

What is a Job Coach? An Overview of the Role of a Job Coach in the Workplace

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>> HEIDI DECKER-MAURER: Good morning, everybody. I hope you're having a great day. Thanks so much for joining us today for today's webinar. The title of the webinar, what is a job coach? Just to let you know, there will be two parts to this video. So once the first one has finished playing, we'll go ahead and start the second one up.

If you have any questions at all during the course of the webinar, we're lucky enough to have Rachael Rounds, one of the presenters in the webinar here on hand to answer any questions you might have.

We're asking that if you have questions about the content of the webinar, we would like you to have them in the Q&A section. That way she can answer them if she can during the presentation and will allow her to see them to answer them or just kind of get prepared to answer your questions at the end of the webinar.

Also, if you have any sort of problems with your technology or if something's not getting through, please put a quick note in the chat box, and we'll do whatever we can to get you going as soon as possible.

This is a fantastic presentation. I've watched it a couple times now, and it's really wonderful. Just wanted to mention too, after the session, we will have some information for you about getting your CRC credits. So if you can be patient with us and wait until the end of the presentation, we would be glad to share some more information about that with us. Without further ado, I think I will go ahead and start up the video. Thanks, everybody.

>> RACHAEL ROUNDS: Hi, welcome to what is a job coach. We're going to give you a brief overview of the role of a job coach in the workplace. My name is Rachael Rounds I'm the business connections manager at VCURTC.

>> APRIL LYNCH: I'm a support employment specialist with VCRT.

>> RACHAEL ROUNDS: What is a job coach? What is our role? Who is this person that is assisting somebody with a disability? So a job coach's responsibility is to help an individual with a disability to locate and maintain employment. And we are doing very individualized services. We're getting to know those folks really well in order to make a good job placement.

>> APRIL LYNCH: We're looking to make an appropriate job match for this individual based on their support needs and their overall strengths. Our services are commissioned through DARS, the Department of Aging and Rehabilitative Services. Some synonymous

terms you might hear on job sites at times for employment specialist or job coach might be a life coach, a vocational rehab counselor, a staffing specialist or a team consultant. We like to mix it up.

>> RACHAEL ROUNDS: So where does the job coach role begin and how does that affect you as the employer? It's useful to understand where the job placement process begins and to understand that the role of the job coach and the needs of the client. So there are five stages in supported employment. It starts with intake. Then it moves to situational assessment, maybe. Some people don't start in situational assessment. If somebody has a clear job goal, then they'll start off in job development and then move into job site training. Then when somebody is independent and working on their job successfully, we back off in a process we call fading, which we'll discuss later. We'll check on them periodically throughout the month to make sure everybody is still happy.

April, you want to talk about the intake.

>> APRIL LYNCH: Starting with the customer intake is where we get to know the client. A lot of times this can look different based on the support network or the family involved with this particular individual. But we do encourage that anyone who is considered a part of their support team to be a part of this meeting so we can gather as much positive information as we can.

This also is a time for us to Dora pour building, which is basically establishing a relationship with the client and building trust to understanding what their goals are. We will be gathering personal information. We're hoping to gain information about volunteer experience or anything that could really make this individual valuable in the job search.

Then particularly we're looking for their strengths and overall support needs that may be identified in the future for job development as well as job site training. So basically summing that all up as the goals for employment for that individual.

>> RACHAEL ROUNDS: So before they meet with us, they're also meeting with DARS and trying to establish employment goals. So we're working very closely with DARS to meet those same goals. If we find what that individual has stated is interested in isn't working out we can go back to DARS and determine a new employment goal. So what is a situational assessment? This is for somebody who may be of transition age. It could be somebody who acquired a disability and can no longer do what they used to do in the workplace. And we are really just trying to figure out what this person's skills and abilities and likes are.

We are doing this in a real work setting. It's not contrived. It's two to four hours for each assessment. We're looking for all kinds of things. Did they show up on time? Were they dressed appropriately? Did they have the stamina? All kinds of things we can gather to help to determine an appropriate job goal.

>> APRIL LYNCH: Then also taking it back to the intake, when we hear what their hopes and dreams are for employment, we really try to accommodate that in the situational assessment process.

However, sometimes we meet clients who may share that they want to be a wizard because they love Harry Potter. That might not be the most realistic job goal at this point in time. We'll help them identify skills that will make them feel as if they can work towards a sustainable goal.

>> RACHAEL ROUNDS: One of my favorite examples of why to do a situational assessment is a lot of times people will say they want to work at animals. We'll schedule an assessment at a doggie day care or vet. Then they have to realize they have to clean up after the animals. Then they decide I really only like my animals. It took an assessment to decide if they liked or disliked this kind of work. I usually use that example when I'm talking about assessments.

Again, to go back to what we're looking for, we're looking for the current skills that they have, the skills that they said they have in the intake. Does that match up with what their abilities are? Unidentified skills that we hadn't talked about in the intake. Like I said, stamina, can they handle the task load? Exposure to new environment. Do they want to work with more men or more women or do they care? Interpersonal skills and how to best communicate and teach this person when they do find a job. You want to take this one?

>> APRIL LYNCH: So what exactly makes a good assessment? The employment specialist or job coach will go and meet with the manager or employer at that particular business site and identify some tasks that could be helpful in the assessment process for that particular client, but then also we want to deliver for the business. We want to meet the business -- the business is the customer as well. We want to meet those needs, so identifying a task list for that particular assessment date could be beneficial for not only the client and the job coach but for the employer as well.

So making that a positive experience with planning ahead and having some expectations for the assessment. And then one of the biggest pieces is having a safe environment, to be able to assess our clients and allow them to feel comfortable to really show us their skill set and just overall getting that information that we need to further the job search. And hopefully make them a future employee for a business.

>> RACHAEL ROUNDS: Another thing, businesses can tend to have questions about liability in assessments because the individual is not an employee and what happens if they get hurt during the assessment? In our situation, if the individual was injured on the assessment, our VR agency has coverage to ensure that the business is safe and sound in case anything happens to the consumer. If anything happened to one of us on the job site, we have workers' compensation through our employer.

So then once we gather all this information from situational assessment, we've determined an appropriate job goal. We're going to start to hit the pavement and look for employment. So we have compiled all the information gained from the intake and the assessment. And we're going out there to look for a good job match.

The process varies for each individual. All of our services are very individualized, and so I always say we're not going to put a square peg into a round hole if I know that a fast food position exists, but I have a consumer who's looking for clerical work, I'm not going to stick him in the fast food position just because I know it's available. Our goal is long-term employment so we're hoping to find a good job match to --

>> APRIL LYNCH: Best fit that client's support needs.

>> RACHAEL ROUNDS: Thank you.

>> APRIL LYNCH: I like what you said how you brought up sometimes our clients go straight into job development is skip over the situational assessment process. We have experienced clients who have been in volunteer positions for years. Building rapport with these management teams and needing that support to further that job placement process so that's when the employment specialist can come in and assist that client in any paperwork that's necessary and pretty much just advocating for employment.

>> RACHAEL ROUNDS: So some of the things that we do is, you know, I would say one of the least successful things is navigating job boards. That's not to say it doesn't work, because we have made placements that way. But really it's about creating relationships in the community and introducing yourself to business owners and hiring managers, community networking. Again, we're taking our clients' interests into mind and we're going out there and trying to find a good job match for them.

Another thing we do is a job analysis and hopefully -- we'll touch on this again later, but hopefully an employer will allow us to maybe take a tour of the facility and also us to go, okay, this isn't what I thought it was. This might not be the right match. This is exactly what I thought it was and I've got the perfect person for the position. It's about establishing relationships in community. That's how we make our best matches.

>> APRIL LYNCH: Sometimes when we do make those best matches and then we create these relationships with employers, it can continue to additional placements or even receptiveness of what we call a job carve or a restructured position. And this would be tailoring a position or maybe even creating a brand new position that best fits your business production needs as well as the clients' strengths. I don't know if we want to touch specifically on that but --

>> RACHAEL ROUNDS: I was going to mention I love it when we've already created a great relationship with a particular employer and when they have a need, they reach out to us, making our jobs a lot easier. Those relationships are really important to us and for the success of the consumer.

So here's some ways that we assist our clients with job seeking skills. We will create and tailor resumes to each individual employer that we are -- we may be looking for a couple different kinds of jobs. So we'll tailor their resumes for the employer that we're applying for. We'll assist with online applications. We may even

do applications on their behalf with their permission.

We'll practice interviews and -- do you want to speak about being the liaison.

>> APRIL LYNCH: Yeah. So at times we refer to ourselves as being a liaison between the employer and client to help advocate for their strengths and support needs through the interview process. This may be talked about later on as far as some interview etiquette with employers and our clients. But really allowing the employer to be open and honest about the process and allowing us to best prepare our client for that process.

>> RACHAEL ROUNDS: Well, that brings us to the end of part one of what is a job coach. If you have questions, please feel free to post them on the web board. Thank you.

(Pause).

>> RACHAEL ROUNDS: Hey, and welcome back to part 2 of what is a job coach. I am Rachael Rounds, a business connections program manager.

>> APRIL LYNCH: Hi, I'm April Lynch I'm an employment specialist with VCURTC.

>> RACHAEL ROUNDS: We're going to talk about if you've decided to hire one of the people that we work with. What are the next steps?

>> APRIL LYNCH: So if you have chosen to hire one of our clients as one of your employees, it would look like whatever your business's onboarding process may be. This really varies between each business. Some businesses may have a new employee orientation where we will come along and attend this with our clients. Also, we know that paperwork is typically a part of this process as well. And we are happy to serve as the support and liaison in that process to make sure that that is completed in an efficient manner. Also, just the overall transition of our client into the workplace as your employee. Helping them adjust and adapt to the new setting, learning the routines. We'll get more into that when we get into the goals of job site training. But overall, we really do encourage employers to have their employees ask us questions. And we can also make this a part of a disability awareness training or education process to really give you and your employees a better idea of support employment.

>> RACHAEL ROUNDS: Which is also good when people have diversity initiatives that they are working on. We can help with that.

So on -- once we get going on the job, the job coach is going to be on site with that person until they are independent in their position. We're going to help them learn the essential functions of their job. We're going to help them learn expectations. We're going to introduce them to their coworkers and supervisors and help them figure out the chain of command. We are hoping to be a big part of this team and to communicate effectively with management and with the consumer, and we want to ensure consistency with the understanding of independence as a goal. With he want the employer to know that our plan is not to be there indefinitely. We will be

there and we will train this person at the rate that they are able to be trained. And we will eventually start to fade off. But we're hoping -- we don't want to fade too quickly. As they become independent in their tasks, we'll start to fade away at those moments.

Systematic data collection is performed by the coach. This is a way for us to observe and measure how they are increasing their independence and how to gauge our training for their work.

>> APRIL LYNCH: We'll be breaking those different routines down for them as well based on their support needs. That may look like introducing a routine of clocking in and we're going to break those step down into the client becomes fully independent in it. And the client and employer is satisfied in that aware.

That goes into our next area.

As far as different workplace routines, again, this is varies business to business. Some places may have a time sheet that they fill out each day. Some may have a clock in and out system. And we're there to support our client in understanding that routine and reaching independence. Also implementing breaks. So that may be having our client understand when is the appropriate time to take a lunch break. Do they get a 15-minute break? Do they get a 30-minute break? Again, this varies what their shift may look like.

We're there to support independence and comfortability in the workplace.

>> RACHAEL ROUNDS: Okay. Once orientation and training is complete, this is now your employee. We are along to help with any kind of training. However, they are your employee. You're not paying the job coach to be there on the site with them. The job coach will help oversee any adjustments that need to be made on the workplace. The workplace performance will be observed to meet job expectations and achieve independence. We've touched on some of this.

Again, we always encourage employers and coworkers to and us questions so we can help educate. That's another part of our goal is to educate the people around our consumers. And we like to rely on natural supports that are on the job site, somebody that would help us exit the job site as a prompt -- they could use prompts like, hey, April, it's time for lunch so the job coach doesn't have to be there to do that but maybe one of their coworkers is happy to step in to be a natural support for them.

>> APRIL LYNCH: Our client may be completely independent in their work routine but something unpredictable comes up at that day. We all like to have a friend at work to help in those situations. Having that support until a job coach can come on site to figure out what that issue may be and to problem solve.

>> RACHAEL ROUNDS: Once the individuals become independent in their positions, we start to fade, which I had mentioned earlier. And this can look different for everybody.

People learn at different rates. So we might have somebody who has gained independence on tasks in the middle of the day, but still needs help with clocking in. So we're there to ensure that

they're clocking in correctly and clocking in correctly, getting started with their job. Once they get into the flow of things, we may leave the site and then come back to help with end tasks and clocking out. It just looks different for everybody.

We talk about two different kinds of fading. One is proximity fading where we -- that could mean stepping back a couple of steps and not doing hands on instruction. That could mean unobtrusive observation from another room. They may or may not know you're there watching them. Then we do offsite fading where we will actually leave the job site. This helps us kind of test to see if they're able to do their work independently.

>> APRIL LYNCH: Absolutely. The fading process is something that we will 100% communicate to the manager. We like to have them in the know of this process to really help support the client to reaching independence. Again, this fading process will look different on every job site.

>> RACHAEL ROUNDS: The consumer should know when we're fading. If the consumer's family is involved, they should know we're fading. It should be a group effort or at least a group acknowledgment that we are fading off of the site with the understanding that we can come back if something is occurring.

>> APRIL LYNCH: Which brings us to follow along. Once our clients reach independence in their work routines and all adjustment to the job setting, we will then put them into a category called follow along services. This means they've reached independence. We've now faded ourselves off site and they are performing up to standards and satisfaction of the employer. But this doesn't mean that we're gone. We are still behind the scenes. And we are happy to come back on site as much as possible. And some areas that may be of need for us to return to the job site are modifying tasks, a new task may be added to the client's checklist or their task list. Also maybe they're promoted because they're performing that well and moving up into a different position or gaining additional responsibilities that take some additional training as well. Unfortunately at times we may see some decrease in productivity or maybe some issues that are going on with the client that we need to just come in and help them problem solve and get them back to feeling comfortable again with their position, just really communicating with the employer about keeping them in that independent area and what we need to do to take ma happen.

>> RACHAEL ROUNDS: One thing we haven't talked about is -- it may be implied but we work when our consumers work. So if they work for first shift we work first shift. If they work third shift we work third shift. I have an example where somebody was promoted and he moved into a team lead position and he was very nervous. He was an individual with an ASD, and he just was nervous about moving into the lead position. He had the ability but he wanted some moral support and he also wanted to know if what he was doing on his first day that he was doing it correctly. So he was a third shift production worker and I was there at 11:00 at night ready for him

to start in his new position and provide any kind of guidance that he needed. He had been in follow along for a long time, but I was able to get additional hours from our funding source who was the Virginia department for aging and rehab services to go back in there, make sure he was okay with his new role, and then faded back off. And he went back into follow along.

>> APRIL LYNCH: So in follow along you'll expect to hear from us a couple times a month, phone, email, on site visits, again, it really varies on that particular site and client.

>> RACHAEL ROUNDS: If somebody is in follow along, don't hesitate to contact us. We're happy to come in and address anything. We are making the initial effort to make -- to establish that communication with visiting on site or emailing or phone calling. But if something comes up, don't hesitate to give us a call.

So some of the frequently asked questions would be does the job coach on site only work with this client? And that answer is no. We all have case loads of at least 20 people. But they're in varying -- they're in situational assessment, job assessment, job site training. We can mold our scheduled around when our consumers are hiring. The person you have hired is not the only person the job coaching is working with.

>> APRIL LYNCH: The job coach's day could look. They could be at a hotel and then off to a school system and then to an office setting and then to a doggie day care. It's real fun sometimes.

>> RACHAEL ROUNDS: How often does a job coach staff a case? We do our best to keep our services to one coach. Maybe we have a job coach who has moved on to another position, I will transition that case to somebody else's case load. So all of our job coaches are equally trained and credentialed. So you have somebody who's as trained who would move into that position.

And we want to make job development as quickly -- as quick as we can, even though we want to make it appropriate for that person. We want to make job site training appropriate for that person. So there's no real timeline on how long somebody will stay with the person. But we will follow them indefinitely after they get the job.

>> APRIL LYNCH: We really strive to make good matches too. The employment specialist working with that particular client, if they have a really awesome rapport and there's all of these things that have been identified through their relationship working together, we're going to do our best to relay that to the new job coach and make sure they're a good fit as well.

>> RACHAEL ROUNDS: Another one is, will the job coach know the client? We always provide our coaches with an overview of the client as April just said, the job site, the task expectation, and we get to know these guys really, really well. We work with them very closely. We are able to kind of have our own vetting process before we place somebody. So we know -- if April has somebody on her case load, she's found a great lead but she understands the people she works with. She'll put it out to the team. I have this great lead but I don't have a good fit for it, does anybody else have a good

fit for it? So we do get to know them very well.

How can the employer best support the job coach? We want open communication. We want you to reach out to us if there's an issue. We want you to reach out to us if something great's going on. We really want to be involved in the success of the individuals that we serve.

>> APRIL LYNCH: And not being afraid to think outside of the box. Sometimes advocating the business needs to us may have us come up with a great idea of a good fit for a task for that client. So just really being open to being creative in the process as well as meeting your standards for your business.

>> RACHAEL ROUNDS: Well, that brings us to the end of part 2 of what is a job coach. Again, if you have any questions, don't hesitate to post on the web board. And thanks for taking the time to listen to April and myself.

>> APRIL LYNCH: Thank you.

>> HEIDI DECKER-MAURER: I just want to thank you, Rachael and April for doing such a great job. I think that covered a lot of territory there. There are a lot of good tips in there.

We're going to go ahead and ask folks if they'd like to right now, please type any questions that you might have over in our question and answer box, and we will address as many of them as we can. We typically take the questions that are going to help the most amount of people. And if there are questions in there that may just be specific to your situation and may not help the full group, we may wait to take those offline. Right now I'd love to give you a chance to type your questions in.

In the meantime I have a questions for Rachel myself. It was a great webinar. I think that so much was covered that I don't have too many questions. But just for folks who are maybe just getting out of school and aren't very experienced yet, do you feel like university or training in this covers enough relationship building out in the community?

>> RACHAEL ROUNDS: Probably not. Probably not. I think that should fall on or does fall on the employer to get that information across to the coaches that the relationship building really is 50% of our job. We're constantly communicating with everybody on the team. So I don't know that there are -- I mean, there are online courses that could prepare somebody. We offer certification that does touch on those things. As far as education, I don't know if that topic is covered for this particular job.

>> HEIDI DECKER-MAURER: So when you say that the employer has to take care of it or kind of at least get it initiated, you mean if a new VR counselor is working in the field and they work in a new agency, then there are usually supports in place at the place where the -- at the VR agency where folks work, that should be geared more towards working at building relationships with employers.

So you mentioned a certification. Is that something that we could include maybe either in the chat box or can we include it with

our email tomorrow for folks to know about CRCs?

>> RACHAEL ROUNDS: Yes. We can include it in the email tomorrow. I know our next acre certification will be this summer. I think it's run twice a year. Sometimes it's run three times a year. I can get that information to you so you can send it in the email tomorrow.

>> HEIDI DECKER-MAURER: Super. That would be great. And if someone is going to -- maybe gets out of school and going to a new community, how would you recommend they go about building the relationships? Is it usually something like a ride along with someone who already works at the agency or --

>> RACHAEL ROUNDS: That's how we do it. There's a couple of ways. I will pair a new employment specialist with a more advanced -- experienced employment specialist so they can shadow for a little while. It's hard to just be thrown to the wolves and go, go make these relationships. But we also talk about our friends and family networks, starting with them, starting with the consumer's friends and family networks. Who do they know that might be hiring who is working at a university that maybe can connect you with HR. The friends and family network is really a big one.

>> HEIDI DECKER-MAURER: Yeah. It's not always what you know. A lot of times it's who you know.

>> RACHAEL ROUNDS: Absolutely. Most of us at least a lot of us got our jobs because we knew somebody who knew somebody.

>> HEIDI DECKER-MAURER: Yeah. A lot of us do a lot of the times. I imagine that when you're in a profession if you're in professional groups, that could be a good way to find out about jobs for VR counselors but also network with other people who might have resources to share.

>> RACHAEL ROUNDS: Definitely.

>> I had a question that wasn't in the Q&A box. It was from someone else. There are a lot of folks these days who just as we are, do a lot of things online. And what the person was asking me about was how do you help people who are used to using technology like emails or texting or chatting, how do you help new VR counselors get out there, get out from behind the email and build those actual personal relationships? Is there anything that you feel helps in that kind of situation?

>> RACHAEL ROUNDS: Yeah. I think we talked about it a little bit in the webcast when we said using those job boards, it's not the best way to make those connections. Because that information is available to everybody and their mother.

>> HEIDI DECKER-MAURER: Right.

>> RACHAEL ROUNDS: So I think just educating new VR counselors that getting in front of people is how you're going to establish those relationships. And something I always say is -- I just lost my train of thought. I'm sorry.

>> HEIDI DECKER-MAURER: That's okay.

>> RACHAEL ROUNDS: You know, people like to talk about themselves. Employers like to talk about themselves especially if

they enjoy what they're doing. So a lot of times you might think this is a weird thing to go ask an employer, tell me about you. But people enjoy doing that. So that's a good way to start establishing relationships.

Also knowing your audience. If you're looking for something in a restaurant, don't show up at noon when it's busy, you know.

(Laughter)

>> RACHAEL ROUNDS: Because they're not going to have time to talk to you.

>> HEIDI DECKER-MAURER: Right.

>> RACHAEL ROUNDS: So kind of getting an idea of who your audience is. Just being smart about your communication tactics.

>> HEIDI DECKER-MAURER: Yeah. It's not a matter of you can send an email out to an employer and just think they're going to get back to you and say, I want your wonderful people right now. It takes a little bit more effort and a little bit more face time.

>> RACHAEL ROUNDS: Sometimes that technology is really useful too. LinkedIn I don't use it to look for employment. If I'm having a hard time getting past a gatekeeper, I will go to LinkedIn and try to see who is the hiring manager at XYZ business.

>> HEIDI DECKER-MAURER: Sure.

>> RACHAEL ROUNDS: It's good information and those things work. But I think we know that face-to-face communication is what is most effective.

>> HEIDI DECKER-MAURER: I think so. That seems to be the case with most of our speakers that we've had the webinar series. They agree that having that relationship building face-to-face is a little bit more personal and they can picture in their head who they're talking to and it's not just some anonymous voice on a phone line.

>> RACHAEL ROUNDS: Right.

>> HEIDI DECKER-MAURER: I'm looking over here, and we have quite a number of questions. For, I believe, the person is asking about the acre certification. Cheryl asks, is the job coaching certification available online and is it -- does it have a fee or a course fee attached to it?

>> RACHAEL ROUNDS: It's Z. I believe it's \$400. It's offered through VCU. And you can go to VCURRTC.org and look at trainings. There will be a list of the different trainings that are coming up. It might giving you a price too.

>> HEIDI DECKER-MAURER: Perfect. Can that be included with all the information we're sending tomorrow.

>> RACHAEL ROUNDS: Yep.

>> HEIDI DECKER-MAURER: Super. Thanks so much for that question. The next question I have is from Alexis. She asks, how do you find out if a certain employer is willing to do the situational assessment? Are companies and workplaces required to say yes. That's a good one.

>> RACHAEL ROUNDS: They're not required to say yes at all. My tactic was always to start the conversation with taking the pressure off of the employer by saying, I'm not looking for employment right

now. I'm working with somebody and we're trying to determine what a good job goal is for them. Do you mind if we come volunteer and work for a couple hours unpaid. Sometimes they want to pay the person. That's really on the employer. But that's not a pressure that we put on them. In fact we try to say volunteer so it sounds better to them.

>> HEIDI DECKER-MAURER: Well, and it kind of goes along with that the marketing principle that we all need to use when we're marketing ourselves. From the employer's perspective they're thinking what's in it for me? Well, if they're getting some volunteer time to take care of some tasks, then that really makes sense.

I think I'll go on to the next question is -- yes. I will answer that later. Okay. Lynn asks, how often do you use work incentives?

>> RACHAEL ROUNDS: You mean Social Security work incentives?

>> HEIDI DECKER-MAURER: It wasn't specified. Let's have you answer that. If the person needs clarification, we'll have the person type into the chat box again.

>> RACHAEL ROUNDS: We have marketing materials that talk about the work opportunity tax credit which is a work incentive from Social Security. Some businesses take advantage of that. Some don't feel like going through the process. It's not a huge amount of money for the business. It depends on how much that person is being paid.

And then we also DARS, our state's VR agency, can connect them with a benefits counselor who can explain the other Social Security work incentives like impairment-related work expenses and all those different work incentives provided by Social Security.

>> HEIDI DECKER-MAURER: Mm-hmm.

>> RACHAEL ROUNDS: Are there other clarifying questions about that?

>> HEIDI DECKER-MAURER: I do. Yes, but also tax credits.

>> RACHAEL ROUNDS: Yes. That's the work opportunity tax credit I was speaking about. We give them information on how to obtain that tax credit, the employer.

>> HEIDI DECKER-MAURER: That sounds great. Thank you for answering that, Rachael. My next question is from Edwin. Do you still come across misconceptions about people with disabilities and what they can bring to the table for an employer? In your position how do you address these misconceptions when assisting a client that could be a good match for a particular employer?

>> RACHAEL ROUNDS: Of course. We still come across that. Unfortunately still in 2020. We still come across those misconceptions. I think it's on those of us in the field to continue to educate people around us, each on your day off, you know, talk about -- if you catch somebody being rude or not even intentionally being rude but unaware that what they said was inappropriate. Try to correct them in a nice way and explain why it is the way it is. And that person's not wheelchair bound. That person is using a wheelchair.

>> HEIDI DECKER-MAURER: Right.

>> RACHAEL ROUNDS: I don't think people -- I do think there are people who are not nice. I think for the most part people just aren't aware of the fact that people with disabilities can work. And I love the opportunity to prove to people that people with disabilities can work.

One way we can get in front of that is offering -- I think we did touch on this in the webcast is offering disability awareness training to businesses, whether they're going to hire somebody or not.

>> HEIDI DECKER-MAURER: Right.

>> RACHAEL ROUNDS: We can provide that kind of training for them. If nothing else, tick it off they've done it for their diversity plan.

>> HEIDI DECKER-MAURER: Sure.

>> RACHAEL ROUNDS: So I think it's on us to educate and to proactively get in front of these employers and talk about people with disabilities working.

>> HEIDI DECKER-MAURER: Yeah. And I think that along with some people maybe are rude, but other people are just worried that they're going to, you know, offend somebody. I'm sure you have it on both sides of the spectrum with that.

>> RACHAEL ROUNDS: I had a really interesting email the other day from the Department of Health. They were reaching out because they've hired somebody who uses a wheelchair. They realize we don't have any kind of disability awareness training for our employees and we would like to add that to our regular onboarding training. He said and in his email said we hired somebody who is wheelchair bound. At the bottom of that paragraph for instance I just used the term wheelchair bound and I don't know if that's appropriate or not. He was self-aware to go, I don't know the answer to that.

>> HEIDI DECKER-MAURER: Right. He checked himself. That's great.

>> RACHAEL ROUNDS: Interesting.

>> HEIDI DECKER-MAURER: Yeah. Danielle has a question, what qualifications do you look for when hiring a process expectative hiring specialist, what is looked at in terms of experience and education for that?

>> RACHAEL ROUNDS: We definitely like to see someone with a degree in human services but that doesn't exclude other people. We've hired people with art backgrounds because that tells us they're going to be creative and the supports that they implement on site or that could be. Somebody who was in sales before might be really good at that job development piece because they can sell the services and sell the consumer's abilities.

So really -- not an introvert. Somebody who doesn't like to be in front of people, somebody who oh who, don't want to be hands on, is not the person you're looking for. You want a teachable person. You want someone okay with hearing the word no because we hear the word no a lot and they're not going to have their feelings

hurt. So really when I'm looking to hire somebody, want to know that they can communicate clearly. I want to know that they believe in what we're doing and it's not just a job. It's a mission.

The degree in education is important but the person, to me, is more important. I get to feel that person out, you know, in the interview and phone calls and things like that.

>> HEIDI DECKER-MAURER: Mm-hmm. Actually we have quite a few questions. The follow-up for the person who was talking about work incentives, she had another follow-up question. Any ADA accessibility? I'm not sure what the question was. Lynn, maybe can you go into a little more depth. I'm going to dismiss this question and please give us the rest of the question so that it's in context a little bit more.

Let's see here. We have someone who mentions that acre certification is also offered locally, not just VCU. Do a search of your local colleges and universities to see if they offer it. Here in Vermont community college of Vermont offers it. Thank you, Elizabeth, for sharing that information with us. Kayla has a question about working with bigger corporations.

I believe you touched on it a little bit by trying to get past gatekeeper going through LinkedIn. Kayla in my experience big corporations don't want to deal with situational assessments, any tips to convince them to make time. Thanks for the great presentation. Beyond getting around that gatekeeper, do you have any other strategies for working with bigger corporations?

>> RACHAEL ROUNDS: You may want to be patient with them because the person that you speak to and I'm thinking of like a Lowe's or Home Depot and these are experiences I've had. The person you're speaking to is not the person that makes the decision. They've got to go up the chain of command and that can take time. Personally I believe that I don't want to waste time waiting for the bigger corporation, for the person that can say yes to get back to me that a smaller business that does similar work is going to be the easier, quicker route to go. We want to be good stewards of the State's money. We don't want to spend a lot of time billing them because we're contacting over and over again. So thinking about that is important too.

But I mean persistence is another, you know, strategy. But I think the more effective strategy is just moving to the next business who can give you that yes.

>> HEIDI DECKER-MAURER: Yeah, definitely. You don't want to beat your head against the wall.

>> RACHAEL ROUNDS: Right. It's not that person at the larger corporation don't want to help you. They don't have the decision making power, even if it's the store manager sometimes.

>> HEIDI DECKER-MAURER: Sometimes it's out of their control.

Our next question we have -- let's see here. Could we use job coaching if we're working with a client with a mental illness and the client is not comfortable disclosing? That's an interesting question.

>> RACHAEL ROUNDS: Disclosure can be tricky. That is on the person. That is not our decision to make.

>> HEIDI DECKER-MAURER: Definitely.

>> RACHAEL ROUNDS: The way you just communicate -- I can't disclose what this person's disability is. But I'm here -- you don't even have to say the word disability. You can say, I help individuals find jobs and I help them maintain their jobs. It can -- like I said, it can be tricky. Who is this weirdo that's just showing up on the job site with this person if the employer doesn't have the context that that person has a disability. I do think that's supported in customized employment is becoming more of a known thing out there in the world. So people are aware of what job coaches are and can hopefully understand that that's the reason you are there. But disclosure is definitely tricky.

>> HEIDI DECKER-MAURER: Mm-hmm. I think it is mostly in any situation, even if people don't have job coaches. I think disclosure is one of those things that seems to be becoming less and less of a stigma.

>> RACHAEL ROUNDS: Right.

>> HEIDI DECKER-MAURER: Just things like the Job Accommodation Network, their suggestions for folks with different kinds of challenges, those have always been interesting for me to read just to find out to figure out what the accommodations the question was about folks with mental illness. There's a lot of room to help get folks employed and if the employers are a little open minded and flexible, then really they can have a great employee that they may not have otherwise been able to have had they not made a little bit of an adjustment to how the person can work in the environment.

>> RACHAEL ROUNDS: With the support in different ways. Instead of -- somebody with mental illness may not need a task analysis or reminders on the phone or this or that, but we can text and check in and say how are you doing. If things aren't going well, provide suggestions like maybe you want to take a water break. There are different ways we can provide support without hovering over somebody.

>> HEIDI DECKER-MAURER: Sometimes I think people are in distress but they don't recognize that they're in distress because it's something that happens to them.

>> RACHAEL ROUNDS: Right.

>> HEIDI DECKER-MAURER: They're used to it. But if you're in a job situation, most of the time people don't want to have anything happen in front of coworkers. It's a little bit -- they might feel uncomfortable having other people know. But that sounds really reasonable.

The next question I have is, I serve persons with intellectual disabilities that require long-term job coaching supports. A lot of the times job coaching isn't available for a few to ten-month periods of time due to finding transitioning of staff, et cetera. How do we maintain continuity of service for those who need long-term support? I'm sorry. She corrected it. It says, coaching isn't

available for a ten-months period of time due to funding and transition of staff. So maintaining continuity in that type of situation.

>> RACHAEL ROUNDS: That's something that we struggle with too when we do our annual plan every year, one of the things that we talk about is being a potential risk for us is when our VR agency goes into order of selection. And they can't, you know, fund the long-term training.

One work around and I don't know -- I know the waiver is different across the states, but in Virginia there are a finite amount of waiver slots, and they are usually left for people with very significant disabilities or they don't have family support or their living situation is terrible. It's hard to get a waiver. Once you get a waiver, you don't let go of it because it provides so many supports. Virginia, if we have somebody who needs that significant, long-term intervention -- excuse me -- and DARS will pay as much as they will pay and then they're like we can't pay anymore. If they have the waiver, that transition switches over to waiver as the funding source. Like I said, I know it's different in different states how the waiver works. But, yeah, it's definitely -- when they go into order of selection, you know, it can be tough for agencies like ours to provide that service.

>> HEIDI DECKER-MAURER: And Rachael, if folks are looking for information, they can go to their state's DARS website and find out about waiver programs? Is that a place they'd go or should they go to their DVR for their state?

>> RACHAEL ROUNDS: Probably the DVR. Well, you know, any VR agency, any state VR agency should at least be able to point you in the right direction if they don't have the information, they should be able to point you in the right direction of where to go to that information.

>> HEIDI DECKER-MAURER: Just anticipating a question we might get. Let's see here.

How do you deal with retention when the management of an employer changes after fading and the new manager changes the conditions for the employee with disabilities? So I think what she is asking is maybe have you ever had instances where one manager was in there and was willing to have folks with disabilities try out the jobs or just go in and job shadow, and then a new manager comes in and isn't willing to do that?

>> RACHAEL ROUNDS: Well, I heard it differently. I heard it as someone in follow along. I'll respond to both. So somebody's who's been employed and has a management shift, we see that all the time. All the time. I think it's really on us to make sure we're keeping up that communication with management there and when we know that there's going to be a change, we make an effort to get in front of the new manager and communicate how long that person is there, how they've been an asset to the company, just so they know you're still there even if you're not there all the time, you're still there. You can still provide support and in necessary, you can come

back for an extended period.

For other managers who are not open -- with the way you worded it or at least I heard you explain it, if there's a management who was okay with letting us come in and do assessments and job shadowing and that kind of thing and the new manager is not okay with those things, again, I'm going to talk about communication all the time. It's really about providing information and saying, this is how we did it before. It would could be a benefit to you. And again, if they're just beating your head against the wall, let's move to the next person.

>> HEIDI DECKER-MAURER: Definitely. It sounds like, again, with the relationship building and if you get ahead of a new manager coming in and do the relationship building then, it seems like with all the relationship building, it might take a little bit more time investment at the beginning, but it can pay off later maybe if they're looking for more employees, if you have that relationship build, even if it's somebody who's new, then you know you've done the courtesy to go out there and put a face to a name and make sure that also that you can support other people or other folks who might be a good job fit. That makes a lot of sense.

I've found myself that relationship building at the front end makes other things easy on the other end of things.

>> RACHAEL ROUNDS: Yeah. It could take time. You know, we're in a project right now that communication started a year and a half ago. And we are now moving forward with a big corporation quickly, but it's taken us a year and a half to get there, but it's been about that relationship building and now it's paying off.

>> HEIDI DECKER-MAURER: Yeah, definitely. Sometimes you have to exercise your patience muscle (laughing)

Let's see here. Going back to Lynn, she's the lady who had asked about the work incentives earlier. She clarified her question. Have employers helped -- have they helped employers become physically accessible remodeling automatic doors, desks and restroom changes. Thank you, Lynn, for clarifying that.

>> RACHAEL ROUNDS: I have not seen an employer, you know, add a ramp or something like that in my experience. That's not to say that it wouldn't happen for somebody else. I haven't seen remodeling like that. But I've definitely seen adjustable desks and calling in a rehab engineer to figure out how to best accommodate a work setting, a rehab engineer could also put bars in a bathroom and that kind of thing. They have brilliant minds. Like I said, in my experience I haven't seen a remodel necessarily, but employers are typically open to adjusting the work area if that makes sense.

>> HEIDI DECKER-MAURER: It reminds me of a little comic strip I saw one time. It was one of the maintenance people at a school, and there were a set of stairs and a ramp. Someone said, can you shovel the ramp first, because everybody can use that. If the person has a wheelchair, then if the stairs get cleared first, then only people who can navigate stairs would be able to benefit. If the ramp gets cleared, everybody benefits right away.

Yeah, all those little funny cartoons of the.

>> RACHAEL ROUNDS: Resee that across the board. If we see something that's going to benefit people we work with, a lot of times employers implements it across the board because it benefits everybody.

>> HEIDI DECKER-MAURER: Definitely. It goes around with universal design too. You're making it with everybody in mind, not just a person who is working with a disability or anybody else who isn't. So, yeah, that seems real smart.

I do have a couple more questions here. Regina makes a statement, you always want to make sure the employer will allow a job coach before accepting the job.

>> RACHAEL ROUNDS: That's true.

>> HEIDI DECKER-MAURER: That's a good thing to point out. Thanks, Regina. Let's see our next question --

>> RACHAEL ROUNDS: I have an example about that. A few years ago --

>> HEIDI DECKER-MAURER: Sure. Cool.

>> RACHAEL ROUNDS: I placed somebody at an awe bomb Pam do you know what that is.

>> HEIDI DECKER-MAURER: Yes.

>> RACHAEL ROUNDS: It's a small one in a hospital. The job coach was in the way and they were fine with me observing on the other side of the door.

>> HEIDI DECKER-MAURER: Right.

>> RACHAEL ROUNDS: But really how I implemented supports then was just being able by phone to text mental, to call, and that kind of thing. So, yes, you do not want to an aggravate an employer by being in the way. You do want their blessing to be on the job site. But if you can't be on the job site, we were talking about this with the mental illness earlier, there are other ways you can support without being right next to somebody.

>> HEIDI DECKER-MAURER: Definitely. If someone gets a job in a kiosk or a coffee stand, it's really going to be difficult to fit two people in there a lot of time or more people.

Let's see. Moving forward. Elizabeth asks, I think this would be for everybody. I don't know if you have a resource like this available. But maybe if you don't, we can point someone in the right direction. Elizabeth is asking, if you have a list of employers found in different states that have been cooperative and willing to hire individuals with disabilities. So since you're based in Virginia, is there any kind of resource or website that you know about that exists that would disclose some of the employers that are open to hiring folks with disabilities?

>> RACHAEL ROUNDS: I'm sorry. I can't think of one off the top of my head. I can ask around here to see if there's something like that available. We had compiled a list of people that we knew -- obviously if they come to us they have a disability. Sometimes they have a criminal conviction. So we had a list compiled of employers in the area that we knew would hire individuals with

a criminal history. It's probably on our intranet somewhere. I can find out if there is that kind of resource available for states.

>> HEIDI DECKER-MAURER: And also, I'd like to throw it out to anyone in the audience. Does anybody know of a list like that? Would you mind sharing it in the chat and or the Q&A? It would be very helpful. That's one of the reasons why we have webinars and we have the Q&A and chat is so people can share and learn from each other. If anybody has any ideas about that, we would be glad to take them. Otherwise, Elizabeth we'll do a little poking around after the webinar and see if there is or isn't anything like that available.

I'm going to go ahead and record the question and since our website platform does not allow me to copy and paste, I'm going to take a picture with my iPhone. There we go.

Thanks, Elizabeth, for that question. We'll see what we can find out for you.

Let's see. Latisha says, I have clients who do their own job searches in collaboration with their job coaches. Some clients do not indicate on the application when asked that they have a disability. I believe this is setting them up to not receive reasonable accommodations on a job, if necessary. What's the proper thing to do? That's the timing of that disclosure question again, isn't it?

>> RACHAEL ROUNDS: Right. I worked with a guy if he indicated he had a disability he would not get the job. It was on me to explain to him that if you need an accommodation, you need to answer the question correctly, otherwise, the employer's not responsible if they've not provided an accommodation because you've not disclosed that you would need an accommodation.

>> HEIDI DECKER-MAURER: Right.

>> RACHAEL ROUNDS: Again, that is that tricky topic of disclosure. It's such a personal choice whether to disclose or not. The stigma is going away. I would say most of the people we work with, 90% of them don't mind disclosing and they would rather you do it. There are that small group of people that don't want to disclose. I just think it takes conversations. Conversations with them as to why it's important that they do indicate that they have a disability so they can receive that accommodation. Maybe bringing in mom, if mom is a good support.

>> HEIDI DECKER-MAURER: Right.

>> RACHAEL ROUNDS: Or maybe they've got a great relationship with their VR counselor. Bring in that person and just helping them to understand. Again, that is their decision to make but helping them to understand the benefit of disclosing and indicating that you have a disability.

>> HEIDI DECKER-MAURER: Yeah. I know that just with the state of Wisconsin with the employment farms with the job with the State they ask you to check a box whether or not you have a disability, but you don't have to put in any other information than that. It may be something that's being treated or is in remission. I think there are a lot of different reasons that folks could check that

because employers really shouldn't make assumptions about what that might mean. But having them covered right away, having the applicant covered right away is a great idea. Because otherwise, they may not be able to get accommodations later on. I think that's kind of a depends upon, but definitely a thing about timing about disclosure too.

Seth, I believe this question was answered before, but I'll go ahead and pop it out there. Rachael, Seth asks, how do you deal with the liability issues in regards to a job coach being on site. I think you mentioned in Virginia, your agency covers like you and April and focus folks in that position with their own liability insurance.

>> RACHAEL ROUNDS: Our employer would cover it and the VR agency covers the consumer should something happen during a situational assessment.

>> HEIDI DECKER-MAURER: I don't know if that would be the case across the board. People should check with their employers, correct?

>> RACHAEL ROUNDS: Definitely. If something happens to you while you're working, your employer would cover you, I would assume. For the VCU employees and VCU employment specialists if something should happen, we're covered by our employer. If something happens to the consumer after they're an employee, their company would cover them with their workers' comp.

>> HEIDI DECKER-MAURER: All right. Let's see. And answer www.monster.com/career/advice/article/disability/friendly-companies. I'll leave that up in the questions. I think -- Carly, I'm not sure if we can answer this one or not. Rachael, you did mention folks with backgrounds adjudication or criminal backgrounds. Working with people with mental disabilities she's come across situations when the clients may have been arrested or involved and has some kind of criminal background. During the application process and when meeting with the employer what's the appropriate way to disclose the information? I know in the application process it sometimes asks if you have a criminal history. I've seen that in job applications, have you been convicted of something?

>> RACHAEL ROUNDS: Sure. Keeping in the back of your mind the kind of industry that you're looking from, what the barrier crimes would be in that industry. So like -- I'm trying to think of an example, we were working with an assisted living facility one time, and I forget what the person's charge was but they were hired because that particular crime was not considered a barrier crime in that industry. So you can ask an HR person what would be a barrier crime to working with you all?

So getting that information up front is good info to have in your back pocket before you start applying to positions. I don't think -- I think honesty is the best, you know, method. You just want to talk about it. I worked with somebody before with a sexual criminal history. And we were honest. He had a letter prepared that he gave to employers that obviously didn't go into detail but said

I have a charge, and this is the charge. He didn't even have to speak about it. He would give it to them.

Like I said, honesty is always going to be the best policy. God forbid, you don't disclose or lie about the charges and then it comes out, then now your reputation with the employer is tarnished and obviously the employee's reputation and that could cause them to lose their job.

>> HEIDI DECKER-MAURER: Yeah. I think that is not one where it's easier to get forgiven than get permission. You want to get permission first in that particular case.

So let's see. Another question I have -- let's see. Here we go. Maybe a bit off topic, is it true employers are allowed to pay those with disabilities less money because they have a disability? I think this is in the case if they're coming in and have offered to pay. But I'm not sure. Could we maybe -- we can take it both ways.

>> RACHAEL ROUNDS: I think there are still workshops that exist that pay people subminimum wage. They are going away. But they still exist. They're still right here in Richmond, Virginia, and I'm sure in whichever area you guys are in. We would never pursue something like that. We would never pursue anything that wasn't at least minimum wage. Really, what you're looking for is not just at least minimum wage but a wage that is equal to somebody else who is doing the same page. If they get paid \$11 an hour, the person with a disability gets paid \$11 an hour and not \$7.25.

>> HEIDI DECKER-MAURER: That makes sense. Kayla McFarland, you said anyone know of any resources for Missouri and I put in the chat box, the monster link to career advice article disability friendly companies. Hopefully that will give you a little boost or help you get going in the right direction.

Let's see Douglas, since you have a relationship with VR counselors, what do you expect from them prior to meeting with new clients?

>> RACHAEL ROUNDS: Whatever information they can give us. If they have a criminal history, that would be good to know. Obviously what their disability is. If their communication style, just whatever information they can give us on the front end would better prepare to meet them when we do our initial intake interview.

>> HEIDI DECKER-MAURER: Definitely. And he has a follow-up question. Thanks, Douglas. Also with a client with hearing loss what accommodations do you offer during job coach time? That's a good question.

>> RACHAEL ROUNDS: Yeah. I think that it excludes a lot of agencies. We don't have anybody here that's an interpreter. And it's not fair -- I worked with somebody -- my mom used to be a an interpreter. And I can sign a little bit but I could never carry on a conversation that was important if I had to.

So I happen to work with a client who was deaf and she was fine with my level of signing because she enjoyed teaching me the.

>> HEIDI DECKER-MAURER: Right.

>> RACHAEL ROUNDS: When somebody uses ASL, it's not fair to them to not have an interpreter with them especially when you're communicating about what that person's going to be paid and what the expectations are and that kind of thing. So if you don't have staff on hand that can communicate effectively, VR will -- at least in Virginia, VR will pay for an interpreter during that process.

>> HEIDI DECKER-MAURER: Sure. That makes complete sense. Where we live in Wisconsin with our grade school education, we have a lot of rural areas. And so they have a person, an interpreter who is just based out of one of the organizations in the local area. And their interpreters travel because they don't have enough students in one school who are deaf that they would need to have the interpreter there all the time. Having them come in or having them maybe consult or be the consultant for that, it seems especially during the beginning phase of trying to, you know, put in your application. You want to make the best impression possible. And even if a person with hearing loss issues is pretty comfortable with maybe lip reading, you don't want to miss anything at a job interview.

>> RACHAEL ROUNDS: Absolutely. Or, you know, if they're getting in trouble for something, I couldn't sign fast enough to tell her what she was getting in trouble when she threw something against the wall.

>> HEIDI DECKER-MAURER: Definitely.

>> RACHAEL ROUNDS: I don't know if there's legal ramifications for it. I would just say better safe than sorry. Have that interpreter with you. I can't hear you anymore. I can't hear you.

>> HEIDI DECKER-MAURER: Can you hear me?

>> RACHAEL ROUNDS: Yeah.

>> HEIDI DECKER-MAURER: My audio settings went wonky for my head set. Hopefully I won't have too much echo. Let's see. Okay.

Susan put the link to the monster article -- Susan also shared one from respectability.org resources employers-embracing-employees-disabilities if somebody checks them out and found out I typed them wrong, let me know. Let's see here. I've got to scroll down here in my questions.

Oh, another great resource is -- thank you, Susan for all these <https://www.WRP.gov/WRP>. That's a great one. Ashley shared <https://abilityjobs.com>. So thank you so much for these resources that folks are sharing with us.

Let me see. Such great suggestions I have to sort them out from the questions. Someone else mentioned the JAN guides. Katrina has more of a comment than a question. She went to the Arizona work center and they shared a lot of probation offices have a job board and employers can only post if they're willing to hire people with a felony. Be mindful the company is obligated to hire X amount of people with a felony. Again, they can only post on this job if they're willing. Is that something you've ever run into, Rachael, it sounds like a good way to get people connected?

>> RACHAEL ROUNDS: Not personally. I've heard of lists like

that. Just my experience. I haven't worked with too many people with a criminal history. It's not something I've come across but it's great information.

>> HEIDI DECKER-MAURER: Definitely. All right. The ability jobs that Ashley had posted. She mentioned it's listed as the largest job sites for those with disabilities. It lists employers and career fairs. I'm going to try to pick up all of these websites and put them also in the chat.

Let's see. Tracy asks, do you know of any resources that might provide checklists of skills required for specific jobs? What do you need to be able to do -- to be a bagger at a grocery store, bus, wash dishes et cetera. Does OMW do that?

>> RACHAEL ROUNDS: I'm not sure. I would say stay away from looking for lists like that, though. You know, with the big employer that we are working with they were asking for a matrix like that. We were like, you know, why don't you tell us what you're interested in, and we will find the right person for you. The job coach obviously can go in and do the task analysis and break down those different pieces of those jobs. I think with experience and -- you become a jack of all trades with the experience comes the knowledge of well the bagger at this particular grocery store is probably going to do the same thing as this other grocery store. I don't know of any resources that would list that kind of information. I'm sorry that I don't have that information.

But I think with experience comes the knowledge of what's involved in these different kinds of jobs. I think asking the employer would be appropriate also.

>> HEIDI DECKER-MAURER: And I found in my experience just as a person seeking a job when I was just getting out of college, a lot of times they didn't want me to know anything about what I was getting into because they had a certain way they wanted to train me. Sometimes a blank slate is best.

I think Tracy might be able to go -- I think you might be able to go, I believe it's an OSER website that has descriptions of jobs and it also talks about market growth, which jobs are growing, which jobs are in decline, and it lists things about what may be involved in this job like lifting or sorting or things like that.

>> RACHAEL ROUNDS: Sorry. I didn't mean to cut you off.

>> HEIDI DECKER-MAURER: Go ahead.

>> RACHAEL ROUNDS: There is the dictionary of occupational titles that you could literally put in fish sorter and it would give you what is involved in that. I apologize there is that website. It's really interesting too just to kind of surf through and see the gazillions of jobs there and how they list what's involved in those positions.

>> HEIDI DECKER-MAURER: Ashley just made me so thankful for my job today. I do not want to be a fish sorter.

(Laughter)

>> HEIDI DECKER-MAURER: Let's see here. Regina mentions I'm a VR counselor we used to count shelter workshops as employment but

no longer do. They shouldn't be discounted. My brother worked in one for years and if not for years, he wouldn't have had anywhere else to go. He was very happy there. That seems to be the case with some people and some people's families seem to support it because it seems to be a place where people can go and if their coworkers have similar disabilities, then they know that the employer is going to take care with their safety.

Any ideas on middle ground there or compromises that can be made?

>> RACHAEL ROUNDS: You know, I think -- I talked about my mom before but she was also a VR counselor. And she battles with me over this and says exactly that. For some people it is -- of course, it's everybody's choice. I'm not going to preach to anybody what the better personal decision is for that family. I think what we're looking at is just ensuring that somebody's being paid for the work that they're doing at least minimum wage and that we work with people with varying levels of disability and have been really successful in placing somebody -- I don't like to use the word placement but helping somebody find a job who you might not think could have worked.

So I would just say, you know, just weigh your options that are out there. And if you feel like a workshop is what works best for your family, then that's what works for your family.

>> HEIDI DECKER-MAURER: Right. And she follows up, Regina follows up, I understand, I just don't want them to be discounted. If it's sheltered work, Regina made a point earlier in one of her chats, that the person that she knew, it wasn't about the paycheck. It was about them being able to work.

>> RACHAEL ROUNDS: Right.

>> HEIDI DECKER-MAURER: And having workshops at subminimum wage doesn't seem real ethical but having sheltered workshops for people to work in so that their families feel safe having them do that, I think that there could be some middle ground there. It's going to depend on the person, right?

>> RACHAEL ROUNDS: Absolutely. Just because that's not the route -- my brain is trained to VCU and kind of what we do. I don't mean to discredit anybody else in my conversations.

>> HEIDI DECKER-MAURER: Right. And I think just with this forum I think it's a good place for people to, you know, ask questions and be open minded about the answers. I don't think that anyone here comes to a webinar because they think they know all this stuff.

(Laughter)

>> HEIDI DECKER-MAURER: Thanks, Regina for asking all those questions. I have a couple, I can't hear you. But I think we took care of that.

Let's see. I'm going to go ahead and throw it out there. This is a lot of questions. This is just wonderful. A lot of the time we don't get this many. This has been fantastic. We do have a question and answer panel. If anybody wants to go in there, we have all the recommended websites from other people. I'm just going to record these quickly so that we can send them out in the email.

I can even give them to you, Rachael. Let's see here. I think that's all of them. I'm going to throw it out there, if anybody else has any questions -- let's see here. I jotted down a couple of questions and one of them was you had talked earlier about training for employers and for consumers and bosses and coworkers. I don't know if it would be called sensitivity training because that's what they called it a decade or so ago for other issues. What does that usually look like? Is it maybe an hour long seminar on how to use person first language?

>> RACHAEL ROUNDS: That's in our slides. Let me see if I have -- I thought I had a printed off version of it but don't. It really a history of people with disabilities working and how it started that people were institutionalized and now here we are at competitive integrated employment and the process there. We talk about some strategies that we have seen that worked for supports from your iPhone alarms to posting up little reminders on somebody's cubicle and all those things in between. We talked about communication strategies. We will get information from our consumers and say, what do you want your employer to know about you? How do you want them to communicate with you? What's the best supervision style that works for you? What do you like to do on your day off? Just an about me kind of thing.

So before they get started or have even met the person, well, in most cases, they will have met the person, before they get started, they have good background information on they will. We talk about person first language. We talk about terms to try to stay away from like the R word and challenged and things like that. It's not a -- the one we're currently using isn't a huge PowerPoint. It might take us a half hour to get through because we don't keep people listening to us. That provides them to then open up the floor for questions and, you know, then we can have a dialogue about it. We've kept it kind of short with the intention of being able to talk about it afterwards.

>> HEIDI DECKER-MAURER: Right. And I think that one of the things that folks who aren't necessarily conversant in vocational rehabilitation, it seems like a good idea to keep in mind is that you really don't want someone to feel othered and everybody is individual and has different preferences. I have a friend who uses a wheelchair and we were talking about, you know, things -- she was talking about decorating her wheelchair. She said she thought it might be nice to have spikes on the handles so people wouldn't just grab her wheelchair and start wheeling her around. It's a matter of asking and finding out what the person needs for help. I don't know that people wouldn't want to answer questions like that. It is something that might be uncomfortable but probably more uncomfortable for the asker sometimes.

>> RACHAEL ROUNDS: Right.

>> HEIDI DECKER-MAURER: Any recommendations on how people can offer to help?

>> RACHAEL ROUNDS: Offer to help. Go to the HR department or

hiring managers and say, I have training that I can present to you. Nobody -- the reason we've kept it kind of short because people don't want to feel like they're being preached at. We hit some high points and talk about some important things that we think are important factors.

I think you can just say, we offer a training. I can come in and train you. I think the hope is, yes, please hire somebody also. But I wouldn't put pressure on people. I think, you know, that organizational marketing, getting in front of people down the road might pay off if you provide that training to somebody today.

>> HEIDI DECKER-MAURER: Well, you know, since every person is different, you know, and people with disabilities included, it's going to be individual how you help people and how you approach it. Some people, you know, welcome questions, and some people are a little more uncomfortable with that. It's a personality and case-by-case basis, I'm sure.

I just want to thank everybody for the questions. It looks like we're nearly at half past the hour. So thank you so much, Rachael, for answering these questions and for the great presentation. Now, I'm going to turn it over to my colleague, Jen, she's going to talk a little bit about getting your CRCs any other information we'll be sending along to you. Jen, go ahead and take it a way.

>> RACHAEL ROUNDS: Thanks, Heidi.

>> JENNIFER: Thanks Heidi and Rachel, it was a great conversation today. If you're in need of the CRC for today's webcast, the link I just added to the chat box contains steps to obtain the CRC. This can at project.com you will receive an email tomorrow with these instructions and where to find our archived webcasts along with any our resources. Our next webcast what is possible when systems truly collaborate which are in two weeks on Thursday February 27th at 11:AM central time. That wraps up today's webcast thanks everybody.

>> HEIDI DECKER-MAURER: Thanks, everybody. Thanks, Rachael. Thanks for attending everyone. Bye-bye.
