

13 Competencies for Employment Services Personnel

Region 7 CRP-RCEP

In 1999, the Region 7 CRP-RCEP assembled a task force to establish a set of universal Employment Services Competencies - 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 Region 7 CRP-RCEP are grounded in this framework.

There are 13 competencies, each with five levels:

- **Level 1** is someone new to 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.

For each competency, this document spells out the characteristic of a person at each of these levels.

Region 7 CRP-RCEP encourages all Community Rehabilitation Providers to implement a staff evaluation program using these core competencies.

Region 7 CRP-RCEP provides this document free of charge and encourages all CRP administrators and staff to copy and share it with anyone who might find it useful.

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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 away.
- 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.

For more information on these competencies or on trainings based on these competencies, please contact:

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