



# Orientation to Employment Services

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2007



This Self Study course counts as 1 ACRE hour toward the National Certificate in Employment Services Certificate. See website for details.  
[www.crprcep7.org](http://www.crprcep7.org)

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## ***Introduction***

Welcome! Orientation to Employment Services is a self study course designed to provide an overview of the history of employment services delivery including the following areas;

- Brief history
- Values driving employment services – traditional verses current practices
- Language
- FAQ's

This course covers some basic competencies designed for employment personnel and is considered a prerequisite for the Employment Services Fundamentals two day training.

### Learning Objectives/Competencies covered in this self study guide are;

1. The ability to articulate the values driving employment services.
2. The ability to use respectful language in all phases of support.
3. The ability to facilitate meaningful and informed choices.

## **Competencies for Employment Services Personnel**

In 1999, the CRP-RCEP at the University of Missouri assembled a task force to establish a set of universal Employment Services Competencies - outlining core skills that all direct support personnel should have to work in any aspect of employment services delivery in the Public Rehabilitation System.



The task force included direct support staff, middle managers, administrators, education personnel and vocational rehabilitation personnel from across Region 7. They developed and refined a set of 16 competencies that are holistic to employment service delivery and have universal practicality for people delivering employment supports to individuals with disabilities. This task force believed that all direct support personnel should demonstrate knowledge in each of these areas of employment service delivery, and that they deserve the

opportunity to address their professional development needs and advance up the career ladder in rehabilitation services. In 2004, after five years of field testing, the 16 competencies were adjusted to 13.

These competencies allow direct service personnel and their employers to evaluate current skills and training needs in all areas of employment service delivery. The competencies also provide a framework for training development, leading to courses that specifically target professional development needs. All Employment Services trainings from the CRP-RCEP are grounded in this framework.

There are 13 competencies, each with five levels. For each competency, this document spells out the characteristic of a person at each of these levels:

- **Level 1** is someone new to the field, with no knowledge in that subject area.
- **Level 2** is someone with a basic knowledge in the subject area.
- **Level 3** is a good strong employee: someone who understands the issues related to the competency and knows how to implement them.
- **Level 4** is someone who goes the extra mile and can apply and problem solve.
- **Level 5** is someone who is considered one of the chosen few, the outstanding employee who can reflect and evaluate.

This self study guide is designed so that a person, after completing it, should be able to perform at a level 3 on the competencies covered in the content.

## **The 13 Competencies**

### **1. The ability to articulate the values driving employment services.**

Employment professionals:

- Level 1. Are unfamiliar with values of employment services.
- Level 2. Have limited understanding of the application of the values of employment services.
- Level 3. Articulate and apply all values of employment services on a regular basis.
- Level 4. Influence other people's beliefs about employment and people with disabilities.
- Level 5. Facilitate and train other people regarding employment and people with disabilities.

### **2. The ability to use respectful language in all phases of support.**

Employment professionals:

- Level 1. Unintentionally use derogatory/demeaning language.
- Level 2. Use respectful language only in certain situations.
- Level 3. Consistently use respectful language in both written and oral communication keeping in mind legal requirements including such issues as confidentiality.
- Level 4. Respectfully influence the language of co-workers and others.
- Level 5. Advocate for the use of respectful language within their own organizations and the community in general.



### **3. The ability to facilitate meaningful and informed choices.**

Employment professionals:

- Level 1. Dictate to the person what will happen to and for them.
- Level 2. Honor preferences of the person on a routine basis.
- Level 3. Promote partnerships by providing continuous opportunities for informed choice.
- Level 4. Advocate to insure informed choices are honored.
- Level 5. Facilitate, mentor, and teach other staff on how to facilitate meaningful and informed choices.

#### **4. The ability to use Person Centered principles as the guiding influence in daily interactions.**



Employment professionals:

- Level 1. Have no knowledge of person centered principles or planning techniques.
- Level 2. Identify some aspects of the values and process.
- Level 3. Advocate for person centered services, supports and planning throughout the individual's life.
- Level 4. Are skilled in implementing and supporting person centered services, supports and planning.
- Level 5. Facilitate, mentor, and train others in person centered services, supports and planning.

#### **5. The ability to utilize personal networks to facilitate successful employment.**

Employment professionals:

- Level 1. Are not aware of personal networks in concept or practice.
- Level 2. Are aware of personal networks, but usually by-pass them.
- Level 3. Solicit and use pertinent and helpful input and involvement from personal network members to assist the person in meeting their employment goals.
- Level 4. Assist the person to become aware of and further develop their personal networks.
- Level 5. Support the person to independently use their own personal networks.

#### **6. The ability to measure customer satisfaction and use results to continuously improve employment services.**

Employment professionals:

- Level 1. Are unaware of an employment agency's multiple customers and their needs.
- Level 2. Are aware of the multiple customers and their needs, but address needs in only a limited way.
- Level 3. Are aware of and respond to various customers and their needs.
- Level 4. Actively seek feedback and information from all customers for continuous improvement.
- Level 5. Continuously promote change based on customer feedback.

## **7. The ability to build relationships with the business community, and offer recruitment assistance to meet their hiring needs.**

Employment professionals:

- Level 1. Use limited or incorrect marketing techniques (i.e., charity, "we need your help," etc.).
- Level 2. Project a business image in their interactions with different audiences (i.e., appropriate dress, language, methods, etc.).
- Level 3. Understand the employer's hiring practices and needs; and offer candidates and services that will meet their needs.
- Level 4. Are involved in organizational marketing improvement efforts.
- Level 5. Develop relationships in such a manner that they strengthen the business image of the organization (i.e., current relationships are so positive that they build and nurture new ones).



## **8. The ability to successfully job match.**

Employment professionals:



- Level 1. Make no effort to gather information for matching.
- Level 2. Understand the importance of making a job match, but use limited or incomplete information.
- Level 3. Are driven by the individual's career plan to pro-actively seek information about both the person and potential jobs.
- Level 4. Use the analysis of the job and the person's conditions, preferences and contributions for employment; seek possible solutions for any discrepancies.
- Level 5. Teach and support the individual to direct their own on-going career development.

## **9. The ability to utilize a variety of techniques to assist people to be socially included at work.**

Employment professionals:

- Level 1. Do not acknowledge a need for social belonging at a work place for the person they are supporting.
- Level 2. Are aware of the need for social belonging, but have limited knowledge and skills to facilitate.
- Level 3. Teach the person the skills for a reciprocal relationship.
- Level 4. Influence other's participation in socially inclusive interactions.
- Level 5. Facilitate and train others regarding strategies to increase social inclusion.

### **10. The ability to identify and facilitate the use of supports that are typical in the workplace.**

Employment professionals:

- Level 1. Are unable to identify any supports existing in the work place.
- Level 2. Analyze and use existing support on a limited basis.
- Level 3. Use all available supports on a regular basis.
- Level 4. Influence others to identify and use available supports.
- Level 5. Facilitate and train others regarding strategies to increase the use of available supports.

### **11. The ability to use teaching strategies to train and facilitate training.**

Employment professionals:

- Level 1. Are unfamiliar with any teaching strategies.
- Level 2. Utilize a limited number of supports or instructional strategies.
- Level 3. Successfully utilize a variety of supports or instructional strategies that match the person's preferences and learning style.
- Level 4. Successfully design supports or instructional strategies for complex instructional situations.
- Level 5. Teach/consult with others regarding utilization of supports and instructional strategies.



### **12. The ability to pro-actively problem solve.**



Employment professionals:

- Level 1. Are unfamiliar with problem solving techniques.
- Level 2. Try solutions but in a haphazard manner.
- Level 3. Use a systematic problem solving approach.
- Level 4. Teach the person to use systematic problem solving approaches.
- Level 5. Facilitate and teach the use of some systematic problem solving approaches with all customers.

**13. The ability to assist the person in accessing additional resources.**

Employment professionals:

- Level 1. Are unaware of existing community resources.
- Level 2. Have limited awareness of community resources.
- Level 3. Provide appropriate/necessary assistance for the person to access existing community resources.
- Level 4. Have developed personal relationships with staff of community resources.
- Level 5. Advocate for and develop new resources to meet unmet needs.



## **Section 1: History of Employment Services**

Section 1 provides a brief overview of the history of employment services and offers some website links for additional information about the history of rehabilitation you might want to read later.

### **History of Employment Services: 1960's – 2000's**

Below is a chart that displays the shift in service delivery over time. You'll notice in the 1960's and 1970's best practices at that time were delivered under the medical model where there was custodial care and treatment. People were considered patients, often times isolated and housed in large institutional settings.



In the 1980's services progressed to a developmental model where people were put into open "slots" or programs that were preexisting. People practiced task in efforts of "getting ready" to someday have a life in the community. People were referred to as "clients", often segregated when it came to employment in local Sheltered Workshops earning sub-minimum wages. Residentially large group home settings were considered best practices during this time.



In the 1990's the human services field had another shift and now services were beginning to be provided in the community. Community Based services and Community membership was the model where people were beginning to network, exercise their civil rights, build relationships that lead to "natural supports" as opposed to "paid supports". People were referred to as consumers or customers and were being supported to obtain jobs and careers of their choice (in the community) as well as being supported in living in apartments and homes of their own.

Now in the 2000 plus years, there has been once again another shift in the delivery of services. People are beginning to control their futures. The model is "consumer driven", where people are self-determined and have economic power to choose what services they want and need. People are considered citizens! Vouchers for services are enabling people to purchase the necessary supports from the providers of their choice in effort to support them in the careers they choose, and finally people are beginning to purchase and/or rent homes of their own.



The question is what's the next shift? In 2010 what will service delivery look like?

### **Shifts in Human Services for People with Disabilities**

<b>Categories</b>	<b>1960's &amp; 1970's</b>	<b>1980's</b>	<b>1990's</b>	<b>2000's</b>
Model	Medical	Developmental	Community-Based Membership	Consumer Driven
Characteristics	Custodial Treatment Deprivation	Continuous, Get Ready Slots	Networking, Civil Rights, Relationships, Natural Supports	Choice, Self-Determination, Economic Power
Society Role	Patient	Client	Consumer, Customer	Citizenship
Employment	Isolation	Segregation	Supported (in community) Inclusion	Voucher for Services
Residential	Institution	Group Living	Supported Living	Home Ownership

*Adapted from Donaldson, G. (1993). Managing the Paradigm Shift.*

### **History of Employment Services: Then, Now, Tomorrow**

Then – Traditional practices in employment services history represent services/supports that employment personnel delivered over the past two decades and are now considered out dated and no longer viable ways to reach successful employment outcomes.

Now – Current best practices in employment services represent services/supports that employment personnel deliver today and are now considered excellent approaches and strategies for increasing successful employment outcomes.

Tomorrow – represents a vision of future services/supports. Visioning all the possibilities, expanding and challenging employment personnel to reach greater heights when planning for change in services/support delivery.

Take a look at the charts below. On the left is the traditional of old practices and on the right are current best practices. Take the first one for example. Several years ago we used the “Targeted Jobs Tax Credit” as a selling point for employers to hire people with disabilities instead of

assisting job seekers to highlight their skills and abilities as the reason why the employer would hire them. We didn't believe employers would hire people without some extra incentive.

We have learned over time that creating "special" services/supports isn't best practices, but rather using what's already in the work place helps people become more included, accepted, and successful in their careers.



Look over the list and see if there are any areas you feel you/your agency may need to improve in. What areas do you think you are still practicing old/traditional techniques and which areas do you feel you are operating in the more current best practices?

## **TNT (Then - Now - Tomorrow) - Employment Strategies**

### Job Search/Job development Practices

<b>Then - Traditional Practices</b>	<b>Now - Current Best Practices)</b>
Offer tax incentives to entice employer	Promote highlight job seekers' abilities and contributions to entice employer
Tell the employer your agency will do all of the training at no cost	Maximize all training offered by the business to support the person to build relationships for natural supports. Describe your role as a consultant
Beg, plead, ask employer to hire out of Charity "help us out"	Promote qualified applicants, highlight skills and contributions of the job seeker
Take any job - you're lucky to get a job	Do your home work. Take time to get to know the business and the employer's needs and make a good job match
Teach employers our language	Use business language
Teach employers about the system	Market your services as an employment agency. Describe yourself as employment agency and how that would benefit the employer
Ask for separate evaluations of employee	Encourage the employer to use only the evaluations typically used by the business
Use Cold Calls	Rely on personal connections, referrals and peer networking to find job opportunities and build business relationships
Job coach learns job before person shows up	Employment Specialist is a facilitator between employer and new employee, adding training only as needed
Employment Specialist is seen as the disability expert	Business is expert on their job. Employment Specialist is a consultant for additional resources
Use contracting to encourage hiring	Expect direct hire by business, don't give mixed messages

<b>Then - Traditional Practices</b>	<b>Now - Current Best Practices)</b>
Use sub-minimum wage to encourage Hiring	Expect starting salaries that are typical for positions being filled
Look for openings	Build relationships with employers and other community members for future opportunities
Job seek when time allows	Go about your work with a sense of urgency, seeking employment for each job seeker as a paid customer not just a referral

So what about “tomorrow”... What do you think the future holds in these areas? Jot down a few thoughts and list ways you think you can take the next step to move towards “tomorrow” (future practices).

## **Supplemental Readings for Section 1**

**Orientation to Rehabilitation** This web site is a resource for anyone involved with the rehabilitation of persons with disabilities, either through community rehabilitation programs, state vocational rehabilitation agencies, or other agencies serving the employment and independent living needs of persons with disabilities. These pages describe the rehabilitation process to new staff or anyone in need of a review. In addition, there are links to other useful web resources. <http://www.rcep7.org/~orient/index.htm>

**Partners in Time** when you have extra time, this is a great resource on the history of society’s treatment of people with disabilities. The eight-hour self-study course was created to help people with developmental disabilities, their parents, family members and friends, educators and service providers understand the history of society's treatment of people with disabilities from ancient times through the present. The course focuses on the way that people with disabilities lived, learned and worked throughout history and growth of the Disability Rights Movement. The course also introduces some of the individuals and groups whose efforts resulted in new ways of thinking about people with disabilities and their rights. <http://www.partnersinpolicymaking.com/history/index.html>

## **Section 2: Values Driving Employment Services**

Section 2 addresses values as it relates to delivering quality employment services. The part on values that drives employment service delivery gives you an opportunity to challenge yourself as you apply day to day practices supporting job seekers in finding and maintaining careers of their choice. The discussion on universal language gives you an understanding of the power of words and how phrasing terms can deliver a positive or negative message to others.



Listed below are the competencies/learning objectives for this section.

### Employment Specialist Competencies

1. The ability to articulate the values driving employment services.
2. The ability to use respectful language in all phases of support.

Before we begin with how we do our job, it is important to understand why we do what we do. This section explains the basic values that employment specialists use today to make decisions about how to do their jobs most effectively.

### **Exercise:**

Before continuing on, there is an exercise I'd like you to complete. Simply mark which answer you think is most like your opinion on the topic. At the end of this section, you will come back to the exercise, where you will have an opportunity to reflect on any differences in your answers.

After the exercise, take your time and read through the 5 values of inclusion, choice, individualization, real money for real work, and ongoing support. After you have completed that, take the values quiz again, it's a good way to help you reflect.

1. Most persons with severe disabilities need special services and training, so they should work and be trained in segregated settings.

Yes

No

2. The larger the grouping of persons with disabilities, the greater the stigma and the more unlikely community inclusion.

Yes

No

3. People with disabilities do not necessarily have to practice community skills (crossing the street, etc.) before they are allowed to go into the community.

Yes

No

4. There is less safety risks for persons with disabilities in a sheltered, segregated setting.

Yes

No

5. The greater the challenge of the disability, the less likely the person can succeed in the community.

Yes

No

6. If a person with a severe disability has a community job, paid staff of an agency will always be needed for support and training with the person.

Yes

No

## Values

What we value actually drives employment services delivery. What does that mean? First, let's take a look at what we mean by values; then you can learn about the history of employment services. This will give you a framework for where we have come from and why we want to move in a particular direction, 'the community.' Values are beliefs that a person or social group holds in which they have an emotional investment either for or against something. When we mention that values drive employment services, we are referring to some basic beliefs that guide our implementation of services and supports.



Let's start with a little history lesson to understand how and where Supported Employment came from. People with severe disabilities were served only in sheltered workshops. Actually, truth be known, lots of individuals with severe disabilities could not even get into sheltered workshops. It was thought they could not work fast enough to produce at a rate of standard set by the sheltered workshops.

For years people were content to go to these segregated places of employment. After all, if they had been in school, they had been in segregated schools. The individuals who could not get into these sheltered workshops attended programs to help them get ready for work. Since it was thought that they typically learned slower than most people, this made sense--they still needed to learn about work.

In the late 1970's and early 1980's several events were happening.

First, students who had been in integrated classes were leaving school. The school law, PL 94-142, mandated that students attend integrated classes and be removed only when removal is proven necessary. That is, it had to be determined that the student could not learn in the regular classroom when accommodations or aids were provided. Now the situation for people with disabilities did not make much sense. In school they were integrated; upon graduation they were segregated.



Second, the rehabilitation community was shocked when it realized that people attending programs to learn about work were not learning very much after all. Marketable skills were not being taught. In fact, we learned that the best place to teach an individual was in the very environment in which the skill was required.

A different way had to be found. That different way is Supported Employment. It has evolved into a service option that values inclusion, real money for real work, choice, individualization, and ongoing support and now you'll find it referred to as employment services or community employment.

Here is a list of key terms we will talk about on the following pages:

1. Inclusion
2. Real Money for Real Work
3. Choice
4. Individualization
5. Ongoing Support

## **Inclusion**

Inclusion is more than integration. It first implies that all individuals be included in community employment, the basis of valuing that all people can work if they want to and that individuals are active members of the work environment. They are not just "there," but rather they are a "part of" the workplace. Of course, every job and every work environment has different inclusion



standards--that is, all workers are more included or less included. It depends on the workplace, not whether you have a disability. Inclusion involves such personal activities as having friends, going to parties, chitchatting with coworkers at break, being on the softball team, activities that everyone does. Inclusion is active participation.

### ***Good example...***

Robert was a graduate of Center High School. He had a job in high school at Bagel & Bagels. All employees work as a team getting bagels baked and ready for customers each morning. Most employees eat lunch together. There's an after work book club study group and Friday night happy hours every other week. Robert may not be able to read all that great, but he and his co-worker John team up to lead the book club study group once a month.

### ***Bad example...***

Joan works for a large company that prides itself in hiring persons with disabilities. She likes her work, but she works in a unit only with other persons with disabilities. During lunches and breaks she often sees the other workers but, they sit at tables away from hers.

Non-inclusion would be any activity that segregates or leaves out a person.

This may include:

- Separate times for breaks or areas for meals (separate tables).
- Exclusion of a person from group activities (work or social).
- Assumptions that a person would not be interested in an activity because of his or her disability.

## **Real Money for Real Work**

Historically, people with disabilities have been paid less than people without disabilities. There is debate in the field as to whether employers should be allowed to pay people with disabilities based on their productivity. Community Employment is based on the value that people want to work at real jobs, not made-up work, and they want to be paid living wages. Implied in real jobs

is that there is value placed on the position held--that what they are doing is valued by the community in which they are working.

### ***Good example...***

Several big employers hire persons with disabilities, Cindy, a young woman with Down Syndrome, works at Target Department Store 30 hours a week for \$7.00 an hour. She sorts clothes and removes and places clothes on the sales rack. She works with other sales associates, helps shoppers, and enjoys her work.

### ***Bad example...***

Sam is a young man with mental retardation who works sorting screws into plastic containers. For this he gets \$.01 per box of 30 screws. Some days he makes \$1.00-\$3.00 a day.

Kim is learning a new job at a factory that makes computer chips. She was told that, since she is just learning, she will be making below minimum wage until she learns the job and her speed increases.



### **Choice**

People with disabilities have a right, just as you and I, to have a say about where they work, with whom they work, and what they do at work. This has been one of the most difficult values for the field of rehabilitation to embrace. It seems we like telling people what they are good at, what they have the potential to do, and just how far they can climb up the career ladder. Community employment (alias supported employment) takes the value of choice quite seriously. We all have limitations about our work. However, it seems that, for people with disabilities, those limitations have been pretty much defined by the "rehabilitation experts."

As an Employment Specialist, one of your toughest jobs will be listening to the person you are assisting when other people are set on telling you and him or her how it is going to be. Don't let this mislead you. People with disabilities need information and guidance just like all of us. The difference is, that sometimes the field tends to discount what people with disabilities say just because they have a disability and we assume they really don't know what they want or are capable of doing.

### ***Good example...***

John states that he would like to work either in a restaurant or do some type of outdoor work. You know of a job for a kitchen assistant and one for lawn maintenance. You take John to job sites and to meet both employers. After meeting them and seeing what each does, John thinks he would rather learn to do lawn maintenance and maybe one day have his own company. This exploration has given John the opportunity to make an **informed choice**.

### ***Bad example...***

Kelly went to a local employment provider for assistance in locating work. The provider told Kelly she would have to go through a number of assessments to determine her work interest. Kelly received the assessments and was offered a job by the provider in the dry cleaning industry. Kelly was not even asked what her interest, hopes, dreams, desires were for employment.



*Or*

"I was told I had to sign up with a county **case manager**. My folks and I went to see her, Agnes deAgnes, and she made me go to Sunshine Workshop to get tested for a job. I asked her when I could go back to work and she said after I got trained."

*Or*

"They finally all looked at me and asked me if I agreed with everything that had been said. I really had no idea what had been said, but they were nodding their heads like I should agree, so I did."

### ***Glossary***

*Case Manager* — A paid professional who supports the person receiving services to coordinate their supports and services.

*Informed Choice* — Opportunities for people to research and explore options before choosing employment directions, types of supports, etc.

### **Individualization**

Like choice, this should be a given. We should know by now that, like everyone, people with disabilities are all different. It seems people used to think that if a person had a disability, then he or she must be similar in capabilities. Please remember above all, we are working with real people with real personalities, skills, needs, and desires. At times the "system" we have to work with makes this difficult to accomplish. Continue to persevere.



### ***Good example...***

John and Betty have the same disability, but have different skills. They are both classified as having learning disabilities. Yet John is good in English but does not do well in math. On the other hand, Betsy is good in math but not English.

### ***Bad example...***

As a newly hired job coach, Carol assumed John and Betty would both like to work as a janitor where neither reading nor math was a high requirement for the job.

## **Ongoing Support**

Providing ongoing support on an as-needed basis was one of the very reasons early supported employment efforts were successful.



Basically this means that you will continue to assist people for as long or as short as the person needs or desires it. Remember not to get caught up into thinking that support only means job coaching. Job coaching is one of the most intrusive forms of support, especially if used too much and for too long. There are many more means of support, including coworkers, productivity aids, and many other forms of "natural" supports. Job coaches are not "natural." (We will be talking in greater length later, on what natural supports are and how to use them.)

### ***Good example...***

To aid Mary in her new job at Wal-Mart, Mary was paired with a co-worker that could aid Mary as needed and introduce her to others during breaks and lunches. The job coach aids Mary to ride the bus and to develop memory aids for the bus schedule.

### ***Bad example...***

John's job coach believes he can best serve John by providing ongoing support on the job from start to finish even when John is working well with very few errors. At these times his job coach lets John do the work but steps in and works for him when he is tired or not doing the job well.

## Moving Us From Traditional to Current Best Practices

Before we get busy and jump into our job duties, it's extremely important to have some discussion around values of employment services. Regardless of what you may have heard in the past, your values (beliefs) are what make or break your success in employment services.

You may be asking, "What do we mean?" Well, start by thinking about when you were a young child. Someone important in your life (mother, father, aunt, brother, etc.) at some point influenced you to learn right from wrong, truth from untruth. Those are values you learned, whether you practice them or not you still learned them. In the case of employment services, we can learn about values but still, today in the 21st century, practicing those values is the challenge.



### Traditional vs. Current Best Practices

<b>Traditional</b>	<b>Current</b>
Facility	Community
Feasible for Employment	Presumed Employable
Fit to Program	Person-Centered Self-Determined
Deficit Identification	Support Identification
Control/Modify Behavior	Understanding the Function of the Behavior
Independence	Interdependence
Professional Staff Reliance	Natural Supports
Program Evaluation/Accreditation	Customer Satisfaction

Traditional practices are services that have been determined, through research and past experiences, to be outdated or "old practices." Current best practices are services that have been proven, through research and past experiences, to be the best possible quality services at this time.

For example, traditionally services have been provided and dictated by the "professionals" in human service agencies. In the past, these services have been designed by these "professionals" with little or no input from people who receive them. The current/best practice way of doing business is to provide services designed and dictated by the people who receive them. Services are designed/developed based on what each individual wants and needs and not based on the organization's "cookie cutter" approach to service delivery.

On the following pages we will discuss more in depth about each of these pairs.

## **Examples of Traditional Values versus Current Best Practices**

### **Facility-Based Services (Traditional) versus Community-Based Services (Current)**

Until recently, services for persons with disabilities were delivered primarily inside facilities. Facilities use special programs, for groups of people who share a label related to some sort of disability, to create places for people to spend their days. This separation from the community creates an image or stigma indicating that people with disabilities should be away from everyone else. Also, facilities often use simulated and sheltered environments to create an artificial learning setting for people. This rarely led to real jobs or real marketable skills in the community.



Current thought or practice is that employment services happen where life takes place, in businesses, where everyone else in the community goes. Employment consists of real work for real pay!

#### ***Example***

Facility – ABC organization offers a wide array of services within the 15,000 square foot building. This facility has 200 people in shelter work and another 150 in Day Habilitation Services (Adult Day Center). All the work done in the shelter workshop is contract work that the Workshop Manager has procured agreements with area businesses and all the day activities are pre-vocational in nature and get put back on a shelf at the end of each day. John has been employed by the sheltered workshop for the last 8 years, he earns an average of \$1.62 per hour and works 35 hours per week. John never knows what job he will be working on until he shows up each morning and the shop supervisor assigns him to an area.

#### ***Versus***

Community – XYZ organization offers a wide array of services to over 200 people who have requested employment services. Each person seeking employment participates in a planning process that involves his or her chosen team of supporters. The job seekers' interests and desire for employment are outlined, and employment opportunities are sought based on the person's interests and not on the businesses where the organization has already lined up job openings.

Bill got a job at Blue Ink 2 years ago. His love or passion in life has always been to work in the printing business. He loves creating designs and working with his hands. His starting wage was \$6.50 per hour and he has received two 50-cent raises since. He works 40 hours per week and sometimes is asked to work overtime. He and his co-workers started a softball team and joined the YMCA league last spring.

## **Feasible for Employment (Traditional) versus Presumed Employable (Current)**

Feasible implies that a person has a realistic chance to get a job and therefore must be "job ready." Traditionally someone determines if a person is feasible or ready to go to work either by some sort of evaluation process or simply relying on past records regarding the person's behavioral history. In the traditional rehabilitation paradigm, most people with significant support needs were deemed "unemployable" or simply not ready for work and therefore had many years of a continuum of vocational services they had to complete before ever being considered "ready for work."



Current practice is to presume people employable. Presuming means people can work! The Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 1992 (link available through the Resources page) has been a major force in the shift towards believing everyone is ready to work. The challenge for us is to figure out how to find the right job, along with the right types of supports needed to assist the person being successful in their career choice.

### ***Example***

Feasible for Employment – John has been working at a sheltered workshop sorting bolts and doing other, similar jobs, earning \$1.40 an hour on average, based on his productivity. He started the job with the expectation that, once he reached a certain level of productivity, he would be ready to get a job that paid minimum wage. He has been working in the sheltered workshop for six years. He hasn't been able to get assistances in locating a job outside the workshop and every time he asked about it, he is told he's not ready yet. He's also told until he can improve on his work behavior he may never get a job outside the workshop. John has never had this explained, just exactly what work behavior he needs to improve on, other than staff telling him he has a bad attitude towards his work.

### ***Versus***

Presumed Employable – Elizabeth just graduated high school and was interested in work for a company delivering mail. She didn't have any past work experience in this area but does have several good traits to offer employers such as, great attitude towards working, very friendly and energetic, and wants to be a good employee. With the help of an employment specialist and her uncle, Elizabeth got a part-time job at a local LMNO corporation delivering mail from the mailroom. Although the work is only 20 hours per week, the \$5.00 per hour is enough to allow her to share an apartment with two roommates. The job allows her to socialize with many people, and she leaves work knowing that she's contributed something to her employer.

## **Fit to Program (Traditional) versus Person-Centered Services & Self – Determination (Current)**

Traditionally service providers have specialized in a particular type of service. They offer a menu of services, so to speak, that a person either fits into or he/she is not provided the service.

A person either accepts the type of services the provider offers or they go elsewhere. Planning for people often consisted of trying to fit a person into a particular program or services already offered by the provider. Programs offered are typically what a funding source will pay for and not necessarily what people need or want.

Currently the best practice service providers are those that offer an array of support services based on what the person states they need and want. Person Centered Planning or Career Planning focuses on the individual as the primary customer and services are created for that individual and respond to his/her needs and expectations. It starts with our attempts to understand, get to know a person, and support them in what they want to do rather than what we think they should do, or what we currently have available.



### ***Example***

**Fit to Program** – Although having bouts of depression that may last for weeks, Amy wants to get a bachelor's degree in computer science. She has found a source that will fund part of her education, but they will approve funding only for classes at a secretarial college or a community college with a certificate as an administrative assistant. She is thinking of starting at the community college because at least she would be able to use computers for word processing and spreadsheets.

### ***Versus***

**Person Centered Services** – Bill's employment counselor was challenged when Bill told him he wanted to be an actor. But with some help, Bill eventually found a job wearing a costume and carrying a billboard to advertise for a local restaurant. His enthusiasm attracted customers and it gave Bill a job where he could try out different characters in front of people. He likes the job for now and likes the money he's making, and he still wants to be an actor.

### **Deficit Identification (Traditional) versus Support Identification (Current)**

Historically people with disabilities were required to undergo several types of evaluations to determine their deficits or limitations. The programming was then developed based on these deficits, and in some cases, individuals with similar identified deficits were grouped together for service delivery. Large amounts of time and money have been spent on finding the deficits of people. An individual can spend weeks upon weeks in an unpaid work evaluation situation and still not end up with a job.

Employment service providers using best practices understand that assessments or evaluations are not about identifying deficits or "what's wrong with a person" but instead, about identifying supports. This would include identifying both those supports available to the person through existing connections and networks, and those which will be necessary to assist the person to achieve his/her goals. Supports come in many different forms, people, things, environments, etc. Everyone needs supports in work and in life. Finding out the type, and what amount of supports are needed is the challenge to service providers.

***Example***

Deficit Identification – George has been labeled "mentally retarded" and has been looking for work for several months. It seems that the only jobs people think he can do are janitorial or fast food type jobs. George is discouraged and doesn't believe he will ever get a job working with cars, which is his dream.

***Versus***

Support Identification – Jennie likes working with children. A woman who works with her mother recommended that she apply at a large daycare center on the other side of town. The daycare center hired her as an assistant teacher after two families for whom she babysat regularly contacted them and discussed Jennie's good work ethic and caring for their children. She needed help identifying accessible buses she could take to get to work, and her older brother has agreed to pick her up on the days she works late.

### **Control/Modify Behavior (Traditional) versus Understanding the Function of the Behavior (Current)**

Historically rehabilitation practice has focused on changing or extinguishing undesirable behavior. Very little thought was given to why a person might be displaying the behavior and if thought was given, the person was to blame.

Rehabilitation providers are beginning to recognize the importance of understanding the function of behavior. All behavior is learned and reinforced in some manner. People display negative behaviors some times for lack of not knowing how else to express their wants and needs. The environment plays a large role in people's behaviors. Regardless of who you are, your surroundings set the mood or tone for your reactions/behaviors. Viewing the behavior from the perspective of the person and then assisting the person to learn a more socially acceptable behavior to serve the same function is the root of positive behavior supports. (see reference document in Resource Area)

***Example***

Control/Modify Behavior – Darrell has been living in a group home for the past 5 years. He shares a room with one other person and seems to always have behavior problems right before going to bed. Darrell has a "behavior management plan" and the staff of the group home follow the steps very closely. However, there still seems to be a problem. Darrell refuses to shut his light out at night and when staff shut the light out and close the door, Darrell screams and gets out of bed. Darrell does this every night until staff finally leaves the light on and door open.

***Versus***

Understanding the Function of the Behavior – Darrell's fear of the dark appeared to be the issue. However after following through with some documentation of what happened prior, during, and

after Darrell screaming and getting out of bed, staff found that Darrell was being hit by his roommate when the light went out and the door was shut. Now staff know Darrell was not the "behavior problem" they once labeled him as. They understand that the screaming and getting out of bed (behavior) was to protect himself.

### **Independence (Traditional) versus Interdependence (Current)**

Nearly every mission statement of agencies serving people with disabilities talks about making people "as independent as possible." While not having to rely on others for most life needs is important to many of us, the reality is that we are all interdependent on each other. For too many people with disabilities, independence has translated into loneliness and isolation.

The field of rehabilitation is beginning to acknowledge that the definition of community implies interdependence. This interdependence or mutual assistance is the reason people live and work in communities. For example, people can still use their cars, even though they are not good mechanics. They are dependent upon the auto garage to have knowledgeable people there to keep their car in running condition.

#### ***Example***

**Independence** – Betty was told in order to move into an apartment some day, she first would have to learn to cook. For years Betty worked on her cooking skills only to find herself depending on staff to read the recipe instructions to her because she could not read. Betty never did move into her own apartment.

#### ***Versus***

**Interdependence** – Bill had always wanted to own his own home and to work at the local newspaper company. He got his job last year as a proofreader and earns a good living. He has saved a lot of money and has told his parents he wants their help in buying his own home. His parents' fears are that Bill can't physically get around that well and how in the world would he ever be able to clean his own home. Bill looked into how much it would cost to hire a cleaning service once a week and he discovered that was too expensive, but if he had them come once a month and he did light cleaning in between, it would be feasible to afford. Bill actually had his own home built two blocks from where his brother lives and has support from him each week mowing the lawn and other very physically demanding jobs, while Bill helps his brother out by babysitting his kids on the weekends.



### **Professional Staff Reliance (Traditional) versus Natural Supports (Current)**

The roots of rehabilitation come from the medical model, a "do for" attitude. An attitude where professionals know best, cost effectiveness and a lack of customer-driven vision exist, and all contribute to an over reliance on paid staff to provide all the supports a person needs. These factors diminish the use of family, friends and other natural relationships, connections or networks the individual may have.

Natural supports has become a "buzz word" over the past 10 years but does represent a concept that is important for services providers to understand and put into practice. Natural supports are considered to be any type of assistance that is typically available to individuals who are not disabled to assist them with accessing and participating in the employment and community environments of their choice.

### ***Example***

Professional Staff Reliance – As an Employment Specialist, Judy's job is to help people find jobs. She was taught that she was the one who contacted employers and set up interviews and provided all the support on the job. She even told employers "not to worry she would do all the training" if they would hire the person. Judy found herself running constantly from job site to job site trying to support all the people she assisted in obtaining employment.

### ***Versus***

Natural Supports – Eric, a recently hired employment specialist for a local employment provider, was trained that you use yourself as a resource last. That means search out all the supports that are typical, supports that already exist in the person's life and then supplement your assistance as needed. Therefore, Eric's approach is to ask family members and friends of the job seeker how they can support them and to ask the employer what types of training programs they already have in place. Then if that's not enough, Eric provides assistance in a way to facilitate natural supports to begin.

## **Program Evaluation/Accreditation (Traditional) versus Customer Satisfaction (Current)**

Traditionally services were measured by numbers of people who got jobs, or how the forms were filled out, or whether the organization is in compliance with acceptable standards.

Current best practice is focused on customer satisfaction. Effective or quality service delivery is based on meeting or exceeding customers' expectations. Best Practice Organizations have methods in place to solicit feedback from their customers and use this information to continually improve the services and supports they provide.



### ***Example***

Program Evaluation/Accreditation – XYZ Services has 10 consumers who are employed, 4 are in supported employment and 6 are in sheltered workshops. None of these people are making minimum wage. The average work week is 12 hours. All working in supported employment have been preparing to work full time for more than six months. The XYZ director emphasizes that

none of their consumers has to wait, unemployed, to get a job. This looks really good on paper. The accrediting body always wants to know how many people are working.

### ***Versus***

Customer Satisfaction – ABC Employment Agency has 4 consumers working in sheltered workshops and 4 working part time in community businesses. Of those working in the community businesses, all are making at least minimum wage and the average work week is 22 hours. Employees working in sheltered workshops express their expectation that they will get better jobs in the future and have career plans with action steps to accomplish their career goals. Throughout the year, focus groups are held with job seekers and their support teams to gather feedback and provide direction in how to improve services. Those suggestions are implemented and monitored for impact.

## **Values Exercise Revisited**

Below is the exercise you did at the beginning of this section. Read over each statement and choose the number which best represents your opinion of agreement or disagreement with the statement. Think about whether your answers have changed since the first time you did the exercise. Once you have read and numbered all of the statements click on the "submit" button below. Your answers will be submitted for feedback and discussion.

1. Most persons with severe disabilities need special services and training, so they should work and be trained in segregated settings.

Yes

No

The first time I did this exercise, my answer was

The same

Different

2. The larger the grouping of persons with disabilities, the greater the stigma and the more unlikely community inclusion.

Yes

No

The first time I did this exercise, my answer was

The same

Different

3. People with disabilities do not necessarily have to practice community skills (crossing the street, etc.) before they are allowed to go into the community.

Yes

No

The first time I did this exercise, my answer was

The same

Different

4. There is less risk for persons with disabilities in a sheltered, segregated setting.

Yes

No

The first time I did this exercise, my answer was

The same

Different

5. The greater the challenge of the disability, the less likely the person can succeed in the community.

Yes

No

The first time I did this exercise, my answer was

The same

Different

6. If a person with a severe disability has a community job, paid staff of an agency will always be needed for support and training with the person.

Yes

No

The first time I did this exercise, my answer was

The same

Different

7. Looking at the differences and similarities of your answers, in the space below, explain why your answers differed or were the same.

Please write your response here: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## **APSE Ethical Guidelines**

There are many types of professions that operate by a code of ethics. It is very important when providing employment services and working with people with disabilities that we understand the ethical issues involved. We have provided you with a link to the Ethical Guidelines from APSE, The Network on Employment. Take a few minutes and read through them, then ask yourself these questions. <http://www.apse.org/products/products.html>

- Are you serving job seekers as the unique individuals they are?
- Are you offering enough options to allow job seekers to make informed choices?
- Do you treat every job seeker you serve as you would want to be treated?
- Are you allowing job seekers to actively participate in all facets of choosing their life activities?
- Are you giving job seekers the opportunities to develop competencies around job search activities?
- Are you facilitating social friendships and relationships for each and every job seeker you represent?

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## Section 3: Language

### The Power of Words: Universal Language

Perceptions, assumptions and past experience shape our understanding of the world around us. Without realizing it, what we say can impact others. When we refer to someone with a label or use acronyms, our message is often misunderstood or misinterpreted. By using universal language, we are speaking a language that makes sense to the majority. We don't have to interpret what we have said or the meaning behind it.

In this section we will discuss the use of universal language in our field and, more specifically, the language we should use as we support individuals in their quest for employment.

First, let's look at Person-First language. Anyone who is new, or relatively new, to the field of disabilities should know about person-first language through their initial orientation. But just in case, let's review some of the key reasoning behind this very important use of language as we support persons with disabilities.



The words *mental retardation*, *handicapped*, *mongoloid*, *crippled*, and *schizophrenic* all conjure up automatic images in our minds as to who these people are. The use of labels in our society, whether unintentional or not, automatically identifies who that person is, even if she happens to be a great scientist or loving aunt. If you or I were an accomplished writer, but happen to use a wheelchair, we would tend to be identified by our wheelchair, not that we are a great writer. There has been much past debate and disagreement in our field as to how to address a person with a disability when reference to such is necessary.

Currently the accepted practice, which emphasizes the person as a person first and foremost, appropriately is called "Person-First Language." When we want to make reference to a person with a disability, we say just that, "he is a person with a disability" as opposed to "he is disabled." It may sound like a subtle difference, but the first sentence states that he is a person first who just happens to have a disability. The second sentence states that he is disabled.

Next you will read about generally accepted guidelines for Person-First Language.

## **Person-First Language: Disability Awareness Guidelines**

1. Make reference to the person first, then the disability. Say "a person with a disability" rather than "a disabled person."
2. If the disability isn't germane to the story or conversation, don't mention it.
3. Remember, a person who has a disability isn't necessarily chronically sick or unhealthy.
4. When speaking about people with disabilities, portray them as they are in real life: as parents, employees, students, etc.
5. When talking to a person who has a disability, speak directly to him or her, not through a companion.
6. Talk in a normal tone and don't enunciate words unnaturally.
7. Relax. Don't be embarrassed if you use common expressions such as "See ya later" or "Gotta run" that seem to relate to a person's disability.
8. When talking to a person in a wheelchair for more than a few minutes, place yourself at eye level with that person. This will spare both of you a sore neck.
9. When greeting a person with a severe loss of vision, always identify yourself and others. For example say, "On my right is John Smith." Speak in a normal tone of voice and indicate when the conversation is over.
10. Leaning on a person's wheelchair is similar to leaning or hanging on a person and is usually considered annoying and rude. The chair is part of one's body space.
11. Share the same social courtesies with people with disabilities that you would share with anyone else. If you shake hands with people you meet, offer your hand to everyone you meet, whether or not they have a disability. If the person is unable to shake your hand, he or she will tell you.



Our language has great influence on our behavior and others. Look at the chart below. Note the differences between traditional/old practices and more current/best practices in terms of how we refer to people we support.

## TNT (Then - Now - Tomorrow) - Language

### Job Search/Job development Practices

<b>Then - Traditional Practices</b>	<b>Now - Current Best Practices)</b>
Use diagnosis/labels to identify people	Use peoples names to identify them and only when there is a need to identify the disability someone experiences use person first language
Reference people as special, challenged, client, resident, My Guys, etc.	Use words easily recognized by anyone: job seeker, job applicant, potential employee
Describe our services by saying "I placed someone today", "I got a placement", "Gotta go coach today	Describe our services by saying "Someone got hired today", "John got a job", "I'm working with Sandy today"

So what about “tomorrow” ...what do you think the future holds in these areas? Take a few minutes and jot down some ideas you have regarding future practices in terms of language.

## Language Summary

Consistently using person-first language takes a conscious awareness, persistence, and practice. Remember, these are generally accepted guidelines related to person-first language and we would highly recommend using the person's name, skills, qualifications, attributes, etc., just like we would want to be referred to as or introduced to someone else.

This completes the introduction to Person-First Language. Next we will take a look at some additional information on Universal Language that focuses on how we represent our customers and speak with employers regarding job seekers and services.

When I first started in this field, it quickly dawned on me that people who had worked here for a number of years spoke a totally different language. Many times I just nodded my head in agreement knowing full well I didn't understand a thing they said. One conversation at one of my first meetings went something like this:

"We need to schedule an interim IP for John, but before that he needs a CBA in order for VR to fill out their IPE. Once we have this, he will be eligible for SE and LT Supports. Got it? Good!"

You can probably guess I was lost after the IP part, but once again, I nodded my head because, after all, with all these important sounding acronyms, it must be very serious and probably even save his life, especially since he will be eligible for Surgery Emergencies (SE) and Life Threatening Supports (LT). Wow, this is serious work we do! I finally did my research and

learned, much to my relief that SE was supported employment and LT was Long Term supports which was good, because I don't have any real medical training!

As you can see by this example, language without a proper reference can be confusing and intimidating. This is the case when we are working with employers to support people to gain employment. We tend to use our language and acronyms, which in most cases, do not mean anything to the business community, and it requires us to go back and explain what we said. When we have to do that, it very well may lead to the employer thinking this is a very complicated field and they don't have the qualifications to hire and support candidates with disabilities. Some terms that come to mind might include Functional Vocational Assessment, Psychosocial Rehabilitation Services, treatment, therapy - you get the point. All of these will seem foreign and complicated to the employer.



Let's look at it this way. Say you are in your doctor's office for a general physical, and he/she is doing the exam and there is an intern observing the doctor. The doctor says "hmmm, quite a cluster of Ephelides, that's interesting. Oh wait, yep that is a Hemangioma, take a look at that!" Now, what would be going through your mind right now? Probably something like, Oh no! Sounds serious. Will it take a specialist? Surgery? What about my family, my job? You get the idea. Many things run through your head because you don't know what it is. It sounds complicated and needs professional expertise to deal with. What

you didn't realize is, that when you were thinking about all of this, you didn't hear the doctor say that the cluster of Ephelides were actually freckles and the Hemangioma was a small birth mark, both of which most everyone has and, for the most part, are harmless! This is a good comparison to how we might sound to employers when we use our terms rather than terms they are familiar with.

This chart helps us realize that our human services terms are sometimes foreign to employers and in order to build better relationships with employers, we need to be speaking their language. Take for example the first column. When we refer to our organizations, we typically say we are a "community service provider or a training center" but in the business world, they understand terms such as employment agencies, or businesses and after all, aren't we approaching them about work and jobs? We should be marketing ourselves as employment agencies looking at assisting them with their recruitment efforts. Take time to review this list as I think you will find it to be a very helpful resource.

## Rehabilitation to Business Language

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<b>What We Might Say</b>	<b>What Employers Say and Will Understand</b>
Community Rehab Program Service Agency Center	Employment Agency Business Organization
Clients Consumers	Job Candidates Human Resources Potential Employees Applicants
Job Coach Employment Specialist	Recruitment Specialist Employment Consultant
Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor	Employment or Career Counselor
Supported Employment Services	Employment Services
Job Development	Recruitment Assistance
Job Analysis	Identifying job tasks and functions
Functional Vocational Evaluation Vocational Assessment	Determination of work skills and career interests
Community Based Assessment Situational Assessment	Job Shadowing Internship
Job Matching	Matching needs and qualifications
Mobility Training	Transportation Assistance
Job Placement Placing People	Assisting people to find jobs and careers; becoming employed
Job Modification	Job Accommodations
Assistive Devices Assistive Technology	Reasonable Accommodations
Universal Design	Accommodations that all employees can benefit from
Job Carving	Job Redesign Job Restructuring Job Creation Streamlining
Job coaching, job counseling, modifications, intervention, site visits, fading, follow-along	Orientation Post-hire follow-up services Job Retention Services & Support

<b>What We Might Say</b>	<b>What Employers Say and Will Understand</b>
Social Integration	Opportunities to socialize Working with a team
Natural Supports	Training and co-worker support offered by the employer
The Employer My Employer Placement Sites	Name of Company

Well there you have it! You now understand how using universal language is very important in our field. By using person-first language, it shows not only respect, but refers to a person in a way anyone would want to be identified, i.e. an employee, a parent, a friend, an artist, etc. By using business language, we will be more easily understood by the business community and show them that we can be a resource for qualified applicants. We need to act and work like any other employment agency, because that is what we are.

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## **FAQs**

So often during training, people have questions that they never ask. Then once back at their organizations, they wish they would have. Here's one example of a frequently asked question.

**Q.** When reviewing the traditional versus current practices, what if you find that your agency's practices are more on the traditional side? Also, don't most agencies have to do a program evaluation and go through accreditation?

**A.** If you find that your organization is operating more on the traditional side, start by selecting one area to focus on, meet with a group of co-workers and your supervisor, have discussion around how to increase your daily practices in that area to achieve the "best practices" approach. Try implementing the strategies you develop and always ask your customers how you're doing. Regarding the program evaluation/accreditation, yes most agencies do require this, however the importance is to focus on customer satisfaction in order to improve the outcomes of the program evaluation system and achieve high rates when going through accreditations. Any good business starts with it's customers.

**What questions do you have after reading all this material? Take a minute and jot down a question or two. Print your questions and bring them with you to the Employment Services Fundamentals training. This will help answer your questions and create discussion with others. If you are not taking this as a prerequisite to ESF and wish to ask questions regarding this material, feel free to contact Darla Wilkerson at (darlajamie@aol.com)**

**If you are taking this as a prerequisite, please print this page and bring to Employment Services Fundamentals 2 day training as your proof of completing your prerequisite. Your supervisor's signature is required.**

**I (Name)\_\_\_\_\_ have completed this prerequisite on (date)\_\_\_\_\_.**

**Supervisors Signature:\_\_\_\_\_**