of a job seeker's themes and develop a timeline for conducting informational interviews. If only one theme is explored at a time, it may become problematic and unnecessarily extend the amount of time it takes to customize a job. All of a job seeker's employment themes should be explored concurrently in order to maximize the time spent in job development.

Keeping a record of where an agency's employment specialists conduct informational interviews is important to ensure that multiple staff members do not contact the same businesses. If the agency creates an online database to record the information, employment specialists can access each other's contacts and know the relationship that has been established with specific businesses. Remember, contacts are made based on specific job seeker's themes rather than broadly canvassing the local labor market. Having said this, keeping a record of contacts also is important following-up with businesses at a later time. For instance, a business may not be able to customize a job description but would be interested in providing opportunities for other job seekers to explore the theme(s) represented by the business for discovery activities. This is another way that warm contacts and connections in the community can help facilitate employment for individuals with disabilities. Table 4 provides types of information that an employment specialist may want to collect and save for future reference.

Table 4

Records for Business Contacts

Business Contacts		
• Name of Business • Business Address • Contact Person • Date of Contact	• Business Products • Business Services • Employment Theme(s) Targeted • Business Needs Identified	• Observation of Business Operations: YES / NO • Summarize the Observation • Follow-up Contacts Including Dates and Outcomes

Business Note of Appreciation

After completing an informational interview, the employment specialist should send a thank you note. A note on business stationary is suggested rather than sending an e-mail or text message. The note serves as tangible communication to reinforce the name and services of the agency as well as the job seeker if that person was involved in the interview. In addition to a standard thank you note, an employment specialist should summarize some of the points that were discussed during the interview. Table 5 presents some key points to remember regarding a business note of appreciation. For example, "I found it very interesting to learn more about the sales clerk's duties. Thank you for inviting me for a tour of your store. I look forward to seeing you again next Wednesday at 10:30 a.m."

Table 5

Tips for Business Notes of Appreciation

• Write the thank-you note on the same day as the visit. • Address the note to the person interviewed. • Direct additional notes to other employees at the business, if appropriate. • Make the note brief.	• Use this note to confirm the next appointment time or to add something that was missed during the interview. • Mail the note the next morning if not mailed on the day of the appointment. • Personalize the note by adding something specific that occurred during the visit.

Informational Interview Case Study Example

One of the job seeker's that Geri, an employment specialist, is representing has an employment theme of customer service. She knows that her job seeker and mother often go to a small locally owned gift shop, ACCENTS, to purchase gifts for friends and family. During discovery, the job seeker expressed that going to the store is one of her favorite things to do. Geri asked if the mother or the job seeker knew anyone at the shop, and they gave her the name of the owner, Mrs. Phelps. She called the shop and asked if the owner would be willing to talk about her business, because she was representing a young person interested in this type of work. The meeting was set for the next day at a time the owner identified as a traditionally slow time for the business. Prior to the meeting, Geri developed a brief list of questions for the interview knowing that she would ask other questions as the conversation developed. Her list of questions can be found in Table 6.

Table 6

Geri's List of Informational Interview Questions for ACCENTS

1. Could you describe a typical day at Accents? 2. What are some of the work tasks that need to be done in a typical day? 3. How do you assign these tasks to your employees? 4. Are there any times of the day that are busier than others? 5. What would help in managing these busy times of the day?	6. Are there things that don't get done or are not done frequently enough that would improve your sales and services? 7. When are your busy seasons and how long do they last? 8. Do you hire additional staff during your busy seasons?

Upon entering the gift shop, Geri was eager to make Ms. Phelps feel comfortable. She remarked on the attractive appearance of the store and the wonderful selection of cards and gifts. (Small talk is important, because it encourages conversation by both parties and begins to establish a relationship.) Once rapport was established, Geri shifted her focus to the questions that she had prepared. During the conversation, Geri carefully watched Ms. Phelps' facial expressions and body movement to determine if she appeared distracted or rushed. If so, Geri knew that she should suggest another time for the interview to continue.

When the interview was finished, Mrs. Phelps suggested a short tour of the shop. During the tour, Geri had the opportunity to ask specific questions about job tasks and the shop operations as she observed what was going on. In addition, she was able to observe employee interactions and begin assessing the social and cultural aspects of the gift shop. Observing and asking questions regarding co-worker relationships and management style, as well as determining employees with influence, can provide clues to the amount of co-worker or natural supports that will be available at the workplace for an employee if a job were to be negotiated.

Also during the tour, Geri was able to ask questions such as: volume of the gift business, number of employees, and hiring process. As Geri asked questions regarding each of these areas, she took brief notes. Although Geri was continually gathering information, she was careful to keep eye contact and not to look away from Mrs. Phelps too frequently. Eye contact, smiles, and nods of affirmation can be a powerful way to communicate non-verbally.

Upon completing the informational interview, Geri commented that she was representing a young woman who had expressed interest in working at a gift shop. (She had permission from her job seeker to share her name.) Mrs. Phelps responded that she indeed knew the young woman and her mother and said that she would be open to her

coming to the shop for an afternoon to observe and work with another employee. Several times were suggested, and Geri's next step was to take the information back to the job seeker and her mother to set up a time for the experience. After returning to her car, Geri used the voice recorder on her cell phone and recorded additional notes that she was unable to write down during the interview process. It is important for Geri to record information, images, and conversations while they were still fresh in her mind. In addition, Geri was able to expand on the information from her handwritten notes. ◆

Job Negotiation

As previously mentioned in this chapter, customized employment involves individually negotiating job duties resulting in a job description that did not exist prior to the negotiation with businesses. Negotiation is a sophisticated form of communication. Therefore, job seekers and the employment specialists who represent them need to become effective communicators and be able to speak in a clear and concise manner. Knowing the job seeker's abilities as well as the supports that the agency has to offer businesses, anticipating an employer's potential needs and questions, and using tools (e.g., business cards, video and/or photo resumes or portfolios) will be key to successful negotiations.

As previously mentioned in this chapter, customized employment involves individually negotiating job duties resulting in a job description that did not exist prior to the negotiation with businesses.

While there is no one "best" way to negotiate, there are some basic steps that can lead toward successful customized employment negotiations. Step one is to know the goal and stay focused. Remember, the goal is to come to an agreement that is mutually beneficial to both parties (job seeker and the employer). This means beginning with a clear knowledge of the job seeker's vocational interests, strengths, expectations, and support needs. If an employment specialist is representing the person with a disability, he or she must know the job seeker's bottom line. This should include areas in which he or she can or cannot compromise. For instance, the job seeker may have some flexibility in the number of hours worked during the week but will not work on the weekends. Knowing the job seeker will ensure that negotiations move in the right direction from the beginning and that a job of choice for the individual is identified. Compromising on features of a job to satisfy the employer that do not meet the needs of the job seeker will not result in a mutually beneficial employment relationship. This information should have been gathered during discovery activities.

Step two is to identify the employer's needs. Successful negotiations require understanding the business and its operations. Time must be spent building rapport with the employers, before negotiation is attempted for a specific job seeker. Identify the company's needs and suggest possible work solutions that might resolve these needs. The way to accomplish this is through informational interviewing, discussed earlier in this chapter.

Negotiations require spending time with the employer. During this period, a relationship can be developed and needs identified. The employment specialists should encourage an employer to share thoughts and feelings by asking for feedback on what is

discussed. The negotiator's responsibility is to ask questions that will uncover the employer's needs and interests that can then be matched with the needs and interests of the job seeker. If the employment specialist creates a receptive climate, he or she is more likely to establish a relationship leading to a negotiated position.

Observing business operations and asking key questions may lead to discovering opportunities for customizing a job. For example, some of the following questions may be asked. Do employees have duties that take time away from their main area of expertise? Do you routinely pay overtime or need temporary work services? Are their tasks that do not get done or that you would like to see done more often?

Observing business operations and asking key questions may lead to discovering opportunities for customizing a job.

The employment specialist must also be ready to probe below the surface. For example, consider asking questions such as the following. What's your real need here? What values are important to your company? What's the outcome or result that you want? The answers to these and other questions can lead to cooperative problem solving. This in turn may trigger discussions about negotiating a new job.

The employment specialist must be ready to listen to employers! It's vital to really understand what employers are saying and their points of view. This shows respect and good intentions, and will make an employer feel valued. In the process, the employment specialist should learn more about a company's needs and what may be holding them back from proceeding with negotiations. "Reading" employers and overcoming objections will be key to success. Employment specialists should become familiar with typical employer concerns and be able to address them. For example, the employer may be wondering, "Will this cost my company money? Will this agency deliver what they are promising? Will the person be able to do the job?"

Pointing out that other businesses have successfully customized job descriptions and hired individuals with disabilities may address these concerns. Ask employers who have hired workers with disabilities if their names can be used as references. Discuss in advance with the job seeker the accommodations that will be needed and what information is to be disclosed to the employer. Know how you are going to represent the person's strengths and interests so that the employer does not have questions regarding the individual's ability to do the job that is being negotiated. Be ready and able to describe how the job seeker will be a valued employee to the company.
One thing to remember is to not assume that what is important for one business will be the same for another. For example, one employer may be motivated to negotiate a job to save money, while another may have a job task that current employees are not completing. Remember, the end result is a mutually agreed upon job description. The employer and the job seeker should leave the negotiation feeling satisfied. ◆

Employment Proposals

The written proposal helps to finalize the negotiation.

Negotiations may begin verbally, but the employment specialist in collaboration with the job seeker should put something in writing to assist the owner or manager in understanding what is being proposed. It may be easy for an employer to verbally negotiate a position but not "seal the deal." The written proposal helps to finalize the negotiation. As with all business interactions, it is imperative to use business language and keep the document free of jargon. The employment proposal can be presented in six categories: Rationale, Benefit, Job Duties, Proposed Employee, Employment Conditions, and References.

The rationale section of the proposal should include how completion of the proposed tasks will the impact the business. As an example, John is an employment specialist who is negotiating a position for his job seeker, Kyle, with a local newspaper. The rationale John provides to the newspaper behind the proposed position would be to increase the productivity and efficiency in distribution of papers for a particular area of town.

The benefit is listed next in the proposal, and this is where the employment specialist goes into greater detail about how the business would benefit from making this change. In the previous example, John discussed how this proposed position would be filled by an employee who excels in organizational tasks, such as stacking the newspapers and organizing by zip code. A part-time stack out position completed by a reliable and motivated employee will improve consistency in the overall circulation process.

Proposed Job Functions should be included next in the employment proposal. This can be a bulleted list of all of the identified tasks that have been negotiated for the proposed employee to complete as part of the customized position. This may a portion of one job description, parts of two separate job descriptions, or completely new tasks that have not previously been performed. In this example, the proposed tasks included sorting publications by area of town, moving the newspapers to the assigned locations in the building, and organizing the publications.

The next section of the proposal presents the is job seeker, and it is important to include the skills, abilities, and interests that make this individual a good match to the tasks, culture, and environment of the business. The proposed employee should be discussed in a positive light and there should be no discussion of disability. For this example, the proposed employee is described as motivated, dedicated, interested in the proposed tasks, routine oriented, and experienced with assembly.

In the employment conditions section, the employment specialist will share information about how the proposed employee will be supported by the employment specialist, if any accommodations will be needed, and specifics related to hours and days of the week the individual will work. For this example, the employment specialist discusses that they will assist the employee in learning their job tasks and be available for ongoing consultation both to the employee and employer.

Finally, References for the proposed employee should be provided. The employment specialist can include former employers if the individual has previous work experience. If this is the individuals' first job, then community members who know the individual should be listed. Examples of possible references could include former teachers, former community based training supervisors, volunteer site contacts, church members or service providers (including the employment specialist). A sample employment proposal is found at the end of this chapter. ◆

Employment Proposal for Stackout
The Times Dispatch
(Hanover Distribution Center)
7000 Times Dispatch Blvd,
Hanover, VA 23123

Rationale: Increase productivity and efficiency in distribution, verification, and the stack out of the newspapers by zones throughout the Hanover Distribution Center.

Benefit: With high turnover rates and an ongoing need for productivity and efficiency, a part-time stack out position could be filled by an employee who excels in organizational tasks, such as stacking the newspapers and organizing by zip code. A part-time stack out position completed by a reliable and motivated employee will improve consistency in the overall circulation process. An employment specialist will provide on-site training to assist in the employee reaching full independence in the stack out position as well as provide coaching for any change in routine or job duties in on a consistent basis. The employment specialist will also evaluate the work site and make suggestions on how to best support the worker if hired. This includes providing training to coworkers on how to assist the worker.

Job Duties:

- Sort publications by zones using provided reference
- Maneuver pallet jack to pallet with publications
- Organize publications on pallet
- Verify and sort publications by zones on work stations for carriers
- Assist in necessary housekeeping duties throughout the Hanover Distribution Center

Proposed Employee:

Justin is a motivated and dedicated young man who is interested in performing the job duties listed above. He is routine-oriented in expected tasks but also responds well to daily assignments. He has experience with assembly and delivery of products, creating packages for delivery, and reviewing expiration dates and organizing products. Justin is a team player but works well independently as needed. He has a positive attitude and a strong work ethic. Justin looks forward to becoming a part of a team where he can use his skills.

Employment Conditions:

Justin will provide these services at an hourly rate of $8.25 for up to 29 hours a week. If hired, Justin will be an employee of The Times Dispatch. An Employment Specialist will:

- Assist Justin in learning his job duties
- Identify any supports Justin needs to complete his job duties
- Ensure the assigned job duties are completed to your satisfaction, and
- Be available on an on-going basis after the initial training for issues that may arise (additional job duties that need training, etc.).

References:

John Smith
Lowe's (manager)
8181 Broad St.
Richmond, VA 23111
(804) 821-8211
jsmith@lowes.com

Susan Smith
Hanover Public Schools (Teacher)
7372 Hanover Rd.
Hanover, VA 23245
(804) 749-0909
ssmith@hanoverschools.com

Cecilia Brown
Hanover Church
1212 Church Rd.
Hanover, VA 23245
(804) 749-5454

Employment Proposal for (title of the position)
Name and Address of the Business

To:	**Date:**
Name of the Proposed Employee:	
Represented by:	
Rationale:	
Job Functions:	
Proposed Employee:	
Employment Conditions:	
References:	
Contact Information:	

Chapter 4

Employment Supports: ON AND OFF THE JOB SITE

The Essential Elements of Customized Employment for Universal Application was developed by The Workforce Innovation Technical Assistance Center (WINTAC) and the Youth Technical Assistance Center (Y-TAC) in collaboration with Griffin-Hammis Associates, TransCen, Inc., Marc Gold & Associates, and Virginia Commonwealth University. A copy can be found at the end of this manual. The document is a guide for the universal application of customized employment elements across service delivery and training providers; however, job supports is only briefly addressed in the document as follows.

> ***Employment specialists should negotiate a support plan with employers that offers the new employee access to all the naturally existing features of the workplace and, at the same time, offers the assistance of supported employment job coaches. This element connects CE with SE [supported employment] in a way that attempts to maximize the natural features of a workplace in relation to the ongoing supports offered by SE.***

While the authors of this manual recognize that customized employment is described as pre-employment services, we believe that it is important to discuss strategies for ensuring job stabilization and job retention. Therefore, included in this chapter is information on employment supports that can be delivered both on and off the job site. While the statement implies that the worker with disabilities is transferred to a job coach and supported employment services, our belief is that the person who completes the discovery and job development activities described in the previous two chapters is the preferred person to develop and provide workplace supports. This allows for continuity of services across the various activities that support the individual in becoming a valued employee of the business. If this is not possible, the employment specialist who completed discovery and job development with the job seeker must coordinate and collaborate with the job coach when the workplace support plan is developed.

Workplace Supports

Critics of providing employment supports at the job site have argued that the presence of an employment specialist draws negative attention to the worker with a disability and has the potential to isolate the individual from coworkers and supervisors. Well-designed instructional programs that are based on the support needs of the worker do not segregate individuals with disabilities. Instead, poor practices are usually the reason that supervisors and coworkers do not interact with or provide assistance to the new employee

with disabilities. Employment specialists need to be skilled in providing the least amount of assistance possible so that the worker is independent, at the same time involving employees / coworkers in the workplace. Having knowledge of the natural supports that are available, the supervisor's and coworkers support needs, the demands of the workplace, and the new employee's support needs, is critical for designing an effective plan for support.

When designing support plans employment specialists should ask themselves the following questions:

- What are the supports that are available to all employees at this business?
- What can I do to avoid being the only person to provide instruction and supports.
- How can coworkers and the supervisor be involved in providing supports while I provide the least amount of assistance or instruction?
- How can the coworkers and supervisor be involved in providing these support from the first day on the job?

Instead of being a barrier between the coworkers and the worker with a disability, the employment specialists need to determine how they can facilitate interaction. The first thing to do is to teach the person from the first day of employment to ask the supervisor or coworkers questions rather than depending on the employment specialist. For example, if the worker doesn't know where to find the work supplies, help the individual seek assistance rather than being the person who solves the problem. Don't always be the one to ask questions or find the answers. This is a small step but a beginning step in involving the workplace in supporting the employee. Initially, coworkers simply may not know how to support someone with a disability, and the employment specialist is the one to model how to interact and provide assistance. As with the worker with disabilities, the employment specialist must be skilled in providing as much support as needed to coworkers but as little as possible!

The role of the employment specialist is to assist the worker with disabilities in identifying and reviewing the variety of supports available and assist in developing the workplace support plan. For instance, a company may have varying types or levels of support options. One company may have an intensive orientation and training program while another has none. Each support also must be analyzed to determine if it meets the needs of the worker. A one time, two-hour lecture on company policies may be of little benefit to one new employee with disabilities. However, a coworker who explains the "unwritten rules" of the workplace may be an extremely valuable resource and become a mentor to the worker.

Whenever identifying and facilitating workplace supports, the employment specialist also needs to determine if unnecessary dependence on coworkers is the outcome. For instance, a coworker may volunteer to assist the worker with disabilities in setting up work supplies every day or in completing portions of work tasks that the individual finds difficult. Training from an employment specialist initially may seem to be the more intrusive option than coworker supports. However, training may actually be the least intrusive option if the workers becomes independent in performing these job duties.

If instruction by the employment specialist is the selected option, he/she continually must evaluate the type of assistance that is being provided. Something as simple as where the employment specialist stands during instruction can create dependence on the employment specialist and place a barrier between the new employee and coworkers. Table 1 on the following page offers on some points to consider when selecting and facilitating workplace supports.

Considerations for the Identification and Selection of Workplace Supports

Table 1

1. **What are the possible workplace support options?**

   There could be many different ways to approach the same support need such as:

   a. using a coworker mentor to assist the individual in responding to a natural cue to increase his/her production;
   b. asking a supervisor to assist the new employee in monitoring his/her work production; or
   c. having an employment specialist train the new employee to monitor his/her own production using a self-management program.

   The employment specialist should identify and review all the different support strategies and options with the new employee and employer and then select the one that best meets the needs of the worker.

2. **Which strategies match the learning style or needs of the new employee?**

   While there may be many support options available in the workplace, a new employee will respond to any particular choice based on his/her learning style. Some individuals may respond better to verbal instructions, while others need demonstrations and repeated practice to learn a new job duty. For instance, if the new employee does not respond to the verbal instructions offered by the supervisor, there is a gap between the support provided and the support needed. In this example, the employment specialist can work with the employer and new employee to determine if the supervisor needs information on how to provide effective support. Or, they may decide that the new employee prefers for the employment specialist to assist him/her in learning the task. If this is the selected option, the employment specialist must be conscious of fading support to the naturally occurring supervision available from the employer.

3. **What are the new employee's, employer's, and coworker's choices?**

   The employment specialist should not assume that workplace supports will be provided by the employer or coworker for all of the new employee's needs. The employer's and/or coworker' level of comfort with supplying the identified support should be determined. Does the new employee want a coworker as an official mentor? How does the coworker feel about providing that type of assistance? Does the employer feel that this is a reasonable request or should other support options be explored? The employer may feel that this is a distraction from work task. For instance, a new employee may be hesitant to ask a stranger for support clocking-in on the computer and a coworker may also feel uncomfortable providing the support because it involves the identification of the employees Social Security number. However, as relationships develop in the workplace, this assistance may evolve naturally.

Initially identifying and discussing the various support options with the employee with disabilities, employer, and coworkers is the employment specialist's role. This should be completed in collaboration with the worker who is supported in the process. Individuals who are involved in identifying their own supports will have greater ownership over their jobs. In most instances, a combination of strategies will be selected to promote success. This combination of supports may include natural supports from coworker, natural cues, compensatory strategies, as well as instruction from the employment specialist and/or coworkers. Determining which combination will promote independence while gradually fading the employment specialist's support to the supervisor and coworkers is the key to long term job retention. ◆

Job Duty Analysis

The job duty analysis is a critical component of any workplace support plan to include analyzing the components of the negotiated job and organizing a daily routine.

A job duty analysis may have occurred during job negotiation, but if not, it must be completed prior to the worker's first day on the job. The job duty analysis is a critical component of any workplace support plan to include analyzing the components of the negotiated job and organizing a daily routine. This analysis includes identifying the areas in which various job tasks are performed, establishing a work routine, identifying natural supports and natural cues associated with the worker's job, and negotiating support strategies as outlined previously. In some cases, the employment specialist may want to spend time in the business, working a shift for the hours that the new worker will be scheduled. By doing this, the employment specialist can identify the available supports for each job duty and estimate the amount of time required for task completion.

During the analysis, the employment specialist should concentrate on each job duty, if more than one, and how it is performed by coworker(s). If a job duty has been negotiated that no one is performing or has not been completed consistently, the employment specialist needs to confirm the supervisor's expectations. This includes negotiating a production standard and/or performance criteria for the job duty. For instance, workers with disabilities may perform a job duty at the same production rate as other coworkers, but the employer is satisfied as long as the task gets done to a specific quality. Negotiating as the job is customized will be critical to set expectations and prevent problems later in employment. The employment specialist also can consider if the task can be organized or modified specific to the worker who will master it. Table 2 provides useful tips for completing a job duty analysis. This must negotiated with the supervisor as well if any changes are made to the "standard" procedures for getting the work completed.

Table 2 Guidelines for Developing a Job Duty Analysis

1. Interview the employer/supervisor for information.
2. Observe the coworker who currently is performing the job duty.
3. Identify the skills that must be completed to perform the job duty to the company's production and quality standards.
4. Determine the most efficient procedure for sequencing the skills.
5. Identify all tools and machinery that are required. Consider needed modifications or accommodations to the equipment.
6. Identify natural supports that coworkers provide to the employee currently completing the job duty.
7. Identify any natural cues intrinsic in the job duty.
8. Evaluate how to eliminate or reduce unnecessary movement when completing the job duty.
9. If the task is one that is not being done or not done regularly, perform the job duty and solicit feedback from the employer and/or supervisor.
10. If changes are made to the "usual way " of completing the job duty, confirm the modifications with the employer and/or supervisor.

As an example, a new job was customized for an individual with the primary job duty of data entry. Coworkers performing the existing data entry operator job had multiple job duties to include answering phone inquiries, verifying data for accuracy and completeness, investigating discrepancies in files and reconciling the differences, coding data for entry, entering information into the data system, and organizing and filing the entered data. The data entry operators often were getting behind in data entry and organizing and filing. They were spending a great

deal of time verifying data for accuracy and completeness; investigating discrepancies in the files to reconcile the differences; and coding the data. During an informational interview, the employment specialist proposed that one way to address this concern would be to hire a person with the primary job duty of data entry and file organization. After observing the data entry job, an employment proposal was submitted on behalf of the job seeker, and it was accepted. Following the steps outlined in Table 2 and using a Job Duty Analysis Form, the employment specialist recorded a sequence of job duties for the new employee and verified it with the employer. Table 3 below presents the completed Job Duty Analysis for the customized job. ◆

Completed Job Duty Analysis Form

Table 3

SEQUENCE OF JOB DUTIES FORM

Position: *Date Entry Level*

Job Site: *Murray Electronics*

Employee: *Bob Stevens*

Job duties remain the same: *Yes, this schedule remains the same each day.*	**Job duties vary from day to day:** *No* **Monday Tuesday Wednesday Thursday Friday Saturday Sunday**
Time of Day	**Job Duty**
8:30 am	*Clock-in*
8:35 – 8:45 am	*Set-up work space and organize files for data entry*
8:45 – 10:30 am	*Enter data*
10:30 – 10:45 am	*Break*
10:45 to Noon	*Enter data*
12:00 – 12:30 pm	*LUNCH*
12:30 – 1:00 pm	*Organize files*
1:00 – 1:30	*File completed folders*
1:30 pm	*Clock-out*

Comments:

It should take Bob five minutes to walk from the clock-in area to his desk. The box of files for the day's data entry will be placed on his desk by Mary Smith (natural support) when she arrives at 8:00 am. If there isn't a box on his desk (natural cue), he needs to go to the file room and get the box from Lucy Jones. At noon, the local siren sounds in town (natural cue) for lunch. Mary has offered to walk by Bob's desk on the way to the lunch breakroom (natural support). The employment specialist will assist Mary in teaching Bob the "landmarks" to and from the breakroom so he can learn to do this independently. (A picture map will be developed that he can use on his phone if he has difficulty learning how to navigate the building). If Bob does not complete all the files in the box for the day, he needs to lock these files in his desk drawer to complete the following day.

Signature: *Sally Johnson* **Date:** *Wed., September 4, 2019*

Natural Cues

A natural cue represents some feature of the workplace, job tasks, or activities that signals an employee what to do next. Typically, a natural cue is one that the employee can see, hear, touch/feel, or smell and has not been changed or added to by an employment specialist. Examples may include an on/off indicator light, a buzzer, the telephone ringing, announcements over a loud speaker, color of a work supply, and the placement or location of work materials (e.g., mail in an "in" box). When a natural cue is present or occurs during the work routine, the person may attend to the cue and respond correctly, not attend to the cue at all, or respond incorrectly. For instance, the employee may respond to the buzzer on the service door by opening it for the delivery person (the correct action); ignore the buzzer and continue pricing merchandise (no response); or ask another worker to open the door (incorrect response).

Coworkers and supervisors are the most valuable resource for identifying the natural cues of a workplace.

Working with coworkers to identify natural cues is important, because cues may not always be obvious to the employment specialist.

Some workers with disabilities need assistance learning to identify and attend to natural cues. They know the job. They can assist the employment specialist in learning the tricks of the trade, those unwritten assistance cues that could help the worker with a disability be successful. For instance, a new employee working in a hotel was assisting with restocking the toiletries in the guest rooms. She could not discriminate between the shoe shine cloth and shower cap packages, they came in identical cardboard packets except for a very small print that labeled the contents. However, the individual could not read, and she couldn't look at the two packages and tell which one was which without opening them.

The employee needed to look on the counter in the bathroom, determine which items were missing, and replace the correct toiletries. The absence of an item on the counter was the first natural cue signaling the person that an item needed replacing. A coworker, when asked, offered the perfect solution to this situation. She told the employment specialist that she never reads the labels on the packets. Instead, she picks up a package and squeezes it; the shower cap makes a "crinkling" noise while the shoe shine cloth is soft. The natural cues, physical characteristics of the items told her which packet contained which item.

Adding an Extra Cue to the Natural Cue

One way to call attention to a natural cue is to initially add an extra or artificial cue. This extra cue can enhance the relevant features of the naturally occurring one such as adding color coding, which is a common added cue. For instance, an red dot is placed on the on / off switch of the copy machine. As another added cue example, an arrow might be added to point to the on / off switch. If the employment specialist thinks adding cues may assist the worker, the employer or supervisor must approve the addition before the change is made. Often added cues

in the workplace benefit everyone. For instance, everyone who uses the copy machine relies on the red dot or the arrow to locate the on-off switch of the copy machine. So everyone in the workplace may benefit not just the worker with a disability.

Another example may be pairing the natural cue with a verbal cue provided by the employment specialist or a coworker with the goal of fading the verbal cue. If the worker is taught to attend to a cue independently, the employment specialist can fade more quickly, or the worker does not have to rely on a coworker for assistance. Teaching the person to be independent may be preferred to relying on a coworker to prompt the response. Coworkers resign; are transferred; or they might simply forget to provide assistance. This needs to be determined on a case by case example.

When extra cues are added to the work environment or work tasks, the employment specialist needs to consider how they will be faded.

As an example, an individual with a traumatic brain injury could not remember that he needed to clock in when he got to work. The natural cue of seeing the time clock upon arriving in the workplace didn't prompt the individual to clock in. So, a reminder audio cue was set on the person's cell phone. Initially, the employment specialist verbally prompted the individual to clock-in using the reminder cue. Gradually, the employment specialist delayed the verbal cue for a few seconds, and the alarm on the phone became the cue to clock-in. Within a few days, the individual was clocking in independently. This gradual waiting can be faded in seconds or minutes depending on the person that is receiving instruction. The goal is to fade the verbal cue to the natural cue that the person needs to recognize.

The speed of fading should be based on the employee's ability to continue responding, as the extra cue is faded. Remember to include the employee, coworker, and supervisor in discussions on adding extra cues to the work environment. This will ensure ownership of the strategy by all individuals involved as well as guarantee that changes are not made that the supervisor would not approve. ◆

Task Analysis

At this point, the employment specialist has identified the major job duties, the time of day when these duties occur, the specific skills associated with each duty, natural cues and supports, and any needed supplies and tools. Next, the employment specialist should develop a written task analysis for those job skills that the worker does not know how to perform and will need instruction. Steps in a task analysis should be stated in terms of observable behaviors with each step representing one "behavior." Once the step is complete, a visible change in the task or process occurs. Wording steps in the form of a verbal cue (e.g., Push the "off" button), allows the employment specialist to use the steps of the task analysis as verbal prompts during instruction. Table 4 on the following page lists tips as guidelines for writing a task analysis.

The employment specialist should develop a written task analysis for those job skills that the worker does not know how to perform and will need

Guidelines for Writing a Task Analysis

Table 4

1. State steps in terms of observable behaviors.
2. Write steps in adequate detail with only one behavior per step.
3. Test the task analysis to ensure that each step results in a visible change in the task or process.
4. Order steps from first to last.
5. Word steps as verbal cues.
6. Build natural cues and compensatory strategies into the task analysis.
7. Consider efficiency; use both hands with the least amount of movement.
8. Eliminate discrimination or unnecessary judgement calls with the task (e.g., the form is complete when all blanks have been filled in).

Case Study Example

Martha secured employment with a local hospital as a transporter. Within the first week of initial training, the employment specialist discovered that Martha was having difficulty with restocking blanket warmers. Martha and the employment specialist worked together to develop the f task analysis in Table 5 with a checklist for self-recording.

Restocking Blanket Warmers

Table 5

1. Get table or cart
2. Fill table with blankets (closed ends same direction) and sheets
3. Cover cart with flat sheet
4. Pull dust cover down over linen cart
5. Start stock at room 1-2
6. Remove 5 warm blankets (place on cart)
7. Fill warmer -- start with back first -- **fill to top of vent line**
8. ***Always put 5 warm on top of front stack**
9. Fill sheets: a. Fold 1 sheet at a time, lengthwise (like a hot dog) b. Stack pike of sheets on cart
10. Stack sheets in warmer
11. Cover cart with flat sheet
12. Check off pod on checklist
13. Continue with next pod until all are finished

***If out of blankets / sheets return to linen cart and reload**

	1-2	9	3-4	5-6	20-21	8-10	14-15	11	19	17-18	16
Blankets											
Flat Sheets											

It is easy to see that each step in the above task analysis is an observable change and each step is written as a verbal cue. In the above example, the employment specialist added a self-recording chart to the task analysis to provide the worker with a form to track her own progress. Within two weeks Martha was restocking blanket warmers with no verbal cues from the employment specialist and/or manager. Developing a tasks analysis for those skills that will require instruction serves as the foundation for job-site training and support.

Compensatory Strategies

Adding compensatory strategies to supports provided at the business can enhance an employee's ability to learn and work independently. In some instances, using a compensatory strategy can eliminate instruction and allow individuals to participate in work-related activities that they otherwise would not be able. For instance, an employee who has difficulty counting money while standing in the cafeteria line may use a "debit card" to purchase lunch. The debit card eliminates the need for the employee to count money when people are impatiently waiting to purchase their lunches. It is important to remember that the steps in using a compensatory strategy may require instruction and should be included within any task analyses that are developed. Table 6 provides some examples of compensatory strategies.

Compensatory Strategy Examples

Table 6

Examples	Possible Compensatory Strategies
Example #1: The new employee who can't remember the sequence of the new job duties could gain support from any one of the following possible strategies.	• written list • pictures on cell phone • photo book • assignment board • flow chart posted in locker
Example #2: The new employee whose job is to run the copy machine and fulfill copy requests made by coworkers has difficulty reading copy request to determine work assignments.	• in/out boxes for each coworker requesting work with name of coworker • special form highlighting relevant features of the task (e.g., thick outlined box where number of copies is located) • audio file of request for copy work sent by email

If compensatory strategies are needed, they should be designed with input from the worker with disabilities, supervisors, and coworkers. In addition, care should be given to the design and construction of materials to ensure that they do not stigmatize the worker with disabilities. The employment specialist and employee must work together in the design of the work schedule. Selected materials should be those that can be found in the work environment and accepted by the business. For instance, if most employees in the work place use their cell phone, then the employee's cell phone may be used with Notes App to assist in designing a work schedule. If the reverse is true and the work site does not permit employees to use their cell phones, then the employment specialist would assist the employee in designing another compensatory strategy for remembering a work schedule. An example of evaluating the materials used for compensatory strategies is found in Table 7. In this example, a job duty schedule has been developed in booklet form with pictures that represent the various job duties.

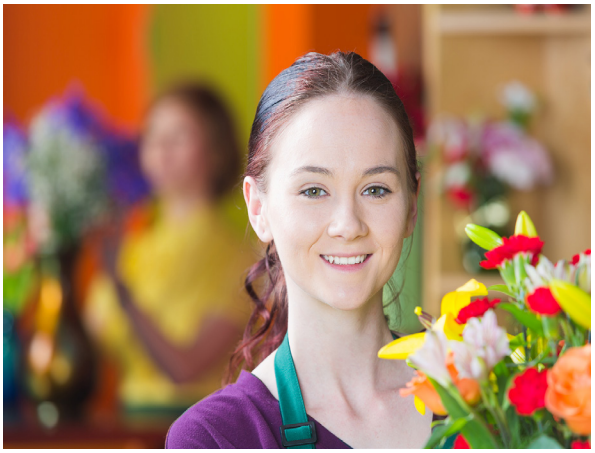
Considerations for Designing a Compensatory Job Duty Booklet

Table 7

- The number of pages in the booklet should be evaluated. Too many may distract or confuse the employee rather than assist in task completion.
- The size of the booklet must be evaluated. Does it draw attention to the employee? Could it be made small enough to fit in a pocket?
- The booklet should be durable. How often will it need to be replaced?
- The materials should be simple to use. Is there a less complicated strategy that is just as effective?
- Does the individual find using technology too stimulating and does it create unproductive work behavior?

Compensatory Memory Strategies

Some individuals with disabilities may have specific memory difficulties related to their disability. This may include problems with auditory and visual memory and learning, as well as short and long term memory. Compensatory strategies are one way to deal with these issues. Some of the specific strategies that have been suggested for employees with a variety of disabilities include the use of imagery, number chunking, memory notebooks, verbal labeling, and verbal rehearsal, to mention a few. Table 8 presents how these specific strategies can be used to help ensure employment success of the worker with memory support needs.



Compensatory Memory Strategy

Table 8

Compensatory Memory Strategy	Example
Imagery: The process of using mental pictures/ images of information to be recalled.	The new employee visualizes himself walking a specific route to assist in remembering how to find his work station.
Mnemonic: Impose an organizational structure on verbal information to cue recall of several elements.	A clerical assistant recalls her sequence of job duties by remembering the word, code. C = clock in O = open mail D = deliver mail E = enter data
Number Grouping: Recalling numbers by perceptually re-organizing them into fewer elements.	A new employee working at central supply in a hospital needed to remember to pull items based on a four digit code. She would review a computer printout and see four numbers such as 1,7,2, and 5. Instead of saying these separately, she recalled the information as seventeen twenty-five.
Memory Notebook: Maintaining written cues systematically in a log to keep up with work that had been done or need to be accomplished.	A daily diary book is used by employees to remember appointments. Other ideas include using an iPad, cell phone, tablet to record written cues.
Verbal Rehearsal: Repeating key information to facilitate memory recall.	A new inventory control specialist needs reminders for setting up her work station so she would state the following sequence aloud: 1. turn on monitor; 2. turn on computer, 3. enter my password, 4. hit enter, etc. She eventually learns to internalize this process by repeating the instruction quietly until she no longer needs to verbalize the information.
Assignment Board: A graphically presented list of task assignments.	A new employee keeps a bulletin board on the door of her locker. She lists her job duties with specific times for completion to refer to if needed throughout her work day.
Location and Place Markers: A visual cue physically placed at some point in a task sequence indicating where the task is to be resumed.	A worker who straightens shelf inventory sometimes is called off task to fill an order. He cannot remember where he leaves his straightening task. The worker ties a bandanna on the shelf to cue himself for coming back to where he left off.

Electronic Reminders: Cell phone app for alarm reminders, set to support job sequence and transitions to next task.	An employee working in the mail room of a large business is having difficulty remembering both her job sequence and transitioning from task to task. The employment specialist helped her to record her schedule of job task for the week into her phone and then set alarms as reminders. One alarm was set for 9:00 am for Monday through Friday to signal the need to sign into work. Another alarm was set for 9:05 am for Monday through Friday to signal to double check sorting assignment. A third alarm was set for 10:00 am Monday through Friday to signal check mail. A fourth alarm was set for 12:30 to remind the new employee to take lunch and a fifth alarm was set for 1:30 to signal that lunch break was over. The process was repeated for the afternoon job tasks.

Instructional Strategies

Once the job duties are identified and task analyses developed, the employment specialist must design instructional programs for each job duty or other related skills that require instruction. The design should include input from the worker with disabilities, the supervisor, and coworker(s). Each program includes:

1. an objective,
2. data collection guidelines,
3. prompting procedures,
4. reinforcement procedures, and
5. strategies for compensatory strategies and pro-gram modifications if needed.

Employment objectives are written to include observable skills, the conditions under which they occur, and the criteria that will be used to evaluate worker performance. Each skill to be trained has a corresponding objective. Table 9 presents an example for entering data into a company's mailing list.

Writing Objectives

Table 9

Objectives	Component Parts
Objective: Given a list of addresses and cues, Ramona will enter names and addresses to the mailing list with 100% accuracy according to the steps in the Task Analysis for three consecutive probe trials.	**Conditions under which the work performance will occur**: Given a list of addresses and cues **Observable work skill**: Ramona will enter names and addresses to the mailing list **Criteria for evaluation of worker performance**: Ramona will complete the work task with

Recording and graphing data is critical to the success of providing training, because graphs allow the employment specialist to monitor the employee's progress. In addition, data collection can provide documentation for the individual's continued funding. It will show whether a particular training strategy is effective or needs modification (e.g., changing strategies, adding external cues, modifying tasks, etc.) Some worker's will also like to track their own work performance using the graphs of their progress in learning their various job duties. Measurement procedures continue throughout initial job-site training into long term supports. This will assist the employment specialist in identifying additional training or retraining needs for the new employee.

Baseline, probe, and prompt data is collected using the task analysis of a job duty when instruction is provided. Before training begins, data collection is referred to as ***baseline*** and should be conducted at least once. Data that is collected after training begins is referred to as ***probe data***. The procedures for baseline and probe data are e the same and provide information on how well the individual completes a work task without assistance or feedback from the employment specialist. Probe data should be collected at least once a week. Typically, a job task is mastered when the employee independently completes every step for a minimum of three consecutive probe trials.

Data collection should never be obvious and draw attention to the worker. A small folded piece of paper that can be held in the palm of the employment specialist's hand is certainly less intrusive for data collection than carrying a clipboard on the job site.

The recommended strategy that is described in this chapter is single opportunity probe. Collecting data using this method is a quick unobtrusive assessment of the person's level of independence. Prior to baseline, the employment specialist may demonstrate the task being assessed once. After this first demonstration, data is completed without any cues, prompts, or feedback from the employment specialist. The goal is to determine what the worker can do if no one is there to provide assistance. One major benefit to using a single opportunity probe for data collection is that it should not interrupt the natural flow of the workplace. Discontinuing the probe as soon as the employee makes an error allows for instruction to begin immediately on that specific step of the task analysis. Steps for using a single opportunity probe are in Table 10.

Table 10

Guidelines for Using a Single Opportunity Probe

1. Have the new employee move to the area where the work is completed unless movement is part of the task analysis.
2. Stand beside or behind the employee so data collection does not interrupt the work flow.
3. Tell the employee that he/she is going to work without assistance to see what he/she can do independently.
4. Provide the work cue specific to the task, (e.g., "Enter the names into the mailing list.").
5. Do not provide prompts or reinforcement.
6. Wait 3-5 seconds for the customer to make a response.
7. If he or she does not begin to work or makes an error, discontinue probe and score a (-) for all steps in task analysis.
8. If he or she begins work, continue as long as correct responses are made scoring a (+) for correct performance.
9. As soon as an error occurs, discontinue the probe and score a (-) for all remaining steps in the task analysis.

Table 11 on the following page, you will find a sample task analysis used for collecting probe data. The worker in this example is learning to set-up the projector in the business's conference room as one of her job duties. The task analysis was developed prior to the individual beginning her job. On the first day, the employment specialist demonstrated how to set up the projector once. She then used the instructional cue, "set up the projector" and stepped back to see what the person did without assistance. The first column shows that the worker was successful until step 6 of the task. At that point, the employment specialist stopped the baseline assessment and moved to instruction. One week later, probe data was collected on the person's progress towards being independent. Prior to beginning training on that day, the employment specialist used the cue, "set up the projector" and stepped back to see what the person did without any assistance. The worker shows some beginning learning of the task and is successful up until step 9. In the following two weeks, the worker continues to show progress; however, the data shows that she is getting "stuck" on step 16, "turn the laptop so word Dell is upside down". The employment specialist may want to consider changing this step or adding a cue so that the worker attends to the natural cue of the word Dell. ◆

Data Collection for Setting up a LCD Projector

Table 11

TASK ANALYSIS: Setting Up The LCD Projector
Trainer: Bobbie Jones
Worker: Teresa
Worksite: Conference Room
Cue to Begin Work: Set up the Projector

Step	Tasks	Dates for Data Collection						
		8/5	8/12	8/19	8/26			
1	Get the projector from the bookcase	+	+	+	+			
2	Bring it to the table	+	+	+	+			
3	Open the flap on the bag	+	+	+	+			
4	Take out the projector	+	+	+	+			
5	Set it on the table	+	+	+	+			
6	Turn the front of the projector to the screen	-	+	+	+			
7	Take the cords out of the bag	-	+	+	+			
8	Pick up the power cord	-		+	+			
9	Plug the prongs into the outlet	-	+	+	+			
10	Plug the other end of the cord into the side of the projector	-	-	+	+			
11	Get the computer case from the bookcase	-	-	+	+			
12	Bring it to the table	-	-	+	+			
13	Unzip the case	-	-	+	+			
14	Take out the laptop	-	-	+	+			
15	Place the laptop next to the projector	-	-	+	+			
16	Turn the laptop so word Dell is upside down	-	-	-	-			
17	Pick up the power cord to the computer	-	-	-	-			
18	Plug the cord into the hole on back of the laptop	-	-	-	-			
19	Plug the prongs into the outlet	-	-	-	-			
20	Pick up the projector cable	-	-	-	-			
21	Plug the projector cable into the back of the computer	-	-	-	-			
22	Plug the other end of the cable into the side of the projector	-	-	-	-			
23	Turn on the projector	-	-	-	-			
24	Open the laptop	-	-	-	-			
25	Turn on the laptop	-	-	-	-			

Data Collection:
(+) Independent correct response
(-) Incorrect response
(V) Verbal prompt
(M) Model prompt
(P) Physical prompt

Prompting Procedures

A prompt is a cue that teaches the worker how to complete the steps in a task. They can include verbal, gestures, model, or physical prompts with the goal of using the least amount of assistance for the person to be successful. It is not unusual for inexperienced employment specialists to provide too much assistance to the worker. Another common mistake is to continue to verbally tell someone what to do when he or she is not responding, which may mean that the individual does not understand. Learning when to prompt and when to step back is a skill that needs to be learned by the employment specialist just like the worker needs to learn the job duty. In addition, employment specialists want to evaluate the workplace to determine when coworkers or the supervisor can provide instruction and when extra training is needed from the employment specialist. Table 12 shows Prompt Descriptions and Examples.

Table 12 Prompt Descriptions and Examples

Compensatory Memory Strategy	Example
Indirect Verbal Instruction: For instance, the light is blinking on the copy machine. The worker is not responding to the natural cue. The least amount of assistance may be to use an indirect verbal cue.	• "What do you do now?" • "What do you do next?" • "What happens now?"
Direct Verbal Instruction: A direct verbal cue tells the worker exactly what to do. Writing the steps in the task analysis as verbal cues is helpful for being consistent with the cues given.	• "Get your timecard." • "Stock the cart." • "Turn on your computer."
Gestures: Typically, a gesture prompt provides less instruction that completely modeling the step that needs to be completed.	• Point to the timecard. • Point to the on button of the computer. • Tap a wrist watch. (Time for a break) • Touch a stack of paper. (Indicating that there is data to enter.)
Model Prompts: A model prompt involves demonstrating what needs to be done. When using a task analysis for instruction, the trainer models one step at a time and waits for the worker to imitate what has been done.	• Coworker shows the new employee how to get to the employee break room. • Supervisor demonstrates how to turn on the computer for clocking in.
Physical Assistance: Providing physical assistance should be the last resort when teaching someone to do a task. This is the most intrusive type of prompt and some workers may find it aversive. The employment specialist must be very sure that the individual will accept the physical assistance before using this type of prompt.	Partial physical assistance • Employment specialist taps the new employee's on the elbow to prompt him/her to reach for the shovel. • Employment specialist guides the employee's elbow to prompt him/her to answer the phone. Full physical assistance • Employment specialist, with hand on the worker's hand, guides him/her in placing a security sticker on a work uniform.

Least Prompts

The system of least prompts is also referred to as a response prompt hierarchy, since the trainer progresses from the least amount of assistance, usually a verbal prompt, to the most intrusive prompt until one prompt results in the employee correctly responding. Employment specialists are encouraged to consider various types of prompts to use in addition to the traditional verbal, model, physical sequence. For instance, an indirect verbal prompt may be used in the sequence such as, "what do you do next," before using the verbal prompt specific to the step in the task analysis. This may be effective for an individual who is hesitant in making a mistake and lacks confidence. In addition, gestures can be used instead of a model prompt as the employment specialist simply points to the next step rather than demonstrating. Regardless of the types of prompts selected, the employment specialist must establish the length of time, latency period, that he or she will wait for the employee to respond before providing the next level of assistance. Usually a worker should be given between 3 to 5 seconds to respond independently. Some individuals may require longer latency periods based on their movement limitations, and this should be determined on an individual basis. Finally, the employment specialist is cautioned to deliver each prompt only once before moving to the next in the sequence. Table 13 lists the steps in how to use least prompts.

Table 13

Steps in Using a Least to Most Prompt System

1. Have the employee move to the appropriate work area unless movement is part of the task analysis.
2. Stand behind or beside the individual so that prompts can be provided when necessary.
3. Provide the cue to begin the task. ("Set up the Projector" as an example.)
4. Wait 3 seconds for self-initiation of step 1 in the task analysis.
5. If the employee completes the step independently, provide reinforcement and proceed to step 2 of the task analysis.
6. If the employee is incorrect or does not respond within 3 seconds, provide a verbal prompt for step 1. (" Get the projector from the bookcase.")
7. If the employee completes the step with a verbal prompt, provide reinforcement and move to step 2.
8. If the employee is incorrect or does not respond within 3 seconds, model the response (Example: The employment specialist goes to the bookcase and picks up the projector).
9. If the employee completes the step with a model prompt, provide reinforcement and move to step 2.
10. If the employee is incorrect or does not respond within 3 seconds, physically guide him/her through the response (The employment specialist places her hand on the worker's back and gently guides her to the bookcase.)
11. Begin instruction on step 2 of the TA.
12. Repeat this procedure for each step in the TA until the task is completed. Always interrupt an error with the next prompt in the least prompt system.

Data Collection

Prompt data indicates the kinds of prompts that are given to the employee during instruction of the job duty. Recording of prompt data should be limited to only one or two tasks per day. It is more important for the employment specialist to collect probe data on a predetermined schedule and to analyze prompt data frequently, than it is to collect data on a daily basis. The same task analysis recording sheet used for probe data collection is used for recording prompt data. In the case of least prompts, the employment specialist records a symbol representing either independent performance (+) or use of a specific prompt. For instance, a verbal prompt can be scored by a (v), model (m), gesture (g), or physical prompt (p).

By keeping track of the types of prompts provided, the employment specialist will be able to determine when to gradually move away from the worker. Initially, the employment specialist may stand beside or behind the worker in a position to provide direct instruction. When the individual is independently performing approximately 70% to 80% of the steps in the task analysis and the remaining with a verbal prompt, the employment specialist can step back. The distance is based on each individual but may be from three to six feet. The employment specialist needs to be able to interrupt errors with the next prompt but not be so close to the worker. In this manner the employment specialist can gradually fade his or her physical proximity. Ultimately, the employment specialist must remove his or her presence from the immediate work area and eventually from the job site. Fading from the immediate work area must be planned and based upon worker performance.

Improvement in an employee's ability to perform job duties is easier to analyze if the data are displayed graphically. Tracking the percentage of steps the worker completes without prompts, allows the employment specialist to determine the rate at which the worker is acquiring the job skills. When graphing data, information such as frequency, percent, number of steps are placed on the vertical axis. Number of sessions, weeks, days, go along the horizontal axis. Data analysis also can show if a change or modification is needed. For instance, if the employee is gradually showing an increase in performing steps independently or with fewer prompts, continue the training as designed. However, if there is no change in either prompt or probe data within a week's period of time, the employment specialist must reevaluate the plan and change components of the program. The following table shows a completed data form for prompt data. By reviewing Table 14 on the following page, it can be seen that the worker is gradually requiring fewer and less intrusive prompts from the employment specialist during training.

Training Modifications

In some cases, the training program does not result in the employee learning the job duties. If this is the case, the employment specialist must determine how to revise the plan. This can be done by reviewing the data and pinpointing what changes need to be made. Occasionally, the employment specialist may find it difficult to determine exactly what is limiting success. In these instances, several employment specialists and the program manager should brainstorm solutions to the problems encountered. The following list of questions can assist in program modifications. The answers will assist the employment specialist in modifying the training program to meet the support needs of the customer. While Table 15 on page 60 presents the questions in sequence, the employment specialist should not infer that each of these items need to be modified.

In some cases, the training program does not result in the employee learning the job duties. If this is the case, the employment specialist must determine how to revise the plan.

Reinforcement Procedures

Selection of reinforcers as well as the systematic delivery and timing of reinforcement can assist the employee in becoming successful in the workplace. Typically, the most effective reinforcers are those that occur as a natural consequence to a given task or situation within the business. Therefore, the employment specialist begins by identifying items that are available at the job site. This includes such things as co¬worker praise, supervisor approval, positive written supervisor evaluations, pay raises or bonuses, and so forth. Remember that all individuals will not be reinforced by the same items and that even the most preferred reinforcer, if used too frequently, will lose its effectiveness. Only after failing to identify a natural reinforcer, should the employment specialist select more tangible items.

Table 14 Task Analysis for Training Data

TASK ANALYSIS: Setting Up The LCD Projector
Trainer: Bobbie Jones
Worker: Teresa
Worksite: Conference Room
Cue to Begin Work: Set up the Projector

Step	Tasks	Dates for Data Collection						
		8/5	8/12	8/19	8/26			
1	Get the projector from the bookcase	V	V	+	+			
2	Bring it to the table	V	+	+	+			
3	Open the flap on the bag	M	V	V	+			
4	Take out the projector	V	V	+	+			
5	Set it on the table	V	+	+	+			
6	Turn the front of the projector to the screen	M	V	V	+			
7	Take the cords out of the bag	M	V	+	+			
8	Pick up the power cord	V	V	V	V			
9	Plug the prongs into the outlet	M	V	+	+			
10	Plug the other end of the cord into the side of the projector	M	M	M	V			
11	Get the computer case from the bookcase	V	V	+	+			
12	Bring it to the table	V	+	+	+			
13	Unzip the case	V	+	+	+			
14	Take out the laptop	V	+	+	+			
15	Place the laptop next to the projector	V	+	+	+			
16	Turn the laptop so word Dell is upside down	P	M	M	M			
17	Pick up the power cord to the computer	M	G	V	+			
18	Plug the cord into the hole on back of the laptop	P	M	G	G			
19	Plug the prongs into the outlet	V	+	+	+			
20	Pick up the projector cable	M	+	+	+			
21	Plug the projector cable into the back of the computer	M	++		+			
22	Plug the other end of the cable into the side of the projector	M	+	+	+			
23	Turn on the projector	G	G	+	+			
24	Open the laptop	M	G	+	+			
25	Turn on the laptop	M	G	+	+			

Data Collection:
- (+) Independent correct response
- (-) Incorrect response
- (V) Verbal prompt
- (G) Gesture prompt
- (M) Model prompt
- (P) Physical prompt

Modifying Instruction

Table 15

Modifying the Instruction	Sample Questions to Consider
Analyze the training program.	• Does the prompting procedure match the learning style of the worker? • Is the employee responding to the type of prompt(s) selected? • Is the employee distracted by noise or people in the environment? • Is he/she attending to the job task? • Can the location of the task be modified to decrease distractions?
Evaluate the task analysis.	• Has the task been analyzed to match the worker's support needs? • Can the steps be further analyzed into smaller components? • Have the physical abilities of the worker been taken into consideration? Can the task analysis be modified to match the physical skills of the worker? • Does the task analysis eliminate the need to make quality judgments? • Have natural cues and compensatory strategies been considered?
Assess the reinforcement and feedback.	• Are the naturally occurring reinforcers meaningful to the customer? • Does he or she need additional reinforcement? • Is the selected reinforcer(s) motivating to the customer? • Is the timing of reinforcement correct? • Is the selected reinforcer(s) motivating to the customer? • Has the reinforcement been faded too quickly?
Consider assistive technology.	• Is the worker's mobility or motor abilities affecting his or her skill acquisition? • Does the worker become fatigued when attempting to perform the motor demands of the task? • Has the work site been modified to meet the physical support needs of the worker? • Are the work supplies positioned for maximum accessibility? • Can the job be restructured to better match the worker's physical abilities?

Designing a training program that includes delivering reinforcement is beyond the scope of this manual. However, common sense approaches to providing praise and feedback to the individual for a job well done is very important. Telling the worker that what has just been completed is correct can go a long way to reinforce learning. In addition, the employment specialist might try telling the worker that after completing a job duty, it will be time for break. Or, saying that after work, there will be time for a snack in the employee cafeteria.

Earning a paycheck may be foreign concept to many individuals who have never worked or had money. In these instances, it may be important to work with family members who are controlling the paycheck to ensure that the person learns work means earning money for spending. Table 16 on the following page provides information on identifying reinforcers for someone who needs more intensive supports.

Modifying Instruction

Table 16

Survey the employee and those familiar with him/her to determine likes and dislikes. Include leisure activities, types of verbal reinforcement, etc. Consider asking some of the following questions. • What are some things you like to do by yourself for fun? • What do you enjoy doing with friends/family in your free time? • Do you have any hobbies or games you enjoy? • Are there any hobbies or games you would like to learn? • Do you like listening to music? • Tell me about the type of music you like. • Who do you like spending time with? • If you had $5.00 what would you buy?
Observe the identifying potential reinforcers in several natural environments (e.g., at home, in a restaurant, at the mall) during his or her free time and record what he or she does.
Offer the identifying potential reinforcers a chance to interact with several novel items and record what he or she does. Often individuals with limited experiences do not know what they like to do. Offering them options, allows identifying potential reinforcers to develop choices and interests.

Increasing Production to Company Standards

From the very first day of employment the employment specialists should provide information to the employee on the standard speed to meet company performance standards. For some new employees this information can be shared verbally however, demonstrating or modeling the work pace is usually the most successful strategy. For some individuals they will need added instruction or support on how to meet company production standards.

Prior to developing a formal program, the employment specialist should determine if the worker is performing all steps of the task analysis as they were designed. Sometimes, production issues can be related to inefficient task analysis development or to inefficient worker implementation. For instance, instead of efficiently using two hands to complete the task, the worker is only using one that slows down the pace of the work. In addition, some production issues are the result of the employee's ability to attend to the work task. Simply, moving the employee's work station to an area with fewer distractions may be enough to increase production rate.

The first step in increasing the employee's production rate is to verify a company standard, which can be used to compare the worker's rate. This is accomplished by asking the supervisor if there is an established company production standard for each job duty that is part of the new job description. Preferably, the employment specialist and the worker have been aware of this production rate from the first day of job-site training and support. After the employer provides the current standard, the employment specialist should verify the rate based on the performance of coworkers who work these particular job tasks. This can be accomplished by observing one or two employees for several days and taking an average of their production rate. One way to calculate production is to based it on the time it takes the worker to complete the job duty. Another is to calculate how many units are completed. Table 17 on the following page describes how to calculate a production standard based on time or number of units completed.

Determining a Production Standard

Table 17

Production Standard Based on Time
1. Note the time that the coworker begins the job duty. 2. Observe the coworker performing the task. 3. Note the time he/she completes the task. 4. Subtract the beginning time from the ending time to determine the amount of time it takes to complete the job duty. 5. Take an average production rate across several days to verify a company standard.
Production Standard Based on Number of Units
1. Identify two time periods during the day to observe coworker perform the job duty. 2. Count and record the number of units completed (e.g., number of towels folded) using the identified sample time period (e.g., 10 minutes, 30 minutes, etc.). 3. Keep the time period constant across all observation periods. 4. Take an average of the coworker's production rate to verify a company standard.

Determining the New Employer's Production Rate

After the company standard has been established, the new employee should compare his/her rate to determine if additional training and support is required.

After the company standard has been established, the new employee should compare his/her rate to determine if additional training and support is required. Follow the above procedures to determine the employee's rate. Then divide the company standard by the customer's rate to get a percentage of standard for the worker. For instance, if the company rate is to finish the job duty in 15 minutes and the new employee is taking 30 minutes, divide 15 by 30 to arrive at 50% of the production standard. Or, if the company rate is determined by the number of units completed, divide the number of units that the new employee completed in the time period by the number completed by the coworker. For instance, the new employee enters 10 records in the time period while the company standard is 25 records. The employee's current production rate would 40% of the standard or 10 divided by 25. A production standard data form is located in the appendix of this chapter. The following case study is an example of how one employee learned to increase her production using self-management procedures.

Self-Management

Self-management has been referred to as self-monitoring, self-observation, self-evaluation, self-reinforcement, self-instruction, and self-assessment, to mention a few terms. Self-management strategies may be applied either before or after the targeted job duty or skill to assist the employee in completing the task successfully. For instance, the worker may use a preset alarm on a watch to determine when it is time to take a break. Another example may be a worker who uses a compensatory strategy such as a picture book of tasks that need to be completed during the day. A third example might be a worker who evaluates his or her work performance in order to self-reinforce such as marking checks on a card for a specific amount of work which is later exchanged for a reinforcer. Table 18 on the following page provides examples of self-management terms, definitions, and examples.

Frequently Used Terms and Examples

Table 18

Terms and Definitions	Example
Self-Assessment: Discriminating the occurrence of one's own behavior.	Example: Bill assesses whether he has or has not completed a work task such as filing all of the patient billing in a doctor's office.
Self-Reinforcement: Providing oneself with reinforcing consequences contingent upon work performance.	This strategy usually is combined with other procedures such as self-assessment. Examples: Marcia places a check on a card after she prices all sale items from a shipping carton. She shows the completed checklist to her supervisor for congratulation on work well done.
Self-Instruction: Verbal statements to oneself which prompt, direct, or maintain behavior.	Example: John instructs himself by speaking out loud. Such as, "First, I go to the computer and log into work. Now, I go the supervisor to get data to be entered. Next, I begin to enter data. Am I being accurate?

Self-management usually entails instructing the worker to independently self-monitor by using such things as natural cues, adding external cues and prompts, compensatory strategies, and so forth. This instruction can be provided by the employment specialist, friends, family member, coworker, and/or the supervisor depending on the employee's support needs. For instance, a family member may assist the employee in learning to set up a work schedule on her cell phone to determine when she goes to work. A coworker may instruct the same individual in using a timer to monitor production, while the employment specialist assists the individual in developing a self-reinforcement strategy to use on the job when she meets the production standard. Regardless of who provides the instruction and/or support to the employee, the following guidelines should be considered.

1. Review training data. If the worker is having specific difficulties in sequencing, discriminating, meeting production, consider using self-management procedures.
2. Consider the learning style of the individual. Does he/she respond best to visual, auditory, tactile information, or is a combination of these needed?
3. Determine if the self-management strategies are stigmatizing. For instance, self-instruction may not be appropriate for the new employee who is in frequent contact with coworker and the public.
4. Always have the worker assist in the design and selection of self-management strategies.
5. Include the supervisor and/or coworker in the process. Don't implement a strategy without approval.
6. Decide who will be responsible for supporting the worker in learning how to self-monitor.
7. Evaluate the procedure and modify if necessary.
8. Fade the self-management procedure if necessary.

Self-Management Case Study Example

Jessica works part-time at a medical office as a record clerk from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon, Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday and 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. on Friday. From the first day of work, Jessica has earned minimum wage for a total of 15 hours per week. During the times of the week that Jessica does not work, she attends her regular school program. Her primary job duty is to sort billing records, file patient records, and file financial records. She also occasionally greets patients as they enter the office.

This job was designed for Jessica by the manager of the medical building and her employment specialist. It was determined during the initial interview, that the nurses and technicians were having difficulty keeping up with

filing during the work day. As such, the manager was very receptive to customizing a position for Jessica that freed up a highly skilled nurse from this part of their job responsibilities.

Initially job-site training and support took place throughout the medical building; however, the majority of the instruction occurred at a small work station located in two large rooms designed for records. Nurses, technicians and other employees constantly move in and out of this area, which provided a lot of opportunity for coworker interaction. The employment specialist provided support to Jessica on a procedure for filing using the system of least intrusive prompts. She successfully learned the task and could complete the work without prompting; however, an analysis of the program data indicated that Jessica did not meet the company production standard. Jessica, her employment specialist, and supervisor decided that she should try using a self-management procedure.

Self-Measurement and Recording Procedures. The first step in assisting Jessica in meeting production was to set and verify a company standard for filing. The manager wanted this task completed at a steady, constant work pace, but she did not have a specific predetermined standard for Jessica to follow. Therefore, the employment specialist observed a coworker; observed Jessica's production without reinforcement or prompting; and completed the task himself to determine a reasonable rate of performance. A production standard of 10 files in 8 minutes was set, and the manager and coworkers agreed that the rate would be satisfactory. Prior to implementing the program design, the employment specialist took a baseline of Jessica's performance. When measured unobtrusively, she completed one file an average of every 90 seconds (10 files in 15 minutes.)

Program Design

Self-Monitoring: Two cues were selected based on Jessica's learning style to assist her in self-monitoring production. First, an auditory cue from Jessica's smart watch was programmed for 8 minutes. Next, a visual cue, of the standard was printed on an card and placed on the table to the right side of Jessica's work station. Jessica pulled 10 files at a time so she could track how many she needed to complete before the alarm went off on her watch.

Self-Reinforcement: Self-reinforcement occurred after Jessica picked up the ten files and completed the filing before the alarm went off on her watch. The employment specialist developed a grid that Jessica could make a check next representing each 10 file session that she completed before the alarm went off on her watch. If the timer had not rung, she pushed the "start/stop" button; picked up the recording sheet and circled the session with a blue marker; and placed it on the table beside her work. At the end of the day, Jessica could count the blue markings to show to her manger, coworkers and at home. If the timer rang prior to completion of ten files, Jessica would simply not mark the session. She then finished the remainder of the ten, put the files in the filing cabinet, and started on the next set of ten by setting the timer.

The employment specialist took the responsibility of assisting Jessica in learning how to use the self-monitoring program. Once she learned the task, her production standard was maintained with the support of her coworker. Initially, Jessica did not fully understand the concept of working at a constant speed. The use of the self-management procedures assisted her in meeting production without constant interference from the employment specialist, until she began to do so independently. In addition, it is suggested that the natural consequences of working at an acceptable speed (e.g. positive interactions from her supervisor and coworker) began to influence Jessica's work performance. The self-management procedures quickly lead to the transfer of control from artificial prompts and reinforcers to the naturally occurring supports on the job site.

Change in the Employee's Job Duties

Sometimes, in spite of efforts to change training supports, modify the workplace, or add compensatory strategies or cues, the worker still has difficulty performing a job duty. In these instances, the employment specialist may need to negotiate with the employer to determine if a coworker can share the job duty or switch for one that is of equal responsibility. The new employee, employer, coworker(s), and employment specialist should meet to discuss the alternatives. A change in the employee's responsibilities may necessitate the implementation of a new instructional program for providing training and or support in performance of the new job duties.

A change in the employee's responsibilities may necessitate the implementation of a new instructional program for providing training and or support in performance of the new job duties.

Fading from the Job Site

Once the worker has learned to perform all the job duties correctly and independently, the employment specialist must ensure that the performance of these duties is maintained to company standards under naturally occurring supervision and reinforcement. The focus of support at this point is to increase the worker's independence while fading the employment specialist's presence from the job site. Much of this will occur naturally if the employment specialist has paid attention to including the supervisor and coworker in the program design. For instance, as the employee begins performing steps in the task analysis independently, the employment specialist fades his or her presence from the immediate work area (e.g., the employment specialist is 3 feet away from the employee and then 5 feet, etc.). This procedure was described earlier in this chapter. If planning has been done correctly, the employment specialist is now ready to develop a fading schedule for leaving the job site.

The employee's first time alone at the job site may be a significant step. The employment specialist should give contact information to the employee, supervisor, and coworker and explain that if needed he or she will return to the job site immediately. As the worker continues to do well based on data results and supervisor and coworker comments, the employment specialist gradually fades his or her presence until the worker is alone for an entire work day. Initially, the employment specialist should stop by the job site at the end of the day to ensure that the employee is comfortable with the fading schedule. The following guidelines in Table 19 may be useful when fading from the job site.

Table 19

Guidelines for Fading from the Job Site

1. Discuss the fading schedule with the employee and supervisor..
2. Agree on a day to begin fading the employment specialist's presence.
3. Inform the employee and coworker (if appropriate) that you are leaving the job site and for how long.
4. Give the employee and supervisor a telephone number where the employment specialist can be reached.
5. Leave for 1-2 hours for the first fading session.
6. Continue to collect probe, on/off task, and production data on the job duties.
7. Gradually increase time off the site as the worker continues to be independent, until he or she is working for the entire day with the naturally occurring support of the workplace.

Summary

Employment supports can be provided both on and off the job site, because everything in the employee's life can impact work. The employment specialist will want to ensure that the new employee understands all of his/her job duties, the unwritten rules at the job site, and all of the necessary soft skills to be successful. The employment specialist's role is to facilitate the employee's successful work performance; be available to support the employee, supervisor and coworker; and implement the procedures that are outlined in this chapter based the support needs of the employee. When the employee is completing work tasks under the naturally occurring supervision at the business then the employee is ready to move into long term support.

SEQUENCE OF JOB DUTIES FORM

Position: _____

Job Site: _____

Employee: _____

Job duties remain the same:	**Job duties vary from day to day:** **Monday Tuesday Wednesday Thursday Friday Saturday Sunday**
Time of Day	**Job Duty**

Comments:

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

TASK ANALYSIS

Trainer: _____

Worker: _____

Worksite: _____

Cue to Begin Work: _____

Step	Tasks	Dates for Data Collection						
		8/5	8/12	8/19	8/26			
1								
2								
3								
4								
5								
6								
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21								
22								
23								
24								
25								

Data Collection:

(+) Independent correct response
(-) Incorrect response
(V) Verbal prompt
(G) Gesture prompt
(M) Model prompt
(P) Physical prompt

Chapter 5 Extended Services

Extended services means ongoing support services and other appropriate services that are needed to support and maintain an individual with a most significant disability in supported employment and that are provided by a State agency, a private nonprofit organization, employer, or any other appropriate resource, from funds other than funds received under this part and 34 CFR part 363 after an individual with a most significant disability ;has made the transition from support provided by the designated State unit.

(Authority: Section 12(c) of the Act; 29 U.S.C. 709(c))

Employees with disabilities are considered stable when they are able to complete their job duties under the conditions of the natural environment without the presence of an employment specialist for direction or assistance. Once job stability is reached, the individual will move to extended services/ long term supports. These two terms often are used interchangeably, and long terms supports will be used in this chapter. The purpose of long terms supports is successful job retention, with a focus on the potentially changing needs of the employee and the business over time.

The effectiveness of long term supports is dependent upon the work that has occurred prior to stabilization. The following may determine job retention for employees with disabilities:

- information gathered,
- relationships built,
- training provided,
- services delivered, and
- supports used by the worker and the business.

Today, a greater number of individuals with disabilities are working successfully because of constantly expanding and improving technologies and support options. These options have expanded and, in some cases, changed our vision of long term supports. The remainder of this chapter will focus on the best practices associated with planning, delivering, and evaluating the effectiveness of long term supports. Approaches, strategies, and techniques will be discussed to assist employment specialists in turning best practices into daily practices.

Best Practices

Long term support services are critically important to ensure participation in the workforce and career advancement by many individuals with disabilities. The nature and amount of support will vary from person to person and business to business. Factors that influence both the level and the type of supports that are ultimately used by an employee are

related to employment satisfaction, expanding job duties, and career development in a variety of corporate cultures. Generally, supports fall into one of two categories:

1. employment specific supports; and
2. individual or community supports.

Employment supports are those supports and/or services that are directly related to the employee's job. These supports may include such services as training, service coordination, orientation and mobility, employer and/or coworker support, and assistive technology. Individual and community supports are supports that are arranged and delivered away from the workplace. They include areas that, if left unresolved, directly or indirectly impact employment stability. Supports in this category include housing and/or personal living situation, leisure, financial support, transportation, and relationships. Using research data from Virginia Commonwealth University Rehabilitation Research and Training Center, Table 1 lists primary reasons for providing long terms supports.

Table 1 Primary Reasons for Providing Long-Term Supports

1. Monitor work performance including work quality and production.	5. Support training for employer and/or coworkers.
2. Facilitate job changes (e.g., wages, benefits, hours) and career movement.	6. Retrain previously learned skills.
3. Provide crisis intervention.	7. Train newly assigned job duties.
4. Monitor socialization and overall integration.	8. Assess employee job satisfaction.
	9. Support family members.
	10. Assess employer satisfaction.

Satisfaction Appraisal

Change is inevitable and should be embraced as positive.

Maintaining regular contact with the employee as a long term support, as well as with the supervisor and coworkers at the business, may be vital to job retention. Establishing a plan for regular communication will allow the employment specialist and the employer to be proactive in their approach to new situations and events. Life involves a constant series of changes, and employment is no exception. Business environments do not remain stable, supervisors leave, coworkers are transferred, building renovations occur, new equipment is purchased, and work routines and job assignments change. Quality services dictate that an employment specialist works closely with the employee and the business to plan for some of the predictable changes and to establish back-up plans and communication strategies for success.

Employee Satisfaction

Regular discussions with the employee, both at and away from the business, regarding job satisfaction will yield the best information. Conducting face-to-face interviews is only one way to gather important information. The employment specialist can make unobtrusive observations at the job site to review coworker and supervisor interactions, confirm job duty analysis, verify production, and review personal leave records. Each of these sources can be rich in data and assist in the continuous updating of a proactive plan for support.

Supervisor Satisfaction

Once the individual is stabilized, they enter the long term supports phase of support. At this point, it should be clear which supervisor is responsible for the employee's performance and review. After identifying the supervisor, the format and schedule for the company's employee's performance review process should be determined. In the event that evaluation is a regular part of the business establishment, the employee with disabilities evaluation should follow the typical company schedule. If agreed to by the employee and the employer, the employment specialist should have additional regular meetings with the employee and the supervisor during the early phase of long term supports to obtain everyone's input and degree of satisfaction. Initially, these meetings will take the form of informal checks and will occur approximately every week to two weeks, if everything is going well. This contact should gradually fade to less intense twice monthly contacts or other schedule as determined by the needs and requests of each employee.

Expanding Responsibilities

Becoming a valued member of a company's work force should be important to all employees. Expanding job responsibilities is an excellent way to accomplish this goal. However, success in managing expansion of job responsibilities requires a commitment on the part of the employment specialist to plan for this possibility from the point of hire. Typically, the most successful jobs are the ones that coworkers and employers provide the primary support to the employee. Yet, the employment specialist must continue to work with the individual to analyze support options, to select the most feasible ones, and to evaluate the effectiveness of the type and level of support provided.

Becoming a valued member of a company's work force should be important to all employees. Expanding job responsibilities is an excellent way to accomplish this goal.

Workers with disabilities may begin their employment at the business with job duties that were customized to form a new job description. Yet, after working for several months, employees may be ready to expand their job duties. Generally, employees who enjoy a long tenure with a company will have their job duties or work responsibilities change or expand over time. This occurs naturally as employees seek to add variety to their daily routine, and as employers begin to assess individual employee strengths. Employers will match and delegate new job responsibilities to their work force as the business grows and improves. Some employees will be able to accept a new task with the supports of the workplace, however, adding new job duties or responsibilities to an existing work routine may require additional support and customization for some individuals.

Making changes to a customized position, such as adding job duties, proactively can prevent employee and employer frustration. The employment specialist can initiate these discussions to form a team with the employee and employer to identify areas for expansion of the individual's customized job. Assisting the employee in developing a list of possible areas for growth gives the individual support to direct his or her career path and

stay focused on goals and objectives, rather than on a single job. When job changes occur, the employee and employer may ask the employment specialist to return to the job site for a period of time. Depending on the needs of the employee, she or he may require assistance with job reorganization, scheduling, skill acquisition, and/or production. The decision to expand job duties is based on both the employee's desire and ability to increase his or her present work scope and the company's needs.

Careers

As discussed in the previous chapters, the focus should not be on obtaining and maintaining a job. It is about identifying and pursuing a career. This career process begins during discovery and job development and remains a focal point throughout employment. During the long term supports phase, the employee reconvenes her or his employment support team to identify and evaluate further work that needs accomplishing. Part of this process will include re-visiting or re-evaluating previously identified career interests and goals.

Generally, an individual who is new to the labor market or who is attempting to reenter the labor force will seek to gain several different work experiences over a period of time. The accumulated work history is then used to identify/clarify career goals. However, career development is only one reason why an individual accepts an employment position. There are numerous other reasons, not the least of which is a paycheck. Therefore, while an employee may accept an employment position and perform well at his or her job, additional career supports may be necessary. When the individual was engaged in discovery and then job development, there were many discussions regarding identifying career interests and desires. The employment specialist has an obligation and responsibility to follow-up with each employee. On-going supports must be offered to determine if career interests are being met or if personal goals and interests have changed.

The employment specialist has an obligation and responsibility to follow-up with each employee. On-going supports must be offered to determine if career interests are being met or if personal goals and interests have changed.

Monitoring and Coordination of Supports

The development of strategies that ensure the maintenance of past, present, and future supports is vital to the continuing job success of employees. Regardless of the type and number of supports that are in place throughout the individual's employment tenure, provisions for the extended coordination and monitoring of the supports must occur. Developing a well established plan for long term supports with the employee ensures that the necessary supports are maintained.

There are many different factors that can affect the quality and stability of an established support. For example, these factors include changes in an employee's needs and preferences, a new supervisor, coworkers resigning,

and change or re-design in a workstation. Change in any one of these critical areas could result in an interruption of work routine or work quality. When these issues are left unaddressed, job termination can follow.

Key features of a long term support plan include clear delineation of responsibilities, specific schedule for monitoring, and a stable point of contact that can temporarily provide services to the employee in the event that a community or work place support becomes ineffective. Vital to this plan is the careful documentation of pertinent employee-specific information, such as: identification of necessary supports; status of the supports; a list of potential options to meet the support needs (including a primary and a backup option); employee preferences for supports; and, if necessary, additional support resources. Typically, the employment specialist, working with the employee, serves as the stable point of contact for all long term supports. Table 2 presents an overview of the key ingredients for a long term support plan.

Table 2 Feature of a Long Term Support Plan

1. Documentation of Support Need	5. Substantiation of Employee Support Option Preference
2. Identification of Need Areas	6. Selection of Primary Support
3. Confirmation of Current Status of Needs	7. Designation of Back-up Support
4. Description of Potential Options to Meet Needs	8. Identification of Additional Resources

Employee Assistance Programs

Employee Assistance Programs (EAP) have been part of the corporate world since the latter part of the 19th century. However, it wasn't until the 1970's that these programs broadened their range of service options and began to develop comprehensive plans for company employees. Today, EAPs have developed a variety of services to include child/elder care, retirement options, fitness and health maintenance programs, counseling, drug or AIDS testing and supports. In general, EAPs can be described as company supports for employees in resolving personal and family issues. These programs offer assistance and, in some cases, a remedy designed to support workers in maintaining that delicate balance of roles and responsibilities between work and home life.

While EAPs may be a valuable resource for many employees with disabilities, these programs remain under-utilized by employees with significant disabilities. By providing these services to all employees, EAPs have the potential to reduce the stigma that may be associated with a local disability organization designed to provide many of the same services. In addition, using EAPs can serve to increase the integration of employees with disabilities into the general employee population and potentially increase the range of services offered.

Typically, EAP service information is disseminated during an employee orientation meeting or simply handed to the employee when personnel forms are being signed. For many employees with disabilities, the information will not be provided in an accessible format, and therefore is discarded. The employment specialist can assist the employee by including EAPs as a potential source for many vital work place supports. However, follow-up investigation should occur to determine the strengths and limitations of each support option available through the EAP. This will provide an opportunity for the employee to direct this process and to make proactive decisions regarding the use of EAP services prior to the need arising. Yet, in the case of most employees, EAP information and services are typically left undiscovered until an employee has an immediate need for a particular service. Table 3 on the following page presents a case study.

EAP Case Study

Table 3

Jane's job was customized for her as a gift wrapper at a department store when a coworker and the employment specialist noticed a marked change in her behavior. Some of the changes included a pattern of mood swings, weight loss, and an inability to focus on her job. The employment specialist spoke to Jane and her sister about these changes. As a result of this meeting, they agreed to contact the county mental health and substance abuse program where Jane had received substance abuse services sporadically over the last eight years. On the following day Jane's coworker presented her with a packet of information about the company's EAP. Listed among the array of available services was psychotherapy and substance abuse counseling. In the end, Jane decided that she would use her company's EAP service, because they were provided at a local medical center and were part of her employee benefit package.

Mentors

In general, a manager takes on a mentoring role with an employee with a disability. This role is an important factor and is the product of establishing an excellent rapport between the manager, the employee, and the employment specialist. As discussed earlier in this chapter, business settings are dynamic. Changes occur continually. The responsibility of the employment specialist is to work with the employee to plan for predictable changes in the business. New management is one of the most predictable changes that will occur in most job settings. As with any partnership or team-work situation, when a valued member of the group leaves, the loss has a serious impact on the remaining members. Therefore, strategies need to be developed to reduce the loss and potential negative side effects of a change in management and/or a mentor.

One of the best strategies is for the employment specialist to develop and maintain a strong communication network with the manager. An important first step is sharing issues and concerns with the mentor-manager regarding change of management and its impact on the employment stability of the employee. This discussion should take place, even in employment situations where the potential for management transfer or job change appears remote. Begin by requesting that the manager inform the employee and/or employment specialist when a transfer is being discussed or is scheduled. If this happens with approximately two weeks notice, the employee and the employment specialist can work together to develop a plan. A variety of creative strategies can be developed and implemented to address this change. However, it will be important to ensure that the strategies match the corporate culture and are respectful of the new manager's time. Therefore when developing these strategies, the employment specialist should not leave the mentor-manager out of the planning process. Table 4 outlines a process with proven utility for many employees in supported employment that have been confronted with the loss of an employment mentor. ◆

Steps for Developing a Change of Management Plan

Table 4

1. Ask the manager for ideas on addressing this issue.
2. Ensure that all supervisor evaluations have been filed in personnel file.
3. Ask the "old" manager to write a letter of recommendation
4. Develop a plan information sharing about the organization's services with the new supervisor.
5. Develop packets of customized / supported employment materials.
6. Implement plan during the manager's first week on the job.
7. Evaluate effects of the plan.
8. Revise plan as needed.

Funding Long Term Supports and Services

Obtaining and maintaining funding for the long term supports and services of an employee is an important and complex issue. Funding of long term supports is important, because it ultimately determines the retention strategies that are utilized for supporting the career advancement of the employee. Funding is an extremely complex issue, because it requires collaboration among local, state, and federal agencies in accessing monetary resources where demand and need almost always exceeds available dollars. A wide variety of services and funding approaches are possible for long term supports. Combinations of these approaches are increasingly used across states and within local communities by employees and individual providers as alternative resources are identified. Utilizing a mixture of new, existing, and natural resources can reduce the burden on any service system or provider. Yet, using these resources successfully necessitates flexibility in service and funding structures due to policy and procedural differences across funding resources. These differences frequently necessitate adjustments in activities, service fees, or payment approaches for supported employment service providers across different funding agencies.

Differences in individual support needs and funding resources will require creativity in how, and from whom, services are purchased and provided. Diversity and flexibility within approaches to long term supports facilitates access to new dollars, use of non-traditional resources, and expansion of ongoing service capacity. Essentially, funding models can come in many different shapes and sizes. Selecting the right funding model will be determined by careful evaluating the mission, goals, and objectives of both the funding entity and the employment organization. The key to establishing the appropriate mix of long terms supports with employees is an understanding of the following five concepts defining a successful employment experience:

1. Satisfying Work
2. Mutually Enjoyable and Supportive Relationships
3. Career Advancement
4. Improved Resources
5. Reduced Reliance on the Service System

Federal Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) dollars are one of the largest single sources of funding for employment services. These funds are typically used to pay for the initial training phase and continue until the employee reaches employment stabilization.

Federal Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) dollars are one of the largest single sources of funding for employment services. These funds are typically used to pay for the initial training phase and continue until the employee reaches employment stabilization. The funding guidelines for State Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) agencies are set in Federal law, but each agency has different policies and guidelines in how these regulations are implemented and managed. For example, stabilization is generally the point where a VR agency will transition a person into long term

supports, and they will close that person's VR case as successfully employed. The VR case closure is tied to achievement of the employment goals contained in the person's Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) developed with the VR Counselor. Stabilization in employment is also measured by the employee's ability to maintain employment performance using the naturally occurring supports at the job site and with limited assistance from the employment specialist. However, a level of continuous assistance is maintained for at least twice monthly checks from the employment specialist to monitor job stability.

A resourceful employment service provider will need to develop a variety of funding sources to assist in maintaining supports and services at the level that is necessary to successfully maintain employment satisfaction among employees. In order to meet the growing demand for long term supports and services, new sources of funding must be identified and utilized. All existing service funding must be reanalyzed to determine if resources, services, and funding can be redirected to meet the employment organization's need for the funding of long term supports.

Funding Source Descriptions

To effectively serve employees in customized employment, employment specialists must become knowledgeable about the vast array of possible funding sources and the strengths and weaknesses of each resource. In many community rehabilitation programs, funding is managed by administrative staff, and employment specialists are directed to concentrate on providing services, not funding. This approach is unfortunate. Funding directly impacts the services employment staff can provide. Personnel who do not have the opportunity to learn about funding cannot effectively plan for, and sometimes advocate for, the service needs of the employees they support.

Developing a firm knowledge base about funding allows the employment specialist and employee to select the best combination of long term support resources that specifically match to that individual's needs. Identifying and utilizing alternative resources involves the work of many individuals. There remains no single source of funding that supports everyone in need. Collaboration efforts are essential for the ultimate growth of funding and resources. This section presents some overview information on an array of possible funding sources, a short description of each, and specific advantages and possible limitations of each identified funding resource. Further investigation will need to be done to identify state specific funding and support options.

Developing a firm knowledge base about funding allows the employment specialist and employee to select the best combination of long term support resources that specifically match to that individual's needs.

Illinois Department of Human Services, Division of Developmental Disabilities

Across the country the State Mental Health/Developmental Disabilities Agency is major contributor to long term funding of customized employment services. The growth in these funds has been dramatic over the last several years. Continued growth will be found in reallocating existing resources to customized employment by defining competitive integrated employment as the option of choice.

The Illinois Department of Human Services, Division of Developmental Disabilities recognizes and has funding for supported/customized employment services for individuals with intellectual disabilities, mental illness, traumatic brain injury and other developmental disabilities that quality for their services. These services are defined as:

> ***The program provides supports and services to individuals with developmental disabilities. These individuals work for compensation in a variety of community-integrated work environments, in which persons without disabilities are also employed. The program is designed to promote regular interaction with persons without disabilities who are not paid care givers or service providers.***

Employment organizations must be an agency that meets the Department of Human Services (DHS) contractual requirement and be in compliance with the Medicaid Home and Community-Based Waiver Program for Individuals with Developmental Disabilities. To determine if your organization can assess these services will require investigation.

Social Security Work Incentives: Plan for Achieving Self-Support (PASS) and Impairment-Related Work Expenses (IRWE)

Work incentives allow a person with a disability to set aside income or resources to pay for costs associated with reaching an educational or vocational objective.

Work incentives are available through the Social Security Administration. They allow a person with a disability to set aside income or resources to pay for costs associated with reaching an educational or vocational objective. For example, funds may be used for paying job coaches. IRWE's are job-related expenses that enable an individual to work. A PASS Plan or IRWE can assist an individual to purchase employment supports. Having the power to purchase services gives an individual greater control of the service and reduces the reliance on other funding systems. These incentives offer a possible alternative for purchasing long term services for individuals who are on waiting lists and who have no other funding sources. Individuals must make enough money to warrant the use of the incentives and the plans have to be approved by Social Security. Sometimes it is easier to use a PASS plan for initial job placement than for long term support, since it is time limited.

One-Stop Career Support Centers

Illinois has 44 comprehensive One-Stop Career Centers and 55 affiliates. Most One Stop Career Centers are located in the Illinois Employment and Training Centers; however a few are located on the campuses of community colleges. The One-Stop Career Centers are designed with customer choice as a guiding principle and at the same time are business-led helping to supply communities with skilled workers needed in their specific areas. The One-Stop Career Centers across the state of Illinois has a mission to support individuals with disabilities and other disenfranchised populations to gain access to competitive employment.

Business Supports

Companies are gaining greater experience in dealing with a more diverse work force. Employers are becoming aware of the wise investment of hiring individuals with disabilities. Employers who make decisions that they can train individuals, customized jobs, and manage the day-to-day activities of employees with disabilities typically rely on the employment specialist as a consultant. Supports that are provided by the employer to other employees should also be extended to workers with disabilities (such as the Employee Assistance Programs discussed earlier in this Chapter).

If the employee can access business supports, then typically he or she will require less intervention from the external service system. Generally, this increases reliance on coworkers and produces a "typical" work environment for the worker with a disability. However, some employers might not be able to handle the full array of supports needed may be needed. Back-up plans must not be overlooked by the rehabilitation and provider agency representatives.

Community Supports

There are numerous community resources which can be tapped for assistance with long term supports for individuals with severe disabilities in customized employment. The social capital and network of each individual and his or her family need to be explored as potential sources of support. Churches, volunteer groups and agencies, college internship programs, local transportation funds, civic groups, friends and neighbors -- these are all local supports to explore for assistance. A positive feature of using community supports is that they are local and exist to be of assistance to individuals who have specific needs. Rules and eligibility issues usually are not a problem. When identifying a community support, the employment specialist needs to realize that some local community programs have limited resources and serve only a particular group.

Centers for Independent Living

The Illinois network of Centers for Independent Living (INCIL) is a statewide association of 22 CILs. Essentially, CILs are community-based, non-profit organizations that are organized and run by and for people with disabilities. CILs serve people across all disability labels. Each CIL has a staff and board of director that, by law, must be at least 50% of people with disabilities. The stated purpose of CILs is to assist people with disabilities with their community inclusion goals working across employment and education and housing. Some of the basic services that are provided at the INCIL include peer support, information and referral, individual and systems advocacy. Independent living skills training and transportation support. Investigating funding for long term supports instead of the more intense initial supports can provide community employment programs with an untapped resource that should not be overlooked as a potential support.

Private and Community Foundations and Charitable Funding

Many private foundations across the country provide grants to service organizations for program development, education, and employment. Some are more interested in start-up activities, but many are interested in long term success, follow-up activities, career enhancement and business assistance to entrepreneurs with disabilities. Community foundations are not as abundant but are available in some areas. Foundations are supported by private donations and public interest and may be more willing to fund risky projects than private foundations.

Many private foundations across the country provide grants to service organizations for program development, education, and employment.

Private and community foundations can be excellent sources for start-up costs while exploring other long term resources. For example, local United Way groups are frequently responsive to initiatives focused on persons with disabilities and can potentially assist with start-up funding and/or potentially a matching fund partnership. A variety of projects can be funded with these dollars. Some are geared to a specific target group and selected geographic areas. The research and development of these resources, and the advocacy work to build coalitions that strengthen partnership presentations for funding, can requires a large amount of time from staff.

Strategies for Implementation

The employment specialist must consider many factors when providing long term supports to individuals with disabilities. Regardless of the employee's type or level of disability, the employment specialist should stay abreast of employee satisfaction, employer satisfaction, expansion of job duties, career goals, coordination of supports, mentors, employee assistance programs, and funding. The following portion of this chapter will give strategies for implementing a person-centered approach to long term supports.

Developing a Plan

An employment specialist may want to use a mix of formal and informal methods to develop a long term supports plan. Informal methods may include conversations with the employee, supervisor, coworkers, and family members, as well as any additional individuals who have agreed to provide supports either at or away from the job site. Formal records should also exist that describe past, present, and future areas of the employee's needs, as well as strategies for supports. Once developed, these records must be maintained throughout the individual's employment tenure. These documents can provide a record of employee preferences and successful support strategies. The form at the end of this chapter is a planning tool that may be useful in assisting employees and their support teams in identifying and maintaining a permanent account of support needs.

Identification of Employee's Needs

The process of identifying a community access or support need begins by engaging the employee in discussions to document personal preferences, concerns, and future directions. The employee's career plan, developed prior to employment, will be an important tool to guide these discussions. This employment plan should contain career goals and objectives, as well as the names of people who have expressed an interest in supporting the employee to achieve his or her personal ambitions. The employee can reconvene his or her employment support team throughout the long term support phase of to celebrate successes and to provide needed supports.

Hopefully, the employer and coworkers have become part of the individual's support team as contributing team members. If this has not occurred, the employment specialist and employee must determine the employer's and coworkers' perceptions of current and future support needs. This can be accomplished by arranging a meeting to obtain this information.

As stated in other sections, it is important for the employee to lead any meeting with the employer. Obviously, the employee's participation in discussions about her or his support needs is an important component in the employee-driven process. Setting this expectation will reduce possible confusion for the employer related to the employee's and the employment specialist's roles and responsibilities. In the event that the employee is not interested in leading meetings, he or she should attend to ensure that his or her views are represented. Table 5 on the following page summarizes points to remember for identifying the employee's support needs.

Identification of Employee's Needs

Table 5

1. Ask the employee.
2. Review employee's career plan.
3. Ask the "old" manager to write a letter of recommendation
4. Discuss the support needs with the employee, employer, coworkers, and other members of the support team.
5. Talk with family members about their expectations and concerns.
6. Review previous need area.
7. Update the support plan with a list of past, current, and future needs.

Brainstorming Options

After past, present and future supports have been documented, it is time to begin the process of brainstorming options for each of the current needs on the list. This can be accomplished by organizing a small group of interested individuals to participate in a brain storming meeting. The objective of the session is to generate as many ideas as possible for the identified support needs. In most cases, a brain-storming group will consist of the employee's support team. Sessions should be limited to no more than 12 individuals; however, 5-6 people are usually present. Participants should be comfortable and arranged in a circle or semi-circle with an area for a group facilitator and recorder.

After past, present and future supports have been documented, it is time to begin the process of brainstorming options for each of the current needs on the list. This can be accomplished by organizing a small group of interested individuals to participate in a brain storming meeting.

The location of the meeting is left up to the employee. However, the community rehabilitation program's meeting room is not recommended. The idea is to focus this planning session on support needs and resources, not an evaluation of the employee's performance. All ideas are accepted by the group; this is a creative process, and members should not limit themselves.

If it is impossible to organize a small group to brainstorm solutions, then the employee and the employment specialist can work together to review and build upon all resources that were identified during the employee profile phase. They can use such instruments as the community analysis and the employee profile form. In addition, the employee should list all the supports that she or he is currently using. Family members or close friends also should be approached also to determine other possible ideas for support options. Finally, it is critical to analyze the supports that the employment setting has to offer. From this process, the employee, employment specialist, and employer can generate a list of support options.

Choosing a Support Option

Once a comprehensive list of possible support options is generated, it is time for the employee to select the preferred option(s). The employment specialist can begin this process by reviewing and explaining each of the support options that appears on the list. Regardless of the individual's disability, it is useful to have concrete examples and experiences to assist the employee in making a choice. As the employment specialist, employer, and/or others participating in the process review each option, an unbiased attempt should be made to give the pros, cons, and consequences of each choice. This would assist the employee in rank ordering the options in a most to least favorable hierarchy.

Many factors may influence the selection process, such as the immediate availability of the support and the ability to identify a primary and backup plan specific to each high-ranking support option. For example, Tom needed to review his long term support options for transportation because he was preparing to move into an apartment of his own. Prior to Tom's move, he had lived in a neighborhood where he grew up and a family friend provided daily transportation to and from work.

During an employment support planning meeting, all support options were reviewed and Tom selected riding public transportation. Tom's brother offered to assist him in learning how to ride the city bus, and his family friend agreed to provide transportation as a backup strategy in the event of a problem. During his planning meeting, Tom shared with the employment specialist and family friend that he had selected an apartment near the bus stop so that he could ride the bus and not be dependent on friends.

In this example, a dependable primary support option was identified along with backup support. Judging from Tom's closing statement; his apartment selection was motivated in-part by the location of the city bus stop. Therefore, the employment specialist can feel confident that riding public transportation is clearly Tom's preferred support option. Before closing the meeting, the employment specialist began to assist in confirming roles, responsibilities, costs, and time commitments. In Tom's case, his brother would provide the primary support of teaching Tom to ride the bus. Tom's brother took the employment specialist's phone number to call her in case he had a problem. The employment specialist agreed to meet Tom and his brother in one week to ensure that Tom was learning to ride the bus independently. If key support persons did not participate in the meeting, the employment specialist should contact each person involved to determine their interest in providing support.

Many times, individuals will express an interest in wanting to provide assistance. However, it is the employment specialist's responsibility to ensure that the support person understands and accepts the responsibility. The employment specialist needs to provide the assistance that is requested by the employee, as well as necessary to ensure success. For example, in the case of Tom and his brother, the employment specialist provided the following:

1. a bus schedule with the most efficient route to Tom's job from his house,
2. information on cost for riding a bus,
3. a brief task analysis for riding the bus,
4. safety tips and rules of etiquette for riding a city bus that had been published by the bus company, and
5. a contact number for the employment specialist in the event of a problem. In this example, the employment specialist left nothing to chance.

Determining Level of Support

Determining the level of support needed by the employee will be critically important in selecting the support option and/or in delivering the support or service. The overall guiding rule governing all interactions *should be to move from the least amount of assistance to more intrusive supports*. An employment specialist should not provide any more assistance than the employee actually needs. The previous chapter on systematic instruction presented a process for providing the least amount of assistance and a method for tracking results. This same philosophy should guide interactions when selecting long term supports and services.

Sometimes, it is difficult to determine the needed level of long term support, because the efforts to identify an appropriate support or service are occurring due to a presenting problem and/or crisis. Once the plan is implemented, the employment specialist must monitor the situation closely. Careful evaluation of the plan will be critical for long term success.

Long Term Support Pitfalls

There are a number of potential pitfalls in the provision of long term supports. These include:

1. Failure to plan for long term supports during development of the supported employment plan,
2. Poor job match,
3. Dependence on job coach,
4. Lack of coworker involvement,
5. Breakdowns in funding of long term supports, and
6. Ignoring the career interests of the employee.

Planning for long terms supports begins when the original training and support plan is developed. Questions that need to be addressed in planning for long terms supports include:

- What are the key support needs that the person will have on an ongoing basis?
- Where are the supports coming from to address these needs?
- How can these supports be cultivated during the initial job acquisition and job site training activities?

A second key to a successful transition to long term supports is the nature of the job match or the successful customization of the worker's position.

A second key to a successful transition to long term supports is the nature of the job match or the successful customization of the worker's position. The job match is critical in planning and addressing anticipated supports needs of an individual. For example, a person with a psychiatric disability chooses not to disclose the disability to the employer and does not want the employment specialist present at the job site. Long term supports for this person by the employment specialist will be provided away from the job site. The job match is particularly important in this situation, because there is a need for more naturally occurring supports to evolve at the job site without the presence of an employment specialist to assist in facilitating these supports.

Another area that can create a pitfall for long-term support services is funding. There are situations where everybody in good faith has developed a funding plan for long term supports, and then something happens and the funding is not there as anticipated. As previously discussed in this section, it is critically important that the employment specialist is very aware of the various funding mechanisms involved in the long term support plan.

It is important to recognize the limits of funding and to know when to reinitiate a more intense training and support activity that might require funding beyond that available in the long term support plan. For example, a new supervisor comes in with different expectations for the employee. A change in work assignments occurs, and on-site support is needed. In this instance, the VR agency might be asked to provide a thirty to forth-five day period of aggressive retraining to meet a different job need. Potentially, VR can provide this support even after the case

closure through post-employment services. There needs to be good dialogue among the participants in the long term support plan to understand just what the realistic resource limits are and to have a back-up plan if something happens with funding where those limits are exceeded.

Another of the long-term support pitfalls is ignoring the career interests of an individual. Over time a person might want to change jobs to take on more responsibility, increase wages, or a change in terms of the type of job. Setting up a long term support plan that has no capacity to assist an individual to change jobs is really a potential pitfall for long term support services. A long term support agency can turn back to the VR in a situation where it appears that a replacement or job upgrade is appropriate for individuals to realize their full work potential. The VR agency can fund this support by opening a new case for the employee seeking a job change or through use of post-employment services as a mechanism for a shorter term funding. ◆

Another of the long-term support pitfalls is ignoring the career interests of an individual.

Long Term Supports Case Study

Lee is twenty-five years old and is a personable, energetic, and dependable worker. He learned to travel independently in the community using public transportation and can get back and forth to work using the city bus line. He needs support with money management, saving for large purchases and paying for routine bills.

Lee has been employed at an urban retirement community providing clerical support services. His primary disability is a moderate intellectual disability. He also has a history of seizures for which he takes medication. He is not consistent in how he manages his medication, and he recently had two tonic-clonic (formerly grand mal) seizures at work. His seizures are a point of serious concern for his employer because of the chance of injury during a seizure. He also has tendencies towards impulsive behavior, usually in moments when he is anxious or uncertain about how to respond.

Lee has worked at the retirement community for about six months. In addition to his clerical work he helps with unloading and stocking of a variety of kitchen goods and on occasion, when they are understaffed, he helps in the dining area of the retirement community. He is a trusted employee among the residents, coworkers, and supervisors. However, his eagerness to please coworkers sometimes creates situations where he leaves jobs unfinished in his haste to move to his next assignment. He also hesitates to ask for help when he is uncertain what is wanted of him, and therefore will sometimes be incorrect in how he works on assignments. He has difficulty with building new relationships at work, particularly where supervision is involved, and is sometimes verbally inappropriate in responding to new and unfamiliar supervision styles. He is a loner in his personal life away from work. His primary long term support issues include:

1. learning how to respond to supervision, including how to ask for clarification of instructions, and reduction of his impulsive behavior tendencies
2. improved medication management to limit his risk of seizures, and
3. continued support with money management to help him generate savings that will support his desire to live more independently.

Lee's primary support group includes one older sister who lives out of state, his VR counselor, his case manager, his employment specialist, and one of his supervisors at work. VR is ready to close his case and is interested in solidifying the long term support plan. Table 6 presents his long term support plan. ◆

Table 6

Interview Case Study Example

IDENTIFIED NEED #1:	Lee needs to respond more effectively to supervision and instructions, including asking questions when uncertain and reducing impulsive behavior tendencies with new supervisors.
Potential Options:	Working with employer to establish a primary point of contact among coworkers where Lee will get his assignments and primary supervision. Also, establish a coworker mentor who will check with Lee regarding his performance and behavior. Emphasize primary verbal reinforcement as a reward for his job performance. Employment specialist will increase presence from twice monthly visits to job site to weekly visits for a 60 day period to monitor behavior plan.
Employee Preference:	Lee identified his preferred coworker mentor, and this individual has agreed to fulfill this role.
Back-up Support:	A second coworker with whom Lee has a positive relationship, at his request, has agreed to serve as a secondary mentor when primary is not available.
Identification of Funding Support:	No funding is needed to implement this strategy
IDENTIFIED NEED #2:	Lee needs improved medication management to limit his risk of seizures.
Potential Options:	1. Meet with Doctor who prescribes his seizure medication to review seizure control plan and make adjustments as needed. 2. Use Health Services at Retirement Community as a dispenser of seizure medications on days he is working. 3. Sister will work with family friend to help reinforce importance of his taking medications are prescribed and will help supervise his medication schedule.
Employee Preference:	Lee is in agreement with this support plan.
Back-up Support:	In case of continued medication management continues problems, possibility of a neighborhood health clinic dispensing his medication on non-work days on an outpatient basis will be investigated
Identification of Funding Support:	Lee is eligible for Medicaid coverage of his medical and prescription services, and Medicaid will pay for his medical and prescription services.
IDENTIFIED NEED #3:	Assistance with money management that will generate savings that will support his desire to live more independently.
Potential Options:	1. VR counselor helped Lee set up a checking and savings account when he was first employed, and his paycheck is deposited directly to the account. This plan will continue. 2. As a transition to a new apartment is implemented a case manager will work with Lee and his sister on setting up a bi-weekly bill paying meeting. 3. Local Independent Living Center has classes in money management. Accommodations to Lee's learning style are being made to make this class accessible to him.
Employee Preference:	Lee has established amount of money he wants to have access to for personal use, and this amount is built into his monthly budget. He has agreed to attend the money management class at INCIL.
Back-up Support:	Employment specialist is primary back up support to case manager and sister until Lee moves into his new apartment.
Identification of Funding Support:	Cost of Money Management Training will be covered as a training cost by Medicaid Waiver. Other services are no-cost services.

Separation From Employment

At some point, the employee may choose to leave his or her job or may be terminated from employment. When this occurs, it can be very beneficial to conduct an exit interview. During this time, the employee, employer, program manager, rehabilitation counselor, and employment specialist can review the entire employment experience to determine the events that led to job separation. This information may be useful for the employee and/or employment specialist as they develop proactive strategies for future employment opportunities. In some cases, a contract can be drawn up and implemented when the individual returns to work again. Using this type of process, an employee who was dissatisfied with the delivery of services could ensure that future service would be shaped by the contract. If the community rehabilitation provider was not satisfied with the employee's performance, this too could be addressed through a contract. In both cases, the rehabilitation counselor may have suggestions for increased efficiency and improved outcomes that may be addressed directly with the employee; for the performance of the employment specialist or the community rehabilitation agency.

Summary

The form at the end of this chapter can be used for identifying, selecting, and tracking long term supports. Employment specialists and employees should use this form from the beginning of employment. However, during the long term supports component this form can be invaluable. In some employment programs, the individual who provides the initial support services to the employee may not be the person who is assisting him or her during the long term supports component. Ensuring that all successful and unsuccessful supports, services, and strategies are charted from the beginning will help to guarantee a smooth transition between professionals with all parties committed to an employee-driven process.

Long Term Supports Plan

Worker's Name:	Date of Hire:
Employment Specialist:	Date Completed:
Address:	Telephone:
Business Name and Address:	
Supervisor:	Telephone:
Rehabilitation Counselor:	Telephone:
Case Manager:	Telephone:
Other:	Telephone:

Identified Need:

Potential Options:

Employee Preference:

Primary Support:

Back-up Support:

Status (check one): ☐ Past ☐ Present ☐ Future	***Identification of Funding Sources:***

Identified Need:

Potential Options:	
Employee Preference:	
Primary Support:	
Back-up Support:	
Status (check one): ☐ Past ☐ Present ☐ Future	***Identification of Funding Sources:***

Identified Need:	
Potential Options:	
Employee Preference:	
Primary Support:	
Back-up Support:	
Status (check one): ☐ Past ☐ Present ☐ Future	***Identification of Funding Sources:***

Chapter 6

Customized Employment for Previously Incarcerated Individuals with Disabilities

Malcolm is a 36 year old man with an intellectual disability. As a child, he was happy and enjoyed making friends with anyone he encountered. He attended a couple of different schools and mostly participated in special education classes but learned minimal academic skills. Malcolm lived with his grandmother and grew up in the city. He lived in a part of town that was known for gang activities, in addition to a multitude of other issues: truancy and dropouts of school aged youth, drug related crimes, drive by shootings and murder. As he grew into adolescence and early adulthood, he became quite "street smart" and was able to fit in with the neighborhood kids. Those kids however often took advantage of his disability and had him complete the tasks that were likely to lead to trouble and brushes with the law. Malcolm's grandmother tried her best to steer him away from trouble but this was a struggle due to her age, failing health, and limited resources. All of these issues forced them to continue living in undesirable neighborhoods where trouble was available all day every day. Eventually, Malcolm's association with neighborhood "friends" turned into running small amounts of drugs for them and assisting them with stealing items from more well to do neighborhoods.

Malcolm's luck ran out when his friends were arrested and they snitched to police that he was part of the ring of thefts. After serving his time, Malcolm was released from jail with felony drug related charges and larceny now on his record. Malcolm's grandmother died while he was away and he had no family or friends to call upon his release. As part of his release, Malcom was given the name and contact information for several organizations that helped returning citizens re-enter the community. He had lost association with his original group of friends and had nowhere to turn but contact the re-entry program.

The reentry program was a huge help to Malcolm. They assisted him with finding a room in a group home located on the bus line in the city. In addition, the program staff assisted him with gathering some clothing and hygiene items, bus tickets, and helped him obtain a state identification or ID card. Malcolm does not drive but the reentry program knew that in order to be employed the ID would be critical.

Malcolm had never held a real job in the community. Prior to his time incarcerated, his only way of making money had been illegally running drugs and selling stolen goods on the street. While incarcerated, he worked on work crews in the cafeteria and eventually earned enough good credit within the system to go out with a grounds keeping crew. None of these "jobs" were enjoyable to Malcolm but they were a means to making money. The only activity that really sparked Malcolm's interest was a program that was offered to those incarcerated where shelter dogs were brought into the facility and the incarcerated individuals worked with the dogs to teach them basic commands and help them become acclimated to people. These dogs would have otherwise been euthanized without this program helping to make them trained and foster ready.

Once Malcolm was settled in his group home and in need of money, he began playing "bucket drums" on the street with some of his housemates. This was not enough income to pay for his expenses so he contacted the reentry program to see if they could assist him with finding a job. They referred him to an employment provider in the area. Malcolm set up a meeting with the provider and they began the process of identifying his skills and abilities as well as his interests. Malcolm was assigned an employment specialist and she met with him to learn his history as well as what work experience he had. Malcolm shared his previous experience with the dog program and asked if she could help him find a job doing the same type of work - training dogs. His employment specialist knew his felony record and limited academic skills would be a challenge within the business community and she would need to utilize her network to find a good fit for Malcolm. She took Malcolm to a couple of different types of employers that focused on animal care: a national big box store that sold supplies, groomed pets, and offered training; a veterinary clinic; and a small dog training facility owned by a retired police officer. In each of these settings, Malcolm was able to try out some job tasks and see the environment of the work setting. He shared with his employment specialist that the dog training was his main interest and he would really like to work doing those tasks at either of the locations.

The employment specialist met with both businesses. The national store had a policy that would make Malcolm ineligible for work due to his felony history. The retired police officer was a friend of the employment specialist's mother and was willing to discuss his business needs with the employment specialist. He was in need of someone to help with handling the dogs during training as well as feeding, walking and cleaning the kennels. The retired officer was doing all of this on his own currently and knew if he had more time on his hands, he could grow his business. The owner agreed to allow Malcolm to come in for a working interview and at the completion of the interview after seeing how well Malcolm handled the dogs, he offered Malcolm a position. He explained to Malcolm the expectations of the job and that he would be under close scrutiny until he had earned his trust. Malcolm earned the business owner's trust. In fact, he exceeded his expectations in his job. The employment specialist helped with some supports (task list, setting alarms to remember infrequent activities, and getting connected with transportation services to set up rides to and from work) but Malcolm's skills with the animals shined as well as his love for the work. After a year of employment, the owner began taking Malcolm out to events with him to market the business. Thanks to Malcolm's assistance with all of the support and marketing tasks, the owner has increased his profit by 25%. ◆

Overview

Malcolm is just one of more than 10,000 prisoners who are released each week from state and federal prisons. Each of these individuals are placed on the doorsteps of their local community with little to no resources and are expected to not return to the judicial system (www.justice.gov, 2019). Of those released, between 32 and 40%

report having at least one disability (Bronson, 2015). On top of the numerous barriers to employment already held by each of these individuals, disability adds yet another layer or stumbling block. So, how do we assist these individuals in finding jobs so that their chance of recidivism is reduced? With so many barriers to employment, is employment in the community even an option? We know that not only does employment reduce recidivism but also the type of employment that is obtained and how long employment is held (Ramakers, Nieuwbeerta, Van Wilsem, & Dirkzwager, 2017). Customized employment, as described in the earlier chapters of this book, can assist with solving these challenges by finding employment that is meaningful and uniquely matched to the individual. In this supplement, we will discuss barriers to employment for this special population as well as how implementing customized employment may be helpful to address and overcome these challenges. ◆

What are the typical barriers that face previously incarcerated individuals with disabilities finding employment?

Previously incarcerated individuals with disabilities have numerous barriers to employment. In order to successfully reenter the community, individuals need basic tools such as identification and social security cards. These documents assist with all aspects of reentry including housing, public assistance, employment, and transportation. Often times, those exiting the system do not have these documents after incarceration because the former documentation has expired, been damaged or lost during the individual's incarceration (National Reentry Resource Center, 2016).

Previously incarcerated individuals with disabilities have numerous barriers to employment. In order to successfully reenter the community, individuals need basic tools such as identification and social security cards.

Before the individual can consider employment, they must first know where they will live. Depending on the individual's family situation, it may or may not be feasible to reside with a family member until housing is secured. When family or friends are unavailable or unwilling to house the individual, there is a high risk of homelessness after release (Fontaine, 2013). Most individuals leave the system with limited monetary resources making securing an apartment difficult. To add to it, restrictive housing policies make previously incarcerated individuals less desirable candidates for consideration. Without a stable place to return to daily to sleep, eat and provide their basic needs, employment will never be a priority or successful.

The stigma of a criminal record is a glaring and obvious barrier to employment (McGrew & Hanks, 2017). Because this issue is so limiting to finding employment, it is often the cause of recidivism (Nally et. al., 2014). A criminal record, even a nonviolent conviction, made employers almost half as likely to call an applicant back for an interview (Pager, 2009). When employment and a paycheck are unattainable through traditional methods, previously incarcerated individuals look to criminal behavior to make money when there are no other alternatives, and thus the cycle of recidivism occurs.

In addition, previously incarcerated individuals with disabilities often have limited education and are uneducated on the job search process (McGrew & Hanks, 2017; Visher, Debus, & Yahner, 2011). Prior to incarceration, individuals may or may not have been employed in a traditional job. And during incarceration, the process for finding employment may have changed to involve more online applications and job search methods. With little knowledge of these systems and computer skills added to limited academic skills, this population falls behind in employment.

Customized Employment as a Bridge to Community Integration

How can utilizing Discovery assist with finding employment for previously incarcerated individuals with disabilities?

The concept of discovery within customized employment focuses on getting to know the job seeker in a manner that is different than most typical service provider approaches.

The concept of discovery within customized employment focuses on getting to know the job seeker in a manner that is different than most typical service provider approaches. The employment specialist is encouraged to get to know the job seeker in a setting where they are most comfortable rather than a typical office setting. These meetings can take place in a local library, a coffee shop, or the home of the job seeker if that is available. The goal of the discovery process is to build rapport with the job seeker as well as get to know their strengths, interests, and abilities. Malcolm's employment specialist was able to use this time together to tease out information about his activities during incarceration and also determine which of the activities he preferred and enjoyed. Liking your job leads to retention of a job which reduces the chances of returning to criminal behavior.

During the discovery process, multiple meetings occur and the employment specialist will want to meet with not only the job seeker but also friends, family and individuals who know the job seeker best. This can be a challenge for previously incarcerated individuals. While incarcerated, family dynamics change. Families lose touch, become estranged and pass away. The same can be true with friendships held prior to incarceration. These individuals often have very limited relationships with non-criminal contacts. The contacts they do have may or may not include family, former employers, social service providers, and parole officers. These individuals can be extremely helpful to assist with not only obtaining information about the job seeker and their skills and abilities but also to assist with networking once the employment specialist begins the job search.

An individual's social capital is critical to finding employment. For a previously incarcerated individual, their networks have been limited due to their time away from the community. Once the employment specialist has met with the job seeker and the individuals involved in their lives, they will meet with the job seeker to begin to brainstorm a number of businesses that represent the job seeker's interest skills and abilities. Using the job seeker's social capital will be helpful at this point. Because that may be limited due to the incarceration, the employment specialist will need to use both their own

networks as well as the networks of the job seeker's family, friends and service providers. Many times the service providers associated with the job seeker will know of businesses that are more accepting of hiring individuals with criminal records.

Once the employment specialist and job seeker have created a list of businesses to target, the employment specialist will begin to make contact with each one. When making each of these business contacts, the employment specialist will utilize the network of social capital they have created with the individual and the important people in their lives. In today's electronic world, connections can be made through social media, such as LinkedIn or Facebook. These tools can be used by both the employment specialist and the jobseeker and the individuals in their support network. Making online connections can lead to face to face meetings with business owners and managers and can serve as a way to connect individuals through the networks of all involved in the individual's life.

Meeting with businesses during the discovery process offers a way to not only build relationships and look at opportunities but also to educate the job seeker.

Meeting with businesses during the discovery process offers a way to not only build relationships and look at opportunities but also to educate the job seeker. If the job seeker has an interest area but doesn't know a lot about that type of work or business, the employment specialist can set up an informational interview and/or brief work experience to help them better understand what work looks like in that setting. In addition to assisting the job seeker better understand different businesses and jobs, it also affords them the opportunity to discover what they don't enjoy which is equally as important as knowing their likes. This information is also gathered during the informational interviews and work experiences and helps both the job seeker and employment specialist to know what avenues of employment should not be pursued. If the job seeker has one perception of what it means to work in an office setting and sounds like something of interest and feels that type of work would be enjoyable, a work experience would assist them in better understanding the true feel of office tasks and environment. If after the first work experience the job seeker enjoys the tasks but not the setting, then the employment specialist can look at different settings and offer an experience in a different setting. All of this information allows both the job seeker and the employment specialist to fine tune the information before approaching businesses about employment.

Many times an employment specialist has to serve as a resource for the job seeker in more ways than just assisting with finding employment. For previously incarcerated individuals with disabilities, the employment specialist may need to assist with making connections to other service providers who can help with housing, obtaining identification, identifying sources for assistance with food, clothing and hygiene items, and determining transportation options. This can all be started in the discovery process but will likely continue through all phases of the employment process.

How can job negotiation assist with securing meaningful employment for these individuals?

Job negotiation begins once the discovery process is complete and a full picture of the job seekers skills, interests, abilities and preferences are identified. The themes that are identified as part of the discovery process will guide both the job seeker and employment specialist towards businesses and opportunities in the community. As the employment specialist begins to build relationships with businesses related to the themes they will look for employers willing to hire individuals with a criminal history. These businesses or managers within businesses are open to giving opportunities to previously incarcerated individuals and willing to allow the job seeker a "second chance" understanding that they have served their time and are ready to start over on the right foot.

Education will be a key component of the process as the employment specialist builds a relationship with the business. During job negotiation, the employment specialist will look for work tasks and employment settings that will meet the job seekers needs and preferences and match their skills and abilities. The employment specialist will also learn about the business's needs and begin to serve as a liaison between the job seeker and the business. They will discuss the job seeker in a positive light to potential employers and also educate the business on the support they are able to provide to both the job seeker and business. The employment specialist will work concurrently with the job seeker to help prepare them for interviews. These interviews can be traditional where the employer asks the job seeker questions or the employment specialist can arrange for a working interview. In a working interview, the employment specialist will have met with the business to customize the desired tasks of the job seeker and then the job seeker will perform the set tasks during the working interview. For a job seeker who can "show" their skills better than verbalize them, this is a great tool and will often lead to an employment offer.

For previously incarcerated individuals with disabilities, the employment specialist acts as an advocate on their part with local businesses. They are able to define the positives of the individual to the business and how the business will benefit from the skills and abilities of the potential employee. Through this customized approach, the employment specialist will be able to explain the job seeker's incarceration (with consent from the job seeker) to the business and how the job seeker has changed during and after incarceration. Providing the right amount of detail, but not too much will be critical. This information will be shared as positively as possible and will allow for the employment specialist to develop a relationship and rapport with the business that will assist the job seeker in being seen in a different light than a typical job application. The employment specialist will also offer training to the business and coworkers on just who the new employee is, what motivates them, how they work best and how to communicate both with the new employee and the employment specialist.

What supports may be needed during job site training and follow along to assist previously incarcerated with disabilities?

Once employment has been secured, the employment specialist will be able to continue supporting the individual as an employee of the business. The employment specialist will provide traditional job site training support but can also support the new employee in other ways. The support of the employment specialist can and will occur both on the job site as well as off site, through face to face, phone and potentially texting (if the new employee utilizes texting).

As mentioned previously, the employment specialist may need to assist with activities outside of the actual job site. This may include teaching the new employee how to ride the bus or navigate the bus system as well as how to purchase bus tickets. The employment specialist may need to work with the employee on the "soft skills" of work such as interactions with coworkers or customers. Returning to the community and re-learning these skills may be a challenge to the new employee. Understanding how to treat coworkers and customers professionally will be a change from how the social system and dynamics worked during incarceration. In addition, knowing what to wear to

work and having the funds to gather those items may also be a problem for the employee. The employment specialist can assist with finding support through community services and agencies to help with these expenses. The beauty of customized employment is that many of these challenges will be identified through the discovery process as the job seeker and employment specialist get to know one another. In addition, the employment specialist will have begun work in these areas as they are identified.

The employment specialist will need to assist the employee and business with on the job supports and accommodations. These may include tasks lists to help the employee remember all of their assigned tasks within a given shift, how to call in and who to call when the employee is sick, assisting with setting alarms to get up in the morning, when to start and end work as well as when to start and end lunch breaks or note card reminders on who to go to within the business when they have questions.

In addition to the above mentioned support, the employment specialist will need to assist the employee and business with on the job supports and accommodations. These may include tasks lists to help the employee remember all of their assigned tasks within a given shift, how to call in and who to call when the employee is sick, assisting with setting alarms to get up in the morning, when to start and end work as well as when to start and end lunch breaks or note card reminders on who to go to within the business when they have questions. Accommodations such as a longer break time for someone who may be working on increasing their stamina or has a health condition that requires more frequent breaks or computer software are all things that can be part of the job negotiation process. If the need is not known until after employment begins, that can be discussed between the employment specialist, employee and supervisor.

Finally, throughout the job site training process the employment specialist will be able to provide positive support to the new employee. For an individual who was previously incarcerated and trying to reenter the community, they can find themselves overwhelmed by the freedom and responsibilities that they are now afforded. The employment specialist can assure the individual, assist them in learning coping strategies to deal with the stress that comes with community living, and help teach organizational skills that will be helpful in their success as a member of their community. The employment specialist serves not only as a vocational guide to these individuals but a confidant and counselor as well. ◆

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