

Vets Teleconference – Notes pages

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Welcome to the Veteran Series on Customized Employment:

Sponsored by:

The Office of Disability and Employment Policy/USDOL, The Veterans Employment and Training Service/USDOL, and The National Center on Workforce and Disability/Adult

May 25th, 2007

1 PM – 2:30 PM Eastern Time

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Agenda

- Call in number is 800-239-0375; 9124234 code
- Welcome
- Introductions
 - Norciva Shumpert, Moderator
 - Technical information for the call
 - Taking questions
 - Evaluation
 - Further information

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Welcome

Kristine McLaughlin, Competitive Grants Manager, Veterans Employment and Training Service, U.S. Department of Labor

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Session Objectives

- Define *Customized Employment*
- Examine alternative approaches to traditional job development for job seekers with barriers to employment
- Discuss how to:
 - find and identify business' unmet needs
 - negotiate customized positions for job seekers with significant barriers to employment
- Hear examples of veterans obtaining employment through customized employment

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Lisa Cuzzo

- 20 years of experience in education and workforce development
- Project Director for the Maryland Customized Employment Partnership
- Manages Montgomery County's efforts in the (Maryland) Veterans Workforce Investment Program
- Located in the MontgomeryWorks One Stop Career Center

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A perfect fit

- HVRP programs nationwide are wholly dedicated to providing employment assistance to homeless veterans who typically experience additional and significant barriers to employment
- Customized Employment is an employment strategy for assisting people with complex lives to achieve positive employment outcomes.

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What we know

- Homeless veterans:
 - Often present with additional complexities, such as: severe post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), long histories of substance abuse, serious psychosocial problems, legal issues, and more.
 - Typically require more time-consuming, specialized, intensive assessment, referrals and counseling than is possible in other programs that work with veterans seeking employment.

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Michael Callahan

- International consultant in Europe, Canada, and USA
- Consultant in various states within One Stop Centers, private/public employment agencies, schools, rehabilitation services, and public assistance agencies
- Editor of a popular "how-to" book on employment for persons with severe disabilities, *Getting Employed, Staying Employed* (1987)
- Co-author of *Keys to the Work Place* (1997) a text on systematic instruction and natural supports
- He has written numerous articles, chapters, manuals and curriculums pertaining to employment of persons with disabilities.
- Michael is the vice-president of Employment for All and president of Marc Gold & Associates.

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Customized Employment: The next step in the evolution of the employment relationship
Leading with your contributions to meet specific workplace needs

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Customized Employment - Defined

- Customized employment means individualizing the employment relationship between job candidates and employers in ways that meet the needs of both.
- It is based on an individualized determination of the strengths, needs, and interests of a person with complex barriers, and is also designed to meet the specific needs of the employer.

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Customized Negotiables between Applicants and Employers

- Essential responsibilities of a job as detailed in job descriptions; and/or
- Non-essential responsibilities or expectations that might include:
 - Time, hours, location, etc for work to be performed
 - Support and supervision strategies
 - Productivity and outcome expectations

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Features of Customized Employment

- Based on discovery of the applicant more than on evaluative/comparative processes
- Driven by a customized plan developed by the applicant's strengths, needs and interests
- Focuses on tasks and job seeker conditions for employment rather than job titles to negotiate job responsibilities

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Features of Customized Employment

- Specific job duties are negotiated with employers, voluntarily, to customize the job
- Occurs in regular community workplaces or in self-owned businesses
- Involves pay of at least the minimum wage up to prevailing wage

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Features of Customized Employment

- Applicable to all users of workforce system
- Includes on-going supports and reasonable accommodations, as appropriate
- Starts with the individual as the source of information and direction to labor force

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Customization and Complex Lives

- Disability
- Age: maturity/youth
- Poverty
- Homelessness
- Family responsibilities
- Lack of experience or skills
- Low self-esteem
- Cultural
- Health
- Minority status
- Lack of education
- Habits/life routines
- Dependence on benefits

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Customized Employment:

A bridging approach for Job Developers

- *Demand-driven Employment:*
 - Responding to the needs of employers with applicants who are “qualified” to meet those general demands.
- *Job seeker-driven Employment:*
 - Employment based on the “strengths, needs and interests” of applicants that uses matching and negotiation.

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Labor/Demand Market Job Development

The demands of employers result in an inevitable sorting out of job seekers. Those with more skills and less complexity rise to the top. Those with less skills and more complexity are considered last.

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Some are left out all together

Even after a concerted effort, our friend with significant challenges is not selected. He (or she) is told that he didn't fit any of the job descriptions due to a variety of reasons (typically those revolve around his complexities).

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The Customized Employment Strategy

In Customized Job Development, Job Developers gets to know one applicant at a time through **discovery** *before* meeting with potential employers in the community.

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Discovery

Allows us to determine who job seekers are – their complexities as well as their potential contributions to employers

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Customized Job Development

- The Applicant's conditions, interests and contributions are identified through a Customized Planning Process as well as a *Task List*.
- The Job Developer (or the job seeker) then meets with specific employers in an effort to negotiate a customized job description.
- From a narrowed list of potential employers identified during the Customized Plan.

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Customized Job Development

Customized Employment is successful when there is a negotiated fit between the job seeker's “strengths, needs and interests” **and** the “specific needs of an employer”.

Slide 23 – picture of man working in a carpet/flooring store

Job seeker: *Desire to wear nice clothes and avoid janitorial*

Employer: *Needed an array of tasks completed in 9 departments*

Slide 24 – picture of woman working at computer

Job Seeker: *Wanted to work in fashion with computers*

Employer: *Needed assistance for buyers & receptionist*

Slide 25 – picture of man working in a floral shop

Job Seeker: *Loves flowers, wanted to do floral design*

Employer: *Needed arrangement prep tasks to be done*

Slide 26 – picture of two men working with wood

Job Seeker: *Wanted to work with wood*

Employer: *Needed assistance with tool/material supply and production tasks*

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On the Job Seeker's side:

- Matching to interests
- Matching to conditions
- Negotiation of conditions and contributions
- Use of supports: job coaching, personal assistance and technology as needed
- Representation assistance

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On the Employer's side:

- Opportunity to target specific workplace needs
- Fuller knowledge and discussion of job seeker's needs and challenges
- Relevance of concept for other employees
- A new way to accomplish diversity and affirmative action goals

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Matching and Negotiating

- *Matching:*
 - Identifying factors that currently exist in job sites that are compatible with the conditions, preferences or contributions of the job seeker.
- *Negotiation:*
 - Striking a deal with an employer to change current factors of a job site that do not currently exist to meet the needs of the job seeker.

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Negotiables

- Tasks that might comprise a customized job description
- Unique conditions that cannot be found through matching: such as hours, days, working environment
- Need for accommodations or additional assistance

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Examining Essential Selling Points

Agency/Concept of CE

- Customized job description
- Meeting specific employer needs
- Discovery reduces uncertainties
- Satisfied employee

Job Seeker

- Tasks to be offered
- Personality characteristics
- Past experiences
- Wants to work in business/industry
- Other positives

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Planning for Negotiables: Sweeteners and Hole cards

- Before entering into negotiations with potential employers, know your “sweeteners” and “hole cards,” both in general and specifically relating to your job seeker.
- Don’t be afraid to hold back some negotiables at first so as to have negotiating clout later.

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Negotiation = Compromise

Job seekers and job developers must carefully examine those aspects of an ideal customized job description that are non-negotiable, but just as importantly, must identify those components that are open to compromise. This allows for successful negotiation.

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Using a “Template” Strategy

- The *Job Seeker’s* skills, interests and conditions – their contributions - for employment are presented to the prospective employer for consideration.
- The *Employer’s* needs provide the basis for the applicant’s contributions to be considered as an overlay or template. A customized job description can then be negotiated.

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Customized Process

- Discovery: facilitated, group, self-discovery
- Capturing discovery through profiles
- Customized, person-centered planning
- Portfolio/resume development
- Job development negotiation & representation

- Job site analysis, accommodations, support as necessary

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Lisa Cuozzo sharing Lessons Learned

What Veterans programs are learning from the Customized Employment process...

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Individual Profile: Helen

- What Helen brings to the table:
 - Army Personnel Sergeant and Administrative Supervisor
 - Personnel Management Specialist - leadership coursework
 - Determination
 - High level computer skills
- Complexities:
 - lost home/living in car
 - teenage son in trouble with school/law
 - financial/tax issues
 - 30% SC disability

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What we did together

- Exploration/discovery: skills, talents, desires and conditions for employment
- Networked: Job fairs, connections
- Negotiated: short-term and long-term goals
- Partnered: VWIP, Housing Services, One Stop, Food Stamps, WIA

Slide 39 – picture of Helen accepting award at workforce breakfast

Today

- Helen is working for the United States House of Representatives as a Chief Administrative Officer – earning \$17.00/hour
- Helen was nominated for and received the 2006 Montgomery County Department of Economic Development Workforce Determination Award

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Individual Profile: Richard

- What Richard brings:
 - Honorable discharge
 - Independent
 - Army electrical instrument repairman (729.281)
 - Enjoys working with hands
 - Resiliency
- Complexities:
 - 18 year prison term
 - living in shelter
 - no local support system

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What we did together

- Discovery process – listened!
- Plan for employment:
 - odd jobs during job search
 - school/training
- Plan for disclosure
- Partnered: VWIP, Work Release, Housing Assistance, Community College, One Stop/WIA

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Today (no picture due to offense)

- Richard is working full-time for a Refrigeration Service Company as a Service Technician
 - Starting salary - \$17.00 while training
 - Currently: \$19.00

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Individual Profile: Tim

- What Tim brings:
 - Very educated
 - Computer skills
 - Great personality – works well with and enjoys people
 - Previous work experiences
- Complexities:
 - Katrina evacuee
 - No fixed living address
 - “nothing behind the eyes” – deflated, depressed

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What we did together

- Discovery process
- Developed plan A, B, and C
- Negotiated paid work experience
- Completed job shadows
- Partners: VWIP, Catholic Charities, One Stop/WIA

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Today – picture of Tim working in a pharmacy assistant job shadow

- Tim is being tutored by a pharmacology lawyer – in preparation for his exam
- Working as a Patent Examiner with the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office – GS12 - \$58,660 (>\$28/hour)

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Join us for other sessions:

- The NCHV conference in Washington, D.C. for a presentation on Wednesday, June 6th, 2007 from 1:00 – 4:30
- Another Veteran's call or webinar on Self Employment, July 17, 2007
- The 2007 VET/DOL Competitive Grantee Training Conference for DOL Veteran's Employment Training Service; Creating Jobs through Self Employment, August 7th, 2007

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Please do an evaluation

- The evaluation can be submitted by sending to Sheila Fesko by:
 - Fax to 617-287-4352
 - Email: Sheila.Fesko@umb.edu

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Feel Free to Contact for further information

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