Expanding Supported Employment Opportunities in Western North Carolina

Co-hosted by:

Western Carolina University

The Arc of Haywood County

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Introductions

- Name
- Affiliation
- Connection to WCU, The Arc, and/or Western North Carolina

Response Card Activity

Supported employment involves competitive work within integrated work settings.

Yes or No

Response Card Activity

Supported employment services are based on the needs of eligible individuals from an individualized plan for employment.

Yes or No

Response Card Activity

Vocational and preference assessments are not always needed with supported employment.

Yes or No

Response Card Activity

Customized employment is more cost effective than supported employment because it involves more natural supports.

Yes or No

Meeting Objectives

- Overview of supported employment and services
- Current status of national employment outcomes
- Current status of employment outcomes in Western North Carolina
- Best practices of supported and customized employment/success stories in WNC
- Group discussion

Supported Employment

- Competitive work in integrated work settings
- Individuals working toward competitive work
- Based on the strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice of the individuals
- For individuals with most significant disabilities where competitive employment has not typically occurred

(Section 36[a] of the Rehabilitation Act)

Supported Employment Services

- Ongoing support services to help maintain employment for individuals with significant disabilities
- Provided to assist eligible individuals to achieve competitive employment
- Based on needs of an eligible individual from an individualized plan for employment

(Section 36[a] of the Rehabilitation Act)

Overview of Supported Employment

- Assists individuals to become competitively employed in integrated work settings
- More cost effective than sheltered workshops
- Greater job satisfaction and services of job coaches
- Higher wages, integration, on-going support, and increased benefits for individuals with disabilities

(Cimera, 2006; Johnson, 2004; Test, Carver, Ewers, Haddad, & Person, 2000; Wehman & Revell, 1997)

Cost Comparisons (2002)

- 118,000 in supported employment
- 126,000 in sheltered workshops
- Additional 365,000 in adult daycare or extended sheltered workshop programs
- $108 million ($912.25 per person) in supported employment
- $488 million ($1,010.35 per person) for sheltered workshops

(Rusch & Braddock, 2004)

Core Values of Supported Employment

- Everyone is capable to do and have a job
- Competitive employment occurs within local labor markets in community businesses
- Career satisfaction and self-regulation
- Equal wages of coworkers
- Viewed based on abilities, strengths, and interests

(Wehman, Revell, & Brooke, 2003)

Reality and New Way of Thinking

- Individuals with disabilities are least likely to participate in employment after exiting high school
- Customized employment?

(Griffin, Hammis, Geary, & Sullivan, 2008; Wagner, Newman, Cameto, Levine, & Garza, 2006)

National Status of Employment

- 67% of general population employed after high school vs. 57% of youth with disabilities
- 31% of youth with developmental disabilities reported having paid employment vs. 64% of youth with learning disabilities

(Newman, Wagner, Cameto, & Knokey, 2009)

WNC Status of Employment (2002)

- 42.5% of adults with developmental disabilities were unemployed in the seven Western counties of North Carolina

Roenigk, D. (2002). Client Profile Statistical Report for Smoky Mountain Area Program.

Benefits of Customized Employment

- Natural supports
- Competitive employment opportunities for individuals with developmental disabilities
- Career advancements
- Competitive wages
- Increased job satisfaction
- Social capital
- More cost effective

Unique Job Possibilities

- Wage Employment Ideas
- Self-Employment Ideas

Stories from WNC Employers

The ingles ADVANTAGE™

Wendy's

Caring for Our Community

Haywood Regional Medical Center

Providing personalized, compassionate, quality healthcare

Recommended Practices

- Provide authentic vocational/preference assessments and instruction
- Teach skills in a variety of integrated settings
- Teach students self-determination and independence
- Provide opportunities for meaningful natural supports
- Provide opportunities for integrated employment experiences no later than age 14
- Teach students about etiquette and work ethic

Best Practices from the Association for Persons in Supported Employment (APSE)

- Choice
- Control
- Careers
- Full inclusion
- Long-term supports
- Community and business supports
- Total quality management
- Assistive technology
- Person centered planning

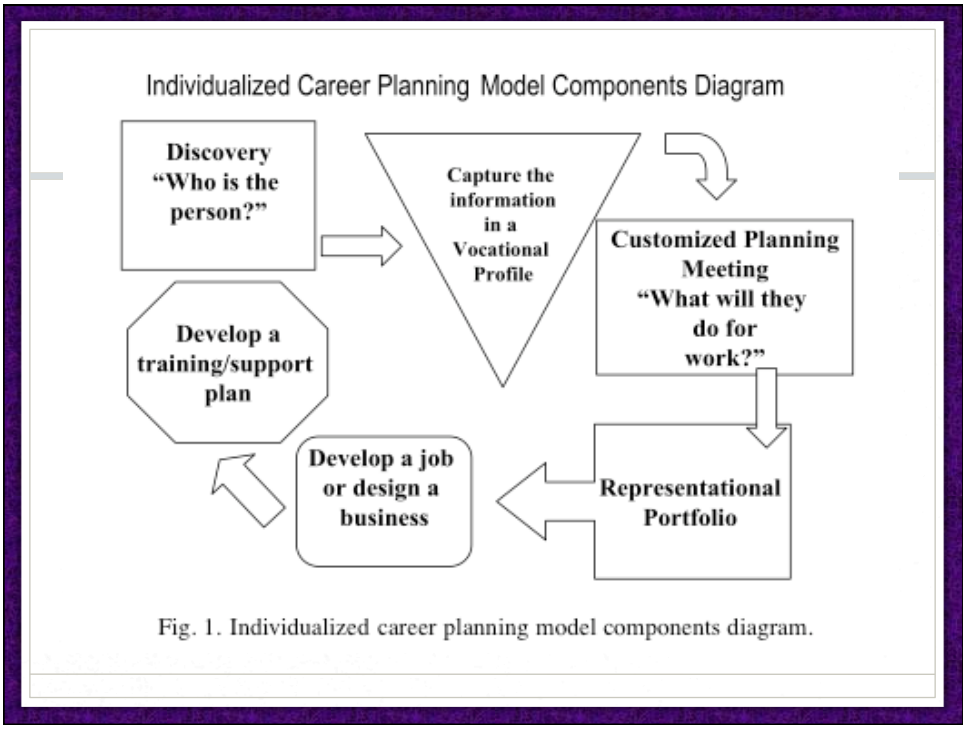

Fig. 1. Individualized career planning model components diagram.

Group Discussion

- Are we satisfied with the state of employment for people with developmental disabilities in WNC?
- Is the community ready for more adults with developmental disabilities to be employed in natural settings?
- Are young adults with developmental disabilities being adequately prepared for work in the community?

Group Discussion

- Are there attitudinal boundaries we need to overcome to achieve more success? If so, how can we do this?
- Will businesses in our community be receptive to employing more people with developmental disabilities?
- How can we best use our limited resources to improve adult outcomes for people with developmental disabilities?

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