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Vocational Empowerment Photovoice

Workbook



Maria E. Restrepo-Toro, Cheryl Gagne, Zlatka Russinova,
Philippe Bloch, Sharon Pritchett, Tracy Woods,
and Debbie Nicolellis



Boston University Center for Psychiatric Rehabilitation

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Boston University Center for Psychiatric Rehabilitation

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For Sasha Bowers,

For your bright light, big ideas, and loving heart.

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Session 1: Introduction to Vocational Empowerment Photovoice

Vocational Empowerment Photovoice provides an opportunity for people to explore their current interest in pursuing a work goal. Many people who experience a mental illness find that working in a chosen career enriches their lives. Others have jobs that provide some pleasure and daily structure, while others still have chosen to not participate in any work activities. The choice is yours. This program will help you in making decisions about your vocational directions.

Goals of the Program

We will support you to:

1. Learn about the Photovoice process.
2. Explore your motivation and interests related to work.
3. Document your thoughts and feelings about your working life using Photovoice.
4. Complete two photo missions.
5. Connect with others who share your questions about working.

Your Commitment to the Photovoice Group

We ask that you:

1. Attend all sessions of the Photovoice program.
2. Complete all assignments.
3. Participate in discussions.
4. Treat others with kindness and respect.

The Leader's Commitment to You

We will work to do the following:

1. The group leader(s) will treat you with kindness and respect.
2. The group leader(s) will assist you in completing any assignment given that you do during the group.
3. The group leader(s) will provide you with the support you need to attend and participate in the group.

What is Vocational Empowerment Photovoice?

What is Vocation?

The word “vocation” means a few different things:

1. Vocation can mean a particular type of work—an occupation, a business, or a profession, as in, “My vocational goal is to become a teacher.”
2. Vocation can mean a strong desire to follow a particular activity or career, even if it does not lead to regular employment for pay. For example “I work as a sales clerk, but my true vocation is as an artist.”
3. Vocation sometimes refers to a divine call to spiritual service, as in “My vocation is to serve inner city youth.”

What is Empowerment?

Empowerment is the belief that one has control over one’s own life. Empowerment involves taking responsibility for oneself, including one’s own health and wellness, and often includes speaking up or advocating for both oneself and other people. In the process of working on their recovery, many people with a mental illness gain a greater sense of empowerment in their lives.

What is Photovoice?

- Photovoice is a process by which people can identify, represent, and enhance their community through the creation of photographs and narratives designed to capture an important aspect of their community experience.
- Photovoice puts cameras into the hands of people living in the community to give them the opportunity to act as agents of change.
- Photovoice uses the impact of photographs and narratives to increase awareness of a situation (problem or strength) and to promote needed changes.
- “Photovoice is a method that enables people to define for themselves and others, including policy makers, what is worth remembering and what needs to be changed.” (Wang, C. 2006)
- For many people, Photovoice gives them a greater sense of belonging in their local communities and support networks.

What is Vocational Empowerment Photovoice?

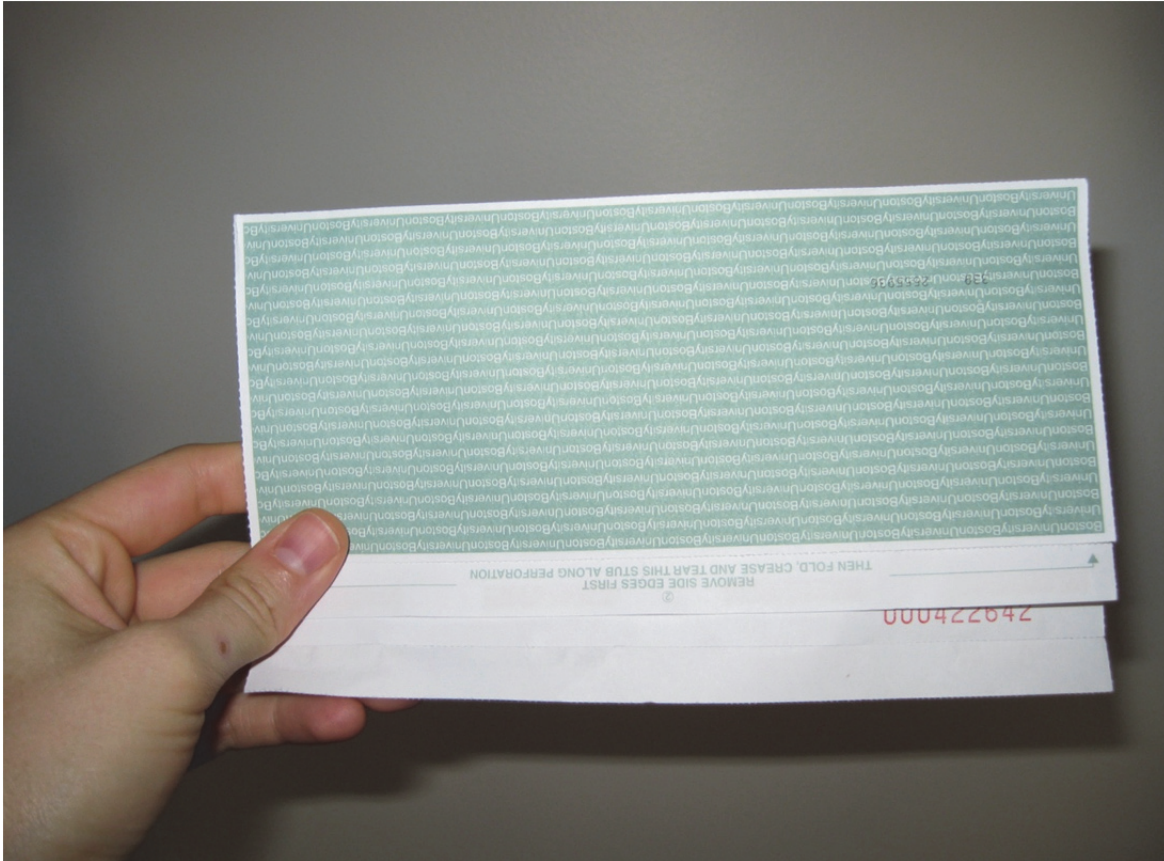
Vocational Empowerment Photovoice is a process by which you can take charge of your own decision-making about a meaningful vocational life through photographs and narratives.

Photovoice has a few main goals:

1. To help people reflect on strengths, problems, and experiences.
2. To promote conversations about important issues about work.
3. To give people a greater sense of belonging in their local communities and support networks.
4. To educate others about people's experiences and their community.

Photovoice Example 1

Below is an example of a Photovoice photograph and narrative.



Paycheck

Since I became sick, I wasn't capable of holding down a 40-hour job. I felt bad about myself, because I was always able to work before. I got my identity from work – my ego was tied into what I did for a living. As time went on, I started working part-time in 10-hour shifts. I was so ecstatic to be handed this little piece of green paper – my first pay stub. I still have setbacks now and need to take a few days off here and there. But, overall, I make it to work each week, encouraged by the connection and courage I get from being in the company of others.

Photovoice Example 2



My Wheels

This is the bicycle I take to work. I ride it to and from my job. Not only am I working, but my bicycle does the work of giving me exercise as well as transportation. We've been through a lot of elements together – the drizzling rain of spring, the scorching heat of summer, and the icy roads of winter. It reminds me that, even though keeping my job despite the symptoms of my mental illness can be challenging, there are ways that I can stay healthy and active. Every morning I ride to work and take the evening trip home, I have a little challenge that I can overcome with the support of my bicycle.

Taking Pictures

- One of the most enjoyable parts of Photovoice is taking pictures. No experience with photography is necessary. Beginners and experts alike can capture images that “speak” to them.
- We will give you a camera to use, or you may like to use your own camera or phone. If it is digital, make sure to bring the connection cord to each session with your camera, so we can download the digital pictures.
- **Bring the camera to EVERY session.** If digital, we will download pictures that you want to present and help you turn them into a Photovoice creation.
- If you prefer, you can email us your pictures or bring them in a flash drive.
- The group leaders will be available to help you learn and practice using the camera.
- As part of the group, we may go outside in the neighborhood as a group and practice using the camera by taking pictures of whatever interests you.
- It is critical to follow all safety and ethical guidelines while taking pictures for the Photovoice program.

How to Use a Camera

1. Think about the picture you wish to take. You can walk to a nearby site or create a photograph in your home.
2. Turn the camera on. The on/off switch may be a small button on the top of the camera.
3. Make sure your camera is set to the setting for “taking pictures” and not “viewing pictures.”
4. Look at the screen on the back of the camera, if there is a screen, or look through the viewfinder. Take your time to frame the picture as you want it.
5. Push the big button (usually on the top of the camera) to take the picture.
6. On a digital camera, there is no film to wind, so you can take another picture right away. If your camera is disposable, you may need to advance the film.

Front of Digital Camera 	Back of Digital Camera 
Front of Disposable Camera 	Back of Disposable Camera 

Ethical and Safety Guidelines

Below are some basic guidelines to help keep you safe and to help you respect others' privacy.

1. Always **ask permission** if you are taking a photo of a person or a person's possessions, like a tree or a car in someone's yard. It is nice to **introduce yourself by first name** if you are approaching a stranger.
2. If you wish to use a photograph of a person in your Photovoice creation, it is important to get a release form signed by the person. The release form is included at the end of the workbook. The group leader will provide extra copies.
3. If you want to take a picture of a child who is under age 18, you need to obtain the **consent of the child's parent/guardian** to take the picture. Have the parent or guardian fill out the release form.
4. Be sensitive. Remember that most people would **not** want to be photographed in embarrassing situations, like when they are crying, losing their temper, eating, using drugs, panhandling, kissing, or in other intimate moments.
5. It's OK to prepare and use a "staged" shot to capture a scene, idea, or emotion if you think it would be difficult to obtain the shot "naturally."
6. **Pay attention to your environment!** Don't sacrifice your safety for a picture. Make sure to pay attention to your footing when you are setting up a shot so you don't accidentally step off a curb, into a hole, or into traffic. Consider taking someone with you when you are out taking pictures, particularly if you are taking pictures in places or neighborhoods where you could be vulnerable to crime.
7. There may be certain places that do not permit you to take photographs of them; for example, federal buildings, gyms, and certain stores. In these places, you will need to find a person who has the authority to give you permission to take a picture.

I agree to follow the guidelines above as I take pictures for our Photovoice projects.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Printed Name: _____

Session 2: My Working Life**Work Defined**

Work can mean action or a place.

- As an action, “work” means to be engaged in physical or mental activity in order to achieve a purpose or result. *Example:* “My work is stocking shelves in a department store” or “I have to work on Saturday.”
- As a place, “work” means where the work is done. *Example:* “She’s at work right now,” or “I left my glasses at work.”

Work can be hard to define. One person’s work might be another person’s leisure. Not all work is paid work. Some people do volunteer work, others work in their homes and gardens, and others call exercise “a work-out.”

What does the word “work” mean to you?

Reasons People Work

1. Work as a means of basic survival

Since the beginning of human history people have had to do certain tasks for basic survival—gather, grow, or hunt food; build shelter; and make clothes. Many do not do this work themselves—they earn a paycheck to pay for food, shelter, and clothing.

2. Work as a way to improve “quality of life”

Many people work to earn money to be able to afford the “extras” in life, such as a vacation, a car, eating out, or going to the movies or a sports event. Most people who earn a living have a higher quality of life than people who are unemployed.

3. Work as a form of self-expression

Many people work as an outlet for their gifts and talents. Some jobs require creativity, others require “people-skills,” and still others require intellectual skills. People whose jobs allow them to use their talents usually report a high level of job satisfaction.

4. Work as a social status

In our society a person’s work role is closely associated with their identity. When people in the United States ask, “What do you do?” they are asking about what you do for work. In most societies, having a work role gives a person status.

5. Work as a social connection

For many people, work is a source of connection to other people. Some people refer to co-workers as their “work family,” while others may enjoy more casual relationships at work.

6. Work as structure and purpose

For many people, work gives a sense of structure and purpose. It is a reason to get out of bed in the morning. There are many benefits of leading a “work-ordered” day. Getting up at the same time and having a place to go provides a person with structure to the day.

7. Work as a reason for leisure

Leisure is pleasurable, in part, because it is a break from work: “Everybody’s working for the weekend.” People like to celebrate the end of a project, a week, or a workday.

8. Work as a spiritual practice

Some people find deep meaning in their work and consider it a spiritual practice. Many religions talk about work as service to God or the Creator.

Meaningful Work

Most people want to have jobs that provide them with purpose or meaning; where the job has significance or value beyond the tasks, role, or paycheck. What makes a job meaningful differs from person to person. Jobs that meet our values (those things we hold as most important) are more likely to be meaningful to us.

Directions: Read and discuss the following descriptions.

These three people in the restaurant industry describe the meaning they find in their jobs:

"I like the restaurant and my co-workers. We are a family restaurant, and I feel like we're a family. I feel like I belong here. The restaurant is a cozy, welcoming place, and we all get along really well."
Deborah, age 52

So, what gives Deborah meaning?

"The work is challenging sometimes. I like to figure out more efficient ways of getting the food prepped. I'm interested in improving the work flow in the kitchen. I love nights when everything gets done smoothly. I am always thinking of ways I can improve how we do things around here."
Harvey, age 32

So, what gives Harvey meaning?

"I feel good when I serve customers. I like to make people feel welcomed and comfortable. Some people say that I do it for the tips, and I do like getting a nice tip. But I also feel good when my customers are relaxed and smiling."
Susan, age, 21

So, what gives Susan meaning?

It is possible to have meaningful work even in an environment and role that does not provide much meaning.

"I figure I have to work, and I might as well make the most of it. I can't say that my job is always rewarding, and I am not fond of the management, but I try to make a little game of it. I set little challenges for myself and sort of race myself to finish a task more quickly. No one else really cares about how I do my job, as long as it gets done; but I feel good, and it does make the time go by."

Nathan, age 45

So, what gives Nathan meaning?

What gives YOU meaning at work?

Which of the following quotes resonates with you?

1. "All labor that uplifts humanity has dignity and importance and should be undertaken with painstaking excellence." by **Martin Luther King**
2. "Choose a job you love, and you'll never work a day in your life." by **Confucius**
3. "To find joy in your work is the greatest thing for a human being." by **Harry Roberts**
4. "The best way to not feel hopeless is to get up and do something. Don't wait for good things to happen to you. If you go out and make some good things happen, you will fill the world with hope, you will fill yourself with hope." by **Barack Obama**

Why? _____



Photo Mission #1: Picturing Work

In this Photo Mission, you will take a picture that represents work or your ideas or feelings about work.

Photo Mission Instructions

1. Carry your camera around with you.
2. Think about the assignment: **Picturing Work.**
3. Take a lot of pictures that might say something about your ideas or feelings about work. You also may choose instead to take a picture of someone performing a job.
4. Your picture could be abstract or very straight forward and concrete. It might capture what you think is important about work or some of your feelings about work.
5. Choose one picture that you would like to share with the rest of the group.
6. Bring the camera with the picture into the next session.
7. Your group leader will print or display your photo for you.

Remember: If you take a picture of a person, you need to get a signed release form.

Examples of “Picturing Work”



Ideas for Photo Mission #1: Picturing Work

Directions: Based on what you've learned about meaningful work, list some ideas that you have for taking pictures that will say something about picturing work:

Where might you go to get the pictures you want?

Session 3: Writing your Photovoice Narrative

Photovoice is more than just taking pictures. It involves writing a narrative that reflects your thoughts, feelings, and ideas about the picture you've taken.

Example of a Photovoice Narrative:



Working Man

Whenever I think of work, I think of Elliot. He never stops working. He retired from a career as a bus driver years ago, but he always has one project or another going. Whenever I visit him, he has some chores for me to help him with. I like working with Elliot because he's relaxed, never in a hurry. Maybe that's because he is his own boss. Elliot works all the time, and Elliot is a very happy man.

What Goes into a Photovoice Narrative?

One way to begin to write a Photovoice narrative is to use the acronym **SHOWED**.

S	What do you SEE here? • What is this photo of? • Where was this photo taken? • What is in the photo?
H	What's really HAPPENING here? • What is your interpretation of the photo? • Are there things that are going on in the photo that the casual observer may not see? • What does the photo really represent?
O	How does this relate to OUR LIVES? • Why did you take this photo? • Why did you pick this photo to discuss? • How does this photo relate to you or your community's perspectives or attitudes?
W	Why does this problem, resource, or situation exist? • If the photo is of something negative (i.e., a "problem"), say something about what contributes to this problem. • If the photo is of something positive (i.e., a "strength" or "resource"), say something about this importance of this resource. Is it overlooked? Do we need more of it?
E	How could this image EDUCATE others, the community, and policy makers? • What would you like to tell people about this problem, resource, or situation? • What does the audience need to know/understand about this problem, resource, or situation?
D	What can we DO about the problem, resource, or situation? • What can we do to strengthen this resource? • What can we do to fix this problem? • Who else can help fix this problem?

Practice 1: Writing Photovoice Narratives

Directions: Look at the picture below and answer the questions.



1. What do you **SEE** here?
2. What's really **HAPPENING** here?
3. How does this relate to **OUR** work lives?
4. **WHY** does this problem, resource, or situation exist?
5. How could this image **EDUCATE** others, the community, and policy makers?
6. What can we **DO** about the problem, resource, or situation?

Optional Practice 2: Writing a Photovoice Narrative

Directions: Look at the picture below and answer the questions.



1. What do you SEE here?
2. What's really HAPPENING here?
3. How does this relate to OUR work lives?
4. WHY does this problem, resource, or situation exist?
5. How could this image EDUCATE others, the community, and policy makers?
6. What can we DO about the problem, resource, or situation?

Write a short narrative to accompany this picture.

Optional Practice 3: Writing a Photovoice Narrative

Directions: Look at the picture below and answer the questions.



1. What do you **SEE** here?
2. What's really **HAPPENING** here?
3. How does this relate to **OUR** work lives?
4. **WHY** does this problem, resource, or situation exist?
5. How could this image **EDUCATE** others, the community, and policy makers?
6. What can we **DO** about the problem, resource, or situation?

Write a short narrative to accompany this picture.

Practice 4: Writing your own Photovoice Narrative

Directions: Take a look at the picture you chose for Photo Mission #1: *Picturing Work*.

1. What do you **SEE** here?
2. What's really **HAPPENING** here?
3. How does this relate to **OUR** work lives?
4. **WHY** does this problem, resource, or situation exist?
5. How could this image **EDUCATE** others, the community, and policy makers?
6. What can we **DO** about the problem, resource, or situation?

Write a narrative to accompany your picture.

Session 4: My Vocational Values

What are Values?

Values are the basic principles that a person uses as a life guide. These are things that are important to you in a big way—so important that it can be hard to explain why they are so important. For example, a person might believe in the value of education, meaning that it is important to that person to be learning new things every day. Another person might believe in the value of kindness to others, and try to do a helpful good deed every day.

Our values usually come from our experiences. We learn about our values through our likes and dislikes of certain situations, environments, and relationships.

Vocational Values

Your vocational values are the qualities or characteristics of the work you do that are important to you and will help you feel satisfied in a particular job or career. If you have a job that matches your values, you are likely to be happy in that job. On the other hand, if you are in a job that does not match your values, you are likely to be unhappy in that job.

For example:

- Jason worked in a job where his boss was always close by and criticizing how he did his job. Jason hated this! He learned from this and other experiences that he valued **INDEPENDENCE**. He found out that it was important to him to be able to do things on his own, without someone watching over him every minute.
- When Sara was at school, she preferred classes that involved working on the computer. She thought about why this was, and she realized that she liked solving technical problems. She learned that **CHALLENGE** was an important value for her. She wanted to have puzzles to solve as part of her daily work.
- Nathan hates getting dressed up for any occasion. **COMFORT** is a value for Nathan, but he also realized that he doesn't like it when people seem to be out-doing each other in the way they dress. **EQUALITY** is another of Nathan's values.
- Jonathan had a good experience with a supervisor who always made sure that he understood the instructions before he began his work day. Jonathan values **CORRECTNESS**. He wants things to be just right, and he hates making a mistake. When his supervisor assigns clear responsibilities with specific directions, Jonathan is able to do his work in the right way.

Karen's Vocational Journey: A Tale of Discovery

Since I was a young girl, everyone told me how smart I was, and I liked hearing this. I did well in school and planned to become a doctor. I studied hard in college, but I became ill with bipolar disorder in my junior year. I took a year off from my studies and worked in a lab that performed medical tests. It was a terrible year. I hated the work, but I couldn't tell if I hated the tasks, or if I just felt that way because of my illness. I still thought that I would return to school and eventually go to medical school.

I graduated with a degree in biology and thought that I would take a year or so off before applying to medical school because I still wasn't feeling my best. I kept taking jobs in the medical field, but never felt satisfied. I was miserable. The only time I felt like myself was when I was outside hiking or kayaking. These were the only activities that I enjoyed. I forced myself to read textbooks on biochemistry and human physiology, but I couldn't concentrate, and I got no pleasure.

After a couple of very unhappy years, I took a summer job at a wilderness camp leading children on backpacking and canoeing trips. I loved every minute of it! I learned that I liked teaching the kids, especially the ones who tried to give me a hard time! After that summer, I took a job as a teachers' aide at a junior high school and found that I liked the work. What a struggle I had accepting the fact that I preferred working with kids in educational settings to studying medicine. My mother had a very hard time with the fact that I wasn't going to go to medical school as I had always dreamed.

Today I work in a wilderness program for teens who have had trouble coping with their family and school. I meet all kinds of kids who present all kinds of challenges. It's hard work sometimes, but this job meets almost all of the values that are most important to me. I am almost grateful for the illness because it forced me to stop and think about what is most important to me in my work life.

What are Karen's values?

Based on Karen's description, what do you think Karen's values are?

What are Your Vocational Values?

Directions: Circle any values that best match what is important to you when you think about work.

Fast Pace / Excitement	Slow Pace / Calmness
Safety / Security	Adventure
Predictable / Consistent	Surprising / Varied
Teamwork / Relationships	Independence / Solitude
Competition	Cooperation
Equality / Acceptance	Status / Achievement
Intellectual challenge	Physical activity
Providing a service	Producing a product
Making others happy	Completing a task
Getting paid well	Getting complimented
Creativity	Repetition
Indoor work	Outdoor work
Carefulness / Detailed	Flexibility / Broad
People-focused (helping others)	Task-focused (hands-on duties)

List other values that are important to you but are not listed here.

Identifying Your Values: Vocational Experiences

Directions: Describe a work experience you have had and then write the value that is important to you, based on that experience. Any type of work experience is fine—it doesn't have to be paid work, and it doesn't have to be a recent experience.

Work Experience	Values
Example: <i>I enjoyed my volunteer job at the library. I liked putting books back where they belonged. I also liked how clean and tidy the library was after I put the books away.</i>	<i>Organization</i> <i>Clean environment</i> <i>Predictability</i>

Identifying Your Values: Vocational Experiences

Think of a job that met most of your values. Job Name _____

- What was that experience like for you?

- What is one important value that was met by that job?

Think of a job that did not meet your values. Job Name _____

- What was that experience like for you?

- What is one important value that was not met by that job?

Session 5: My Vocational Identity

Vocational identity is how you see yourself as a worker. This identity as a worker is made up of your values, interests, talents, and goals. A person develops a vocational identity through experiences that help uncover values, interests, and talents.

Some quotes of people talking about their vocational identities:

“Who I am as a worker is very much how I am at home and with friends. I tend to be a very ‘take charge’ kind of person. I like to make plans and organize things. It makes sense that I am a manager.”
Cathy, manager of retail pharmacy

“I have always liked helping others. It’s a very important value to me. When I considered what kind of job I would like, I knew I would work in a job where I could help others. Being a home health aide for people with serious disabilities combines my interest in health with my passion for helping others.”
Steven, part-time home health aide

“Since I was a little kid, I’ve been good with numbers. I like to work in a clean, organized environment. I’m really good at details. I notice errors more quickly than most people. Although music is my passion, I like doing data entry and data management. It’s steady and predictable work and that suits me just fine. I work on my music after hours, and I don’t have to worry about earning an income from my music, which makes it pure pleasure.”
Sandra, research assistant

These people are all talking about how their own preferences and traits are related to what they do at work.

What kind of work might you prefer to do, given what you know about yourself?

Vocational Strengths and Limitations

Everyone has different strengths and limitations. Most people choose jobs or careers that allow them to use their strengths and avoid jobs that require them to do tasks that emphasize their limitations. People often learn about their strengths and limitations through their work experiences.

What kinds of strengths do you think are needed to do the tasks shown in these pictures?

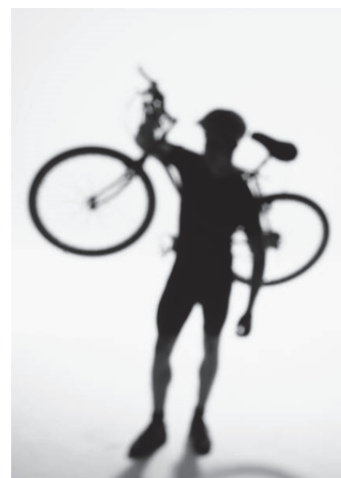


A Few Stories of Strengths and Limitations

"I really wanted to work at Bicycle Bill's because I liked bike riding and because the store was hip, with cute guys and good music playing. But the boss became frustrated with me because it took me so much longer to change a tire or fix a derailleur than anyone else. I learned that I did not have the finger control or manual dexterity needed to repair bikes for a living."

Jessica, age 23

What strengths or limitations did Jessica talk about? _____



"After graduating with a degree in criminal justice and getting a job as a probation officer, I learned that I did not have the right personality to work with people when I had to kind of force them into doing what they were supposed to do. I became a hairstylist, and now I have a very different relationship with the people I work with."

John, age 27

What strengths or limitations did John talk about? _____

"I always knew that I was shy and preferred spending time alone, rather than being with others. When it came time to find a job, I only looked for work that allowed me to work alone with minimal contact with other people. I now do data entry and I like it fine."

Sara, age 53

What strengths or limitations did Sara talk about? _____



"School was torture for me. I get restless and bored easily. I need to have a lot of variety in my day. I drive a cab in the city, so I never know where my day will bring me and whom I will meet."

Phil, age 44

What strengths or limitations did Phil talk about? _____

My Vocational Strengths and Talents

Directions: Review this list of vocational strengths and identify those that you believe are strengths for you. Check the boxes next to your strengths and talents.

- ☐ I am good with numbers.
- ☐ I have a good sense of humor.
- ☐ I am artistic.
- ☐ I am very organized.
- ☐ I am honest and trustworthy.
- ☐ I am good with my hands.
- ☐ I am good at problem solving.
- ☐ I am athletic.
- ☐ I can play a musical instrument.
- ☐ I am a hard worker.
- ☐ I am a good storyteller.
- ☐ I am a good listener and patient with others.
- ☐ I have a lot of perseverance (“stick-to-it-tive-ness”).
- ☐ I am a team player.

What other strengths and talents might make you a good worker?

Pick one of your strengths—how might it help you in a particular job?

My Vocational Identity Summary Worksheet

Directions: Think about yourself as a worker and complete the following worksheet. Some of your responses will come from earlier worksheets.

I prefer to do the following tasks:

I prefer to work with people who are:

My key strengths include:

Some of my limitations are:

My most important vocational values are:



Photo Mission #2: My Vocational Identity

In this photo mission, you will take a picture that relates specifically to you.

Photo Mission Instructions

1. Your assignment is to take a picture that represents how you see yourself as a worker.
2. Think about the assignment: **My Vocational Identity**.
3. The picture can be abstract and represent one of your values or strengths, or it might concretely capture an aspect of something you want to do in your working life, a particular work task or a job goal.
4. Carry your camera around with you and take a lot of pictures that might capture: a) who you are as a worker, b) a job you'd love to have, or c) a dream job.
5. Choose one picture and practice writing a narrative.
6. Bring the camera with the picture into the next session.
7. Your group leader(s) will help you print or display the photo you choose to discuss with the rest of the group.

Remember: If you take a picture of a person, you need to get a signed release form.

Example: This picture might represent a job that is fast-paced, exciting, and unpredictable.



Ideas for Photo Mission #2: My Vocational Identity

Directions: Based on your vocational summary, list some ideas that you have for taking pictures that will say something about your vocational identity:

Where might you go to get the pictures you want?

Writing your Photovoice Narrative for My Vocational Identity

Directions: Take a look at the picture you chose for Photo Mission #2: *My Vocational Identity*

1. What do you **SEE** here?
2. What's really **HAPPENING** here?
3. How does this relate to **OUR** work lives?
4. **WHY** does this problem, resource, or situation exist?
5. How could this image **EDUCATE** others, the community, and policy makers?
6. What can we **DO** about the problem, resource, or situation?

Write a narrative to accompany your picture.

Session 6: Costs and Benefits of Working (Part One)

In the next two sessions, you will have a chance to explore costs and benefits in your vocational journeys.

Benefits are gains (Pros) associated with any changes we make in our vocational lives. Benefits are advantages of a change. We may “get” certain things from working, like money, something to do, a specific worker role, etc.

Costs are losses (Cons) associated with any changes we make in our lives. Costs are the disadvantages of change. We may lose something by working, like free time or being able to do whatever we want.

Examples: Costs and Benefits

“I work because I need the structure in my life. Work helps me with my recovery. On the other hand, I don’t think that I could work full-time or earn enough to support myself. So I work part-time and earn an amount of money that allows me to keep my disability check and health insurance. It’s a good balance for me.”

Steven, age 47

“I hated being on SSI. I had to report every penny I earned. It drove me crazy. Now I work full-time as a peer specialist at a program for people who have mental health and addiction problems, and I get health insurance through my job. I’ll never be rich, but I don’t have to deal with the federal bureaucracy anymore.”

Marcy, age 36

“I worked for a number of years when I was younger, but now I have a number of health problems in addition to a diagnosis of a serious mental illness. Staying healthy seems to be a full-time job! I do volunteer work at my church thrift shop six hours a week, which works just fine for me.”

Nancy, age 58

“Eventually, I want to work full-time, but I am not there yet. I work with an employment specialist who helps me figure out how to keep my benefits while working part-time. I work in a health food store for 20 hours a week. I like my job a lot. I am not sure what my career will be, but I am happy to have help in planning for my career.”

Nathan, age 23

Benefits of Working

Directions: First check the benefits of working that are important to you. Add your own benefits that are not listed in “other.” (Check as many as you like.)

☐ Earning money and benefits
☐ Doing something I enjoy
☐ Feeling better about myself
☐ Meeting new people and making friends
☐ Feeling like everyone else in society
☐ Learning new skills and ideas
☐ Being respected by others
☐ Reducing symptoms and feeling healthier
☐ Other:
☐ Other:
☐ Other:

Which of these benefits of working is most important to you?

Which of these benefits of working is least important to you?

Costs of Working

Directions: First check the costs of working that are important to you. Add your own costs that are not listed in “other.” (Check as many as you like.)

☐ Concerns about loss of benefits
☐ Increased stress
☐ Less free time
☐ Less time with friends
☐ Anxiety about job performance
☐ Worry about increased symptoms
☐ Concerns about getting along with my coworkers and my supervisor
☐ Concerns about stigma if I tell anyone about my diagnosis
☐ Conflict with my role in my family
☐ Fear of failure
☐ Fear of success
☐ Other:
☐ Other:

Which of these costs of working concerns you the most?

Which of these costs of working concerns you the least?

Example: Sam's Decision-Making Process

Sam has been unemployed for several years and receives SSDI. He prepared for a career in computer programming before he was diagnosed with a serious mental illness. He is not satisfied with the way his life is now, but he doesn't know whether he can get and keep a job that he would like.

Sam describes the Benefits and Costs of Working this way:	
Benefits of Working • Earn money • Have something to do • Meet people • Meet a girlfriend • Have something to say when family members ask, "what are you doing these days?"	Costs of Working • Worried about getting ill again • Worried about the stress of working • Losing my SSDI check • Worried about making friends • Losing my free time

Sam also describes the Benefits and Costs of NOT Working this way:	
Benefits of Not Working • Lots of free time to do what I want • Playing video games all day • Sleeping in • Staying up late watching movies	Costs of Not Working • No money to do things • Feeling ashamed about not working • Nothing to do • Nothing to talk about with my family • Feeling like a mental patient • Feeling weak • No possibility of having a girlfriend

When Sam considered the advantages and disadvantages of working and not working, he decided that the benefits of working outweighed the costs of working. He still did not know what he would want to do or how he would proceed, but he did make the decision to pursue employment.

Advantages and Disadvantages of Working

Here's another way to think about the pros and cons of working. Sometimes when you make a decision, it helps to look at the question from many different angles.

Directions: Please write in the two top boxes what you think the benefits and costs of working are for you. When you are done with that, use the bottom two boxes to write what the benefits and costs to NOT working are for you.

For me, the Benefits and Costs of Working are:	
Benefits of Working	Costs of Working

For me, the Benefits and Costs of NOT Working are:	
Benefits of Not Working	Costs of Not Working

When you look at these costs and benefits all together, what do you think about working? Is it more to your advantage to work or not to work? Will you gain more or lose more? Why?

Summary: Benefits and Costs of Working

1. Overall, what do you hope will be (or have been) the greatest benefit of working for you?

2. Overall, what are you concerned will be the greatest cost (loss) to you of working?

3. Given your hopes and worries, how confident are you feeling about succeeding at work right now? Circle the number that best matches your current feeling of confidence about succeeding at work right now.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
No confidence									Very confident

4. Describe two or three things that could help you to increase your confidence about succeeding at work.

Session 7: Costs & Benefits of Working through Interviewing Others (Part Two)

The choice is yours about whether or not to work. Whatever choice you make today might change later—and that's OK. Making that choice means weighing the costs and benefits of work, and what we name as the pros and cons can change over time. When making decisions about work, there are a variety of choices you make, such as whether to work or not, whether to get paid or volunteer, and what kind of work you might want to do.

What does Exploring Other People's Work Experiences mean?

Interviewing people about their work experiences is finding out about what it is like for them to work, what they do for work, how they like their work, and even how they got into that kind of work. Interviewing other people about their work also means that you may find information that you can't find in written resources. Sometimes this is called an Informational Interview.

You can learn a lot by talking with someone who is working, whether the person is working in a job you are interested in or not.

Why Explore Other People's Work Experiences?

If we talk to people who are working, we can gather information that can help us make decisions about whether to work, when to work, and what to do for work.

Example:

"Years ago, I got really stuck and realized that I had no idea what to do with my life. I was starting to lose hope that I could ever find something that would fit me. I wondered if I could be a worker at all. And then I met someone who worked as an occupational therapist. I didn't know anything about it, but I was curious, so I asked if I could talk with her and find out more about it. It was fascinating to hear what she did, how she got into it, and why she liked it. I didn't end up going into occupational therapy, but I kept talking to people. I had hope again."

Deborah, 37

What did Deborah find out by talking to someone about working?

Example of Exploring Other People's Work Experiences

Sam is talking to James, who started working after being out on disability.

Sam: James, tell me what you like most about working when you compare it to your life when you were not working.

James: It's hard to say what I like most because there's a lot I like about my work today. I like having more money, that's for sure. I like having something to do every day. It was awful for me when I didn't have anything to do. I like the people I work with, and I like the work itself. Of course, there are times when I wish I could sleep in, but mostly I am glad that I have to be somewhere every day.

Sam: So for you, working gives you a structure and a reason to get out of bed every day. How did you know that you were ready to take on a job?

James: Well, I didn't really know I could do it until I actually did it. I had been working part-time at a job that I felt I had outgrown. I knew I could do more than I was doing, but I wasn't at all sure that I could work full-time doing this.

Sam: So until you were actually doing the job, you weren't all that confident that you could do it. What was it that made it possible for you to take the risk?

James: Well, I did have a lot of support. I was working with an employment specialist who helped me plan out a strategy for applying for this job. She really helped me a lot. I also figured that if I never took the risk, I would never know what I could do.

Sam: You had support from a counselor. Is that something that you would recommend someone else to do if he wanted to return to work after being unemployed?

James: Definitely. It's hard to make the leap without help. Job counselors or employment specialists, as they're sometimes called, are experts in helping people with disabilities return to work.

What do you think Sam is learning from James?

Conducting an Informational Interview

Exploring other people's experiences with work through an informational interview requires us to do some preparation. We are, after all, interviewing someone about their work experience!

This session will help us to think through the following pieces of the interview:

Informational Interviews	• Deciding who to Interview • Preparing Questions • Keeping a Conversation Going • Closing the Interview
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Discussion:

- Have you ever shared your experiences with work with others?
- Have you asked others about their experiences with work?
- What is the most important thing you have learned about work from other people?

Exercise: What do you want to learn from talking with someone about work experiences?

Demonstration of an Informational Interview

You will now see a live demonstration of a short informational interview. Your instructor(s) will show you what it might look like to talk with someone about his or her vocational experiences. One instructor will be the interviewer, talking to the other about what he or she does for work. Your instructor has prepared for this, just as you will prepare to do one yourself.

Watch your instructor demonstrate how to conduct an informational interview for the purpose of gathering information about work. Notice what he or she does to make the other person feel comfortable, get information about vocational experiences, and close the conversation.

After the interview is over, answer the following questions:

1. What did you see the “interviewer” do to start the conversation? _____

2. What did you see the “interviewer” do to make the other person feel comfortable?

3. Did the questions that were asked open up conversation or shut it down? Why?

4. What did the interviewer do to keep the conversation going? _____

5. What did the interviewer do to close the conversation? _____

Deciding Who to Interview

The person should be someone you want to talk to about work, the kind of work he or she does, or how she or he came to start working again.

You might want to consider criteria for picking that person.

Criteria for selecting a person to interview:

- Someone who has a disability and has made a decision to return to work
- Someone who is participating in vocational services
- Someone who has built a life with purpose and meaning
- Someone who might like to talk about his or her experiences

Exercise: Deciding who to Interview

Who would you ask to talk to about work experiences?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

What could you say to the person to ask him or her to talk with you?

What kinds of details would you need to set up before the interview?

Preparing Questions

The questions you ask will have an impact on the information you get back. There are different kinds of questions you can ask that can get you different kinds of information.

Types of Question:	Direct Questions gather a specific piece of information, and may get you a one-word, or short, answer.	Open-ended Questions open the door to more information, and often start with What, Why, How, Where?
Examples:	“Do you like your job?” “Are you working now?”	“What do you like about working?”

Below are some examples of questions that a person might ask when talking to another person about work experiences.

Examples of Questions about Working:

- How did you decide to return to work?
- What helped you make the decision?
- How did you decide to work while on disability benefits?
- Who supported your decision to return to work?
- Where services did you use?
- What do you like about your job?
- What do you like about working?

Exercise: Preparing Questions

What questions do you have that you would like to ask someone who is working now? Think of the people you identified in the previous exercise when creating your questions. You are not limited to 5 questions, you can add more later!

1. _____?
2. _____?
3. _____?
4. _____?
5. _____?

Keeping the Conversation Going

A conversation is more than questions, as you know. Usually, a conversation is made up of talking back and forth. In an interview to learn about a person's experience with work, you are having more than a casual conversation: You are drawing out the person's experiences and thoughts. One of the most effective ways to do this is to show that you are listening.

There are two ways to show that you are listening: with your body and with your words.

1. Showing you are listening with your BODY:

- Turn towards the person
- Make eye contact
- Lean in, if it feels ok to do so

2. Showing you are listening with your WORDS:

- Repeat back interesting points in different words
- Ask open-ended questions that start with What? Why? How?

Exercise: You will pair up with a classmate and have a conversation about the weather. Decide who will talk, and who will listen. The person who is listening will practice showing that you are listening, with your body and with your words. Talk for 3 minutes. Then answer these questions:

1. What was it like to listen, or be listened to, with the body? _____

2. What was it like to listen, or be listened to, with words? _____

Closing the Interview

What does it take to close an interview? Even in conversations in which we are exploring the work experiences of other people, we need to close in a way that wraps things up, ends the conversation, but also leaves the door open for further contact if you want it.

1. **Summarize the conversation:** “So, the things we talked about today were”
2. **Let the person know what you got out of the conversation:** “This conversation really helped me because”
3. **Thank the person for talking with you:** “I really appreciate your taking time out with me today...”
4. **Set up follow-up conversations:** “Would you be willing to talk with me again if I have any questions?”

Example: Jacqueline is interviewing Sonya about her new job. Read the following and write how you would close this interview if it were you:

“Sonya, thank you for meeting with me today! I want to ask you some questions about how you came to start working again. We know each other from the clubhouse, and I’ve always wondered how you did it. How did you decide to go back to work? And do you like it?”

“Jacquie, I’m so glad you asked me! I love being a worker again, even though it’s hard. After I found a medication that worked for me, I always wondered if I could go back. It was actually a peer specialist who approached me one day and said, “Have you ever thought about work?” And that was it! I talked to the vocational counselor there, and she had a volunteer job that I thought I could do. And that sent me on my way. Some days I wonder if it’s worth it, especially when I’m tired, and there are some days when I’m nervous that I can’t do it. But then I go to work and it’s usually better when I get there. Mostly, I have loved being a worker again!”

Exercise: How would you close this interview, if you were Jacquie?

Plan for Exploring Others' Experiences

In the next week or two, plan to talk with someone about his or her experience with working. This worksheet will help you to consolidate and plan for a conversation. Ask for support if needed, and enjoy the experience!

Who I plan to talk with about experience(s) with work: _____

Details about our informational interview (when, where, etc.) _____

What I will say to open the conversation: _____

My questions about the person's experience with working: _____

What I want to say to summarize and close the conversation: _____

Other things I want to remember to do (for example, send a thank you note): _____

Session 8: Vocational Supports and Services

Vocational Supports

Most people who are effective in achieving their work goals use a wide range of supports to assist them. Vocational supports are the people, places, things, or activities that help you function better in a job or help you enjoy the job more.

People Supports help you by doing things for you or with you. People supports can help you by: • Giving you a ride to work • Going to a doctor's appointment with you • Checking in with you • Encouraging you	What are Examples of People Supports?
Place Supports are spaces or environments that help you to be more happy or successful at work. Place supports can: • Give you a place to go to get away for a bit • Help you relax • Give you a place to concentrate	What are Examples of Place Supports?
Thing Supports are physical items that help you accomplish a task more easily. Thing supports can help you: • Organize your work day • Get to where you need to go • Feel good throughout the day	What are Examples of Thing Supports?
Activity Supports are what you do that help you function better in your life or help you feel better either immediately or at a later time. Activity supports can help you: • Feel more relaxed and less anxious • Get to work on time and ready to go • Feel more hopeful • Clear your mind so you can concentrate	What are Examples of Activity Supports?

Example: Marcy's Experiences with Vocational Supports and Services

I've had a lot of jobs and lost a lot of jobs in the past. I had the same pattern. I'd feel better so I would go out and get a job. I've always been good at interviewing, and I like catering so there were always jobs available. I had a pattern. I would work for a while, and then I would start feeling overwhelmed by the job, really anxious and irritable. The longest I kept a job was 2.5 years, but the average was probably six months or so. I didn't know what I was doing wrong and I was getting tired of always losing my job.

My psychiatrist noticed this pattern and suggested that I go to a vocational program he knew about. I didn't want to go because I thought that people who went there were much worse off than I was. I have been diagnosed with a serious mental illness, but I do manage it well with medication. He told me that some people who went there had a lot of problems, but many were a lot like me.

I figured I didn't have anything to lose, so I went. I met Connie, who became my counselor and coach. She helped me choose a job that could give me a schedule that would have me home early in the evening. She helped me recognize that sometimes my work caused me to have trouble sleeping and, when I don't sleep well, I am more likely to become anxious and irritable.

Connie and I talked a lot about my self-care because when we reviewed my past job losses, many of them started out by me not taking good care of myself. She helped me recognize that sleep, good nutrition, and exercise were all important for me to feel well. We also discovered that, in many of the jobs that I lost, I had problems with co-workers, especially if I was irritable. We talked about strategies I could use on the job when I was feeling bad, so that I wouldn't let it build up and then lash out at people I worked with.

I have been meeting with Connie for several years. These days, we only meet once a month, but I can call her anytime I need to. She has been an incredible support. Here is a list of the supports that she and I identified as being important to my success and happiness on the job.

People	Places/Things	Activities
• Connie (job coach) • Dr. Weller (psychiatrist) • Dave (supervisor) • Ellie (friend at work) • Stoli (my dog)	• Vocational program • Gym membership • Cell phone • Comfortable work clothes • Healthy snacks	• Exercise • 8 hours sleep • Relaxation techniques • Long walks with my dog

Identifying your People Supports

People Supports provide different types of supports:

- Practical support
- Emotional support
- Informational support
- Companionship support

Identifying your Support Needs

1. When you think about your vocational goal, what sorts of support or help do you think you will need to be successful?

2. Who are the people supports in your life today?

3. What are some examples of how they might give support to help you work?

4. What additional people supports are there who might help you work?

Identifying your Place Supports

Place Supports are spaces or environments that help you to be more happy or successful at work.

1. What are the places that support you in your life today?

2. What are some examples of how these places support you?

3. What places would you like to add to your life that could support you to return to work and be successful at work? How would these places support you?

4. What could you do to help get these places into your life?

Identifying your Thing Supports

Thing Supports are physical things that help you in some way by doing things for you, by helping you accomplish a task more easily, or just making you feel better.

1. What are the things that support you in your life today?

2. What are some examples of how these things support you?

3. What things would you like to add to your life that could support you to return to work and be successful at work? How would these things support you?

4. What could you do to help get these things into your life?

Identifying your Activity Supports

Activity supports are things you *do* that you participate in to help you function better in your life. Activities usually work by helping you feel better either immediately or at a later time.

1. What are the activities that you do that support you in your life today?

2. What are some examples of how these activities support you?

3. What activities would you like to add to your life that could support you to return to work and be successful at work? How would these activities support you?

4. What could you do to help get these activities into your life?

Personal Experiences with Vocational Services

Vocational services are a special type of support for work. These services provide help to people who are seeking a job or wanting help with a career. Each state and town has a variety of agencies and people who provide vocational services.

1. Which vocational services have you used in the past?

2. What were those experiences like for you?

3. What can you do to learn more about vocational services that you have not used?

Vocational Services

State Vocational Agency

Every state has a state vocational agency that helps people with disabilities get the services and supports that they need to find work. The state vocational agency usually has several offices that serve people in different parts of the state.

What is the name and contact information of your state vocational agency?

The state vocational agency is not the only game in town. There are other services that people can access. Here are a few examples of services that help people get jobs:

- **Jewish Vocational Services (JVS):** Most large urban areas have offices of JVS. One does not have to be Jewish to use the services of JVS. The mission of JVS is to empower individuals from diverse communities to find employment and build careers, and to partner with employers to hire, develop, and retain productive workers.
- **Goodwill Industries International:** This organization works to eliminate barriers to opportunity, and to help people in need reach their full potential through learning and the power of work. Many Goodwill centers provide on-site training programs, help with job placement, and support for work.
- **Career One-Stop Centers:** All states have Career One-Stop centers that help people explore careers, develop work skills, and find jobs. Most states have offices located throughout the state to serve people in the area. Career One-Stop Centers are often a good place to go to learn about career opportunities in your state and to search for jobs, and have websites that provide helpful information about working.
- **Vocational Services offered by Mental Health Agencies:** Many mental health services agencies offer vocational services to people who use their services. For example, a mental health agency might have a clubhouse that offers transitional employment and supported employment services; or a community support program that offers housing also might offer vocational services.
- **Supported Employment:** Supported employment focuses on rapid job search and support. Supported employment has been well researched and is now available throughout the country. Supported employment programs may exist within other services, so ask around to see where they are in your area.

Summary: Vocational Support and Services Worksheet

Directions: List the supports you currently use, whether you are working or not.

Supports and Services I Currently Use	
Supports	Services

Directions: Imagine yourself working. Are there any additional supports or services you will find helpful when you are working? List those supports and services in the table below.

Supports I Need to Return to Work and to Work Well	
Supports	Services

Session 9: Setting Goals

Goal setting is a powerful process for thinking about the future you would like to have, and for motivating yourself to turn your vision of this future into reality.

Information about Goals

Many people feel as if they're adrift in the world. For some, spending time thinking about what they want from life can help set a direction and set the stage for having a purpose and meaningful activity in one's life.

Setting Goals Can:

- Give you direction
- Increase your motivation to do something
- Increase your confidence in moving toward something you want
- Help you stay on track
- Give you something to celebrate

SMART Goals

A useful way of making goals more powerful is to use the SMART mnemonic. SMART goals are:

- **S** = Specific: The goal is clear and well-defined.
- **M** = Measurable: The goal statement includes precise actions and amounts or frequencies, so you can tell if you actually have reached your goal.
- **A** = Attainable: The goal is within your reach, something you can accomplish.
- **R** = Relevant (or Rewarding): The goal indicates something you want.
- **T** = Time-oriented goals have target dates for when you want to achieve them.

Examples of SMART Goals

For her New Year's resolution, Janelle decided to set some goals for the coming year. She identified some personal goals to improve her health and to reconnect with old friends, but she also wanted to set a vocational goal:

"I will identify three possible occupations that match my interests and values by the end of next June."

For Janelle, this goal was specific and relevant. By selecting a number (three occupations) and a target date (next June), Janelle was able to make her goal both measurable and time-oriented. Finally, she chose a goal that would require some effort, but that she believed would be attainable. Overall, her goal was SMART.

Goals can be long-term or short-term.

- Long-Term goals are generally ones that will take a year or more to accomplish and requires several steps to achieve.
- Short-term goals are simpler and easier than long-term goals. They require fewer steps than a long-term goal and are accomplished more quickly—usually in less than a few months. It is ideal to have a least one long-term goal and one or more short-term goals.

Examples of long-term goals:

- I will complete my bachelor's degree in biology at UMass Boston by May in four years.
- I will launch my own pet-sitting business by next January.

Examples of short-term goals:

- I will get a college catalog and application form for UMass Boston within the next two months.
- By the end of this month, I will make an appointment with an insurance agent to talk about liability insurance for my pet-sitting business.

Example of Goal Setting

In the summer, Phil was participating in a work program that would help him get and keep a job. He had decided he would like to find a job as an administrative assistant, because he liked working on computers and had good office skills. His vocational values were a good match for that idea, since he liked helping others and wanted a job with some variety.

Phil's Long-Term Goal

- I will work as an administrative assistant in a medium-sized office by next June.

After he reviewed his past work experiences, Phil realized that he is very organized, he is a hard worker, and he wants to do his job right. At times, though, he has difficulty because he gets anxious that his work will not be good enough. In the past, his anxiety had led to several job losses. He already takes a lot of medication, so he would like better manage his anxiety at work using stress reduction techniques. Ruth, his counselor, suggested he learn some relaxation and breathing techniques to help him manage his anxiety.

Phil's Short-Term Goals

1. Next week, I will measure my typing speed using a computer program available at the clubhouse.
2. I will learn two stress reduction techniques within the next four weeks.

Steps toward Phil's Short-Term Goal #2:

- Attend a stress reduction course at the clubhouse.
- Write the stress reduction course into my weekly schedule.
- Attend the course twice a week.
- Practice the techniques with my counselor at home and at the clubhouse.

How I will evaluate my process:

- Check in each week with Ruth, my counselor

Setting Your Own Goals

Directions: Think of some goals that you have in relation to work. These can be goals to learn about career options, to arrange a series of conversations to learn about other people's experiences, or to start either a paid job or a volunteer position. Choose a goal that is right for you, not something that you think another person might want you to achieve.

Long-Term Goals

What is your long-term SMART goal?

- Be specific and make it measurable, so you know if you've reached it (SM)
- Choose something attainable and relevant *to you* (AR)
- Name a target date (T)



By this time next year, I _____

Short-term Goals

What are the goals you need to accomplish in the next few months in order for you to make progress towards your long term-goal? You may have only one short-term goal to start out, or you might think of several short-term goals that you want to accomplish.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Are your goals Specific & Measurable? Attainable & Relevant? Time-oriented?

Steps Towards the Goal

Steps:

Sometimes, even a short-term goal can seem overwhelming. It can be helpful to outline the action steps that you need to take to accomplish that goal. Here's how to do it:

- Break down long-term goals into smaller, more manageable short-term goals that you know you can achieve. This will help you feel less overwhelmed.
- Focus on one goal at a time.
- Write down clear action steps that will lead you toward your short-term goal.
- Create timelines for yourself. It's good to set a date by which you will accomplish each step. You can change the date if it does not seem possible.
- Remain hopeful, as accomplishing your goals may take time.
- Be persistent. It takes most people more than one attempt to achieve a goal.
- Try a variety of strategies until you find something that works.

Directions: For at least one of your short-term goals, write out some small steps that you will take to accomplish that goal.

Short Term Goal (from the previous page):

Steps toward the Goal

1.

2.

3.

Session 10: My Vocational Journey

Experience tells us that vocational journeys can be more successful and satisfying when people set goals and use supports. Planning ahead and having the right supports can make the difference between an enjoyable work life and the drudgery of unemployment or unrewarding work.

Example of Vocational Goals with Supports

Jason's long-term goal is to find a position as a computer systems analyst in a hospital or university within two years. He has been out of work for seven years, but has kept his skills current by taking online courses. He is working with a career coach, Julie, through his college alumni association.

Short-Term Goal: To learn about five different types of jobs by next June.

Steps	Supports
1. Select five different job sites	- Talk with Julie and my brother, Dan - Use local job search resources
2. List interview questions I need to answer	- Look up tips for interviewing online - Ask Julie for ideas
3. Research written information about each of the sites	- My computer - Online research - Visit HR at each site (ask Julie)
4. Conduct informational interviews with people working in IT at each site	- Call alumni association to identify people - Practice informational interviewing with Julie
5. Summarize information gathered	- Library to give me space to summarize my notes - Julie will review with me on May 1st
6. Expand list of jobs, if necessary	- Ask Julie and Dan for help - Use local job search resources

How Will I Evaluate My Progress?

- Check off steps as I complete them.
- Schedule regular check-ins with Julie, who said she would work with me on this.
- Celebrate each major step when I have finished it. I'm going to the movies!

Putting It All Together - My Personal Action Plan

My Long-Term Goal is:

Is the goal Specific & Measurable? Attainable & Relevant? Time-oriented?

My #1 Short-Term Goal is:

Is the goal Specific & Measurable? Attainable & Relevant? Time-oriented?

Steps for Short-Term Goal #1

Supports for each step

1.	People:
	Places:
	Things:
	Activities:
2.	People:
	Places:
	Things:
	Activities:
3.	People:
	Places:
	Things:
	Activities:

Which vocational service(s) will I use? _____

Putting It All Together - My Personal Action Plan (continued)

My #2 Short-Term Goal is:

_____ *Is the goal Specific & Measurable? Attainable & Relevant? Time-oriented?* _____

Steps for Short-Term Goal #2

Supports for each step

1.	People: _____
	Places: _____
	Things: _____
	Activities: _____

2.	People: _____
	Places: _____
	Things: _____
	Activities: _____

3.	People: _____
	Places: _____
	Things: _____
	Activities: _____

Which vocational service(s) will I use? _____

Review of Your VEP Experience

Let's review your experience with the VEP class.

1. What did you learn about yourself as a worker?
2. What did you learn about your vocational goals and aspirations?
3. How did working on Photo Missions and Narratives support your vocational exploration?

Evaluation

Goals of the Vocational Empowerment Photovoice Program

- 1. Learn about the Photovoice process.
- 2. Explore your vocational motivation and interests.
- 3. Document your thoughts and feelings about your working life using Photovoice.
- 4. Complete two photo missions.
- 5. Connect with others who share your questions about working.

Did we meet the goals of the program? **YES** **NO**

Comment: _____

Did you meet your personal goals for the program? **YES** **NO**

Comment: _____

Displaying our Vocational Empowerment Photovoice Work

One of the major goals of VEP is to influence and educate others about vocational identity and vocational empowerment. As the class prepares for an exhibit, it is important to get your ideas about who should see your work.

Exercise:

1. **Who** are the people and organizations who should see your Photovoice work?

2. **Where** do you think our Photovoice work should be displayed?

3. **When** do you think it would be important for our Photovoice work to be exhibited?

4. **How** would you like to be involved in preparing for or hosting an exhibit?

What Happens from Here?

Review: With this Session, we are ending our 10-session Vocational Empowerment Photovoice class. Recognizing ourselves as vocational beings, whatever that means to each one of us, has been a core theme of this class.

We have explored our Vocational Identities, or ourselves as workers, with values, interests, strengths and limitations. We have Pictured Work through Photovoice, taking pictures of what work means to us, and of what we may want to do in the future. We have explored other people's experiences with working again, expanding our own sense of what it's like to go on to work in a particular field, or after experiencing a disability. And we have decided on long-term and shorter-term goals for ourselves, thinking through not only the steps we might take to achieve those goals, but the supports and vocational services we might use along the way.

Preview: So what comes next?

- As a class, we will continue to meet three times during the next three months.
 - These sessions are called, “**Booster Sessions**,” and will allow us to come together as a group to check in with each other about what we’ve been doing with our goals.
 - We will even have the chance to do some more picturing work!
- As individuals, we will have the opportunity to meet one-on-one in “**Individual Sessions**” with the group leaders to:
 - Work on your goals and steps,
 - Get connected to vocational services and supports
 - Work on Booster session creative assignments

What are you hoping to get out of the rest of VEP?

Booster Sessions: _____

Individual Sessions: _____

Booster Sessions

Booster Session #1 Worksheet

Review: Booster Session #1 happens about 1 month after the end of the VEP class. In this Booster Session, we will:

1. Discuss progress with goals and supports
2. Review of Individual Sessions
3. Give an Assignment at the end of the Session.

Progress with Goals and Supports

What do you want to discuss with the class today about where you are with your goals, connecting to vocational services, and using vocational supports?

Review of Individual Sessions

1. Have you started working with a group leader in a one-on-one Individual Session? Yes No
2. How have the Individual Sessions been helpful to you?

3. What would you like to work on next in the Individual Sessions?

Vocational Empowerment Photovoice Future Goals Assignment for Booster Session #1

1. You are to create a piece of work that reflects your future vocational goals. Your vocational goals may include paid work or volunteer activities, but may just be a hint about your “calling” in life.
2. The piece of work could be in any medium: a photograph, photomontage, collage, drawing, poem, essay, or any other format. There are no constraints on your creativity.
3. Use a medium that is both comfortable and pleasant for you.
4. The assignment is due at the next booster session.
5. You will have an opportunity to present your work and discuss it with the group.

Booster Session #2 Worksheet

Review: Booster Session #2 happens about two months after the end of the VEP class. In this Booster Session, we will:

1. Discuss progress with goals and supports
2. Review your Assignment from Booster Session #1
3. Give another Assignment at the end of the Session

Progress with Goals and Supports

What do you want to discuss with the class today about where you are with your goals, connecting to vocational services, and using vocational supports?

Review of Booster Session #1 Assignment

What can you share of your assignment? The assignment was to create a piece of creative work, in any medium that you like, that reflects your future vocational goals.

Last Assignment

You may do either of the following in preparation for Booster Session #3, one month from now. Check the option below that you plan to work on:

- **Finish working on** the piece you have started for this session. Complete this assignment for Booster Session #3.
- **Start a new piece**, using the guidelines for the Assignment for Booster Session #1.

Booster Session #3 Worksheet

Review: Booster Session #3 occurs about three months after the end of the VEP class. In this Booster Session, we will:

1. Discuss progress with goals and supports
2. Review your Assignment from Booster Session #2
3. Make plans for how you will use what you learned and did in VEP ongoing

Progress with Goals and Supports

What do you want to discuss with the class today about where you are with your goals, connecting to vocational services, and using vocational supports?

Review of Booster Session #1 Assignment

What can you share of your assignment? The assignment was to create a piece of creative work, in any medium that you like, that reflects your future vocational goals.

How Will You Use What You Learned Here?

This is our last session! As a formal class, this is the last time that we will review our work, our progress, and our creative vision for our vocational lives together through VEP. However, this does not need to be the end of the road for you! How do you plan to use what you have learned here in your own life as you move forward?

Celebrating Our Photovoice Work!

Today is the day we will celebrate the end of our class and reflect upon what we have learned!



What are you
celebrating today?

What was your
favorite thing
about this class?



I am celebrating: _____

My favorite thing(s) about this class was: _____

RELEASE FORM

I, **(print name)** _____ agree to have my photograph taken as part of a photography project to motivate people with disabilities to return to work called “Vocational Empowerment Photovoice.” People participating in this project will take pictures and will tell stories about those pictures to express their perspectives on important issues in their communities and lives.

I understand that this photo will become the personal property of the photographer and will not be used for any financial gain. I understand that the photographer may share the photo in the group as part of the group discussions.

I understand I can agree to the following additional uses of the photo by checking any or all of the boxes below:

- ☐ The photographer has my permission to display this photo in this group. I understand my name will not be used under any circumstances.
- ☐ The photographer has my permission to consider including this photo in a public Photovoice exhibit, where the picture will be framed and mounted, and/or in a web-based exhibit whose goal would be to increase people with disabilities’ motivation to work. I understand my name will not be used under any circumstances if the photo is included in a public and/or Internet exhibit. I understand I may withdraw my permission for this photo to be included in a public and/or Internet exhibit at any time prior to the opening of such exhibit.
- ☐ I would like to be notified of any exhibit that would include the photo of me so that I may have the opportunity to view it.
- ☐ I would like a copy of this photo for myself.

In order to notify me about an exhibit and/or send me a copy of this photo, my contact information is below:

Address: _____

Phone: _____

E-mail: _____

Signature / Date of person in photo
(or parent/guardian, if under 18)

Signature of Photographer / Date

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