

Vocational Peer Support

Trainee Handbook and Toolkit

money recovery
success choose
VPS job satisfaction esteem keep career
future get dreams support

Debbie Nicolellis
and Lyn Legere



Boston University Center for Psychiatric Rehabilitation

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We cannot thank the Transformation Center in Boston, MA, and its Executive Director, Deborah Delman, enough for their generous and instrumental support of the development and piloting of this curriculum. We celebrate the collaboration between peer and academic organizations, and we are grateful to have had the opportunity to bring to fruition an aspiration of ours, that of joining employment support and peer support to better serve people in recovery.

Our working advisory group has had a great impact on us and on this curriculum. We are moved by Shery Mead’s reminders in Intentional Peer Support to “learn with,” “scaffold,” and to “stay peer,” and we appreciate her support to echo those sentiments throughout this curriculum. Larry Fricks of the Appalachian Training Group helped us to find our center by encouraging us to concentrate on the beauty and power of Choose-Get-Keep. The encouragement of Peggy Swarbrick of Community Support Programs of New Jersey to add in a Social Security Work Incentives component has transformed the final training package. Lori Ashcraft of Recovery Innovations taught us much about the role that genuine caring and wellbeing plays in peer support and vocational recovery. Lastly, we thank Lori DiGalbo for her thoughts on ways that we could join vocational peer support and vocational rehabilitation systems.

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And to those who worked with us for several years while utilizing VPS skills and tools in their practice every day, we tip our hats to you. The Peer Specialist Team at Advocates, Inc., under the direction of Keith Scott, the Recovery Coaches of Recovery Innovations in Phoenix, AZ, under the leadership of Lori Ashcraft, Gene Johnson, and Christopher Magee; and finally, the staff at Promise Recovery Network under the guidance of Cherene Allen-Caraco have made more than a substantive contribution. By using VPS in your work, and talking to us month after month, you have offered us the kind of guidance that only the true experts can extend.

Finally, we wish to thank those who provided funding, the National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research (NIDILRR) and the Center for Mental Health Services (CMHS) under the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). We are grateful for your vision of, and unfaltering commitment to, improving employment outcomes for people diagnosed with psychiatric disabilities.

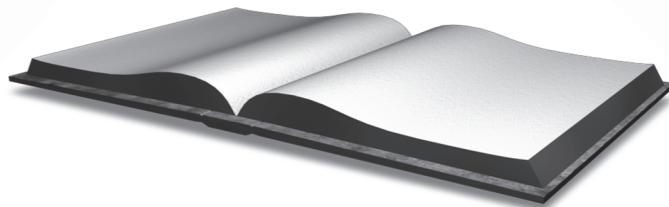
Debbie Nicolellis, Lyn Legere

How To Use This Material

The material within these pages are designed to be utilized within a classroom-training environment, but may be used for independent study as desired.

Here is what you will find within the Modules in this workbook:

1. Each Module has a different content focus
2. For ease, each Module has a “Content Guide” with a list of what is contained within
3. Overviews of each content area
4. Classroom Discussion Questions
5. Information about skills you will need to work with Vocational Peer Support
6. Examples of the process
7. Classroom Practice Exercises
8. Discussion Prompts for use in conversations with peers or to facilitate use of Tools
9. Tools to support explorations and decision-making in your work with peers
10. Tips and Pitfalls to Watch out for



Feel free to write in this book, to take notes, mark down answers for exercises and discussions, and even to doodle. This workbook is yours. You will receive a clean copy of the Tools, Discussion Prompts, and even some of the main points from each of the Modules in the VPS Toolkit. Once you start using the VPS Toolkit, make copies of the Tools to work with each person.

Course Introduction: VPS Training Program: The Basic Facts

VPS Training Program: An advanced specialization for peer specialists.

Goal of the VPS Training: To support peer specialists who wish to add information, skills, and tools needed to support vocational recovery.



VPS Teaching Methods

In the VPS Training, you might expect the following:

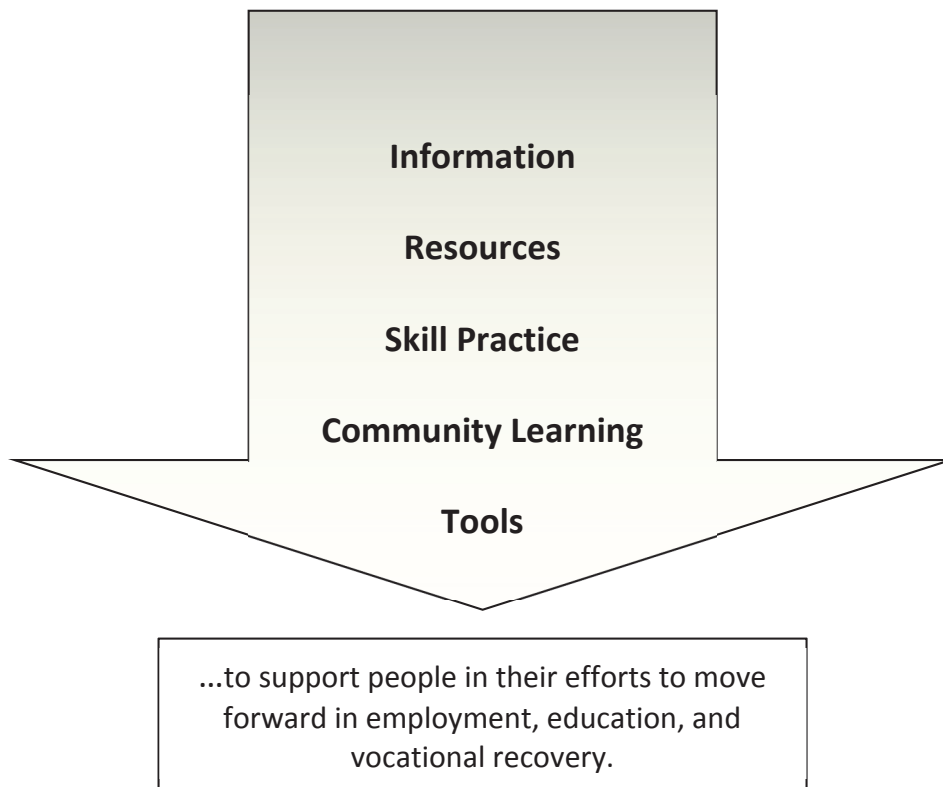
- Interactive teaching
- Lots of discussion
- A focus on skills
- Exercises to enhance experience with new tools
- Community Learning outside of class, to hone new skills in your work

VPS Training Topics

The table below lists the training topics covered in the VPS Training, by each Module.

Module 1	Overview of the Training Program Vocational Recovery & Vocational Peer Support
Module 2	Partnering to Support Vocational Recovery
Module 3	Building Motivational Foundations
Module 4	Supporting Choice in Work and Career
Module 5	Scaffolding Getting Into Jobs and School
Module 6	Keeping Work and School
Module 7	Coordinating with Employment Service Providers
Module 8	Researching Information
Module 9	Supporting People to Work While on Benefits (Optional 1-day Module)
Module 10	Using the Scaffolding: How do we keep this going?

What we will we walk away with?



Discussion:

What are you hoping to get out of this program?

What do the people you work with say about employment and educational goals?



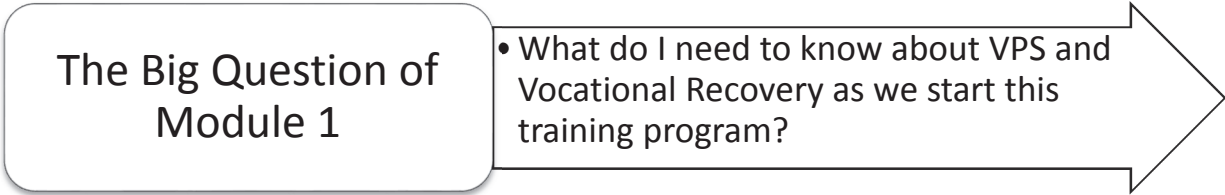
Module 1

Vocational Recovery and Vocational Peer Support

What to Expect in Module 1

**The Big Question of
Module 1**

- What do I need to know about VPS and Vocational Recovery as we start this training program?



Module 1 will introduce you to the concepts and general practice of Vocational Peer Support (VPS), and the context of Vocational Recovery. You will find in Module 1 descriptions of concepts, examples to illustrate processes, classroom exercises, and tools for your ongoing reference.

	Module 1 Table of Contents	Page
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1.1 Vocational Recovery and Vocational Peer Support

In Module 1: we will learn Information about:

- What is Vocational Recovery?
- What is Vocational Peer Support?
- What is Scaffolding in VPS?

Why look at work?

- Studies report that only 15% - 33% of people with psychiatric disabilities are working.
- Under-employment is a big problem: People with disabilities may work fewer hours, and even get paid less, than people without disabilities.
- HOWEVER: Research shows that most people with lived experience want to work – about 70% say they want to work!

What is the peer support role in supporting vocational recovery?

Assist people to decide IF they want to work,

Support people to figure out what they want to do for work or career,

Aid in the gathering of resources,

Support people to use their strengths,

And help people to get into and keep the kind of work they really want.

1.2 Review of Peer Support Principles



Vocational Peer Support is based in Peer Support principles and practice.

Pair up with a classmate to discuss the following, and write down your answers to discuss with the large group:

- 1. What main ideas do you remember from peer support training?

- 2. What peer support values guide your work today?

- 3. Which of these are the easiest to uphold?

- 4. Which of these are the hardest to uphold?

1.3 What is Vocational Recovery?

Vocational Recovery is an individualized journey of claiming or reclaiming one's right and capacity to choose, get, and keep vocational paths.

Vocational Recovery: Not just a job.

Vocational Recovery is the journey of self-discovery as someone who can have meaningful activity in one's life, who has something to offer to the world, and/or who has a future as a worker/student.

- More than a job: Recovery!
- Vocational trajectory
- Long term focus
- Career, jobs, and education
- Jobs as learning labs

Meaningful work can mean different things to different people:

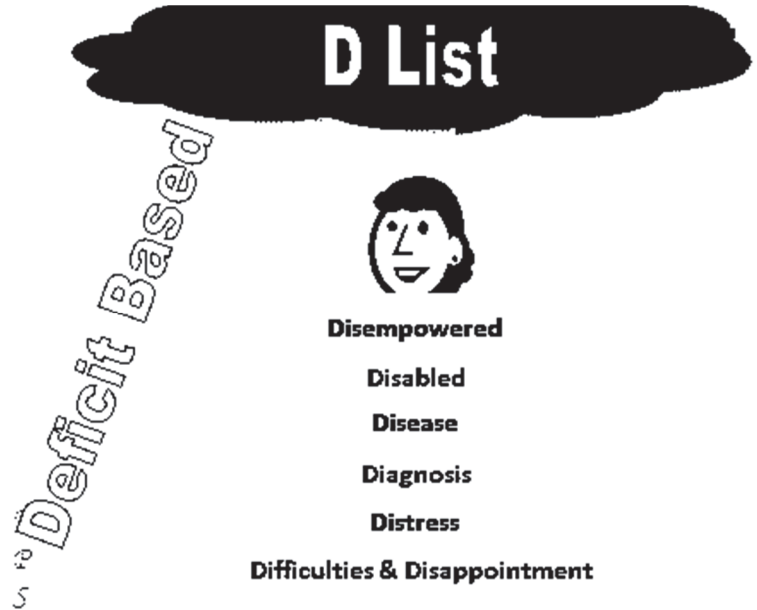
- A "stepping stone" job leading to career
- A job that "makes sense" for right now
- Work in a desired career or direction
- Learning Lab: what do I want to learn at this job?



Think about your own vocational recovery: What did it mean to you to find work that was meaningful to you?

1.4 So What Are People Up Against When Thinking About Work?

People are often up against lots of D's: Disadvantage, Disability, Distress, etc. What happens to the person when all these "D's" are surrounding the person?



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A List

Asset Based

- Advocacy & Agency
- Authentic
- Achievements
- Abilities
- Assets
- A person



And the person comes back and gets stronger and stronger!

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On the other hand, when the person has the chance to rack up assets, such as abilities, achievements, agency (as in, the sense that "I can"), what happens?

1'
2'
3'

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1.5 Vocational Peer Support: Mission

Mission of VPS: The mission of Vocational Peer Support is to assist people as they choose, get into, and maintain their vocational recovery.

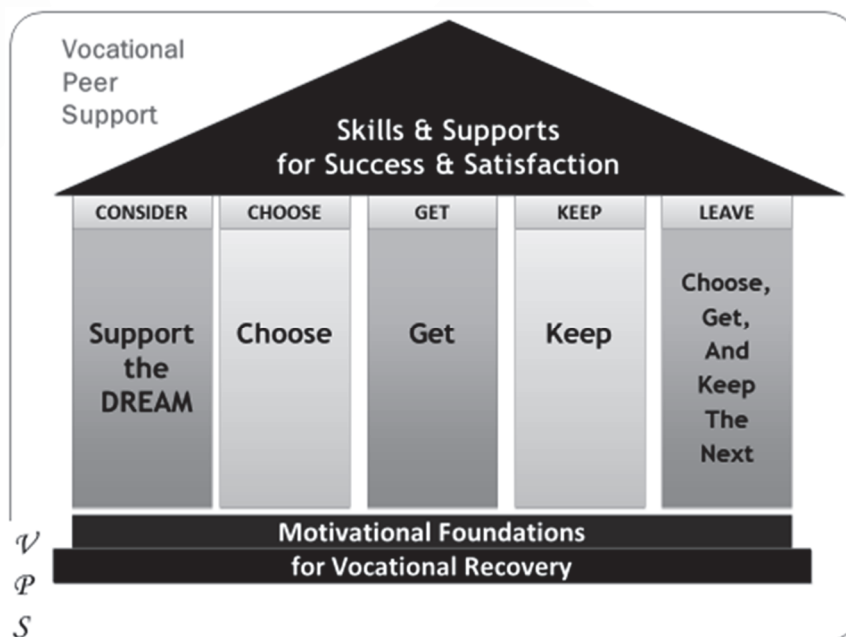
The foundations for Vocational Peer Support include the essentials of Peer Support:

MUTUAL SUPPORT
SHARED EXPERIENCE
SHARED POWER

...as well as those of Psychiatric Vocational Rehabilitation: People participating in PVR:

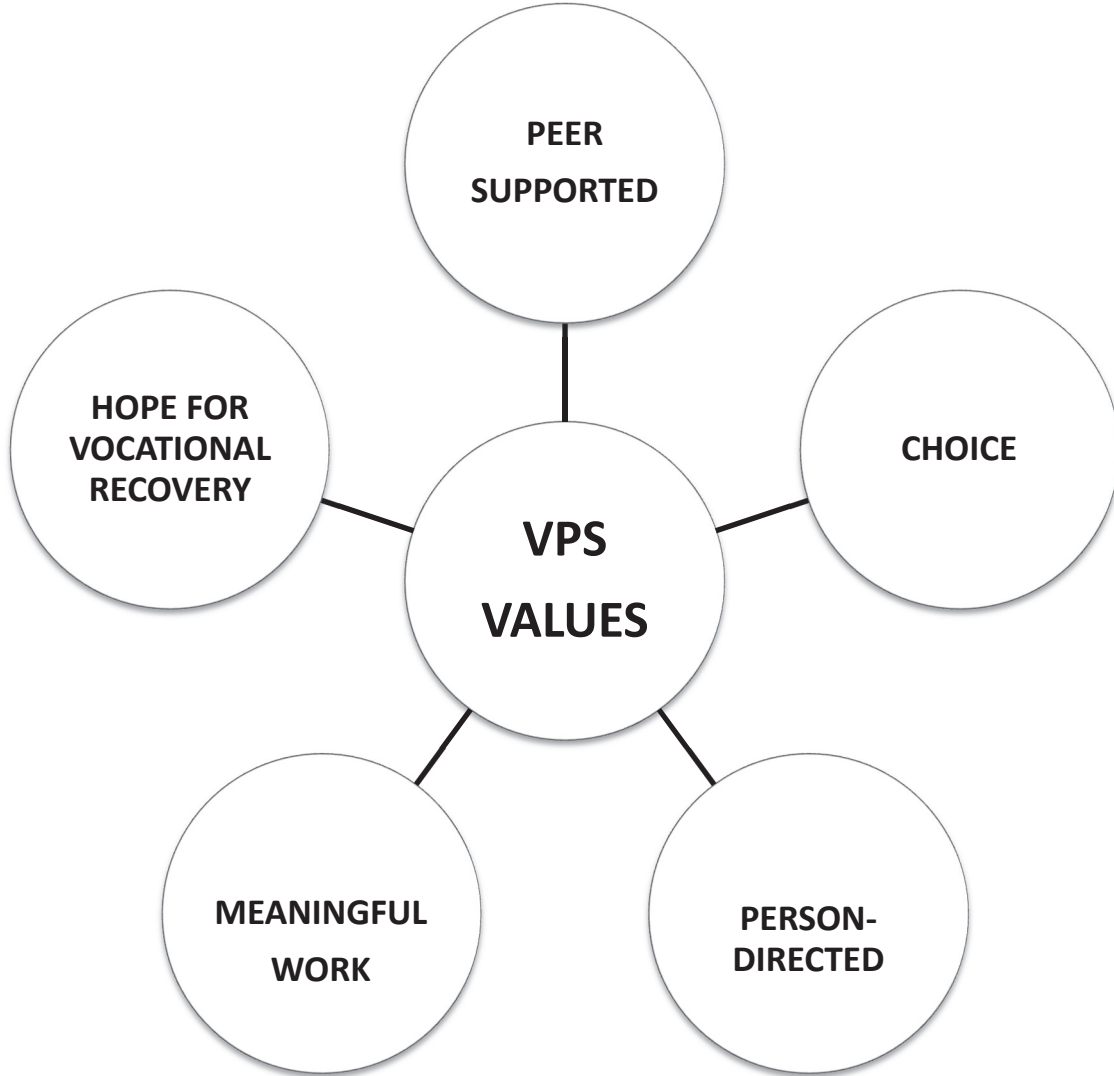
CONSIDER
CHOOSE
GET
KEEP

The following graphic will be utilized throughout this training, as an anchor for where we are. This image guides our thinking about Vocational Peer Support:



1.6 Vocational Peer Support: Values

VPS is based on values that guide our work. Here are a few:



What would you add to this list?

1.7 A Snapshot of VPS Activities

VPS Activities

Inspiring hope for Vocational Recovery

Modeling Vocational Recovery

Sharing Lived Experience & Recovery
Strategies

Supporting Exploration about Work

Helping people make *informed* decisions
about work

Providing supports as people choose, get
and keep work

Supporting the use of vocational services

Supporting the use of community resources

1.8 “Scaffolding” in Peer Support

In VPS, scaffolding is supporting someone’s learning and building up of one’s self, as the person takes on more and more of the tasks themselves.

The question then is, “What is our role in “scaffolding” the person who is interested in work and/or vocational recovery?”

What would you add? Some of what peer supports might do to scaffold vocational recovery are below. Add your own!

Accompany	Explore ideas	Explore beliefs	Have fun!	Negotiate
“Sit with”	Support decision-making	Help identify strengths	Get to know the person	Advocate
Listen!	Find resources	Explore experiences	Hear the despair	Coordinate with supports
Share experiences	Support to research	Help to remember	Understand the questions	Learn with!
Encourage	Connect	Explore what’s out there	Hold out hope	Support person to do
Help providers hear the person	Translate between person and system	Support person to use services if desired	Share your vocational recovery story	

1.9 Tool: “Scaffolding” in Peer Support

In VPS, we think of scaffolding as methods of co-learning, exploring, discovering, and gaining experience, and supporting the person as he or she takes on more and more of those tasks over time.

VPS complements other vocational services, providing opportunities for exploration, decision-making and experiencing that traditional vocational services may not be able to provide.

Use the table below to brainstorm and create a list of the kinds of things you may do to scaffold the efforts of the person you are now serving, or you may do this on your own. Pay attention to the kinds of scaffolds the person **wants**. The examples below may get you started:

Listening to me!	Go with me so I’m not alone	Help me find good info	Tell me how you did it	Understand how hard this is...

1.10 Module 1 Summary Exercise

Pair up with a partner, and discuss the following:

1. In your own words, how do you see vocational recovery?

2. How would you describe vocational peer support?

3. What were the most important moments in your own vocational recovery?

4. What are some of the ways you hope to use VPS in your work?

Module 2

Partnering to Support Vocational Recovery

What to Expect from Module 2

The Big Question of Module 2

- How do I engage with people in ways that facilitate their involvement in VPS?

Module 2 will teach you how to partner effectively with peers, so that they can engage with you, engage with the VPS process, and move forward with work and/or education.

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2.1 Partnering to Support Vocational Recovery

*“Remember that you don’t lack all the power, nor do you have all the power.”
--Shery Mead*

Discuss the following questions with a classmate:

Who are some of the partners in your life? What makes someone a partner?

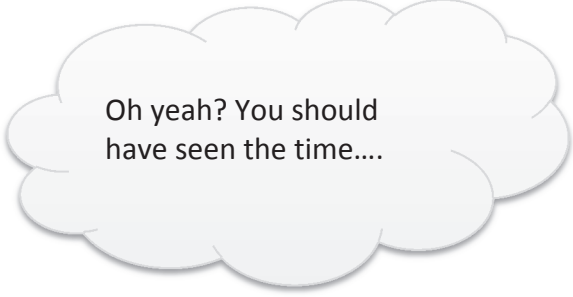
What makes someone a particularly **good partner**?

What makes someone a particularly **unhelpful** partner?

What **skills** do you think it takes to be a solid partner?

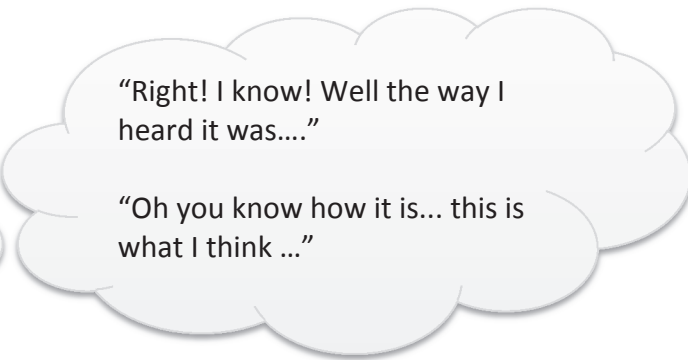
2.2 Partnering is NOT....

1) One-upping each other...



Oh yeah? You should have seen the time....

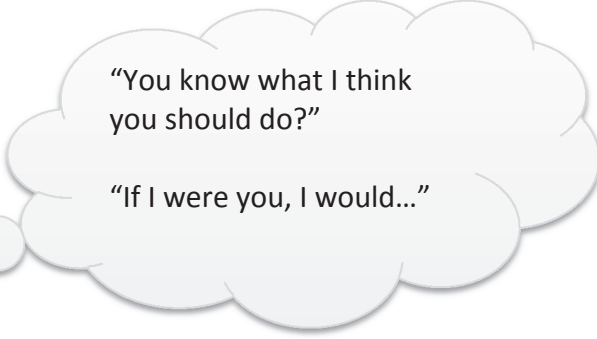
2) A tennis match...



“Right! I know! Well the way I heard it was....”

“Oh you know how it is... this is what I think ...”

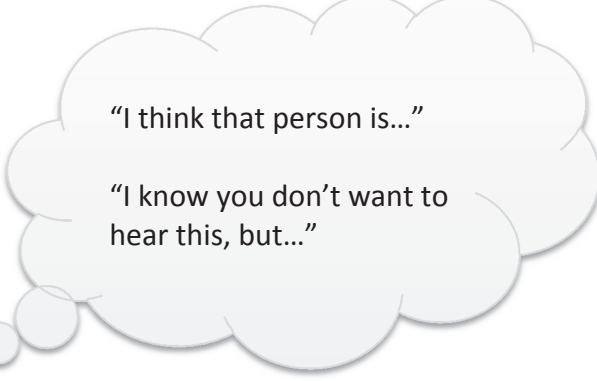
3) Giving advice or “fixing”...



“You know what I think you should do?”

“If I were you, I would...”

4) Giving unsolicited opinions...



“I think that person is...”

“I know you don’t want to hear this, but...”

2.3 Partnering: A Definition

Partnering
is...

- connecting with another person in an intentional way that assists that person to explore and discover his or her own inner wisdom

Partnering is working with people to support them to be included in every process and activity, support their vocational recovery by listening and engaging their experiences, thoughts, and feelings, and inspiring hope for vocational recovery by sharing our own experiences with the ups and downs of reclaiming a meaningful vocational life.

- Orienting
- Listening
- Sharing your Vocational Recovery Story

In the next pages, you will see:

- Examples of the process
- Information about each skill
- Discussions to help us think through each piece
- Practice opportunities related to these Partnering skills

As you move through the next pages, keep in mind your current partnerships, especially those with peers with whom you work. Think about how these skills might apply to your work.

2.4 Example: Introduction to Reggie and Miguel

Peer Support Specialist Miguel had noticed that Reggie had gotten frustrated with the advice he had been getting from all sides: his family, treatment providers, even some of his friends, who had been weighing in on what they thought Reggie should do. Reggie often felt that his service providers were doing things around him and about him, but certainly not with him.

Miguel knew personally what that was like, and so he decided to focus on strengthening their partnership. This made sense because other partnerships had been problematic for Reggie. Miguel listened hard as Reggie recounted how excluded and controlled he felt by some of the people in his life.

Miguel listened hard for Reggie's perspective, and found it difficult sometimes to stop himself from trying to change Reggie's perspective. He wanted to say things like, "Want me to tell 'em?," but he knew that doing that wouldn't be listening per se, but rather, trying to fix the situation. Instead, Miguel focused on paraphrasing Reggie's perspective, to find out more about what Reggie thought and felt.

Because of this, Reggie had the room to decide for himself what to do. He decided that if he knew more about what his service providers were thinking, had a chance to have his voice heard, and heard more about what was possible for his work life; it would be easier for him to get the most out of vocational services. He really wanted to get moving with his goal of working within the next few months.

2.5 Orienting

What is Orienting?

Orienting is facilitating understanding of **any** new or ongoing activity.

Why Orient?

When we orient, we work to be “on the same page.” Orienting can help everyone to know what’s going on.



When should we Orient?

Orienting can be used any time the person could benefit from knowing WHAT is happening, WHY, and HOW.

Where can we Orient?

Orienting is a tool that can be used in a group meeting, class, or in a one-on-one conversation in which you want to support the person to have a more full understanding of a process, activity, or discussion.

Orienting is..

- Assisting the person to UNDERSTAND:
 - WHAT is happening
 - WHY
 - HOW
 - ROLES: yours, his/hers/ anyone else's!



V
P
S

2.6 Example of Orienting: Reggie

Reggie has not felt very engaged with his treatment team. Because of this, Miguel decided to support Reggie to get oriented to new activities. Because he knew Reggie doesn't like it when people "sneak things in," he took a minute to describe orienting to Reggie, including what orienting is and what Reggie might get from it. They talked about how getting oriented to new vocational activities might support Reggie and his vocational recovery. Reggie was excited to learn more about employment activities, and asked how he could get more involved.

Reggie invited Miguel to his team meeting, since it is a meeting in which he often feels lost. They discussed what Miguel's role might be, and decided that Miguel would help Reggie to be more involved in the discussion, and another "listening ear" in the meeting.

Miguel attended the meeting with Reggie, and he quickly noticed that the discussion was going forward without attention to whether Reggie understood or not. Miguel asked the leader of the meeting to describe the goal of the meeting, and what they hoped it would do for Reggie. He also asked Reggie what he was hoping for from the meeting, soliciting Reggie's thoughts and questions before they got started.

Question: What kind of impact do you think Miguel's actions here had on Reggie? On the team?

2.7 Partnering Exercise: Orienting

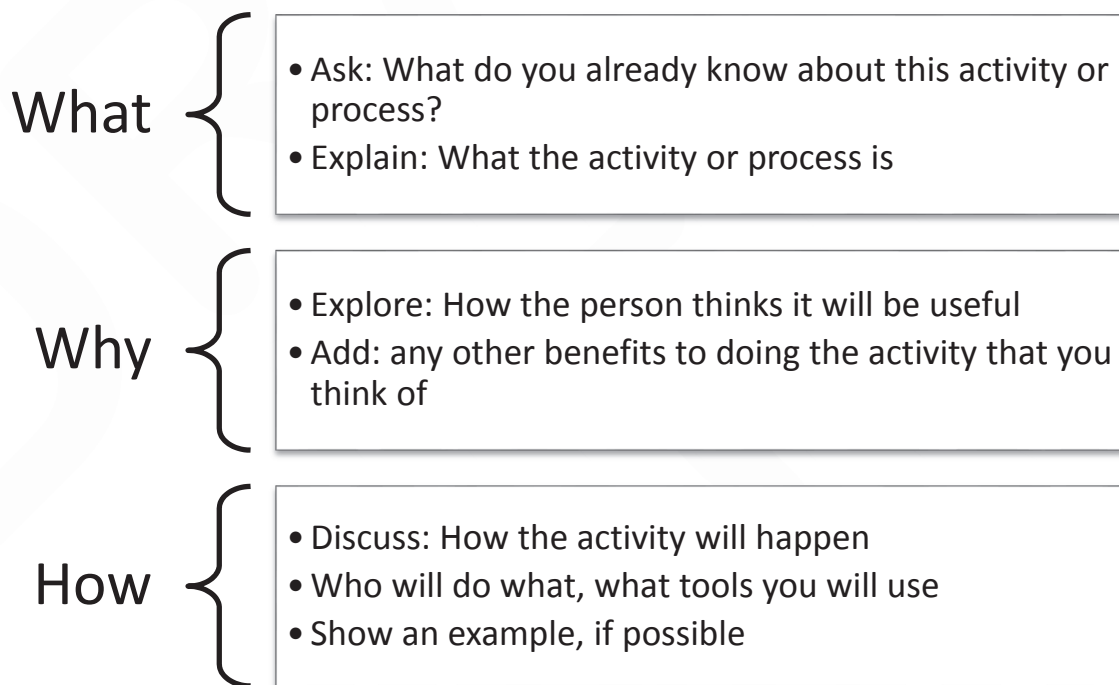
Team up with a classmate. Choose who will practice orienting and follow these directions and the instructions from your trainer(s):

If you are **orienting**, orient your partner to an activity as directed by the instructor, using the GUIDE below. Be yourself: Do not play a role, i.e., a “counselor.”

If you are working as the partner, participate in the orientation. Be yourself: Do not play the role of someone else!

If you are a third partner, just observe, and listen – Do not add to the conversation. Think about what you are hearing: What’s working?

Use this **GUIDE** to help you to ORIENT to:



Questions for Class Discussion:

1. What was easy to do? Hard to do?
2. What did you learn about Orienting?
3. How are you hoping to add Orienting to your own practice?

2.8 Orienting Discussion Prompts

Orienting involves both asking for the person's perspectives as well as giving information:

- THE WHAT
- THE WHY
- THE HOW

Use prompts such as these to help orient to any new or ongoing activity:

1. What do you already know about... (what we're about to do, this process, etc.)
2. What do you want to know about... (what we're about to do, this process, etc.)?
3. Let me share with you what I know about...
4. I remember when I was...or I felt like... (shared experience)
5. Does this seem like something that you would find helpful? How?
6. Here are some benefits I've seen/experienced...
7. What role would you like? How do you want to be a part of this?
8. Here's what you might see (me/other people doing) during...
9. What do you know about how (this activity) might happen?
10. Let me show you an example of...
11. Here's what we can expect of...

2.9 Orienting Checklist Tool

Instructions: Use this checklist anytime the person could use an orientation to what is happening, for example:

- You are suggesting an activity to do together
- Others are starting an activity or meeting with the person
- At the start of an activity that you've agreed to do together
- If you or the person "gets lost"
- If you are coming back to an activity you started previously

CHECKLIST FOR ORIENTING:

- Ask: What do you know already about this activity?
- Tell: WHAT the activity is
- Ask: How this activity could be useful to the person (WHY do it)
- Suggest: Any added benefits to doing the activity you can think of
- Ask: If the person knows HOW this activity will occur
- Describe: HOW the activity will happen (who will do what?)
- Show: An example, if possible
- Other things you would add:

2.10 Listening

Listening SOUNDS easy enough... But is it?

How do you know someone is really listening to you?

As a peer specialist, what are some of the things you do to ensure that you are listening?

*Listening is more than hearing: It involves not only the ears and brain;
we have to engage our hearts, minds, and intention.*

How do we Listen?

We will focus on three skill areas that will help us to listen in a way that engages people in Vocational Peer Support and vocational recovery.

Listening	Attending
	Paraphrasing key content
	Using silence

2.11 Example of Listening: Reggie

What do you notice about what Miguel's Listening?

Miguel prepared himself to listen at Reggie's team meeting by doing a few things. First, because he often gets distracted by all the paperwork he has to do; he cleared his space of extraneous papers so that his focus could be on Reggie and the meeting at hand. Miguel also wrote a note to himself to work on his report, so that it would not distract him while trying to listen.

Miguel reminded himself to use "SOLER" to make sure his body communicated his interest in what was being said –to make sure that he squared his shoulders so that his body was facing the person, to be open with his posture, to lean forward when someone was saying something important, and to make eye contact and relax.

At the team meeting, Miguel was ready to listen and was primed for talking about work. But he decided to listen first, without responding right away, and without asking a lot of questions. He wanted to make sure that Reggie had a chance to get his thoughts out completely, without a lot of other people deciding on the direction of the conversation.

When it seemed like a good time to jump in, Miguel reflected back his understanding of what Reggie had said because 1) he wanted Reggie to know that he was being heard, and 2) he wanted the staff and other supporters to understand what Reggie was telling them. This seemed to get Reggie talking even more, and Miguel noticed that the staff did not need to ask so many questions. Reggie had become a full participant in the conversation.

2.12 Listening: Attending

What is Attending? Attending is focusing on the person with our bodies and minds.

Why do it? Attending is showing, with body language, that we are listening to another person.

How do we do it?

Attending involves:	Clearing distractions
	Opening our minds
	Attending physically

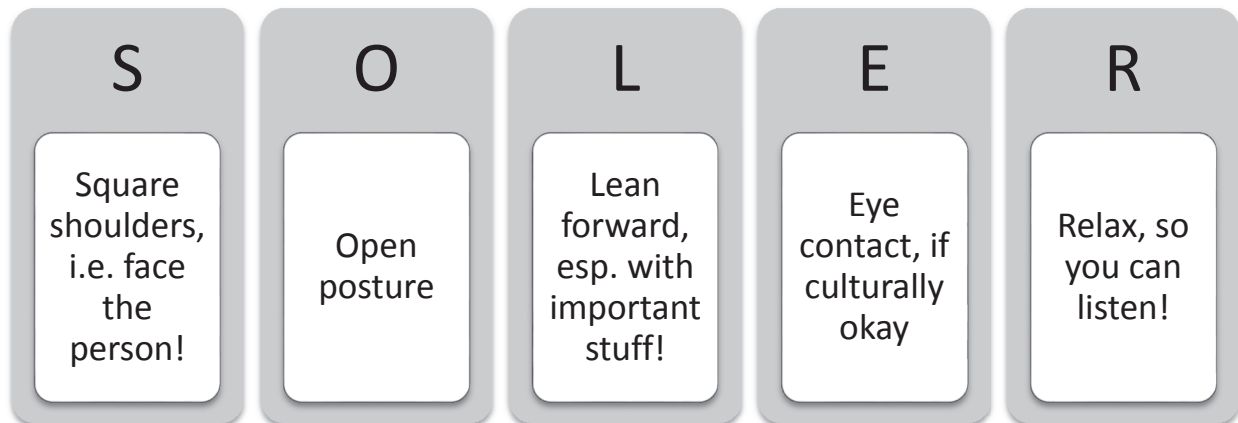
When **clearing distractions**, consider:

- phones ringing,
- open door,
- paperwork everywhere!

When **opening your mind**, become aware of any internal distractions

- to-do lists,
- wandering thoughts,
- preconceived notions about the person

Attending physically: Here's a mnemonic to help you remember how to attend to someone with your body:



2.13 Checklist: Clearing Distractions

When clearing distractions, think both about::

1) The space around you: Ask yourself:

- Is the space around me cluttered?
- Am I focusing on something in front of me or around me?
- Are there interruptions and disruptions in this space?
- Are we likely to be able to focus here?



2) The space inside you: Ask yourself:

- Is my head cluttered with other things to do or other worries?
- Do I have the willingness to listen to this person?
- Do I have the “space” in my head to listen?

How to Clear Distractions. Try...

- Clearing the papers on your desk
- Finding a new space that is quiet
- Putting a sign on the door
- Putting your phone “on silent” (and out of sight)
- Texting yourself a “to do” list for later
- Taking care of details beforehand that could get in the way
- Other: _____
- _____

2.14 Listening: Paraphrasing

Questions to Ponder:

- Have you ever listened through paraphrasing?
- Has anyone used paraphrasing to listen to you? What was that like?
- Who does paraphrasing support?
- When should we paraphrase?

Paraphrasing is stating in different words what we hear another person saying.

Why do it? Paraphrasing can help us to check out what we are hearing, and show that we understand.

Paraphrasing is...

Summarizing words, feelings, beliefs

Using different words

Sandwiching your questions

How do we do it? Sometimes it is helpful to use “leads.” The following leads can remind us to paraphrase. How could you use these in your work?

Paraphrases might look like this:

So you're saying...

You want people to know that...

So you...

You wish that....



2.15 Example of Paraphrasing

Throughout the team meeting, Miguel invited Reggie to give his perspective. Miguel listened and paraphrased to ensure that Reggie’s perspective was heard, and that it was heard correctly.

Afterwards, they talked about the meeting:

Miguel: So, what did you think about the meeting?

Reggie: It was okay – I was glad you asked me what I wanted out of the meeting. For once, I was actually a part of it.

Miguel: So you were glad to have a voice in the meeting.

Reggie: Yeah! It was great...(pause)...but I wish that people were more interested in what I have to say. I could tell that most people felt like my talking in the meeting was a bother to them.

Miguel: So you feel disappointed that everyone is not as excited as you are that you finally have a voice in the process.

Reggie: I am! Everybody here keeps talking about “recovery,” but then I don’t get any love as somebody who is going after my own recovery. It’s not going to stop me though.

Miguel: You’re bummed out that you aren’t seen for the strong, resilient person that you are. But you’re not swayed. You’re on the path!

Q. What did you notice in this example?

2.16 Practice: Paraphrasing

Instructions: Read the statements below, then answer the questions. Lastly, write in a paraphrase that is even better than those listed as options.

Robbie: “I really wish my counselor would just stop asking me so many questions, so we can get on with it. She asks me everything from how much money I have to when my last dentist visit was... why can’t she just help me get a job?”



Q. What would the best paraphrase be?

1. “I totally understand. Have I ever told you about the time that happened to me?”
2. “So you just wish your counselor would just stop asking you so many questions and get on with it. You don’t see why she just can’t help you get a job!”
3. “You’re ready to get started with the job search!”

What would be an even better paraphrase?

Kate: “I’m really hopeful about my future – I’ve always thought I would be a good worker. I just have no idea what I should be doing – I mean, how do people figure this “work thing” out? How will I know what’s right for me?”



Q. What would the best paraphrase be?

1. “You know what I think you would be good at? Accounting!”
2. “What if we did a test to assess what you’re good at?”
3. “You’re not sure how to decide what the best direction is, but you definitely know there is a job for you out there.

What would be an even better paraphrase?

2.17 Paraphrasing Checklist Tool

Paraphrasing Preparation Checklist:

- Have I prepared for Listening?
- Have I listened for the most important points the person is making?
- What do I think is being communicated here, in words, tone, emotion, and in body language?
- How can I use different words to acknowledge what the person is saying?
- How can I state those points, in different words, to demonstrate my understanding of the person's point of view?

Keep your Paraphrases:

- Brief!
- Focused on the main point(s)
- Oriented to the person
- In different words
- Free of judgment

Paraphrasing is not telling people what they think, feel or believe. It is affirming that we hear what people say to us.

Trying out new skills can be uncomfortable and awkward. Just like riding a bike was awkward until we "got the hang of it." In our experience, the same thing happens with paraphrasing. Give yourself a chance to get your balance – it WILL happen!

"Leads" you can use to state your paraphrases:

"You think that _____"

"So you're saying _____"

"You feel _____ because _____"

"You believe _____"

2.18 “Sandwiching” Questions

Questions to Ponder:

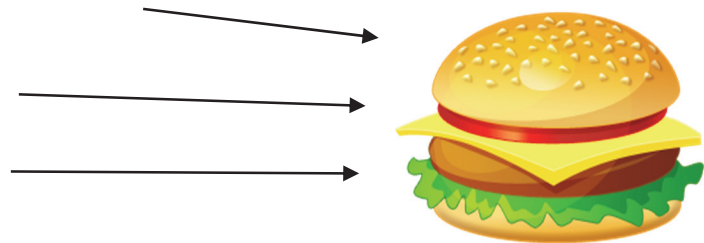
- When can questions be helpful? When are they NOT helpful?
- What’s the difference between an open-ended question and direct question?
- Who is in control when questions are asked?

Sometimes questions get in the way of connecting in an intentional way. When they do, we might want to “sandwich” our questions between reflective responses:

Paraphrase the person’s statement

Your Question

Paraphrase the person’s answer



Sandwiching questions is showing the person that you understand what is being said both before and after asking a question.

You’ll be amazed at how few questions you actually need to ask in order to get to know the person’s perspective!

What are some benefits to Sandwiching Questions?

When would you Sandwich Questions?

2.19 Example of Sandwiching Questions

Miguel: What would have helped to make you feel more welcome in the meeting?

Reggie: Well, for one, they could have looked at me in the eye when I was talking instead of writing notes.

Miguel: So, acknowledging that you were speaking instead of looking away would have helped.

Reggie: Yeah. There's nothing worse than feeling like you're all alone in a room full of people who are writing furiously. What are they even writing? Are they writing stuff about me?

Miguel: It's disconcerting to not know what they're doing. But putting down their pens and paper would have helped. Did anyone do anything during the meeting that led you to think that they were listening?

Reggie: Well, I noticed that Sarah nodded her head, and even asked me a question about something I said. That was good.

Miguel: So you knew that at least one person was listening, because she acknowledged you. Twice!

Reggie: Exactly. I would love it if the rest of the people would start listening like that. It made me feel good.

Q. What do you notice about Miguel's partnering here?

How did Miguel Sandwich his question?

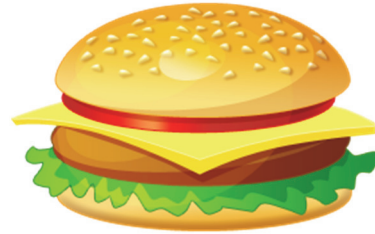
2.20 “Sandwiching” Questions Checklist Tool

Sometimes when we are interested in what someone is saying, we bombard the person with questions. We may intend for this to show our interest, but sometimes our interest can be received as a barrage of questions, and that actually creates a situation in which WE are controlling the conversation. When this happens, the person actually may feel left out, unimportant, or unheard.

With too many questions, we also may *start to control the direction of the conversation*. When we partner, we work to make sure that the **person** is driving the process. One partnering strategy is to “sandwich” our questions between reflective responses:

CHECKLIST FOR SANDWICHING:

- Has the person just said something that I can paraphrase BEFORE I ask a question?
- Have I heard the person completely before I ask a question?
- Is there another paraphrase or summary that I can offer instead of a question?
- Can I use silence here instead of a question?
- If I ask a question, is this question relevant to the conversation?
- Will this question support the person to move forward, or will it just satisfy my own curiosity?
- After I ask the question, have I listened to the answer?
- Have I paraphrased the person’s answer to my question?



2.21 Listening: Using Silence

“There are times when silence has the loudest voice.”

--LeRoy Brownlow

Questions to Ponder:

- What is the benefit of silence when connecting?
- What is it like for you when someone listens without talking?
- What is hard about being silent when listening to someone?



Exercise: Work with a partner from class. One person should talk about a topic important to him or her. The other will listen: without talking. The person listening should not ask any questions, make any comments, or offer advice.

Do this for five minutes, then discuss your experience with the larger group.

2.22 Using Silence Checklist Tool

Silence can feel very scary to us, and we may be tempted to jump in to avoid the discomfort of silence. Usually, silence means the person is doing further exploration and can't put his or her thoughts or feelings into words yet. Being patient, and allowing the person the space he or she needs, can be a wonderful gift.

During silences, attend to the person by paying attention to the person's body language and facial expressions, and ask yourself, "What is the person communicating to me?" This will distract *you* from your discomfort, as well as prepare you for a meaningful reflective response later.

The truth is, talking about vocational recovery can bring up some intense experiences and feelings. As supporters of recovery, we may be tempted to try and fix things, or to fill up the silence with our own experiences, questions, or simply change the topic. It is harder, but much more meaningful, to us and to the person, to simply sit with our discomfort and listen.

CHECKLIST FOR USING SILENCE:

- Ask yourself if this moment needs a response
- Ask yourself if it would be helpful to give a verbal response right now, or would silence be more respectful?
- If you feel uncomfortable, consider why. Is it your own internal pressure to do or say something? If so, work to lessen the discomfort, but allow the person room to talk.
- Breathe.
- Relax into the moment – you don't need to fix anything. Just be there with the person!
- Focus on the person.
- Consider a paraphrase: What is the person communicating to you?

2.23 Sharing your Vocational Recovery Story

Sharing Your Vocational Recovery Story is a cornerstone of peer practice. When you were trained as a peer supporter, you learned how to tell your own recovery story in a way that offered hope.

Questions to Ponder:

- What do you remember from peer support training about telling your story?
- What are elements of a helpful telling of your recovery story?
- What pitfalls do we need to watch out for?

Sharing is part of co-learning, another cornerstone of peer practice!



Sharing our perspective or our story involves first considering:

1. Have I listened to the person's perspective first?
2. Have I demonstrated understanding of that perspective?
3. Will the person benefit from hearing this perspective or story?
4. Will I hinder or hurt by sharing now?
5. Is this story for me, or for the other person?
6. Am I inspiring possibility, connection, and hope through sharing?
7. What part or snippet of my story is relevant right now?

What would you add to this list? _____

2.24 Example of Sharing Part of a Vocational Recovery Story

Miguel didn't hesitate to share part of his vocational recovery story because he had heard Reggie talk about feeling discouraged. Reggie had been worried about whether he would ever be able to work in a great job, and had been disappointed that his team still seemed to be disinterested in his ideas.

Miguel shared with Reggie that he remembered what it was like to feel hopeless about ever having a meaningful vocational life. He shared his memories of what it was like to see that everyone seemed to think something different about what he should do for work. He remembered feeling bummed out, wondering why he should bother trying. But he didn't stay there. Miguel also told Reggie about the person in his life who had believed in him, the person who had encouraged him. He told Reggie how he got to the point in his life that he started to use employment services. He told him about his first job, and how he lost it, but that he learned that it might take a minute to get his "working legs under him." He ended this snippet of his story with hope for Reggie's vocational life, saying, "If I did it, I know you can, too."

What did you notice in this example?

Questions to Ponder:

- How are vocational recovery stories different from recovery stories?
- Have you ever told part of your vocational recovery story before?
- What is the benefit of telling snippets of your vocational recovery story?

2.25 Exercise: Sharing our Vocational Recovery Stories

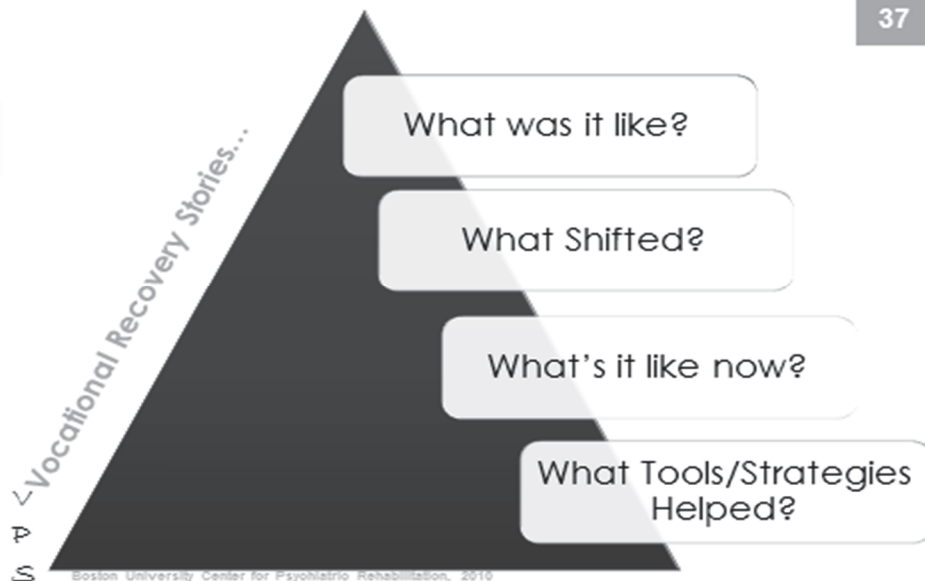
Instructions: Read the introduction and example statement by Reggie and answer the questions below. Be prepared to discuss your answers with the group.

Reggie: “Everyone around me has a different idea of what I SHOULD be doing. And most people don’t have very high expectations for me. If the people in my life don’t think I can do it, how can I think that I can do it?”

What should Miguel do first?

How can Miguel paraphrase what he’s heard?

What snippet of your own story would you share with Reggie?



2.26 Exercise: Your Vocational Recovery Story

Sharing your recovery story has been elemental to supporting people in their own recovery. You may never have thought through your Vocational Recovery Story: how work and school have been a part of your overall experience of recovery.

As you get ready to support someone’s vocational journey, think through snippets of your own vocational story. Think about how you got to where you are now. Be aware of the times that entering into work or school was scary, or presented challenges, because your peers also may be going through similar things.

Significant Moments in my Vocational Recovery Story

	<p>Tips for a successful story:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tell a vocational recovery story, not a vocational struggle story! • Fill your story with hope, even as you acknowledge the times that you felt scared or hopeless. • Consider who you are talking to: Will the person benefit from this part of your story? • Ask yourself: Is this story-telling for me or for the person? • Be genuine!

2.27 Considering Sharing Vocational Recovery Stories Checklist Tool

Sharing how we got to where we are now may inspire hope for those who are asking themselves similar questions to the ones we once asked ourselves.

Consider the person: Will sharing at this time help or hurt?

- Have I listened to the person's perspective first?
- Have I demonstrated understanding of that perspective?
- Have I considered why this story might be useful?
- Will the person benefit from hearing this perspective or story?
- Will I help or hurt by sharing this story now?
- Can the person hear this story now?

Consider the timing: Is this the right time to tell this story?

- Is this story for me or the other person?

Consider the story: What part of my story is relevant here?

- Can I relate to the person's experience, and do I have a story that communicates that?
- Am I inspiring possibility, connection, and hope through sharing?

Consider yourself:

- Do I feel comfortable telling this part of my story?

2.28 One Last Partnering Exercise



Partnering is...

- Orienting
- Listening
- Sharing Vocational Recovery Stories

Let's take a look at this scenario. How might you begin to partner with Ken?

Ken: "I KNOW that there are other people who are working and figuring out their careers. I just don't know that I can do it – and believe, me, I've tried! I've worked before, and I failed. It just didn't work out. So I appreciate your wanting to help, but I just don't think that I can work."

- What are the MOST important thoughts, feelings, experiences or beliefs you hear?

- How would you paraphrase what Ken said? Be brief, use different words than Ken did, and accurately capture the most important point(s).

- Is there an activity that you might orient Ken to? How would you orient?

- What part of your own story would you share with this person to inspire hope for vocational recovery?

2.29 Practical Assignment: Your Vocational Recovery Story

Instructions: *This assignment will take approximately 30 minutes to complete. Have it ready for the beginning of the second day of class. Use this worksheet to prepare. You will be directed by your instructor about how and when to discuss this assignment.*

Brainstorm the following. In the next class session, you will be asked to share a snippet of your vocational recovery story with a partner in the class, and then to discuss the experience of both sharing and hearing vocational recovery stories.

- **What was it like** to have challenges with working and/or going to school?
- **What shifted** in your life that made it possible to work or study again?
- **What's it like now** to be working and/or going to school?
- **What tools and/or strategies did you use** to get over obstacles along the way?
- **What gave you hope?** What gives you hope now?

Module 3

**Building Motivational
Foundations**

What to Expect from Module 3

The Big Question of Module 3

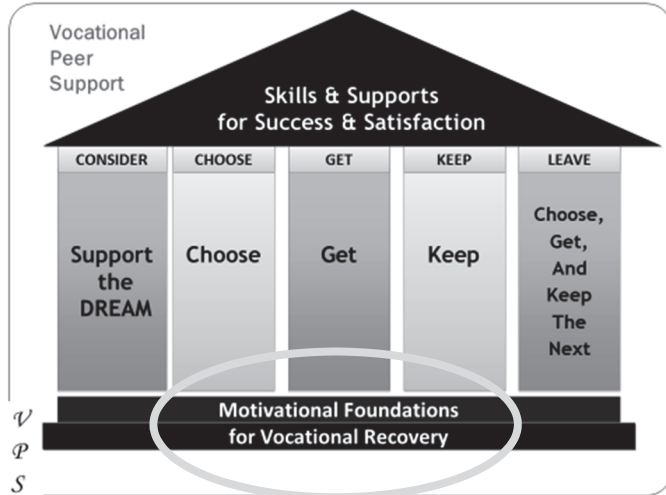
- How can I support people who are considering work, but haven't fully decided to move forward?

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3.1 Motivational Foundations Overview

In this Module, we will learn how to support people to build the Foundational Building Blocks of Vocational Recovery.

Building Motivational Foundations is exploring and building the need, beliefs, information, and supports that sustain our efforts to make changes in our vocational lives.



In this Module, you will be able to:

- Look at each Factor separately
- See examples of the process
- Look at and experience tools and discussion prompts to help explore and build Motivational Foundations

Remember that a review of each Motivational Foundations factor, with tools and discussion prompts, will be available in the Toolkit for your everyday use.

At this point in the training, you will be expected to demonstrate skills you learned in past modules, so use your partnering skills in

Building Motivational Foundations is NOT a “Ready or Not” process. This process gives people the opportunity to decide for themselves HOW ready they are for making a major life change like engaging in work, school, or career.

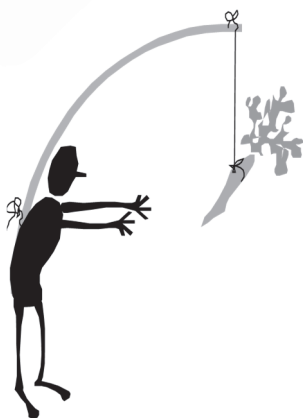
3.2 Foundations of Vocational Recovery

Or... what helps me feel ready

Motivational Foundations are the:

- Beliefs
- Knowledge
- Experience
- Resources that enhance or hinder our involvement in vocational recovery

Motivational Foundations are those critical factors that help us to consider for ourselves, “Do I stay where I am, or do I move in a new direction?”

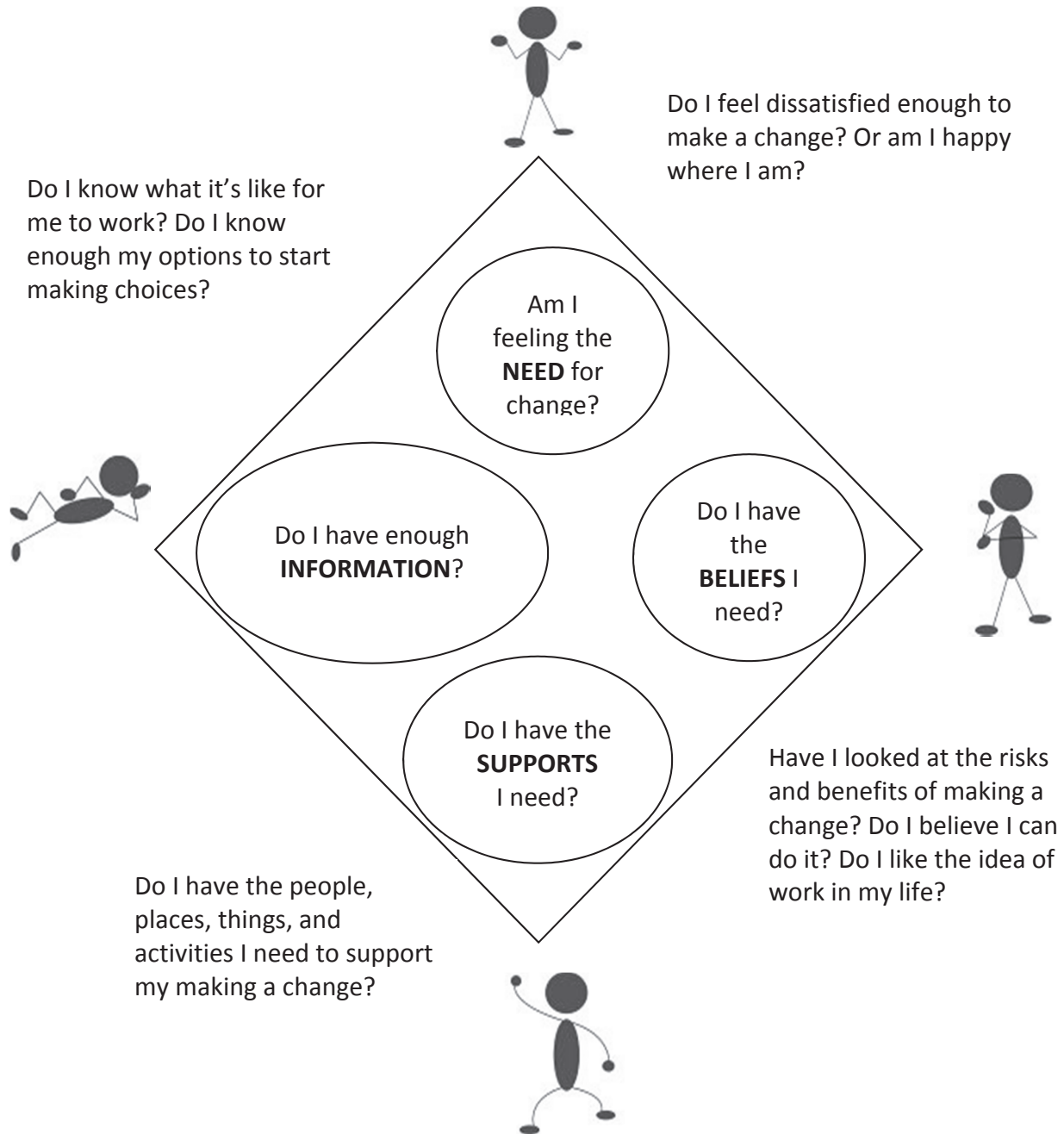


Questions to Ponder:

- How do we change?
- How do we know that it’s time to start a journey of change?
- How do we keep going along the way?
- What helps us?
- What hinders our movement forward?
- How are these things similar or different from what we hear from our peers?

3.3 Foundational Building Blocks

Factors that impact change, and specifically change around work, include:



3.4 Motivational Foundations: Overall Process

Feeling ready, willing, and able to be on the journey of vocational recovery strongly impacts our success and satisfaction along the road.

3-step process for the person

Explore: How strong is this factor for me?

Discuss: Do I need to build, and is this the time?

Build: What would help me feel more confident?

The Four Motivational Foundations:

The Motivational Foundations include Need, Beliefs, Information, and Support.

We will start with an overall example, and then learn about each one separately in Module 3.



3.5 Example: Exploring Motivational Foundations

Miguel knew that Reggie had wanted to consider work for some time. He'd been working on having a voice in his team meetings, and had made it known that he is interested in work.

Miguel also has heard Reggie say that he was unsure about whether now is the time. Given that Reggie is probably "considering" work right now, Miguel invited Reggie to explore Motivational Foundations with him. He and Reggie went to grab a cup of coffee to talk about what the Foundations are and what kinds of things they might do together. Because Reggie likes to look back at what they've talked about in previous meetings, he indicated that he'd rather work with concrete tools so they can write down stuff along the way.

They started with Need. Exploring not only how he felt about not working right now, but also how he felt about his current living, learning, and social situations revealed that work is the area for which he felt the most Need. So they moved on to Beliefs.

Exploring Beliefs gave both Reggie and Miguel more information about Reggie's feelings about work overall. Reggie had been worrying, saying, "maybe work is not for me" because he hadn't worked a lot of jobs. Concerned about his benefits, he had heard that he could completely lose his monthly check if he went back to work. He said that he was hopeful that work could make his day-to-day life better, but at the same time, the risks worry him.

Reggie rated his Information medium-high, because he knows what he likes and dislikes. However, he hasn't had enough work experience to know what kinds of environments are out there, and what kinds of work would suit him.

And when they looked at Supports, Reggie revealed that though they've been working on it, he doesn't feel that his team is behind him enough to feel confident about moving forward. He doesn't know if people would help with things like getting to job fairs or getting enough bus fare together to meet with an employment counselor.

They decided to work together to think about how Reggie could start to build the beliefs, experience and information he needed, and to educate his supports. Reggie told Miguel, "I want to 'get my ducks in a row,' as my granddad used to say."

3.6 Foundation: Need

“If it ain’t broke, don’t fix it”

And so it goes.



Questions to Ponder:

- How do YOU know you have a need for change?
- What indicators let you know that “it’s time?”

What is it?

A “**need**” for change is an *internal or external push* that says, “it’s time to make this change.....”

- An example of an **external “push”** to get work might be finding out that your benefits have been cut off.
- An **internal “push”** might be a strong feeling of dissatisfaction with your current situation. For example, “I just can’t deal with all these agencies that make me feel horrible about myself anymore. I need to get a job.”

How do we do it?

In order to decide if we have need for a change now, we must ask ourselves this question about our CURRENT situation:

“Am I satisfied where I am now, or do I feel a need to change?”

Should I stay?

Or...

Should I go?



3.7 Example: Exploring Need

Ming, a peer support specialist, began working in a group home about a year ago. When she started her work, she was surprised to see that the people living there hadn't heard much about recovery and, in some ways, may have been afraid that all her talk about recovery was really just a front for cutting off services.

When Ming would ask people about their satisfaction with their current situations, people universally said that they were very satisfied. They loved the group home, and were OK with not working, with their social connections, and with their educational status.

Ming realized pretty early in her work that the satisfaction that people were indicating may have been related to their beliefs about the possibility of change. What if they were just resigned to their fate instead of feeling happy with it? She and some of her colleagues wanted to introduce the possibilities of change by refocusing and talking about vocational recovery, including inviting other people in recovery to the group home to talk about their experiences out in the world.

She knew that this would be a process of discovery, but hoped to open up the possibility of vocational recovery for those who wanted it.

Q. Do you agree with Ming's idea? Why or why not?

3.8 Exploring Need Tool: UNEMPLOYED

Exploring Need involves deciding how *dissatisfied* you are with your CURRENT vocational situation. Use this tool if you are **unemployed**.

People

1. Who are the people who are usually in your workplace? (supervisors, customers, coworkers)

2. How satisfied are you with NOT having these people in your life right now?

Activities

1. What do you usually do while working?

2. How satisfied are you with NOT doing these activities right now?

Place

1. What are some of the places and spaces that you associate with work? (office, construction site, parking lot, etc.)

2. How satisfied are you with not having a place to work right now?

Total Satisfaction: How satisfied are you with not working?

- Satisfied (Low Need) Neutral (Medium Need) Dissatisfied (High Need)

3.9 Exploring Need Tool: EMPLOYED

Exploring Need involves deciding how dissatisfied you are with your CURRENT vocational situation. Use this tool if you are **currently working**.

People

1. Who are the people who are in your current work situation? (supervisors, customers, coworkers, etc.)

2. How satisfied are you with these people in your current job?

Activities

1. What are some of the activities that you do in your current job?

2. How satisfied are you with your current work activities?

Place

1. What does your workplace look like?

2. How satisfied are you with your current workplace?

Total Satisfaction: How satisfied are you with your job overall?

- Satisfied (Low Need) Neutral (Medium Need) Dissatisfied (High Need)

3.10 Discussion Prompts: Exploring Need

Note: Remember to use other partnering skills, such as reflective listening, orienting, and sharing snippets of your vocational recovery story.

If the person is unemployed:

People

- Who would usually be in a workplace with you? What roles would they have (for example: supervisors, customers, etc.)?
- How happy or unhappy are you about NOT having these people in your life now?
- How would you feel about having these people in your life again?

Activities

- What kinds of activities do you associate with working?
- How satisfied are you with not doing work activities right now?
- How would you feel about doing work activities at this point in your life?

Place

- What places do you associate with work?
- How satisfied are you with not having a workplace right now?
- How would you feel about being in a workplace again?

If person is working right now:

People

- Who are the people in your current job? What roles do they have?
- What relationships do you have with the people in your current job? Why?
- How satisfied are you with the people at your job overall?

Activities

- What do you do at work now?
- How satisfied are you with your work activities/tasks now? Why?

Place

- What is your workplace and other spaces associated with your job (parking lot, lunchroom, etc.) like?
- How satisfied do you feel with your workplace?

Finally, given all of this, how dissatisfied are you with your current situation?

- Satisfied (Low Need) Neutral (Medium Need) Dissatisfied (High Need)

3.11 Building Need



Building Motivational Foundations

is supporting the person to increase confidence about moving forward with choosing, getting, and keeping work or school.

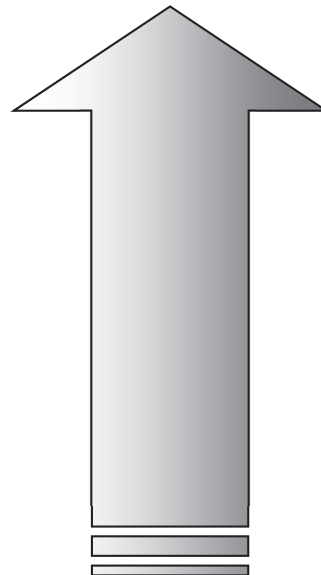
Building NEED creates a dilemma: Building Need is increasing, well, dissatisfaction...

We do not want to help create dissatisfaction in someone's life by helping to make the person more uncomfortable or unsuccessful. This would be unethical and not in sync with the peer value of mutuality.

So... How can we support a person to Build Need? How do we support a person to build dissatisfaction with the way things are now, if the person wants to?

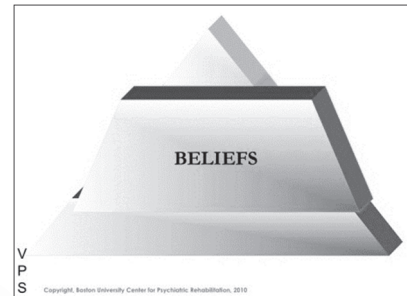
Building Need is supporting a person to:

- Find out more...
- Learn more...
- Experience more...
- Gather more support
- Educate supporters about needs
- Build awareness of recovery
- Talk with other peers
- Try out work and school
- See new possibilities

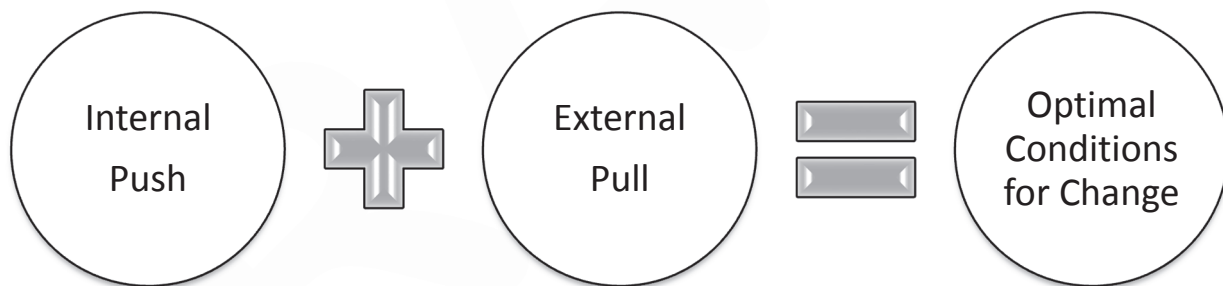


3.12 Foundation: Beliefs

*“If you believe you can...
or you believe you can’t...
You’re Right”*
--Henry Ford



Our beliefs about ourselves, our abilities, and our potential have a huge role in what we actually can do. Beliefs may provide some “pull” toward change.



Beliefs that support a strong foundation include:

1. **Change is Possible:** “I think work or school is in the cards for me.”
2. **Positive Outcome:** I think that the hard work will be “Worth It.”
3. **Self-Efficacy:** Self-confidence and a belief that “I can do it.”
4. **Desire to make the change:** “I want this.”

Why explore these beliefs? Exploring these beliefs with someone provides an opportunity for the person to really think about whether or not making a change makes sense, that the pros outweigh the cons, and that it’s worth doing the work over the long run.

Building Beliefs can develop the person’s sense of excitement, confidence, and competence regarding work. Without these essential beliefs, it is often hard for people to make the move to work.

3.13 Example: Exploring Beliefs

Alicia has been working with Elizabeth, a peer specialist with VPS training, exploring what vocational recovery might look like for her. Alicia has worked as a janitor for several years at her clubhouse, but would like to think about a career instead of just having a job. They've been talking in general about careers and vocational recovery, and Alicia has been excited about what the future might hold.

Elizabeth tells Alicia about Motivational Foundations and asked if Alicia would like to explore them. Alicia thought that it sounded like a good idea, so using the discussion prompts, Elizabeth and Alicia discussed the different Factors.

Alicia described some of the benefits to having a career, including "being someone" and having more money. She said, "I'm a fighter and a hard worker, and she felt confident that she would be able to do the work needed to get moving on a career. But as they continued to discuss whether working on a career would be "worth it," Alicia said she realized that she would have to give up her benefits. "While I'd love to do that someday, I know that the rules would require me to give up my disability benefits as soon as I start getting paid."

Elizabeth sees the sparkle about her future start to leave Alicia's eyes. Elizabeth asked, "Are you sure about the benefits? I'm pretty sure that I've heard that there are different rules that apply to people who are working. I think it's worth looking into to be absolutely sure before making any big decisions." Alicia told Elizabeth that she was pretty sure that her information was correct, but that "it probably makes sense to double check anyway."

3.14 Exploring Beliefs Tool

Instructions: Consider the following statements. Write in your thoughts on the lines provided. Then, rate your beliefs and overall level of Beliefs as High (H), Medium (M), or Low (L). Circle the letter that best matches how you feel about that belief. How you rate your beliefs is up to you!

1. How much do I believe that a vocational change in my life is...

Possible? _____

A good idea? _____

Overall my belief that Change is Possible is: H M L

2. What are the benefits and risks of making a vocational change now?

Benefits: _____

Risks: _____

More benefits or more risks? _____

Overall my belief that Change is Worth It is: H M L

3. To what extent do I believe that I CAN make change happen?

What I'm good at: _____

What I'm not good at: _____

Overall, my Belief in Myself is: H M L

4. How much DESIRE do I have for a vocational change now?

Do I want a vocational change? _____

Do I want it enough to work hard? _____

Overall, my Desire for Change is: H M L

My Overall Beliefs are: High Medium Low

3.15 Discussion Prompts: Beliefs

Note: Remember to use other partnering skills, such as reflective listening, orienting, and sharing snippets of your vocational recovery story.

Belief that Change is Possible:

- To what extent do you believe that work is possible for you?
- To what extent do you believe that work will be a good thing in your life?

Belief that Change is Worth It (Positive Outcome):

- What are the benefits of working at this point in your life?
- What are the risks to getting involved with choosing, getting, or keeping work?
- Do the benefits outweigh the risks? Or do the risks outweigh the benefits?

Belief in Myself (Self-Efficacy = “I believe I can do this”)

- Do you believe you have what it takes to do the work to make a vocational change happen?
- How have you made changes in the past?
- What are your strengths in making changes happen?
- What information or skills do you think you will need to learn?

Desire for Change:

- Is the “grass greener on the other side”? Do you want to work?
- Is the desire for a change in your vocational life pulling at you?
- To what extent is your heart in this change?
- Do you want this change enough to work hard for it?

3.16 Building Belief: Small Group Exercise

Instructions: Get together with a group of 3-4 people, and consider the following questions. Be prepared to discuss with the class.

Q. How would you scaffold someone who didn't believe that working was **possible** for him or her?

Q. What kinds of things could you do with someone who did not believe that work would be **"worth it?"**

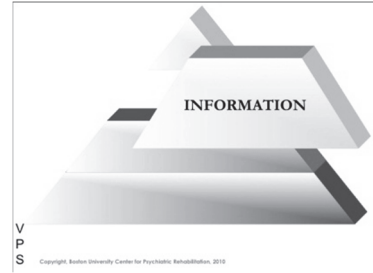
Q. What kinds of activities might support someone who is unsure that he or she can **make a change** happen in her work world?

Q. What kinds of scaffolds would you work on with someone who thinks that work is **too risky** because:

- a. "Work will cause me to lose my benefits."
- b. "Work will mean I will lose time with my friends."
- c. "Work will confirm that 'I'm no good at anything.' "

3.17 Foundation: Information

Information refers to knowledge about ourselves and the world of work that allows us to make *informed choices* about work and vocational recovery.



Information
is knowledge about ourselves and work settings
needed to make *informed choices*.

Informed choice is ...a person’s thoughtful decision based on an accurate understanding *of the full range of options and their possible results*.

Information can include knowledge or awareness of:

OPTIONS:

What I know or need to know about my OPTIONS in order to feel confident about choosing, getting, and keeping work or school.

- Career Options
- Jobs
- Educational Opportunities

MYSELF:

What I know or need to know about MYSELF in order to feel confident about choosing, getting and/or keeping work or school.

- My values
- My interests
- My preferences about work and/or school
- My strengths, or “what I’m good at”

Question to Ponder:

- What is your experience with the impact of information in making vocational choices?

3.18 Information Example: Jackson

Jackson is a 48-year-old peer mentor volunteer at a local peer-run recovery center, who has been considering taking the next step in his vocational recovery journey. He describes this step as getting a job that pays and one that he feels good about at the end of the day. He often discusses his thoughts and ideas about his vocational recovery journey with Geraldo, another peer who works at the recovery center.

Geraldo has noticed that Jackson has seemed a little lost in terms of a vocational direction. He also knows that Jackson hasn't been in the work world for at least 20 years, and he wonders how this might be affecting Jackson.

As they were sitting around talking about work one day, Geraldo asked Jackson if he might want to explore Information, oriented him to what that would look like, and shared how it had been helpful for him in his own vocational recovery.

Together, they decided to explore Information. Geraldo asked Jackson about jobs that he had worked in previously, as well as what he liked and didn't like about them. Jackson told him, "Look, man, it's been so long since I've worked, I see myself as a totally different person now."

As they continued to talk, Jackson shared that he's realized lately that he doesn't think he knows anymore what he truly likes or doesn't like. He said, "Every time I start to think about what I want to do for work, or even if I really want to consider work, I get all confused." Geraldo and he decided to try Building Information.

What scaffolds would assist Jackson to explore Information?

3.19 Exploring Information Tool

Information about Myself:

1. Some of my interests are: _____

2. Some of my values that impact my vocational life are: _____

3. Some of the things I'm good at are: _____

Information about the World of Work: Brainstorm below:

<p>I know about these kinds of jobs and careers:</p>	
<p>I've always wanted to know more about these kinds of jobs:</p>	

Overall:

I want more information about myself as a worker and my options.

Comments:

I have enough information to choose, get, and keep work or school.

Comments:

3.20 Exploring Information: Discussion Prompts

Note: Remember to use other partnering skills, such as reflective listening, orienting, and sharing snippets of your vocational recovery story.

There are several types of knowledge that support our vocational recovery:

Knowledge about Personal Interests and Values (General)

- What kinds of things do you like to do?
- What do you do when you want to go have some fun?
- What's important to you?
- What would you say you value most?

Knowledge about Work Environments

- What kinds of jobs have you had in the past?
- What kinds of jobs (volunteer or paid) do you have now?
- What do you know about other possibilities?

Knowledge about Personal Interests and Values in Relation to Work

- What jobs have you liked? Why?
- What kinds of jobs can you picture yourself doing? Why?
- What kinds of jobs look interesting to you? Why?
- What part of that job seems most interesting?
- What kinds of jobs do you definitely NOT want to do?
- When you think about working at a job, what is most attractive about working?
- When you think about working any job, what is least exciting about it?

Knowledge about Abilities

- What kinds of things are you really good at?
- What kinds of things are you really bad at?

3.21 Building Information

“Building Information” is creating strategies to discover knowledge about our personal values, wants, interests, preferences and/or about work and school settings so that we can make informed choices about work and school.

SMALL GROUP EXERCISE: Consider the kinds of scaffolds that could be put into place if you wanted to support someone to **Build Information** about:

- The kinds of JOBS that exist today:

- The kinds of SCHOOL options out there:

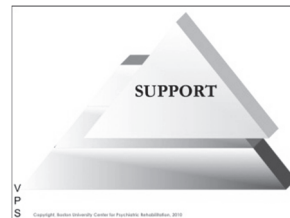
- What JOB TASKS are like today:

- What WORKPLACES are like today:

- The person’s vocational VALUES:

- The person’s INTERESTS AND PREFERENCES related to work or school:

3.22 Foundation: Support



Support: Supports are the people, places, things, and activities that can reinforce the vocational recovery journey.

Support comes in a variety of forms.



Questions to Ponder:

- Who and what are the people, places, things, and activities that support your pursuit of vocational recovery now?
- How could your vocational recovery story come into play while supporting a person to explore supports for vocational recovery?

Keep in mind that People supports may come in several forms. For example:

- Emotional Supports: cheerleading, believing in, talking with
- Concrete Supports: rides, bus fare, leads, child care

3.23 Exploring Support Example: Sophia

Ana works as a peer specialist on an ACT team. Richard is an Employment Specialist and has been trained in IPS Supported Employment. Ana and Richard often work in partnership to support people who want to work.

Sophia has been using the services of the ACT team for two years, and she has been working with Richard and Ana for one year. At times, she is very excited and has a personal sense of being on a “vocational recovery” path; but at other times, she seems to have lost her vision. Over the past year, she has gotten several jobs. She’s always done well in starting the job. But each time, seemingly out of the blue, she has quit within the first few weeks and hasn’t wanted to talk about what happened.

Ana suspects that there’s more going on here, and over coffee one day, invites Sophia to explore supports. Sophia states that the ACT team is a wonderful support, that she has friends that support her, and that she even has people who offer hands-on practical help. But as they explore further, Ana learns that Sophia’s mother, with whom she lives, is very worried about what will happen if Sophia works.

Sophia explains how her mother “watches me like I’m under a microscope” every time she starts working. “My mother starts pointing out all these ‘symptoms’ and ‘signs’ that things are starting to fall apart because I’m working.” Sophia explained to Ana that it gets confusing because she feels fine, but then starts questioning herself, her own perceptions, her health, and her wellbeing. Over time, she explains, she figures her mother must be right and quits the job, so she doesn’t lose her wellness.

What supports does Sophia have? _____

What supports might Sophia need to build up? _____

3.24 Exploring Supports Tool

Instructions: This worksheet is a tool to help you think about the supports in your life that can help or hinder you make choices to choose, get, or keep work or school roles.

1. Who are the people who will encourage me and my choices? _____

2. Who will give me concrete supports? What kinds?

- Who: _____
- How They Can Help: _____

3. Who in my life is either *against* or not very enthusiastic about my work decisions?

- Who: _____
- Their concerns: _____

4. What places could support me in my vocational recovery? _____

5. What activities could support my vocational recovery? _____

6. What things will support my vocational recovery? _____

OVERALL, how supported do I feel as I start to choose, get, and keep work or school?

- Very supported (High) Somewhat supported (Medium) Not supported (Low)

3.25 Building Supports

Building supports means gathering, educating, pulling together, or increasing supports you need as you consider work or school. Below are some ideas for Building or developing Supports.

Developing New Supports – Peer & Recovery Community

- Connect with local peer-run organizations
- Connect with peer support groups
- Connect with 12-Step programs
- Create a peer support group
- Your ideas: _____

Developing New Supports – Community at Large

- Interests – hobbies, etc. (e.g., photography class)
- Values – religious, political, or philanthropic organizations
- Cultural – shared culture or history groups (e.g., genealogy society, history society, cultural associations, etc.)
- Vision – shared hope about single issue (e.g., National Organization of Women)
- Your ideas: _____

Strengthening Supports

- Educate your supporters about recovery in general
- Educate supporters about Vocational Recovery
- Collaborate with supports: bring them together to be on the same page
- Learn skills to better partner with supporters
- Learn skills to better negotiate with supporters
- Coordinate supports so supporters feel more useful and can work together
- Learn self-advocacy skills to strengthen your voice
- Your ideas: _____

3.26 Discussion Prompts: Exploring Support

Note: Remember to use other partnering skills, such as reflective listening, orienting, and sharing snippets of your vocational recovery story.

Support in general:

- Who supports you in your life?
- What helps you when things are really difficult?
- Who or what supports your recovery and wellness?

Emotional supports:

- Who do you turn to when you need a friend?
- Are there people who can listen to you when you're frustrated or down?
- Is there at least one person with whom you have a trusting relationship to share the ups and downs of vocational recovery?

Concrete, practical supports:

- Are there people in your life who can offer you practical supports? Who are they? What types of support?
- Are there people who can offer some financial support if you need it?
- Do you have anyone in your life who can accompany you if you're doing something new or something challenging?

People who may not agree:

- As you think about going to work, is there anyone in your life who is not excited about your decision?
- Is there anyone in your life who is working against your vocational plans?
- Are you picking up on any ambivalence by people close to you as you've been considering and talking about vocational recovery?

Overall Sense of Support:

- Do you think you have the kinds of supports you need to see you through a change?
- Do you have enough people in your life who believe in you as you work to make a change happen?
- Do you believe you have more supporters than detractors?
- How supported do you feel? Well supported? Somewhat supported? Not supported?

3.27 Summary Tool: My Overall Confidence

Instructions: In the table below, chart your Motivational Foundations “Overall” results from the previous pages. Make a “dot” (•) where you would place your Need, Beliefs, Information, and Support (High, Medium, or Low). Then, connect the dots, starting at Need, ending with Support.

Note: The descriptors for each of the Foundations may vary. It’s okay to “translate” them for your purposes here. For example,

- If you chose “very satisfied” or “well-supported,” for example, choose “High” here.
- If you chose “I need more information,” you may want to choose either “Low” or “Medium” here, depending on how much information you think you need.

Summary of my Motivational Foundations:

High				
Medium				
Low				
	Need	Beliefs	Information	Support

What areas are High or Medium? _____

What areas are Low? _____

How confident do you feel about moving forward with Choosing, Getting, and Keeping?

3.28 Building Motivational Foundations Examples

For Supporting People through VPS. Add additional ideas in the boxes below!

Factor	Strategy Examples	Peer Specialist scaffolds
If the person has <u>little desire</u> for a vocational change (but wants to talk with you about it)...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhance exposure: talk to people who have done it Visit work sites 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accompany Help person learn to research Find possibilities
If the person has <u>little belief</u> that “I can” make change happen....	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revisit changes made Volunteer Try out jobs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore past changes Connect with resources
If change seems <u>too risky</u> ...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Get information! Talk to people who have done it 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Share your story Seek out workers Help person gather info
If there are <u>not enough benefits</u> to make change “worth it”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work to come up with some! Experience with work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Go with person to seek information
If the person <u>doesn’t have information</u> about what it’s like to work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Try out working! Volunteer! 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scaffold use of resources Visit workplace
If the person has <u>little information</u> on career/work options	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Go see different workplaces Research online 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accompany to career center Explore O*NET
If the person has <u>little or no support</u> for making a vocational change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coordinate supports Gather supports Educate supports 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brainstorm possibilities Educate Support person to be heard
Or has <u>few concrete resources</u> to help in making the change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research possibilities Request concrete supports 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teach how to research Support to create request
Or <u>no Need</u> for change, is satisfied	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hear stories of people who have made changes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitate talks, people to talk to Share story

3.29 Pitfalls to Watch Out For

We get pretty excited about the possibilities for work, school, and overall vocational recovery, and that can be very important to people who need someone to be excited with them.

However, there may be times when we get ahead of the person with our excitement about his or her vocational future. We may want to move before the person has really had the time to consider Motivational Foundations, or has decided what he or she wants to do to build confidence about moving forward.

Here are some common pitfalls we may run into in Building Motivational Foundations:



Assuming we know

- ...what the person needs, wants, and will do.

Trying to "fix" the situation

- ...before we even really know what the situation really is.



Taking over for the person

- ...when what the person really needs is mutual support, scaffolding, hearing your story, and a partner in the process.

Remember to always use your Partnering skills throughout the journey with the person.

No matter which part of the VPS process that you are using, the greatest support may be your relationship with the person, and your listening for what the person is communicating to you.

3.30 Small Group Exercise: Building Motivational Foundations

Optional homework assignment

Instructions: Read about Akeelah's situation. Consider the questions below, and be ready to discuss your responses with the class.

Akeelah is not working right now, but thinks she may want to try working again. She gets worried about work because she has lost jobs when times got tough. Akeelah also is not exactly sure if work would be a good idea for her right now, since she likes her free time, and she loves getting together with friends whenever she wants to. She likes her freedom, but also wishes she had more to do during the day. She's talked about wanting to do something she could feel good about. She's scared because she has heard that if you go to work, she could lose her benefits and her health insurance.

Q. If she wanted to Explore Motivational Foundations, which Foundation(s) would you suggest looking at?

Q. What strengths does she have? What kinds of questions does she have?

Q. What scaffolds could you offer to help her gather the information, experiences, and resources she needs to answer those questions?

Q. What parts of your vocational recovery story relate to your process of building your own motivations for vocational recovery? How did you "get ready" to start planning for work and career?

Module 4

Supporting Choice in Work and Career

What to Expect from Module 4

The Big Question of Module 4

- How can I support people who are choosing a direction for their vocational lives?

Offering to work with the person closely to explore preferences, options, and a best match are key to Module 4: Supporting Choice in Work and Career.

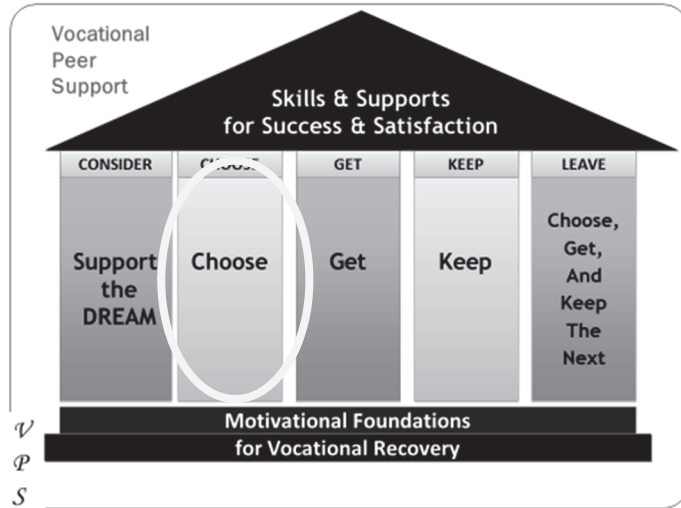
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4.1 Overview of Module 4

Choosing Work

Vocational Peer Support has its roots in both peer support and in psychiatric vocational rehabilitation. At the heart of psychiatric vocational rehabilitation is Choose-Get-Keep, a process developed for supporting people who want to be involved with employment.

Choose-Get-Keep focuses on keeping the process of acquiring jobs, school, and careers in the hands of the person it belongs to: The person who wants to work.



Why Peers? People often are being asked to select a goal without much preparation or support for the exploration that goes into making such a major life decision. Peer Support can offer scaffolding, such as exploring, accompanying, listening, and sharing of mutual experiences to support Choosing efforts in ways that other professionals may not be able to offer.

In this Module, you can expect to learn information and skills, and to gather, tools which you can use to support a person who wants to **choose** a job, a career direction, or a training program.

You will see introductions to the concepts, examples of Supporting Choice activities, discussion prompts, and tools that can assist you to scaffold the people you serve.

4.2 Supporting Choice: The How-To

Supporting Choice is scaffolding the efforts of people to explore and choose the jobs, careers, and school environments they prefer.

This Module will give you the information, tools, and discussion prompts you need to support people to choose vocational goals.

Career

Job

School

**Choosing Jobs,
Careers,
Schools, and
Areas of Study**

Identifying preferences

Gathering information

Supporting Decision-making

Questions to Ponder:

- How did YOU decide on your job?
- Was it a simple decision? Difficult? Messy? Or a straight line?
- What kinds of feelings came up for you when you were choosing?
- What kinds of obstacles were in your way as you were exploring?
- How did you get over them?

4.3 Overall Example of Supporting Choice: Reggie's Story

Reggie has worked with his peer specialist, Miguel, to have more of a voice with his team. They have worked on exploring and building Reggie's Motivational Foundations for work. Reggie feels more confident about work now, and is starting to think about what he wants to do.

Miguel understands that this process is new for Reggie, so he knows he needs to start with Orienting. Miguel started by orienting Reggie to Choosing activities. They talked about the point of Choosing: that not only would they explore past jobs, but that they would get into his preferences for future jobs by looking at the past. Reggie was into it, and Miguel was pretty excited to continue his own learning about Choosing by working with Reggie on it.

They started by exploring more about the jobs Reggie had done in the past. Reggie had some experience with work: He worked as a stocker in a grocery store, and he used to take care of his nephews when he was younger. He didn't really think of this as work, but after exploring his responsibilities, they decided that it was indeed a job. Looking at past work like this gave them the opportunity to explore what Reggie had liked, and what he hadn't liked in those past jobs. They realized that Reggie had definite preferences that might influence the kinds of jobs he would want to look at in the future. For example, he didn't like supervisors "who were breathing down my neck," and he did want to work in an office, where he "could be a professional."

Over time, they decided to take on the task of researching the kinds of office work that might exist in Reggie's community. They decided that they wouldn't look "for" a job yet, but that they would look at what was "out there."

To do this, they talked to other peers who were working, explored O*NET online to understand jobs in general, and they went to local job fairs. Reggie also took walks around the area to get a sense of the kinds of businesses that were located in his town. They took notes on the options that seemed to interest Reggie, and held onto those notes so that they can look at them later.

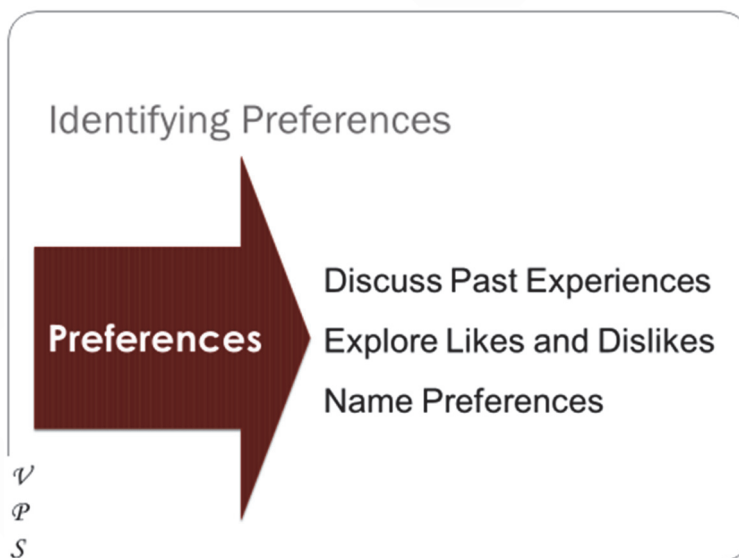
In the end, they compared Reggie's preferences to his top three types of office jobs: reception desk, filing clerk, and recovery mentor.

Question: How is Reggie's experience similar to or different from your own?

4.4 Identifying Preferences

What is it? Identifying Preferences is supporting the person to create a list of criteria the person will use to decide between career or job options.

Why do it: The person will have more information about himself or herself, and can use this information to decide between options after some research.



How do we do it?

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| 1. | 2. | 3. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Discuss past experiences with work, school, volunteer work, etc. Write the "resume" you would never hand to an employer! | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Explore likes and dislikes with each of the past experiences as well as strengths and areas for growth. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Help name preferences for the future. Come up with 2-3 word names to remember it by. |

4.5 Example of Identifying Preferences: Mariana

Mariana didn't have a lot of experience with thinking about her preferences. Because Hugh had VPS training, he knew that they could start with looking back at her past experiences and translate those experiences into preferences. When he explained this to Mariana, she exclaimed, "Finally!" They were clearly onto something.

Hugh and Mariana went out to get a cool drink, and sat at the café to think. She told him the ins and outs of her work experiences so far. They talked about the people, what she did, the kinds of places she had worked in, and what her supervisors were like. They took notes so they could remember what they had talked about, but Hugh focused on listening to her experiences. It seemed to really help when he would paraphrase because they both got more information about what was most important.

After looking at her past experiences, Mariana wanted to keep exploring – this was getting fun! So she and Hugh sat down with a Tool, and with the assistance of some Discussion Prompts, Mariana started to identify her preferences.

It was pretty easy to figure out which things she wanted to see in her next job. They carried over some of her best experiences, job tasks she would like to do again, and aspects of the people and the kinds of places she's worked in. She named things like having a supportive supervisor and an academic environment as key.

It was a little harder to think about the dislikes, but after the first one, it made sense: Hugh invited her to think about what she would want INSTEAD of the bad experience or thing she did not like. Her dislikes included things like direct people contact and unclean workspaces.

At the end, Hugh and Mariana looked at the list – Hugh asked Mariana if this list "looked like" her, and she realized that there were some important preferences that weren't there. So they added preferences related to hours, and once they had about 10 preferences, it felt more like a complete list. It really started to feel like they were getting somewhere!

Q **uestion:** Have you ever done anything like this? If not, how do you think a process like this could be helpful to you and the people you serve? If yes, what did you learn from it?

4.7 Identifying Preferences Discussion Prompts

Note: Remember to use other partnering skills, such as reflective listening, orienting, and sharing snippets of your vocational recovery story.

Listing Past Jobs:

- What kinds of jobs, volunteer, military, and school experiences have you had in the past?
- If none, let's talk about any work you have done for or with your family, such as babysitting, yard work, caring for loved ones, chores, etc.

Exploring the Experience:

- What did you do?
- What were your experiences with the people?
- What did you think about the workplace itself?
- What did you like or not like about your work activities?
- How do you feel about the role?

Naming the Preference: (NOTE: Aim for 8-12 preferences!)

- When looking at your past experiences, what did you particularly like?
- What would you like to carry over into your next job or career?
- If we could give this "like" a name, what would you call it?
- What did you dislike? Which of the "dislikes" stand out to you? Why?
- If you could "do it over again," what would be different next time? What would you want your next job experience to be like instead?
- What would you call that preference in 2-3 words?
- What else would you add to your preference list?
- What do you think about this list? Does it give you a better sense of what you want and don't want?

4.8 Gathering Information

What is it? Gathering Information is researching the kinds of settings that that are appealing to us because we have an interest in them. The work or school settings “fit” our strengths and skills, and they are a match for our values.

Why do it? Gathering Information supports the person to make a more informed decision about a vocational direction. The more people know about their options, the better choice they can make about where they want to work or go to school.

How do we do it?

Gathering Information involves:

Brainstorming meaningful options

Articulating research questions

Researching Possibilities

Questions to Ponder:

- Have you taken any of the above steps before?
- What was your experience like? What was easy? Difficult?
- What emotions did you experience when researching possibilities?
- What twists and turns did your own process take?

In these next pages, you will see an example, Discussion Prompts and Tool(s) for supporting someone to Gather Information.

4.9 Example of Gathering Information: Mariana

Mariana liked looking back at her experiences with work and school to figure out her current preferences. It really felt like things were starting to take shape. Given this excitement, she and Hugh agreed to keep going. Mariana wanted to go in to her vocational counselor with a goal in mind, so that the counselor could help her to get the job that she really wanted. Hugh knew that as a peer support specialist, it wasn't his job to find Mariana a job, but he knew he had time to listen to Mariana, and he could help ensure that her voice would be heard in the process.

To start, Hugh invited Mariana to start to think about what kinds of things she was interested in, as well as what she had to offer and even her values. Mariana found that although she knew those things she wanted to see and do again, she wasn't really sure about what was out there. This made her nervous, and she wondered aloud if she should just let the vocational program "put" her in a job again. Hugh realized that he could relate to how difficult and scary it is to be in a position of "not knowing."

He decided to share a snippet of his own story that had to do with how he got through those moments himself. He told her about one situation in particular that seemed relevant to her concerns: A moment in time when he lost a job and had no idea where else he could work. Mariana said that she was really glad he saw this as a "moment," because sometimes those moments seem like they will last forever!

They started to brainstorm, and then found that they really needed to get more information. They decided to do some preliminary research, and to set a meeting with the counselor, who also might have a better sense of what was out there.

Q **uestion:** How does Mariana's experience with Gathering Information mirror or not mirror your own experience(s)?

How could doing a process like this support the people you work with?

4.10 Brainstorming Meaningful Options Tool

1. Which areas of interest, which skills, and which values are most important to my choice of career, work, or school?

<p>What areas of work am I most interested in?</p>	<p>Mariana: I love working with data, and on issues that really matter to me.</p>	<p>Your Interests:</p>
<p>What do I know about what I can do (skills)?</p>	<p>Mariana: I'm apparently good with numbers and computers!</p>	<p>Your Skills:</p>
<p>What are my values that impact my choice about work?</p>	<p>Mariana: Honesty, cleanliness, a job well done, and education.</p>	<p>Your Values:</p>

2. What kinds of **options** might fit these values, skills, and interests?

<p>Brainstorm options that fit your interests, values, and skills:</p>
<p>Mariana: State University, Rehab Research Center, Hartville Hospital</p>

4.11 Discussion Prompts: Brainstorming Meaningful Options

Note: Remember to use other partnering skills, such as reflective listening, orienting, and sharing snippets of your vocational recovery story.

Interests

- What kinds of work do you think you're most interested in?
- When you see people working, what types of work do you feel the most excited about?

Skills

- Looking back at your past experiences, what are you good at?
- What other things do you know how to do?
- What are you best at?
- What are you not so good at?

Values

- When you make decisions, what do you base your decisions on?
- If you could name the three things that are most important in your life, what are they?
What do they say about what is important to you?
- If you are unsure about your values, would it be helpful to find a values clarification activity to do together?

Options

- What options for (work, school, career) do you want to consider?
- What could we do to find additional options?

4.12 Articulating Research Questions

What is it? Articulating Research Questions is creating a list of what you want to know about when you look into your options.

Why do it? If we support someone to articulate their research questions, we will help them prepare for getting additional information about their potential options for work, school, or career choices.

How do we do it?

Articulating

Research Questions

Define Your Preferences

State the Question

Mariana's Example

Mariana and Hugh had some ideas for possibilities, and decided to research them. Mariana told him that she wanted to visit some of these places and talk to people there, but was too scared to even think about it!

They talked about this a bit, and Hugh remembered how scary it was for him to talk to people about his dreams of working again, never mind walking into places he was interested in. After sharing this with Mariana, they decided that it would be much more tolerable, and maybe even fun, if they went together.

Hugh offered to help Mariana come up with research questions. He suggested trying those questions out in an informational interview with someone he knew at a nearby hospital.

To do this, they confirmed that Mariana's listed preferences were still important to her. Then, they worked together to define what she really meant by each one. For example, when they looked at "Working with Data," knowing that she did not want to spend a lot of time working with people, they defined it as, "The percentage of my time that I would be working with numbers and other information."

Her research question for Working with Data became: "What percentage of my time here would be spent working with numbers and other information?"

4.13 Articulating Research Questions Tool

Instructions: List your preferences in the left-hand column, and write a definition of each in the middle column. Lastly, turn those definitions into questions.

Preference Name	What do I mean by this? (Define your preference)	Research question
Example: Working with data	Working with data means the amount of time I spend working with numbers and other information.	What percentage of time per week will I be working numbers and other information?

4.14 Discussion Prompts: Articulating Research Questions

***Note:** Remember to use other partnering skills, such as reflective listening, orienting, and sharing snippets of your vocational recovery story.*

Naming Preferences

- What are some of the preferences that you named when we Identified Preferences?
- What would you add to that list?
- How can we give those preferences a name that you will remember them by?
- Do the names involve a noun and an adjective that describes the noun?

Defining the Preferences

- What does the preference name mean to you?
- What would you see happening if this preference was present in a work or school environment?
- How often would you want it to happen?
- How would you measure it?
- How could we turn all of that information in a definition?

Articulating the Research Question

- How could we turn the definition into a question?
- If you were to ask the question of someone in the environment, or in looking up information about the environment, what would you ask?

4.15 Researching Possibilities

What is it? Researching Possibilities is getting personalized information about your options.

Why do it? When we Research Possibilities, we assist the person to get more information with which to make an informed decision.

How do we do it? Scaffold people to find information in a variety of ways and places:

- Internet searches
- Job postings (Internet, newspaper, etc.)
- Talking to people we know
- Informational interviews (asking people familiar with the option)
- Visiting the place
- Talking with customers/members/workers/students
- Other _____

Tip! When researching, the closer we get to the actual place that we are interested in, the better information we will get!

Questions to Ponder:

- How have you researched career, work, and school options in your own life?
- What resources did you use to help you?
- How did you find out what workplaces and training programs were like?
- What research methods scare you? Excite you?
- How do you support others to research options?

4.16 Researching Possibilities Tool

Instructions: Brainstorm options you might want to research further. Consider your qualifications, availability, interest, and the location: (check or comment in each box)

My Brainstormed Option (list each one)	Do I have the qualifications for this option?	Is this option available to me?	Is this option interesting to me?	Is this option in a good location?
Mariana’s example: State University	✓ I have experience and some training	+/- Need to find out if there are jobs open	✓ Absolutely – it’s up my alley!	+/- It’s in an okay location

Instructions: Pick your **Top 3 Possibilities** by looking at your brainstormed options and consider which make the most sense for you to research right now.

<p>Mariana’s Example: Top Option 1: State University – I am hoping to look at research options there.</p>
<p>Top Option 1:</p> <p>Top Option 2:</p> <p>Top Option 3:</p>

4.18 Discussion Prompts: Researching Possibilities

Note: Remember to use other partnering skills, such as reflective listening, orienting, and sharing snippets of your vocational recovery story.

Researching Possibilities:

- After looking over your Brainstormed Options, which options do you want to consider for your Top three Possibilities?
- How did you decide which would go into your Top three?
- What qualifications are required of you for each option?
- Do you currently have those qualifications?
- To what extent are these options available to you?
- Do you think that these options are accessible or open, to you?
- How much does this option interest you? Why?
- Is this option in a good location for you? How so?

Doing the Research:

- How do you want to get these questions answered?
- Would it be more helpful to read about the place, talk to people who know about the place, or see the place? Or all three?
- If you opt to read about or see the place, how will you “ask” the questions?

Keeping Track of Research:

Use these prompts, if you are reviewing the person’s research after the fact.

- Which option did you research, and how did you research it?
- What did you find out?
- Which information do you want to write down, so you remember it?
- What other information do you want to record here?

4.19 Supporting Decision-Making

What is it? Supporting Decision-Making is scaffolding the efforts of the person to decide between options based on what is important to him or her.

Why do it? Working with someone in Supporting Decision-Making can help the person to work through a concrete process to make a choice.

How do we do it?

**Scaffolding
Choice:
Support the
Person to...**

Consolidate answers to research questions

Discuss a best choice

Decide how to move forward



Pitfalls to watch out for

- If the decision-making gets confusing, check to see if the person has a clear idea of what is being researched: Are we looking at Career choices? Job choices? School choices? For example, “Supportive supervisor” will not help in choosing a career.
- Has the person had a chance to see or hear about the options directly? The closer we get to the environment itself, the better information we will gather about those options.

4.20 Example: Supporting Decision-Making

Below is an example of how Mariana chose which option was best for her. Mariana listed her preferences as well as her three best options. Mariana and Hugh researched her options and rated each of them according to her preferences using the scale at the bottom. They then added up the scores to see which option best met her preferences.

My Preferences	Best Option 1: Hospital Research Assistant	Best Option 2: University Research Assist.	Best Option 3: Community College Assistant to professor
Working with Data	5 I'd be doing research	5 Mostly research tasks	3 Some work w/students
Low People Contact	5 I'd be in an office mostly by myself	5 I wouldn't have to interview participants	1 Work with students, profs
Flexible hours	1 It's a hospital – this is pretty rigid	3 Definite expectations, but a laid-back office	3 Some flexibility here
Academic Atmosphere	1 A teaching hospital, but still a hospital	5 It's a university!	5 Academic, but more laid back
Quiet office	1 Very busy	5 I'd be in the back offices	5 Not too much traffic when I went
Full Time Work	5 Full time	3 30 hours/week	5 Full-time
Clean Work Environment	5 Focus on cleanliness	5 Office work – clean	5 Also very clean environment
TOTAL SCORE <i>sum of scores</i>	23	31	27

Scale:	5	High	Meets my preference at a HIGH level
	3	Medium	Meets my preference at a MEDIUM level
	1	Low	Meets my preference at a LOW level

4.21 Supporting Decision-Making Tool

Instructions: Write in your Preferences in the first column, and then write the names of your top 2-3, researched options. How does each option rate on each of your preferences? Add up the scores at the end, to see which meets your criteria the best. Make copies if needed.

My Preferences Write in below.	My Best Option 1:	My Best Option 2:	My Best Option 3:
TOTAL SCORES:			

Scale:	5	High	Meets my preference at a HIGH level
	3	Medium	Meets my preference at a MEDIUM level
	1	Low	Meets my preference at a LOW level

4.22 Support for My Best Option: Tool

My Best Option (Highest Score):

Before you make a decision about your best option, consider:

- Did I get to do the research I wanted to?
- Were the scores different enough that I feel confident about which is best?
- Do the scores match my “gut feeling” about my best option(s)?
- Am I missing any personal criteria that should be considered?
- Do I want to set this “Best Option” as my work goal? Or think about it some more?

My best option is: _____.

I want to go forward with pursuing this option yes no maybe

I would like to be working/in school (circle one) by _____ (date).

What kinds of supports do I need and want in order to move forward?

Supports I want/need...

How I want them to support me...

What I would like from Peer Support as I move forward...

4.23 Discussion Prompts: Supporting Decision-Making

Note: Remember to use other partnering skills, such as reflective listening, orienting, and sharing snippets of your vocational recovery story.

Making the Choice:

- What preferences did you use to research your options?
- Which options did you research?
- How did you keep track of your research?
- Would you like to gather all of your research into one place?
- How would you rate each of your options as it pertains to your preferences?
- If you don't like the scale on the Tool, what kind of scale do you want to use? (*Note: scales can simply use checkmarks, smiley faces, etc.*)
- How do your ratings add up? Can we give each option a total score?
- Which option seems to meet your preferences the best?
- How does that match your "gut feeling" about which choice is the best?

Moving Forward:

- Did you get to do the research you wanted to do?
- Would you like to do more research, or do you have enough to go on?
- Which choice do you want to name as your top choice?
- By when do you want to be working or going to school?
- How do you want to move from here?
- What are the first steps you want to take?

Supports:

- Which supports do you need and want as you move forward?
- How can I continue to support you as you move into getting and keeping your goal?

Module 5

Scaffolding Getting into Jobs and School

What to Expect from Module 5: Scaffolding Getting

The Big Question of Module 5

- How can I support the efforts of people who are working on getting into jobs and school?

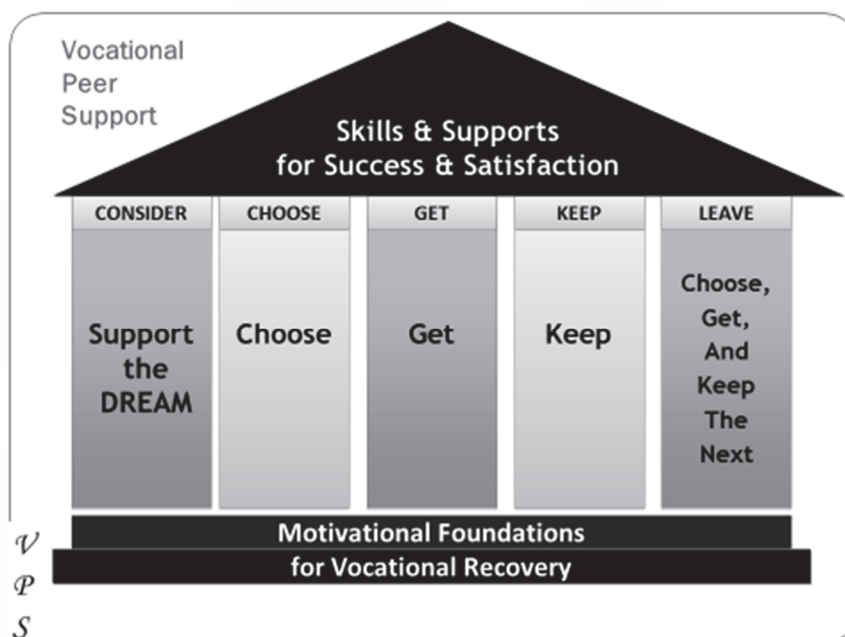
Supporting people to plan out and work on getting into job and school settings are the core of Module 5. In addition, you will learn how to work with people to address other big questions of getting jobs, such as whether to disclose a disability.

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5.1 Overview of Module 5: Scaffolding Getting into Jobs and School

Questions to Ponder:

- What has getting into school or work been like for you in the past?
- What do you know about the concerns of the people you work with in regard to “getting”?
- What do you hope to get out of this Module?



This Module will explore the many ways in which peer support specialists can scaffold people as they **get** into jobs and school.

**In this Module,
we will learn
how to:**

Scaffold Getting Jobs and Schools

Create a Getting Plan

Think about Disclosure

5.2 Overview Example: Scaffolding Getting

Tanisha, a peer specialist on an ACT team, is working with Aaron, a 22-year-old man, who is receiving intensive case management services. Aaron wants to work. As he has said, “I just want a job, so I can go out with my friends.” Tanisha and he have had many conversations at the local coffee shop and through this, Aaron has decided already that he wants to use work right now as a “learning lab” to find out if he can work, if he likes work, and what kinds of work he likes.

Tanisha and Aaron decided to make a Getting Plan. They included supports Aaron will need, including support from Tanisha, the kinds of documents he would need for a “learning lab” job: A “cheat sheet” with past job info for applications, a list of references, and a sample thank you letter for after interviews.

They also decided that it would be a good idea to involve the employment specialist on the ACT team, since Tanisha doesn’t know all of the “ins and outs” of getting jobs. Aaron wanted Tanisha to go with him to his first meeting, because even though he has met John before, he was nervous about the meeting.

Tanisha decided to share a snippet of her own vocational recovery story, describing how scared she was when she started thinking about working again, and about how her best friend waited at the Dunkin Donuts while she met with her vocational counselor. She remembers being surprised about how confident it made her feel.

When coming up with the Getting Plan, Aaron said he wasn’t sure who to contact. So they asked around amongst some peers who were working. They found out that the people who were most successful at getting a job had contacted just about everybody they knew. Aaron and Tanisha wrote up a list of everyone they could think of, and suddenly it became clear to Aaron who he wanted to contact first. Tanisha offered to support him to figure out what to say, and they were on their way.

Q **uestion:** How does this example remind you of your own experience? Of the experiences with the people you serve?

5.3 Scaffolding Getting Jobs

Questions to Ponder:

- How have you gotten your last two jobs?
- What are you good at doing? What are you not so comfortable with?
- What do you think the most important tasks of getting into jobs are?
- What do you most want to do to support your peers to get a job?

Scaffolding Getting into Jobs is supporting people as they go through a process of applying to, interviewing for, and negotiating offers for employment.

As peer supporters, we can support people to pull together information and documentation, make connections, try out new skills, and *go with* as desired.

PITFALLS to watch out for!

- *Scaffolding Getting is DIFFERENT than getting jobs for people!*
- *Avoid the trap of doing for ... stay peer by supporting the person and the person's process.*
- *Remember that there are experts in getting jobs out there: Scaffold the inclusion of other supports as desired by the person, including employment specialists, vocational counselors, etc.*

5.4 Supporting Getting into School

Questions to Ponder:

- Think back to the last time you went to a training program, college, or school.
- What did it take to get in?
- What were you good at doing? What were you not so comfortable doing?
- What do you most want to do to support your peers to get into college?

What is it? **Supporting Getting Into School** is scaffolding people to prepare for and walk through the process of applying for acceptance into school or training programs.

Why do it? Supporting people as they get into school offers peer support as people go through the “hoops” of getting accepted into the training programs and schools of their choice.

How to do it? On the next pages, you will have the opportunity to think through ways in which peer specialists can support people to get into work and school.



- *Stay Peer by walking alongside the person, rather than taking over the process.*

- *Remember that there is more than one way to do everything, and your way might not be the best way for the person!*

- *Learn together about the process and about what the person is good*

5.5 Small Group Exercise: Scaffolding Getting into Jobs

Instructions: Team up with a group of 3-5 people to explore the scaffolds you could put into place to support someone’s job search efforts. Brainstorm any sub-tasks on the left, in order to get ideas for scaffolds. Be prepared to share your answers with the class.

Tasks for Getting Jobs Brainstorm tasks under each category	Potential Scaffolds Name ways of supporting the person
Gathering information for applications	Example: Calling past employers for dates of empl. Looking up old resumes Calling references for contact info.
Writing letters	
Identifying Jobs	
Networking with potential employers	
Researching positions	
Interviewing	
Presenting strengths to employers	
Negotiating job offers	
Deciding about disclosure of disability	
Other:	
Other:	

5.6 Small Group Exercise: Scaffolding Getting into School



Instructions: Team up with a group of 3-5 people to explore the scaffolds you could put into place to support people to get into schools or training. Add sub-tasks as relevant in the left column. Then brainstorm possible scaffolds on the right. Be prepared to share your answers with the class.

Tasks for Getting into School Brainstorm tasks under each category	Potential Scaffolds Name ways of supporting the person
Gathering information for the application	Example: Request transcripts Read application carefully Look up education history (where, dates)
Writing essays	
Setting up interviews	
Preparing for school interviews	
Following up with Admissions	
Applying for Financial Aid and other scholarships	
Exploring disclosure	
Researching Disability Services/ADA Compliance Officer	
Other:	

5.7 Getting Plan Tool

Instructions: Write in the left column what you need to do to work on Getting. In the middle column, write any steps you need to take to do those tasks. On the right, add what you might need people to support you with.

“Getting” Tasks	How will I do it? (steps)	How can a Peer and others support me?
Example: Writing my resume	VR job club can help me learn how to do it, and give me computer access	Help me remember past jobs, maybe make phone calls with me
Documents I need to create or gather:		
People I want to contact:		
Places I want to contact:		
Skills I want to practice:		

5.8 Discussion Prompts: Getting Plan

Note: Remember to use other partnering skills, such as reflective listening, orienting, and sharing snippets of your vocational recovery story.

Documents to Develop:

- What documents do you have already? (examples: resume, cover letter, references, college application, essays)
- Which documents do you still need to develop now?
- What kinds of “cheats” do you need to have on hand to help in filling out applications, etc.? (cheat sheets, etc.)
- How do you want me and/or other peers to assist you?

People to Contact:

- Who do you know? Let’s think about people in all kinds of places in your life: home, work, schools, church, peers, social clubs, clubhouses, family, friends, neighbors
- Who do they know?
- Who would you want to connect with?
- How do you want to connect with each person or category of person?
- How do you want me and/or other peers/providers to support you?

Places to Contact:

- What places do you want to look at, to see if they have openings?
- What kind of application do they require of you?
- What documents or information do you need to have with you?
- What supports do you want to have around you as you do this?

Skills to Practice:

- What skills do you have that can help you get the job or school you want?
- What skills do you want to learn?
- What skills do you want to practice? (examples: greeting interviewers, answering questions, closing interviews, writing thank-you notes)
- How can I support you to practice these skills?

5.9 Scaffolding Decisions about Disclosure

Questions to Ponder:

- Whose decision is disclosure of a disability?
- What is your experience with disclosing a disability at work or school?
- What benefits can people get out of disclosing? What risks are there?
- How do you think peers can support others to decide about disclosing at the job or at school?

What is it? Scaffolding Disclosure Decisions is supporting people as they think about, explore, and choose how they want to proceed with telling key people in a work or school environment that they have a disability. Disclosure often is linked to requesting a “reasonable accommodation.”

Why do it? Scaffolding Decisions about Disclosure gives us a way to support people who are wondering whether they need to tell someone about their disabilities.

Americans with Disabilities Act Definitions to be familiar with:

Disability: In this case, disability has a very specific meaning: having a medical condition that makes it difficult for the person to have a “level playing field” in a work or school environment. This usually has to do with having “functional limitations” that prevent success in living, learning, working, and/or social environments.

Essential Functions: Essential functions are the basic job duties that the employee must perform, with or without an accommodation* under the law (<http://www.eeoc.gov/facts/ada17.html>). The person, in other words, has to be able to do the core tasks of the job itself in order to have protection under the law.

Functional Limitations: The person may be asked about these, and it can be difficult to talk about. Functional limitations are skills the person currently does not have or tasks he or she cannot do without supports from the environment.

***Reasonable Accommodation:** refers to an adjustment to the environment in some way to accommodate the worker or student under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA and amendments).

5.10 Example Disclosure: Pros and Cons

Jing, Alice’s peer supporter, is helping her to figure out whether she would want to disclose a disability to her employer at all, and if she does, when and to whom she would want to disclose. The following tool is one that they used to think “on paper” about the risks and benefits of disclosing.

<p>I’m <u>concerned</u> that if I disclose... (“Cons” of disclosing)</p>	<p>I <u>hope</u> that if I do disclose.. (“Pros” of disclosing)</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What if I don’t get hired because of discrimination? • I’ve heard that I shouldn’t – some of the people I know have had trouble once they disclosed. • I am worried that word will get out if I tell a supervisor about my disability. • I’ve also heard that sometimes people are watched more closely if they disclose. • That my privacy will not be protected by people who are curious or gossipy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It would be nice to not have to “hide” that I have a disability. • I may need accommodations at some point. • If I have accommodations, I may be more productive, a better worker. • I’m hoping to be accepted for exactly who I am. • I won’t have to carry around a “secret” about my diagnosis.
<p>Are there any things above that I want to learn more about?</p>	<p>Who will support me? How?</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I definitely want to learn more about the ADA, how I’m protected, and how I’m not protected. • I’d like to know more about people’s positive experiences with disclosure. • Who should know, and what are their responsibilities to me? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jing has said he will help me research this, and my VR counselor too. • I may want to look for recovery stories, talk around with my friends. • Jing and my VR counselor said they can help me research this.

5.11 Pros and Cons of Disclosure Tool

Instructions: Write in the boxes below your hopes and concerns about disclosure, as well as what you want to learn about in relation to disclosure, and the supports you think you will need as you decide about disclosing a disability.

I hope that if I disclose... (“Pros” of disclosing)	I’m concerned that if I disclose... (“Cons” of disclosing)
Are there any things above that I want to learn more about?	Who will support me? How?

5.12 Discussion Prompts: The Pros and Cons of Disclosure

Note: Remember to use other partnering skills, such as reflective listening, orienting, and sharing snippets of your vocational recovery story.

In general:

- What is your experience with disclosing a disability? What do you know about it?
- What have people in your life said about disclosing a disability?
- What do you think will happen if you disclose a disability at work or at school?

Cons: “I’m concerned that if I disclose...”

- What risks do you think you are taking if you disclose?
- What do you think disclosing could cost you?
- Have you or people you know experienced costs to disclosing?

Pros: “I’m hoping that if I disclose...”

- What positive things do you think will happen if you disclose a disability to your boss or your school?
- What benefits do you think you’ll get out of disclosing?
- Do you think that you will feel relieved if you disclose, or worried?

“What things above do I want to learn about?”

- Are there any things that you want to learn more about?
- Are there concerns or hopes you want to get more perspectives on?

“What supports will I need?”

- Who do you want at your side as you decide about disclosure?
- Do you want support to learn more about certain concerns/benefits?
- How can I support you?
- What kinds of reasonable accommodations do you think you may need?

5.13 Example: Disclosure Thinking

This is the example that **Aaron and Tanisha** worked on together. Using her partnering skills, Tanisha helped Aaron explore his answers to these questions. The big questions were: whether he would disclose, and if so, what would he say?

1. Why do I want this job?

I'm thinking about a cooking job, and I would say that I want this because I love to cook, and present nice-looking, good-tasting food. It makes me happy when people eat something I've made.

2. What strengths do I bring to this job?

I have a real love of cooking. I love to work in a clean space, so I will keep my workspaces clean. I have worked with other cooks in a kitchen before, so I know what it's like to take orders, and I do it well.

3. How do I want to describe my disability?

I have a medical condition that is pretty well under control. I want to disclose because I may need to take breaks more often than other cooks, and I have to make sure to drink water throughout the day.

4. How do I think my disability will interact with this job?

I know I'll be building my "work muscles" in the beginning, and I may need to take a break every two hours. Because of some medications that I take, I need to make sure to drink lots of water, and I can't afford to forget.

5. What adjustments to the job might I need in order to do this job well?

- a. People supports** (training, supervision, job coaching, etc.) *I'd love some good training, but don't think I'll need anything else from people on the job.*
- b. Flexible scheduling** *I may need more frequent breaks, but many cooks need smoke-breaks, so I may not need anything special. I can come in for any shift.*
- c. Changes in non-essential job tasks** *I don't need these right now.*

6. Are there people who might support me during this process (brainstorming accommodations, talking with my employer, etc.)?

I don't know that I'd talk about this with my employer, but yes, I have a peer specialist who is working with me, a voc rehab counselor, as well as others. They may help me along the way, I can introduce them to my boss if I need to, but I don't think I will.

5.14 Disclosure Thinking Tool

Instructions: Use this Tool to help you decide if you want to disclose a disability to an employer or training program.

1. Why do I want this job? _____

2. What strengths do I bring to this job? _____

3. How do I want to describe my disability? _____

4. How do I think my disability will interact with this job? _____

5. What adjustments to the job might I need in order to do this job well?

- a. People supports (training, supervision, job coaching, etc.) _____

- b. Flexible scheduling _____

- c. Changes in non-essential job tasks _____

6. Are there people who might support me during this process (brainstorming accommodations, talking with my employer, etc.)? _____

7. **With all of the above, do I want to disclose?** Yes No If Needed

5.15 Discussion Prompts: Disclosure Thinking

Why do I want this job? (focus on what the employer wants to hear)

- What do you value about this employer/organization/job?
- How do you want to contribute to the work of the organization?

What strengths do I bring?

- What are you good at that this employer will value?
- What do you want to make sure to mention that you add to the company?

How do I want to describe my disability?

- What words would you want to use to describe why you are disclosing or requesting an accommodation?
- How can we use real English, rather than clinical language?

What adjustments or accommodations do I need to do this job well?

- **People Supports:** What do you need from people on the job in order to do this job well? What do you need from the supervisor, coworkers, or human resources that would give you a leg up? Will any of these break the bank of the company, or change the job altogether?
- **Flexible Scheduling:** Do you need to start later or end later than other employees? Need more breaks? Do you need a flexible schedule in some other way? Are these needs or wants? (*Wants may not be accommodated.*)
- **Changes in non-essential job tasks:** What are the essential, or main, tasks of the job? Are there tasks that are not core to your position? Are there any of those tasks that are getting in the way of your success, that we might ask for changes in?

Who else might support you in this process?

- Are there other people who can help with asking for any needed accommodations, or with disclosing a disability?

Given all of this, do you want to disclose a disability after all?

Module 6

Keeping Work and School

What to expect in Module 6

The Big Question of Module 6

- How can I support people to KEEP the jobs and training programs they want to be in?

This Module will help us consider how to support people to identify some of the skills, supports, and even employer-provided supports, called Accommodations, that people may need when working to keep jobs and school.

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6.1 What does it take to keep a job?

It might take a village! However, we can work with people as they keep the roles they want.

Questions to Ponder:

- What helps you to keep your job?
- What kinds of things have gotten in your way of keeping a job in the past?
- How did you overcome those obstacles?

In Vocational Peer Support, we may scaffold the person's capacity to keep a job or stay in school. We cannot keep the person there ourselves!

The role of VPS is to provide scaffolds as the person develops the skills, supports, and accommodations needed to be successful and satisfied where he or she wants to be...

What helps us be successful and satisfied at work and school:

Skills – What we KNOW HOW TO DO that supports us to be successful at work and school.

Supports – The PEOPLE, PLACES, THINGS and ACTIVITIES that help a person to be successful and satisfied.

Accommodations – Supports that the EMPLOYER PROVIDES to provide a “level playing field” for a person with a disability.

6.2 Keeping Example: Reggie

Reggie and Miguel have worked together to consider, choose, and get into work that Reggie is interested in. Reggie recently has started a receptionist job at the SLG Corp., which after some research, seemed to be a good fit for him. He wanted a professional job; one in which he could be around people pretty often.

Now that Reggie has started, the reality of keeping the job is settling in. Reggie wonders, “what if I can’t do this?” Miguel has shared his own experience about the time that he got into his first paid job after getting hospitalized. He remembers being so scared that he would lose the job that he didn’t go to the first day of work! He told Reggie about the supports that made a difference, including the job coach that helped Miguel call his boss to explain what happened. In this spirit, Miguel offered to support Reggie in the work of keeping his job.

In their first meeting, they decided to figure out what they will work on and how. They knew they would want to look at what Reggie will need to do at the job, and think about any supports he will need.

They first worked on skills. Figuring out the explicit skills was easy enough because they had the job description, which listed most of the everyday tasks that Reggie would need to do. The hidden, or implicit skills, were harder to find. For this, they would need to ask a coworker or two and maybe even the boss about the skills nobody talks about up front. They even looked at skills the job wouldn’t ask for from Reggie, but that he needs to be successful, such as getting his lunch ready.

They also considered supports. Reggie didn’t want anyone coming to the job itself, but told Miguel that he could really use a “pep talk” every once in a while. They explored what Reggie meant by that, and decided to meet for coffee before work on Mondays, which are the hardest days for Reggie.

The last thing they do is to think about accommodations, but remembered from the “getting” process that Reggie didn’t want to disclose just yet. So they decided to keep an eye on anything that may come up along the way, paying close attention to the Monday morning coffee get-togethers, and to “feel out” any supports or adjustments that the job itself can provide.

6.3 Job and School Expectations

When supporting a person to figure out how to keep a job, volunteer position, training program, etc., we may want to keep three categories of expectations in mind.

These include expectations of the environment, and of the person:



Explicit Expectations

Skills that are easily found in job descriptions, or described in the interview.

Ex: Stock shelves, greet customers, analyze research data



Implicit Expectations

"Hidden Expectations" are harder to see or find out about until you trip across them.

Implicit Expectations: culture of the office, social.

Ex: How people participate in celebrations, go out after work, keep breakroom clean



Personal Expectations

The Person wants to put these into place for success and satisfaction, not an employer requirement.

Ex: packing a lunch, getting to work early, clearing the desk at the end of the day

Questions to Ponder:

- What kinds of **Explicit** Expectations are required of you in your current work?
- What **Hidden** Expectations exist in your workplace now?
- What **Personal** Expectations do you have of yourself to be successful and satisfied as a worker?

6.4 Listing Expectations Tool

Introduction: Success often is linked with what we do. To get an understanding of what you need to do to be successful on the job or at school, find out what is expected from you. Learn about expectations from written materials, interviews with supervisors, coworkers, classmates or teachers, observe “unwritten rules” in the environment, and keep in mind your own experience.

Instructions: List for yourself the Explicit, Implicit, and expectations that you find.

Type/Source of the Expectation	List of Expectations
Explicit Expectations/ Written materials, verbal instructions	<i>Examples: Study every day; Be punctual</i>
<i>Example: Look up job description or student handbook</i>	
Hidden Expectations/ Talking to Key People	<i>Examples: Be a good worker; Get along with others</i>
<i>Example: Talk to people who work or study there</i>	
Hidden Expectations/ Observing the Setting	<i>Examples: Only chat at break times; Be nice to the receptionist</i>
<i>Example: watch how people talk (or don't talk) to each other</i>	
Personal Expectations/ Doing my own thing to ensure success	<i>Examples: Estimate my travel time; Planning lunch</i>
<i>Example: take stock of what you've done in the past that has helped you to be successful</i>	

6.5 Discussion Prompts: Listing Expectations

Sources for Learning about Expectations

- What kinds of written, or easy-to-find, sources are there for you to learn about the expectations of this environment?
- Who might you talk to about any not-so-obvious, or hidden, expectations?
- How can you observe the setting for clues about what is expected of the people who work (or study) there?
- What kinds of similar experiences have you had that might give you a sense of what you might need to do to be successful and happy there?

Gathering Expectations

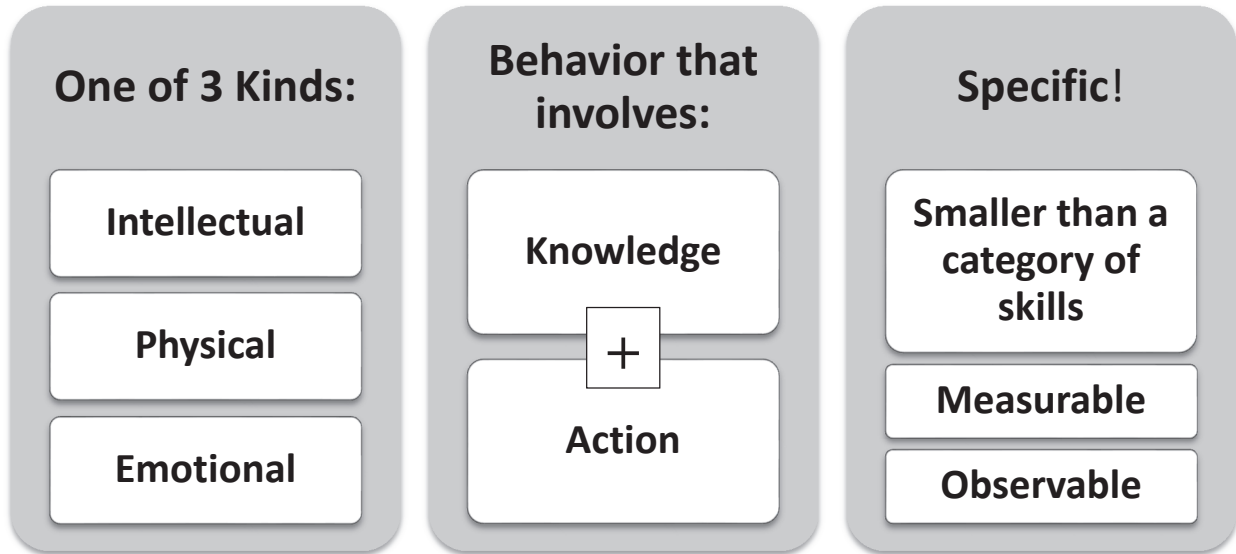
- What did you do to find out about explicit, or easy-to-find, expectations in this environment?
- What did you do to find out about hidden expectations?
- What did you do to think about personal expectations for your own success and satisfaction on the job?

Listing Expectations

- What did you find out about the expectations of this place?
- Which do you think are the most relevant to you?
- Which do you anticipate being easy to meet?
- Which do you think will be hard to do?

6.6 Skills: What's the Deal?

A Skill is:



1. What are Skills?

Skills are what people “know how to do.” Performing a skill is purposefully doing an action for a reason, in a context that requires it. We can master skills with practice and know-how!

2. Skills are Specific:

- Individual skills are different than categories of skills (see next pg.)
- Measurable: We can measure whether we are doing a skill enough for success
- Observable: We can see whether a skill is being performed.

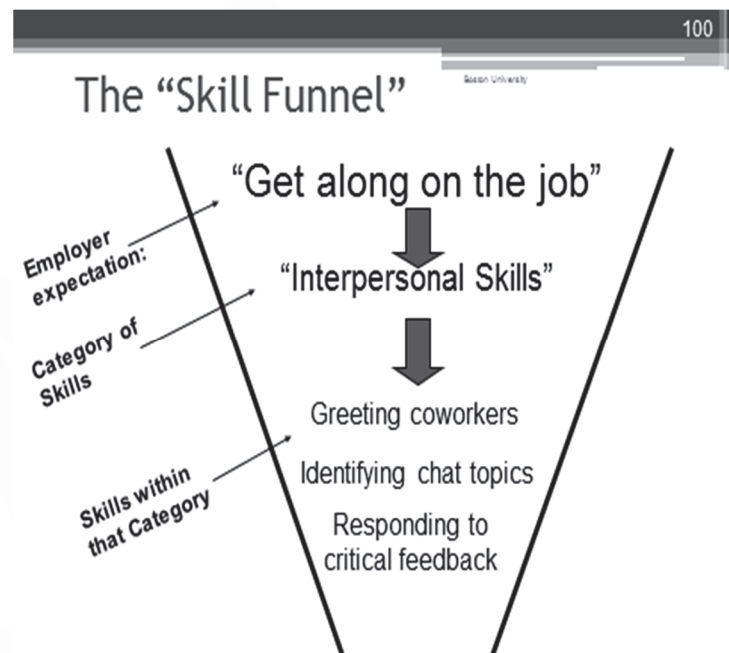
3. Three Kinds:

- Intellectual skills: that we do “in our heads”
- Physical skills are those that we do with our bodies (and are easiest to see)
- Skills may be emotional: used in connection with ourselves and others

6.7 Example: Getting Specific about Skills

This is an example of how to get from a vague expectation in the environment to a specific set of skills that the person needs to perform:

- Start with the broad expectation, and then break it down into smaller and smaller pieces until you get to the skill.
- A skill is teachable but a vague expectation is generally not!



Reggie's Example of Skills

Once Reggie started working, he realized he might need some support to keep the job going. It was his first job in a while, and though he thought he could be good at reception because he liked talking to people, he also knew that it required a lot more than just talking.

Miguel offered to sit down with Reggie and clarify what the expectations were.

The first thing Reggie said at lunch was, "I can't believe they expect me to do everything on a computer! I thought this was a people job!"

Miguel and Reggie broke this down, by exploring the actual expectation, which went from "doing things on the computer" to "keeping track of things" to the actual skill: *Logging customer interactions*.

6.8 Exercise: Breaking Skill Categories Down into Skills

1. With the whole group, break down the skill category of Time Management into specific, individual skills. When naming the skills, have in mind the format of, “doing something.” For example, “Identifying Tasks.” Write your answers on the lines next to the graphic.

Time Management

Identify Tasks

Adhere to Schedule

Schedule Tasks

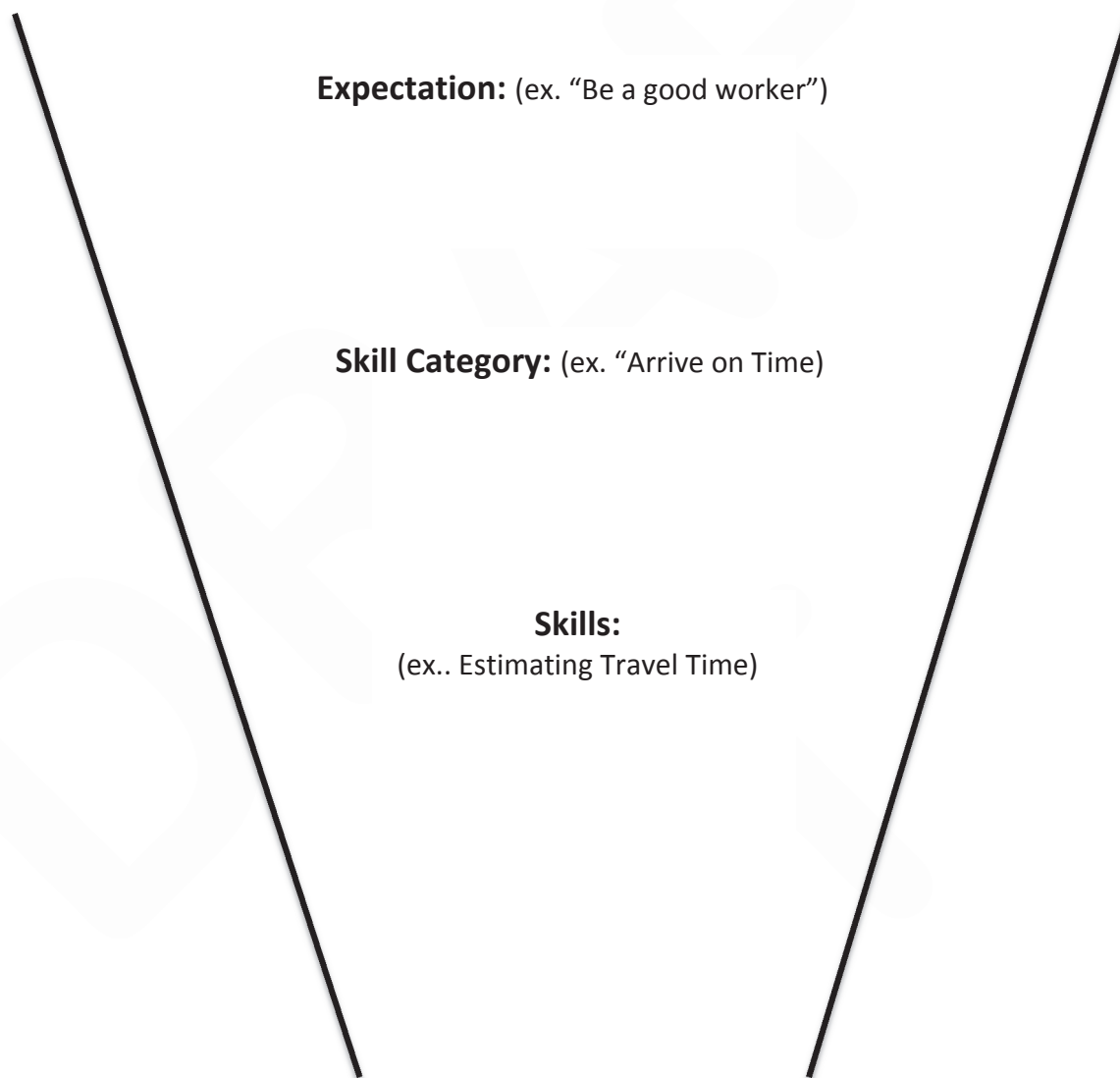
Prioritize Tasks

2. Which individual skills fall within the following categories? (Work in small groups; be prepared to share your answers)

Broad expectation	One category of skills	Individual skills
“Be presentable”		
“Get along on the job”		
“Be a good worker”		

6.9 Tool: Skill Funnel

Instructions: Use this Skill Funnel to get more specific about the skills required at work or school. Break broad, general expectations down into individual skills. Use one Tool for each broad expectation.



- Which Skills are you already using, and which are good at?
- Which Skills do you not know how to do or need more practice for?

6.10 Tool: Turning Expectations into Skills

Instructions: To work on more than one expectation, use this tool to break vague expectations into smaller pieces. Specific skills will be easier to learn, to use, and to improve! This tool may be used as an alternative to the “Funnel.”

List one vague expectation on the left, brainstorm a list of possible smaller skills in the middle, and then star (*) the most important or relevant skill in the right-hand column.

Vague Expectation	Brainstorm possible skills	Most Important Skill(s)
<i>Example:</i> “Get along with others”	Skill 1: Requesting clarification Skill 2: Greeting coworkers Skill 3: Offering assistance	* Requesting clarification
Expectation 1:	Skill 1: Skill 2: Skill 3:	* * *
Expectation 2:	Skill 1: Skill 2: Skill 3:	* * *
Expectation 3:	Skill 1: Skill 2: Skill 3:	* * *
Expectation 4:	Skill 1: Skill 2: Skill 3:	* * *
Expectation 5:	Skill 1: Skill 2: Skill 3:	* * *

6.11 Tool: General Expectations to Specific Skills

Instructions: If you have trouble gathering information about expectations and skills, try out this tool to get a general sense of skills you might need to succeed.

Note: The more you know about the place you're going to, the better equipped for success you will be!

Skill Category:	Break it down...	Now even smaller!
<p><i>Example:</i> <i>Dressing for Success</i></p>	<p><i>Figuring out what to wear</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Choosing work outfits</i> • <i>Matching my clothes</i>
<p>Physical skills</p>		
<p>Organizing skills</p>		
<p>Time Management skills</p>		
<p>Getting along with Coworkers/ Classmates</p>		
<p>Working w/Sups/ Teachers</p>		
<p>Planning Skills</p>		

6.12 Discussion Prompts: Breaking Down Expectations into Skills

Listing Expectations

- Which of the Expectations that you listed do you think are important enough to break down into individual skills?
- Which of the tools do you want to use to help you break down expectations into smaller, more learnable pieces?
- What do you know about skills vs. expectations?

Breaking Expectations Down

- Why do you think it is important to break down expectations into smaller pieces?
- Do you think any of these expectations are too big in scope, meaning that it probably contains more than one skill?
- How would you break that down into smaller pieces?
- How could we break the smaller pieces into even smaller pieces?
- Is the smallest piece something that you can either do or learn how to do?

Evaluating my Skills

- Which of these smaller pieces do you think will be important to your success and/or happiness?
- Which do you think you will have an easy time doing?
- Which do you think you will have a hard time doing?

6.13 Common Skills

Listed below are some of the skills related to particular work and school activities. This list is not exhaustive, but is meant to guide you as you think about skills. Skills are listed by environments – here we will focus on work and school. Keep in mind that skills that are listed in one environment also may be very relevant to someone’s success and satisfaction in a different setting.

People don’t have to know how to do these skills before going into their chosen environment or role. However, if a skill is required, we will want to support the person to learn the skill once in the environment if not before.

WORK ENVIRONMENT – These are some skills that support people to be both successful and satisfied in their work environments.

Working with Coworkers

Expressing Opinions	Conversing about Social Topics
Asking Personal Questions	Dividing Work Responsibilities
Requesting Favors	Discussing Differences of Opinion
Responding to Questions	Recognizing When to Interrupt
Refraining from Interrupting	Recognizing Body Language
Recognizing Angry Feelings	Asking for Help
Recognizing Escalating Emotions	Resolving Conflicts
Focusing on Personal Activities	Recognizing When to Assist
Clarifying Verbal Comments	Expressing Feelings
Listening	Discussing Impersonal Topics
Initiating Conversations	Selecting Friends
Recognizing Others’ Personal Space	Recognizing Feelings

Working with Supervisors

Responding to Feedback	Clarifying Feedback
Clarifying Instructions	Requesting Feedback
Requesting Assistance	Sharing Self-Evaluation
Resolving Conflicts	Discussing Problems
Recognizing Feelings	Recognizing Others’ Personal Space
Expressing Feelings	Recognizing Escalating Emotions
Requesting Assistance	Expressing Opinions
Scheduling Appointments	Discussing Differences of Opinion
Compromising	Listening
Responding	Recognizing When to Interrupt
Recognizing When to Speak	Choosing Discussion Topics
Choosing Responses	Initiating Conversations

Discussing Impersonal Topics	Initiating Additional Tasks
Refusing Requests	Requesting Information
Evaluating Accommodations	Identifying Disclosure Needs
Disclosing Disability	Requesting Accommodations

Socializing at Work

Responding to Personal Statements	Requesting Assistance
Choosing Discussion Topics	Matching Jokes to Setting
Expressing Opinions	Expressing Feelings
Choosing Gifts	Acknowledging Gifts
Praising Others	Acknowledging Praise
Assisting Others	Selecting Friends
Initiating Conversations	Asking to be Included
Introducing Self	Discussing Impersonal Topics
Asking Questions	Recognizing Non-Verbal Cues
Extending Invitations	Recognizing Others' Personal Space

Preparing for Work

Planning Travel Route	Estimating Time for Travel
Estimating Time for Getting Ready	Choosing Time for Alarm
Selecting Alarm Clocks	Identifying Alternatives to Alarm Clock
Preparing Lunch Food	Choosing Clothing
Identifying Needs	Choosing Things to Bring for Day
Requesting a Ride	Navigating Public Transportation

L **EARNING ENVIRONMENT** – These are some of the skills that improve peoples' success and satisfaction in school.

Applying for School

Evaluating School/College Choices	Choosing Colleges/School
Completing Applications	Requesting Transcripts
Interviewing for College/School	Selecting College/School
Exploring School Funding Options	Applying for Loans/Grants

Taking Courses – In Class

Choosing Courses	Evaluating Performance
Estimating Arrival Time	Arranging for Accommodations
Evaluating Accommodation Needs	Recognizing Material to Note
Organizing Note Materials	Responding to Questions
Asking Questions	Responding to Feedback
Negotiating with Teacher/Professor	Analyzing Concepts
Expressing Opinions	Requesting Information

Taking Courses – Studying

Choosing a Study Space	Organizing Study Space
Selecting Material to Study	Scheduling Time to Study
Identifying Learning Style	Brainstorming Memory Techniques
Recognizing Study Needs	Clarifying Assignments
Defining Words/Terms	Answering Questions
Summarizing Facts	Clarifying Points
Researching Information	Illustrating Points

Working with Teachers/Professors or Other Students

Expressing Opinions	Expressing Disagreements
Asking Personal Questions	Conversing about Social Topics
Requesting Favors	Dividing Work Responsibilities
Responding to Questions	Discussing Differences of Opinion
Refraining from Interrupting	Recognizing When to Interrupt
Recognizing Angry Feelings	Recognizing Body Language
Recognizing Escalating Emotions	Asking for Help
Focusing on Personal Activities	Resolving Conflicts
Clarifying Verbal Comments	Recognizing When to Assist
Listening	Expressing Feelings
Initiating Conversation	Discussing Impersonal Topics
Interacting with Others	Selecting Friends
Offering Feedback	Offering Assistance
Recognizing Others’ Personal Space	Recognizing Feelings
Expressing Opinion	Responding to Personal Statements

EITHER ENVIRONMENT: No matter which environment, you will need these.

Grooming/Hygiene

Identifying Hygiene Tasks	Brushing Teeth
Assessing Appearance	Brushing Hair
Recognizing When to Cut Hair	Selecting Makeup
Applying Makeup	Applying Deodorant
Applying Perfume/Cologne	Shaving Facial Hair
Shaving Body Hair	Washing Hair
Washing Body	Requesting Assistance
Identifying impact of body odor	Recognizing non-verbal cues

Dressing

Selecting/Choosing Clothes	Assessing Appearance
Estimating Time to Dress	Estimating Time to Shower/Wash

Matching Clothes to Weather	Tucking in Shirt
Choosing Accessories	Washing Clothes
Operating a Washing Machine	Operating a Dryer
Operating an Iron	Recognizing Need for Laundering
Scheduling Laundry	Folding Clothes
Buying Clothes	Budgeting for Clothing

Health

Identifying Health Needs	Scheduling Appointments
Recognizing Physical Symptoms	Recognizing Psychiatric Distress
Identifying Wellness Tools	Choosing Wellness Tools
Recognizing Angry Feelings	Asking for Help
Evaluating Medication Benefits	Evaluating Medical Support
Choosing Health Care Providers	Identifying Healthy Foods
Conversing about Health Needs	Preparing Healthy Foods

Budgeting

Assessing Finances	Exploring Housing Options
Recognizing Affordable Housing	Identifying Household Bills
Allocating Income	Prioritizing Spending
Paying Rent	Paying Bills
Saving Money	Buying Groceries
Prioritizing Needs	Estimating Expenses

Banking

Balancing a Checkbook	Writing a Check/Money Order
Depositing Income	Recording ATM Debits

Be mindful that there are certain words that will *look like and feel like* skills until we try to see what they look like and what steps it would take to learn them.

The following SOUND LIKE skills, but are not...

Allowing	Arriving	Keeping	Having
Avoiding	Being	Trying	Knowing
Doing	Feeling	Seeing	Wanting
Hearing	Hoping	Remembering	Talking
Learning	Liking	Staying	Wishing

6.14 Supports

As peers, we may be accustomed to talking with people about supports – it is an important part of our work. This Module may expand our vision of supports that can assist a person to be successful and satisfied in their work or school settings.



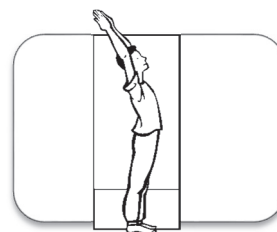
People



Places



Things



Activities

Reggie's Example of Supports

After looking at skills, Miguel knows that a next step for Reggie could be exploring the Supports he needs for success.

Miguel oriented Reggie to the big idea of supports – both inside and outside of work - that could help him be a success at work.

They decided to brainstorm the supports that Reggie already has, and the supports they thought he needs to develop. But they ran into a snag: Reggie wasn't really sure what supports he needs.

So they took a different tack. They decided to make a log to note down any problems Reggie might run into. That way, they could look at supports as the need arose.

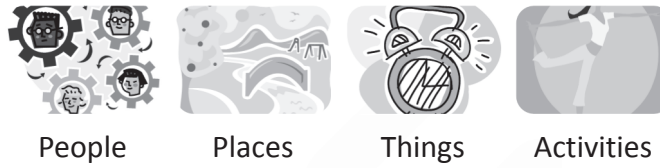
Reggie wondered about his mental health team – “what about them?” Miguel and he decided to bring up discussing with the team how they could support Reggie with work on an ongoing basis, now that he is working.

6.15 Small Group Exercise: Supporting Challenging Situations

Instructions: Following the example below, get together with 2-3 partners to brainstorm supports that may scaffold a person who is challenged in the following ways. Consider the people, places, things, and activities. Be prepared to share ideas with the group.

Situation:	Possible Supports: People, Places, Things, Activities
I don't know how I will get all my work done.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Job coach to help strategize (<i>person</i>) • Find a quiet space to work (<i>place</i>) • Reminders on my phone (<i>thing</i>) • Prioritize tasks with supervisor (<i>activity</i>)
I don't know how to tell my supervisor that I'm having a hard time.	
Nobody seems to be talking to me at school.	
I can't seem to get there on time.	
I'm worried that my symptoms may come back.	
My supports are not working together.	
I get bored at work.	

6.16 Supports I Have Now Tool



Instructions: List the People, Places, Things, and Activities that you **already have** to support your success at work or school.

Which supports do you have **now**?

<i>The PEOPLE who support me:</i>	
<i>The PLACES that support me:</i>	
<i>The THINGS that support me:</i>	
<i>The ACTIVITIES that support me:</i>	

6.17 Tool: Brainstorming Supports I Still Need

Instructions: Use this tool to help think about potential supports you need to **keep** work or school.

Support Category	Situation	Examples	Supports You Need or Want
People	At work or school	Supervision time with boss, Disability Services	
	Outside:	Peer support, counseling, time with my pastor	
Places	At work or school	Closed office, lunchroom, library	
	Outside:	Local park, place of worship	
Activities	At work or school	Taking study breaks, accessing tutoring, lunch with coworker	
	Outside:	Exercise, sleeping 8 hours, developing a WRAP plan	
Things	At work or school:	Smart phone, calendar, favorite cup for coffee, books, water bottle	
	Outside:	alarm clock, coffee maker, home computer	

6.18 Brainstorming Supports Discussion Prompts

These prompts are designed to start discussion and exploration! Substitute the word, “school” or “training,” if you are looking at education.

People Supports:

- Who are the people that support you now at work? How do they support your success and satisfaction at work?
- Who else do you think you need to support you at the job itself?
- Who is outside of work (in your life in general), who supports your success at work?
- Who else do you think you need more support from so that you can be successful at work?

Place Supports:

- What are the places at work that support you?
- What other places at work do you think you need in order to be more successful and satisfied there?
- What places support your work success but are outside of the job?
- What other places do you think could support your success and satisfaction at work, even though they are outside of the job?

Activities:

- What do you do at work to support your success at work now?
- What kinds of things do you need to do at work to increase your satisfaction and success at work?
- What do you do at home or in other parts of your life to ensure your success at work now?
- What else do you think you would like to do in your life outside of work to enhance your success?

Things:

- What kinds of things do you have that make you successful and happy at work?
- What kinds of things do you think you need that could make you more successful?

6.19 Tool: Overcoming Challenges with Supports

Instructions: Use this tool to think through the people, places, things, and activities that could support you through challenging situations at work or school. The example in gray shows a support in each category. List on the left any challenges you are having at work or school, and then brainstorm on the right the supports that might help.

Challenge at Work or School	Possible Supports: People, Places, Things, Activities
Example: I don't know how I will get all my work done....	Job coach to help me strategize (<i>person</i>), a quiet space to work (<i>place</i>), a cellphone that gives reminders (<i>thing</i>), prioritizing tasks with a supervisor (<i>activity</i>)

6.20 Discussion Prompts: Overcoming Challenges with Supports

Problem Situations:

- What has been going well at work/school so far?
- In what situations do you feel the most support at work (school)?
- What kinds of things have been hard at work (school)?
- What kinds of “bumps in the road” have you run into at work or school lately?
- What kinds of problem situations are you running into at work?
- Do any of the example problem situations listed on the Tool sound familiar?
- Do you have others that you want to think through?

People Supports

- Who are the people who might support you?
- How might those people support you? Can they support you emotionally (like be a cheerleader), with practical supports, like bus fare, or in other ways?
- Consider supports both inside the workplace or school and outside in the rest of your life.

Places

- What places might support you? Consider places inside, such as a quiet place to work, lunchroom, library, etc.
- Do you have access to those places? Could we request access?
- Are there places outside work or school that could support you in this situation (a place to take a walk, a place to go for support)?

Things

- What things could support you? Consider things such as computers, washing machine, alarm clock, etc.
- Do you have access to these things? How could we think about getting them?

Activities

- What activities could support you, both inside and outside work?

Peer Support

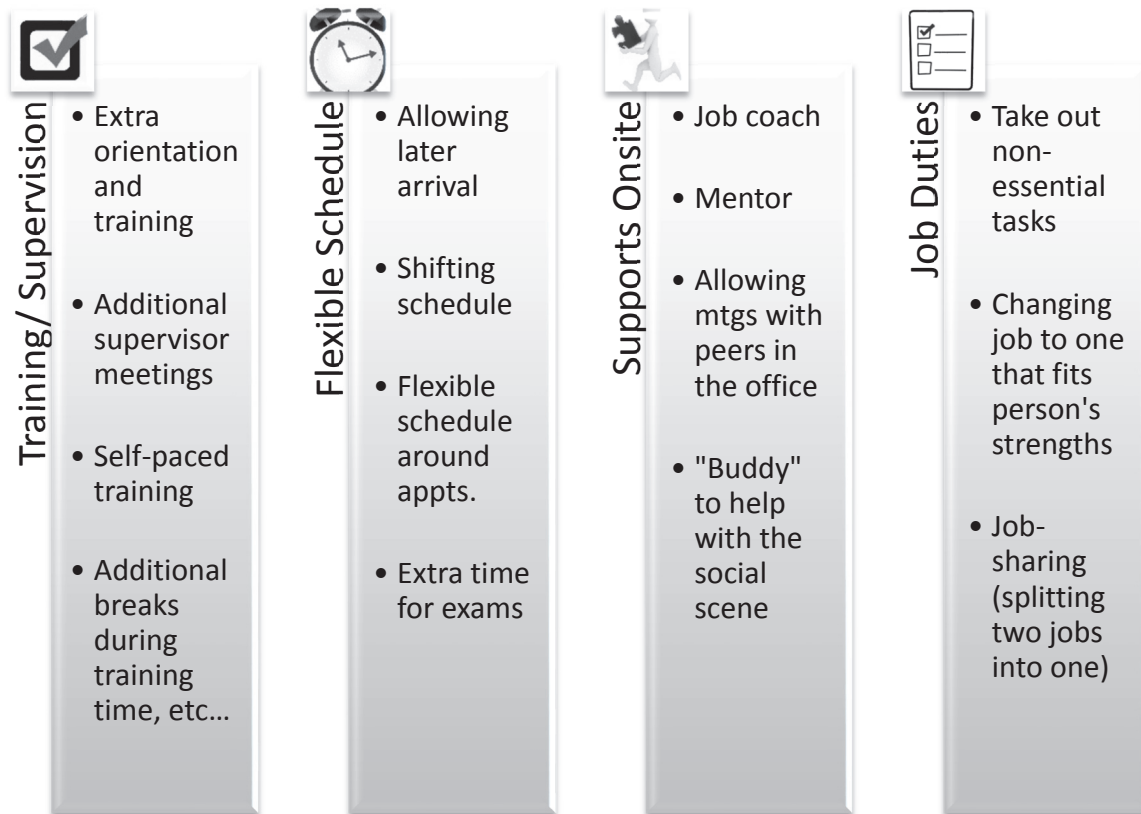
- How can I support you?
- How can I work with you to access or use any of these other supports?
- What can we learn together to help you get the support you need?

6.21 Accommodations: Employment

What is it? Accommodations are supports that the EMPLOYER provides.

The word, “Accommodations” comes from the Americans with Disabilities Act, which allows people to request and receive “reasonable accommodations” in employment and other settings, in order to “level the playing field” for the disability.

Rather than raising the height of a desk, or other physical adjustments, we may be talking about the following (not an exhaustive list). These focus primarily on work:



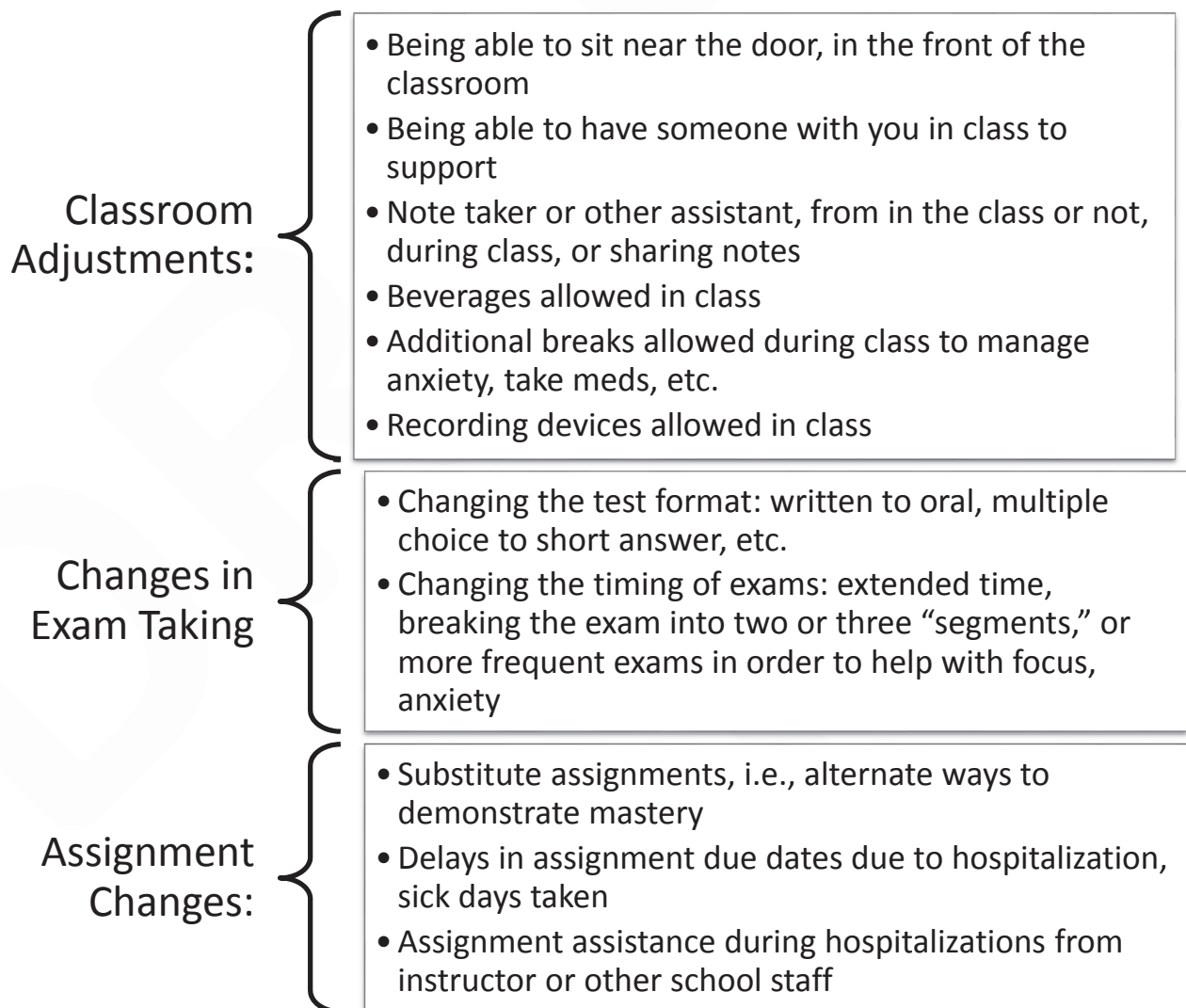
Important Note! Accommodations often make the workplace more accessible for all workers, not only workers with disabilities. Employers who are thinking about how to accommodate workers with disabilities may be making the environment better for everyone.

For more examples, check out the Job Accommodation Network at www.askjan.org

6.22 Accommodations: Education

The following offers a few examples of accommodations you may request in a school environment.

For more examples, refer to the website of the BU Center for Psychiatric Rehabilitation:
<http://cpr.bu.edu/resources/reasonable-accommodations/>



Please note that these are examples of *potential* accommodations. Accommodations must be negotiated with the school or training program. It may be helpful to engage the school disability services or “504 C officer,” who must ensure compliance with laws related to accommodating disabilities.

6.23 Example: Reggie and Miguel

Reggie and Miguel have been meeting on Mondays for some time now. They have been talking about using skills that Reggie already knows how to do, but sometimes finds hard to use on the job. They also have been thinking about supports inside and outside of the workplace that can help Reggie be successful and happy on the job.

For the past few months, Reggie has been talking more and more about his worries that he is going to get a bad evaluation. Miguel paraphrased that concern, because he knows first-hand how it feels to be told, “Oh, it’s not going to be that bad; it’ll be fine!” In fact, when Reggie was feeling blown off by some of his providers, Miguel shared how he recovered from what he calls “the slap of dismissal.”

But they didn’t stop there. They talked about what Reggie needs on the job. Reggie thinks he “knows what’s going to go down” when evaluation time comes around. After talking a bit, Miguel asked if Reggie had heard anything from his supervisor, Virginia, and he hadn’t. In fact, from Reggie’s perspective, Virginia doesn’t say anything about Reggie’s work either way, leaving him to assume the worst.

So they decided to ask Virginia for feedback. They practiced what Miguel would say, and agreed to meet the afternoon after he talked to her. What happened surprised even Miguel: Virginia didn’t say much at all, making Reggie even more nervous. They decided that this may be a time to ask for an accommodation, because though no feedback may or may not be an issue for some people, for Reggie, the anxiety could actually push him out of the job.

Miguel realized that he didn’t know a lot about accommodations, but he knew that Reggie’s VR counselor did. They decided to look over the “Disclosure Thinking” tool again. In addition, they decided to consult Reggie’s counselor for help in making the actual request. This way, they could enhance supports and request an accommodation at the same time.

Q **uestion:** How can you relate to Reggie’s situation? What parts of your own vocational recovery story could have supported Reggie here?

6.24 Exercise: Turning “Can’ts” into “Can-do’s”

Below are a few examples of supports and accommodations for common problems experienced at work. What would you add to the lists?

Common “Can’ts”	Possible Skills	Brainstormed Supports	Possible Accommodations
Can’t get into work on time	<i>Requesting a wake-up call Estimating time Scheduling morning activities</i>	<i>Alarm clock Wake up call Ride to work</i>	<i>Ride with coworker Later start time</i>
Can’t remember what to do next			
Can’t figure out what to do first			
Can’t seem to make friends			
Can’t get my work done in time			
Can’t take it when my boss yells at me			

6.25 Exercise: What helps YOU?

Instructions: Team up with someone you don't ordinarily work with. Choose which one of you will facilitate the exploration, and who will explore **their own** situation. Facilitators should use their partnering skills! Both of you should be yourselves; do not play a role.

1. **What are some examples of SKILLS that your job requires you to meet:**
 - a. Job Tasks
 - b. Hidden Expectations (including Social/Cultural Expectations)
 - c. Personal Expectations

2. **What kinds of SUPPORTS do you need to be successful and satisfied at work? (Supports can be inside or outside work)**
 - a. People
 - b. Places
 - c. Things
 - d. Activities

3. **What kinds of ACCOMMODATIONS do you need?**
 - a. People supports (Training, supervision, job coaching)
 - b. Flexible schedule
 - c. Changes in job tasks

6.26 Tool: Turning “Can’t’s” into “Can-do’s”

Instructions: Use this tool to figure out what kinds of skills, supports, and accommodations could assist you with what you might be struggling to do at work or school.

“I Can’t’s”	Possible Skills	Supports that might help	Possible Accommodations (employer supports)
Example: I can’t get into work on time!	Requesting a wake-up call Estimating time Scheduling morning activities	Alarm clock Wake up call Ride to work	Ride with coworker Later start time
I can’t			
I can’t			
I can’t			
I can’t			
I can’t			
I can’t			

6.27 Discussion Prompts: Turning “Can’t’s” into “Can-Do’s”

Can’t’s:

- What is coming up as problems at work or school?
- What do you think is getting in the way of your overall success at work or school?
- What would you like to get better at?

Possible Skills:

- What are you good at doing at work or school?
- What skills do you already have that could help you with this “can’t”?
- What do you think you want to learn how to do that could improve this situation?
- What skills do you want to get better at, that could help in this situation?
- What skills do you want to practice with me or somebody else?

Possible Supports:

- Who could help you with this situation? How?
- What kinds of places might support you with this situation?
- What kinds of activities might help you out?
- What kinds of things do you need that could support you here?

Possible Accommodations:

- How could your employer (or school) support you in this situation?
- What kinds of adjustments to the workplace (or class load) could help to level the playing field with other workers/classmates?
- Is there something you need from the people at work?
- Would you be able to do your job if your schedule was adjusted in some way?
- Would you be able to be successful if extra (not essential) job duties were not required of you?
- How can I support you to get what you need?

6.28 Building Skills and Supports

New skills and supports: When we don't know how to do something, or do not have support, we may need to develop new skills and/or supports. Consider:

Learning new skills and developing new supports

Many vocational and other programs offer skill and support development. Support people to get connected to skill teaching programs and providers.

Support practice! As they say, "How do you get to Carnegie Hall?"

Help make sure that the goals being worked on are related to the person's vocational recovery goals. Skill learning must be linked to where the person wants to go!

Strengthening skills and supports: Being "strength-based" is in part referring to acknowledging, and building on, the skills people have already. To do this, we need to:

Building on Strengths

Support people to use what they already know how to do.

Scaffold people with experiences with doing things and practicing skills they might already have! (i.e., the more we do, the more we can do!).

Help people to apply skills to new settings.

Support the strengthening of supports.

Help people to overcome barriers that get in the way of using skills and supports in the new setting.

6.29 Exercise: Developing Skills and Supports

Instructions: Read the scenario and pair up with a partner. Consider the questions below to think through how you might support Marco to keep his job.

Marco started working at the Home Depot as a Sales Associate two months ago. He is good at his job, and has gotten good feedback from his supervisor about his performance.

Marco has been focusing on doing well on the job so much that he hasn't really started to meet people. He ends up spending break times alone, or just working through them because he doesn't know what to say to people in the break room. He has had friends before, but at the job, talking to people feels different to him.

What skills does Marco need?	How could you support him to learn those skills?
What supports does Marco need?	How could you scaffold him to gather those supports?

Q. How would you support the use of skills and supports Marco already has?

What skills does Marco already have?	What scaffolds could support him to use those skills in this job?
What supports does he already have?	What scaffolds could help him to use those supports?

6.30 Tool: Learning Skills

Instructions: How will you learn or improve the skills you named?

Use this sheet to name the skill, and how you will learn, improve, or practice each one.

Skills	Learn, Improve, or Practice
Example: Requesting Clarification	Practice asking my boss to repeat or write down instructions with Petra, my peer specialist.

6.31 Discussion Prompts: Learning Skills

Listing Skills

- Which skills do you think will be the most important to list here?
- Why did you choose those skills?
- Are there any other skills that you think would be important to list here?

Thinking through Level of Learning Needed

- Which of these skills do you already know how to do?
- Which of these skills do you need some practice with, so that you can fine-tune your skill level?
- Which of these skills do you need refreshing?
- Which of these skills do you need to learn how to do?

Planning for Learning

- How do you think you can learn this skill?
- How can you practice any skills that need fine-tuning?
- How can we learn more together about these skills?
- How would you like me to support you as you learn these skills?
- What other supports would you like to pull in to support your learning?
- How would you like to keep track of your learning over time?

6.32 Tool: My KEEPING Summary

***Instructions:** Use this Tool to bring together information from other tools you used to make decisions about keeping work or school.*

Skills: List skills you want to develop to be a great worker or student.

Explicit Skills
(easily found)

**Hidden/
Implicit Skills**

**Personal
Expectations**

Supports: List those supports you need to be happy and successful.

People

Places

Things

Activities

Accommodations: Describe changes you need from the workplace.

**Training/Supervision
/Supports**

Flexible Schedule

Physical Space

**Job Duty
Modifications**

6.33 Helpful Links

American Disability Association (ADA): <http://www.ada.gov/>

Association for Higher Education and Disabilities (AHEAD): <http://www.ahead.org>

DO-IT The Faculty Room: <http://www.washington.edu/doit/faculty/>

Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC):
www.eeoc.gov

Job Accommodation Network (JAN): www.jan.wvu.edu

Judge Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law: www.bazelon.org/

National Disability Rights Network: www.ndrn.org

U.S. Department of Justice ADA Home Page: www.ada.gov

Disclosure

From Job Accommodation Network: <http://askjan.org/topics/discl.htm>

For articles on disclosure: <http://www.adainfo.org/content/disclosure-disabilityaccommodation-requests-workplace>

Disclosing at a One-Stop Center:
http://www.communityinclusion.org/article.php?article_id=269

6.34 The Americans with Disabilities Act (and Amendments): *Some Basics*

The ADA has five different Sections called “Titles.” Title I is Employment

Goals of the ADA:

- Eliminate discrimination and ensure that people with disabilities experience:
 - Equality of opportunity
 - Full participation and integration
 - Independence
 - Economic self-sufficiency
- Remove barriers to access.
- Provide clear, strong, enforceable standards

An employee is protected under the ADA if:

- There is a physical or mental impairment that causes a substantial limitation of one or more major life activities.
- The person has a “record of” a disability or who are “regarded as” having a disability.

The employee must be:

- *Qualified to do the essential job functions of the job with or without a reasonable accommodation.*

Workplace Protections: The Americans with Disabilities Act is an *anti-discrimination law, not an anti-firing law!*

- Discrimination is prohibited in all facets of employment, including:

Job application procedures	Hiring or Advancement
Benefits and Compensation	Discipline / Termination
Training	Any terms, conditions, or privileges of employment
Company events	

Medical Inquiries – In General

The employer is NOT entitled to request information regarding:

- General medical information
- Medical conditions or impairments unrelated to the reasonable accommodation request
- Any medical inquiry must be “job-related and consistent with business necessity.”

The Permissible Question

- An employee or applicant is not required to mention that they have a disability until a reasonable accommodation is needed.
- An employer may not request any disability-related information or give any medical examinations prior to making a job offer to the applicant. Any question that may elicit disability-related information is prohibited.
- Permissible Question: Are you able to do the job with or without an accommodation?
 - People with or without disabilities can answer yes to this question (without indicating “with” or without”)

After a Conditional Job Offer is Made:

- “Conditional job offer:” A job offer conditioned on the applicant successfully meeting the reasonable and legitimate physical and medical requirements of the job.
- Employers may ask disability-related questions and require a medical exam if done uniformly of all applicants.
- Employers cannot withdraw a job offer unless:
 - The individual cannot perform the essential job functions;
 - A reasonable accommodation cannot be provided; and
 - The reasons for withdrawing the job offer are job-related and consistent with business necessity.

Disability-Related Information – On The Job

The employer may only seek disability-related information if there is a “reasonable basis” to believe that the employee:

- Is unqualified to do the job;
- Needs a reasonable accommodation; or
- Poses a direct threat to the health or safety of the employee or others.

6.35 Reasonable Accommodations

Reasonable Accommodations are defined as:

Modifications or adjustments to the work environment or to the manner or circumstances under which the position is customarily performed that enable a qualified individual with a disability to perform the essential functions of that position or enjoy equal benefits and privileges of employment. 29 C.F.R. § 1630.2(o)(1). (Equal Employment Opportunity Community (EEOC) Regulations)

An Accommodation does not have to be provided if it:

- Is unreasonable
- Requires reallocation of essential job functions
- Will not enable the employee to be qualified
- Causes an undue hardship to the employer; or
- Results in a direct threat to the health or safety of the employee or others.

“Essential Functions”

- Fundamental Job Duties
- Job descriptions may be used as a guide to determine essential job functions, but essential job functions may be in a job description.

“Undue hardship” is defined as “Significant difficulty or expense, in light of:”

- “The nature and net cost of the accommodation...”
- “The impact ... upon the operation of the facility, including on...”
- “The ability of other employees to perform their duties...”
- “The facility's ability to conduct business.”

“Direct threat” “A significant risk of substantial harm to the health or safety of the individual or others...”

- “That cannot be eliminated or reduced by reasonable accommodation.”
- Requires an “individualized assessment...”
- “Based on a reasonable medical judgment that relies on the most current medical knowledge and/or on the best available objective evidence.”

See Module 5, Scaffolding Getting, for more on supporting Requesting Accommodations.

Module 7

Coordinating with Employment Service Providers

What to Expect from Module 7

The Big Question of Module 7

- How can I support people who want to use employment support services for vocational recovery?

In this Module, we will get an introduction to various vocational and employment service models, and look at some concrete ways in which we can serve our peers through connecting with other providers.

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7.1 Why Connect with Employment Service Providers?

Questions to Ponder:

- How has working with vocational and employment service providers been helpful in your own vocational recovery?
- What are your concerns about connecting people with employment and education support providers? Your hopes?

Not everyone will connect with employment or education providers to achieve work and school goals. However, there may be specific tasks that employment, education, and career services may provide.

Instructions: Sit with a partner and together identify:

Benefits to getting involved with vocational services:

Task the provider could help with:	What kinds of supports can vocational service providers offer?
Help with resume writing	Expertise in types of resumes, “what sells,” etc.

Risks to getting involved with vocational services?

Risk:	Why is this a risk?
Feeling “pushed” into a job I don’t like	For me, it has made me not want to work in the past

7.2 Example of Coordinating with Employment Providers: Rafik

Rafik, a peer counselor at a mental health agency in a large mid-western state, has been working with Maribel for a few months now. Maribel has been involved with many services for most of the last 10 years, and has been feeling for a while that work was something she wants to try out. Maribel wondered, “Would vocational services be a good idea?” She asked Rafik if he could help her.

Rafik knew that the best way to support Maribel is to find out first what she wanted out of this next phase of her life. She might want assistance finding out what her options are, and to find that out, they would need to chat some more. So they decided to set a time to go on a walk and talk about what her hopes and dreams were.

After their first mile, they started to realize that Maribel simply didn’t have a lot of information. She didn’t know about the kinds of vocational services out there, what they do, or what would be expected of her. It became pretty clear to both of them that she needed more information to confidently move forward, and Rafik offered to support her. Maribel pointed out that she has a trusted therapist and a couple of good friends whom she also would want to consult.

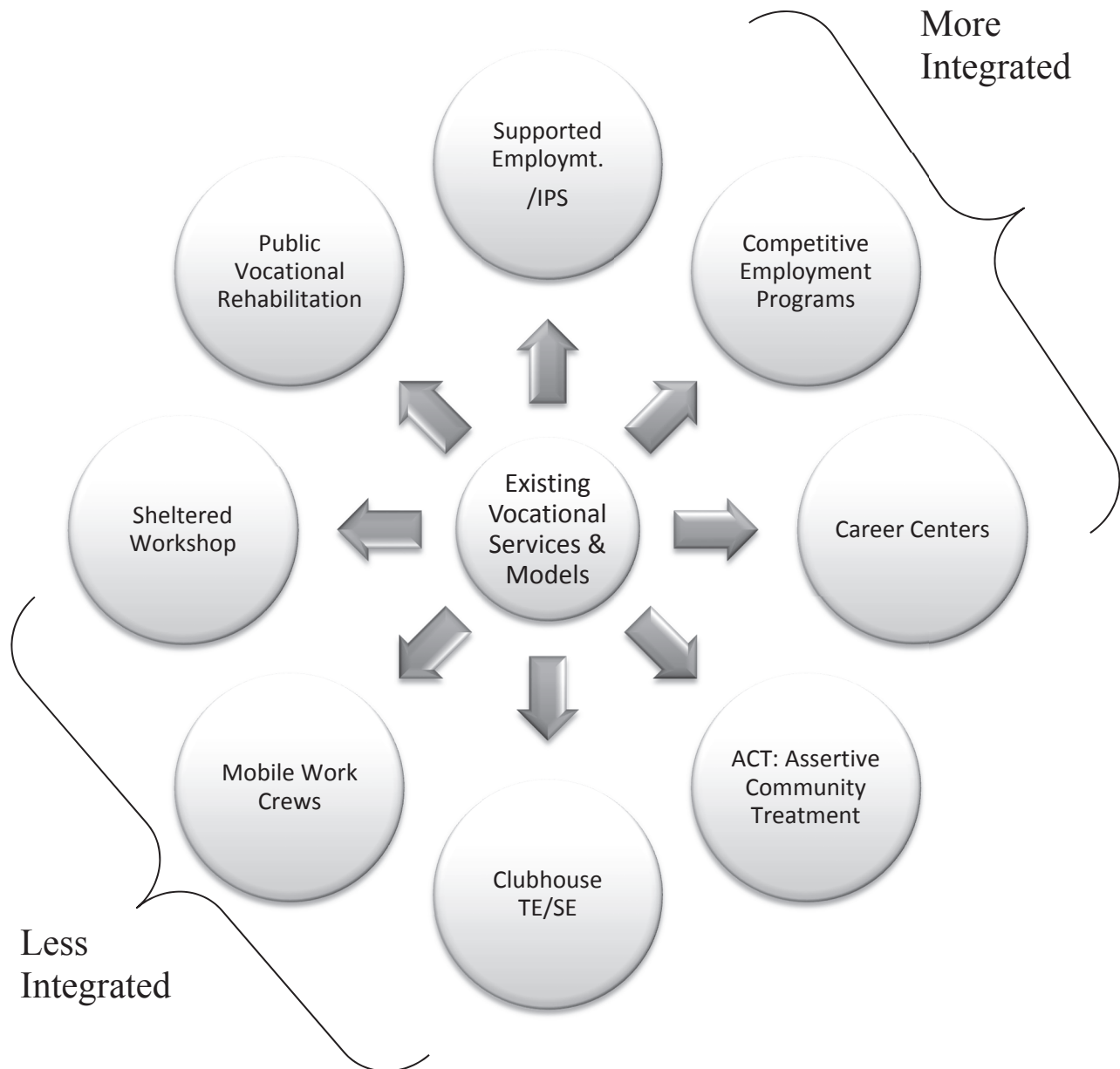
Rafik had been looking into some of the programs in the area. Maribel wanted to start with those, and keep her options open for looking further. Rafik shared some of the information he had gathered. He had learned about State VR, the clubhouse at the agency, and the new Supported Employment program. They wanted to learn more together, so Rafik, Maribel, and one of Maribel’s friends, George, went together to a few of the programs. They wanted to see the programs and talk to people who used the services. Maribel got pretty excited about the Clubhouse. She said that because she hadn’t worked in so long, she wanted a chance to try out a few jobs in their Transitional Employment program, and then move into Supported Employment. As she talked to more people, she got even more excited, and then she got nervous.

Maribel wanted this to be successful. She also wanted to do a good job. But she knew that if she got too nervous, she wouldn’t go. Rafik offered to go with her to the first couple of appointments, if she wanted. Maribel loved that idea, and they set up an appointment for an intake at two places: the State VR agency to support her long-term goals, and the clubhouse.

Question: What could you do to support Maribel in addition to what Rafik has offered?

7.3 The Array of Vocational Services

People who are seeking to choose, get into, or maintain meaningful work may want to get the support of vocational services – and there are a variety of options for them to choose from. Here are a few of the major models and services types that exist in 2015:



Note: “Integrated” refers to supporting work that is not specifically designated for people with disabilities. The more integrated on this list, the more likely that the work people do as a result of the program is “real work, for real pay.”

7.4 Public Vocational Rehabilitation

Public Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) “empowers individuals with disabilities to achieve employment, economic self-sufficiency, independence, and inclusion and integration into our communities.”

Retrieved from <http://www.rehabnetwork.org/>



Questions to Ponder:

- What do you know about Vocational Rehabilitation Services?
- What is Public Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) called in your state?
- What do you know about what they are mandated to do?
- How many people do you think each counselor serves?
- Who do you think they serve?
- What do you know about how VR can offer assistance?

Public VR has an important function in helping people with disabilities to secure work:

- Their mandate is to help people with disabilities to work.
- They serve just about anyone with a disability.
- They are mandated to serve the “most disabled.”
- Services are free for most people.
- VR can send people to other services and pay for important services and education required to get work.
- VR is pretty readily available in most communities.

7.5 Supported Employment

Supported Employment (SE) is a model of vocational services which focuses on “Real Work for Real Pay” in competitive, integrated work environments. Choose-Get-Keep is a Supported Employment approach, and provides a basis for this training.

<p>Competitive Employment ensures that people with disabilities:</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• earn equal pay• with equal benefits• for equal work• in community workplaces alongside people with and without disabilities

The Evidence-Based Supported Employment Program Model, Individual Placement and Support (IPS), focuses on the following:

- All services focus on competitive employment
- No one is excluded who wants to participate
- People do not need to be “job ready” to participate
- Rapid job search
- Employment and mental health services are integrated
- Employment is based on person’s preferences
- Ongoing support
- Individualized supports

7.6 Other Employment Support Program Models

Clubhouse: People who attend clubhouses are invited to be members. Clubhouses value a “work-ordered day” everyone who wants to can have a role to play in the success of the club.

Members + Staff \rightleftarrows Work Side-by-Side \rightleftarrows Functioning Clubhouse

Many clubhouses also offer Transitional Employment (TE):

- The employer “hires” the service agency to fill the job.
- Members work in short-term job slots with employers, usually up to 6 months.
- Job performance is guaranteed: if the person does not go to work, a staff person may do the job instead.
- People may be moved from job to job over time, due to the short-term nature of the job.



Assertive Community Treatment or ACT, is a mental health treatment model designed to integrate mental health treatment and rehabilitation services, including vocational services and peer support.

Inherent in ACT is the value of intensive, in-the-community support, and an “everyone does everything” attitude, so roles may overlap, including medication monitoring and treatment compliance checks.

ACT is recognized as an Evidence-Based Practice in mental health by SAMHSA.

One-Stop Career Centers (also called American Job Centers): Funded by the Dept. of Labor, they provide a “full range of services to the entire job-seeker community.” These services are for everyone, and may or may not have a specific focus on disability.

Non-integrated Models (that may still exist):

Mobile crews are operated by mental health service staff, who hire people with disabilities to work as a group for a community employer. Mobile crews may provide janitorial and other services to employers in temporary or permanent positions.

Sheltered Workshops are set up to “train” people in work skills to get ready for employment, but are segregated environments that are not in the community. Sheltered workshops have not been shown to be effective in supporting people to move to competitive employment.

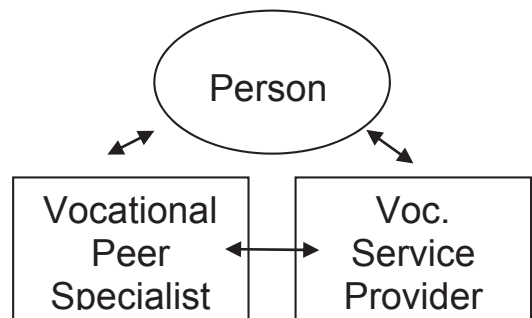
7.7 Partnering with Service Providers

Questions to Ponder:

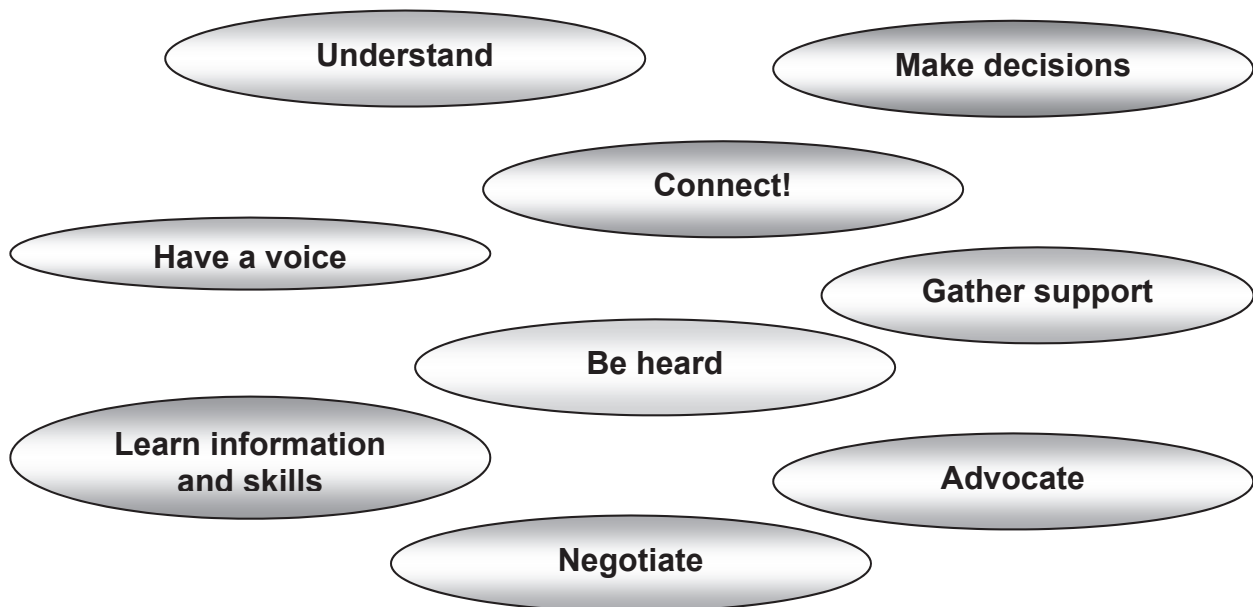
- What can we do to help people connect with vocational service providers?
- Which VPS skills do you think will help the most to connect with service providers?
- What do you wish somebody might have helped you with when you were working with vocational service systems and providers?

There are many partners in our work – the people we work with, their families and loved ones, our coworkers and supervisors, other service providers, and employers.

We might think about partnership as a “**three-legged stool**!”



As Peer Supports with VPS skills and tools, we can make a difference in what happens with vocational services, by supporting people to:



7.8 Connecting with Service Providers

WHAT WE CAN DO:

Listen – “Don’t just do something, stand there!”

We are not required to do, or fix, anything. We can:

- 1) Clear our minds and our environments of distractions,
- 2) Focus in on the person and what they are communicating,

Facilitate Understanding. We can help translate between services and the person.



Help the person to be heard! Getting involved with services, especially services that are new to us, can be very intimidating.

- Scaffold the person’s efforts: Orient the person to what will happen. Help plan or write down what he or she wants to say.
- Invite the person in to the conversation as needed.
- Help the vocational provider to “hear” the person.
- Help summarize, ensuring that the person’s voice is in the mix.

Supporting Decision-making. Vocational services often work best for people who know what they want, and who know something about their options:

- We can support people to explore their dreams, options, even what their first jobs should look like.
- We often have the flexibility, time, and the role to visualize the possibilities.

Accompanying. Sometimes it is enough to “go with” – whether or not we go into the meeting itself. Having someone there in the moment, who is willing to go with us, walk through the door, or be waiting at the coffee shop next door, can make or break our experience.

Learning with! Remember that we do not need to know it all – we are learning with, and from, our peers.



7.9 Exercise: Scaffolding Employment Services Use

Small Group 1: *Read the scenario and brainstorm scaffolds:*

Scenario: You are a peer specialist working in a residential home for people labeled with psychiatric diagnoses. Your state has adopted the IPS Supported Employment model for all state-run agencies.

One of the people you've been working with, Paul, had his first appointment today with the employment unit connected to your agency. When you ask him how it went, he said that he's totally overwhelmed. He was assigned to an employment specialist who did an employment profile with him, and who told Paul in the first meeting that the goal was to have him out searching for work in the field of his choice within 30 days.

Paul has told you that he feels pressured to perform "right away." He says he has no idea what he wants to do, and that "it doesn't really matter what I want to do because I'm not qualified to do much of anything besides sweep floors anyway." He says that it was probably a mistake to say he wanted to talk to someone about work.

Group Instructions:

Brainstorm the scaffolds that could support Paul and write them in the box below.

7.9 Exercise, continued

Group 2: *Read the scenario and brainstorm scaffolds:*

Scenario: You work as a peer specialist in a local peer-run recovery learning center. Your agency offers classes in self-help tools like WRAP and self-advocacy, and offers peer support to community members. Samantha runs one of the WRAP classes and has used that experience to build up her work skills. She also gets a lot of peer support at the center.

Today, Samantha has come by to vent her anger and frustration after visiting her local VR. She waited for three months after her initial orientation to meet a counselor, and she was excited about getting started on the road to her dream job. She wants to be a Rehabilitation Counselor, knows the school she wants to go to, and was hoping to start classes in the Fall.

But when she met with the counselor today, she was told that they would have to do a series of tests to make sure that this was a realistic goal for her, and that it would take three months to complete that process. She is crushed because she thinks her dream is being questioned and is angry because she really wants to “get this party started.”

Group Instructions:

Brainstorm the scaffolds that could support Samantha and write them in the box below.

7.9 Exercise, continued

Group 3: *Read the scenario and brainstorm scaffolds:*

Scenario: You work in a clubhouse that has a long tradition in supporting people to work. They have a supported employment program as well as a Transitional Employment Program. The club has begun to hire peer specialists at the clubhouse. When they learned that you had VPS skills, you were hired to support people in their vocational recovery.

You've been working with Jose, a Latino man who has been involved with the clubhouse for about five years. He started working in the clubhouse two years ago, and tells you that he wants to move beyond the clubhouse job and get work in the community. But he also knows that the clubhouse relies on him. He has been serving in a supervisory role in the administrative unit, and he doesn't want to disappoint the staff after all they've done for him.

Group Instructions: *Brainstorm scaffolds that could be supportive to Jose.*



7.10 Discussion Prompts: Partnering with Service Providers

Please feel free to change the wording and include education as relevant.

Benefits of Connecting with Service Providers

- What is your experience with working with vocational or employment service providers?
- What do you see as the benefits of working with a provider to help you think about, get into, or keep work?
- What do you think you could get out of working with a service provider?

Risks of Connecting with Service Providers

- Have you ever had any bad experiences with service providers in the past? What was that like?
- What do you think the downside of getting involved with a service provider could be?

Support for Connecting with Service Providers

- Which service providers have you thought about getting involved with?
- What are you hoping to achieve with a vocational (or other) service provider?
- What kinds of supports or skills do you think you need to actively engage a service provider right now?
- What can I do to support you to get involved with the service providers you are most interested in?
- What do you need from others?

7.11 Negotiating for Success with Vocational Services

Negotiating is a way to achieve consensus when there is disagreement.

When working with vocational services, people may disagree about the:

1. Goal of services
2. Process of getting there
3. The way services are being provided

Example: Mary is being told by her vocational counselor that her dream of becoming a veterinarian is not reasonable. Mary thinks she is being discriminated against, for having been labeled with a mental illness. LaShauna, her CPS, offers to go with her to meet with the vocational counselor to try and work it out, using this framework:



1) Get: the person's concerns, and affirm them



When Asha, the counselor, talked with them, LaShauna was careful to think about why Asha might think the way she did. She responded, "I think we understand that you are concerned; you want Mary to be successful with work. You don't want to set her up for failure, and think it's unethical to go down a road you are unsure about."

2) Give: your connection to that perspective

LaShauna thought about her own path: "I remember when people didn't think I could work in peer support, or work at all! I had had a pretty tough time at one point, and looking back, I know that people couldn't see the 'working me.' I wasn't so sure I could survive a life that didn't include supporting others to recover in some way. Once people saw me taking steps, even if they didn't always work out, they started to see the 'me' that I saw."

3) Merge: perspectives with a "what if we..." solution

Mary and LaShauna talked, and asked Asha: "What if we tried out a step or two in the direction of veterinary work and see if two things happen: 1) that Mary still likes it, and 2) that it's working out? Then we could get back together and see where to go from there."

7.12 Exercise: Negotiating for Success

Instructions: Get into a small group of 2-3 people, and read the following short scenario. Discuss with the group how you would Negotiate for Success as you scaffold Nolan. Be prepared to discuss your responses with the class.

Nolan is working with an employment service for the first time. He's hoping that he can get a job right away, because he "just wants some money" so he can go out and buy things he wants. His employment counselor met with his team, and the team has some concerns about whether he has enough "stability" to start work right away.

How would you:

- 1) **Get: the counselor's concerns, and affirm them?** What values and ethics do you think are at work here? What could you say to show that you understand that perspective?
- 2) **Give: your connection to that perspective.** What experiences have you had that are related? What can you say that shows that you can relate to the other person's perspective?
- 3) **Merge: perspectives with a "what if we.." solution.** What might you suggest as a strategy that merges the two perspectives? How would you put it, to demonstrate that this is a "we" solution, rather than a "you" or "me" solution?

7.13 Tool: Negotiating for Success

Instructions: Use this tool to help strategize how to approach difficult situations. Think through the following:

1) Get: the service provider's concerns, and affirm them

What values and ethics do you think are at work? What could you say to show that you understand that perspective?

2) Give: your connection to that perspective.

What experiences have you had that are related? What can you say that shows that you can relate to the other person's perspective?

3) Merge: perspectives with a "what if we..." solution.

What might you suggest as a strategy that merges the two perspectives? How would you demonstrate the strategy as a "we" solution, rather than a "you" or "me" solution?

7.14 Helpful Links: Vocational Support Providers

General Information on Working and Disability

- Repository of Employment Resources:
<http://cpr.bu.edu/resources/employment/welcome>
- Career One-Stop: Tools for exploring work and careers, job market, local resources, and basic tips on interviews, resume writing, etc.: <http://www.careeronestop.org/>

Public Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) *NOTE: each state has its own agency*

- Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation:
<http://www.rehabnetwork.org/>
- Disability Resources: <http://www.disabilityresources.org/VOC-REHAB.html>

Supported Employment

- Association for People in Supported Employment (APSE): <http://www.apse.org/>
- Individualized Placement and Support (“IPS”) Model of Supported Employment (also known as Evidence-Based Supported Employment); SAMHSA Toolkit:
<http://store.samhsa.gov/product/Supported-Employment-Evidence-Based-Practices-EBP-KIT/SMA08-4365>
- Evidence-Based Supported Employment/IPS: <http://www.dartmouth.edu/~ips/>

Young Adults

- National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability, NCWD for Youth – Great resources and manuals to support you <http://www.ncwd-youth.info/>

Social Security Benefits:

- <http://www.socialsecurity.gov/redbook/>
- Institute for Community Inclusion:
http://www.communityinclusion.org/topic.php?topic_id=15
<http://www.disabilityresources.org/PASS.html>
- Job Accommodation Network (JAN) - <http://askjan.org/>
<http://www.disabilityresources.org/ADA.html>
- Self-Employment – Start-Up USA, technical assistance center on Self-Employment
<http://www.start-up-usa.biz/>

Supported Education

<http://www.disabilityresources.org/HIGHERED.html>

7.15 Practice Assignment: Researching Vocational Services

Instructions: *This assignment should be completed before the next session. Bring enough information to share with each participant in the class.*

Assignment Details:

Research a vocational service that is available in your area.

Look into a program or service that is of interest to the people you work with, to you, and/or to your agency, that you don't know already well.

a. When researching the agency, do as many of the following as possible:

- Look at brochures and other materials
- Go to the organization's website
- Visit the program
- Talk to people who run the program
- Talk to people who work there
- Talk to people who participate in the services

b. Gather information about as many of the following as possible:

- What kind(s) of services are offered?
- How the services are provided (one-to-one meetings, groups, community support)?
- Who can participate?
- How long people can participate?
- Benefits to participating?
- Costs to participating?
- What people can expect to get out of the program in the end?
- What people need to do to participate successfully in the program?

Write up a ½– 1 page description to share with your colleagues

Use any format you desire: lists, bullets, or narrative, but make it easy to understand.

Bring enough copies for the entire class with you to the next training session, and be prepared to talk about it briefly (1-2 minutes).

Module 8

Researching Information

What to Expect from Module 8

The Big Question of Module 8

- How can I support people who are working to gather information and utilize resources for vocational recovery?

In this Module, we will look at ways to validate the information you might research with people as they work on their vocational recovery.

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8.1 Scaffolding in the Community

Knowledge is Power...

There will be many times in our work that we will be asked information that we don't have the answer to, but we know the information is important. There also will be times when we will have a hunch that there may be more information that could help the person we are working with. There will be other times when simply knowing the BIG picture will be invaluable.

There are two strategies that are key to our success in supporting people get the information they need:

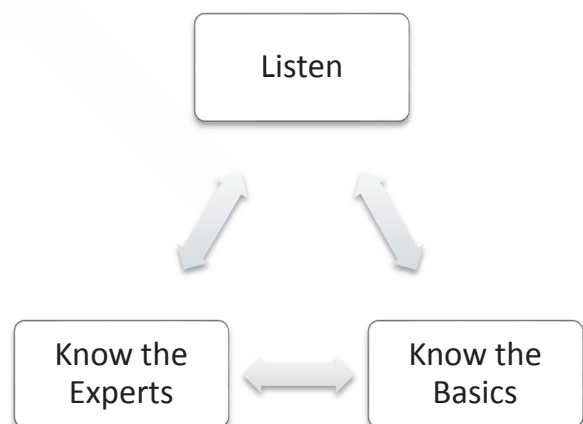
Partner with the Experts

There are some areas that we will never learn (or want to learn), such as the ins and outs of Social Security or the VR system. Luckily, there are many experts in the community who do great work. Creating relationships with experts in these different areas can be invaluable.

In some cases, experts will become the people that you can refer someone to, with confidence. In other cases, the experts may be people we can consult with to clarify an issue or ask a question.

Know the Basics

It's important that we know the basics, though, even if we have partnered with other experts. Knowing basic information about a variety of vocational recovery areas allows us to know what the questions are, and may alert us if we hear potential misinformation. We also don't want to overwhelm our experts by looking to them for the answer to every little question. So even with experts, we need to know how to research information and get the basics for ourselves.

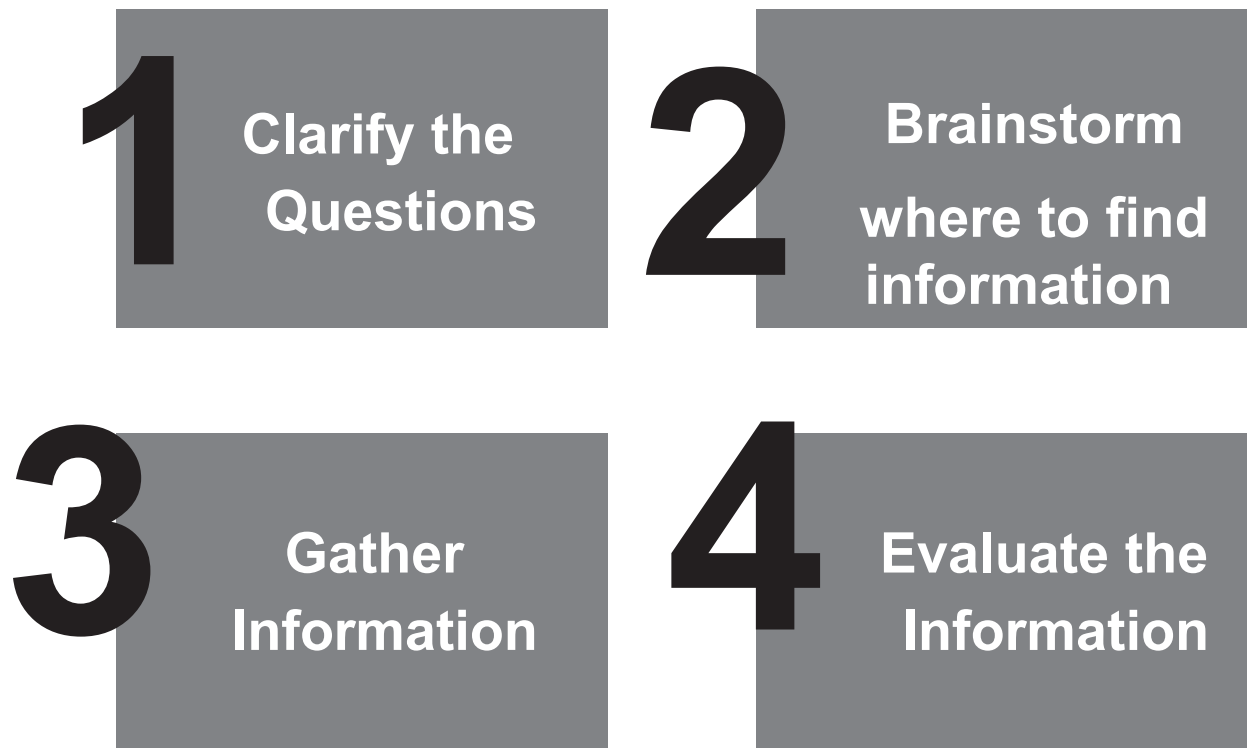


8.2 Researching the Basics

So how do we gain the knowledge of the basics that we need, or other information that's important?

There are four steps that we can use whenever we have to try to gather information.

Researching Information



The following pages will give us some information on what each of these means, what it could look like, and a Tool to use when working with people on researching information.

8.3 Clarifying the Question

1

Clarify the Questions

A Problem Clearly Stated
is a Problem Half Solved...

Stephen Covey

- Move from general to specific concrete questions
- Use open-ended questions and partnering skills

Questions come in all sizes and shapes, but when it comes to researching information, the clearer the question, the better you'll do. Spending a little time to spell out exactly what you want to know can save you lots of time.

Example 1: Mario has been working and is thinking about increasing his hours. He wants to know how much he can make and not jeopardize his benefits. After asking some questions, you learn that Mario is aware of his benefits, knows that he's in his Extended Period of Eligibility, and will be fine if he stays under the SGA figure. He just doesn't know what SGA is right now, so the question is, "What is the current SGA figure?"

Example 2: Sasha has been saying that she wants to try working again. She's worked off and on over the years, but with little success. She's afraid of working, though, because she believes she'll lose her Medicaid. At first, you think the question might be "how does work impact Medicaid?" But after talking more with Sasha, you learn that she gets Medicaid because she has SSI, so you realize that another important question is, "What are the work rules for someone on SSI?"

Keep in mind that you are working in partnership. Each one of you is learning what the questions are.

- Getting clear on the questions involves listening to the person with an ear for getting clear on the key question(s).
- You also may want to ask open-ended questions (see Module 2 on Partnering), to get more information from the person.
- Paraphrasing is key, as you and the other person come to an understanding.

Once you both feel clear on what the important questions are, decide together if you need general information, or the answer to a specific question.

8.5 Brainstorming Information Sources

2

Brainstorm where to get information

Brainstorm avenues to get information

- Internet
- Library
- People

Types of Sources

- “Knowledgeable” primary resources
- Experienced
- Written
- Observed

We are living in the age of information. The Internet gives us access to volumes of information at the touch of a button. This can be both a help and a hindrance to finding information, and it should be seen as only one of many ways of gathering information.

Different ways to get information include (but are not limited to):

<p>Knowledgeable Sources – Talking to people “in the know.” Knowledgeable sources are people with direct connections to what you’re looking for, like people who work somewhere (government agency, VR, Social Security)</p>
<p>Experienced Sources -- Talking to people who have experiential knowledge, e.g., someone who has used a service, worked with them in the past.</p>
<p>Written Sources -- Gathering brochures or other written materials, including books and Internet sites, on the topic.</p>
<p>Observation -- One of the best ways to get information about a service or setting is to visit and observe. Ask for a tour and/or an orientation!</p>

Brainstorming Information Sources involves three steps:

1. Come up with as many possibilities as you can: No idea is a bad idea!
2. Evaluate your list for the top three sources of information. Consider
 - a. Availability – is it local?
 - b. Accessibility – can the person access the information?
 - c. Feasibility – is it easy to get to?
 - d. Reasonable Cost – will it cost too much financially or personally?
3. Decide who will do what, and what scaffolds will support the effort.

8.6 Tool: Brainstorming Information Sources

Your peer specialist will not know everything, but rather work with you to understand what you need to know as you make choices, gain experience, and move forward in your vocational recovery.

To Brainstorm Information Sources:

1. Come up with as many possibilities as you can: No idea is a bad idea!
2. Decide if each option is accessible, available, feasible, and reasonable, and therefore, a best option to use to get information.

My Brainstormed Ideas	Is it available?	Is it nearby/ accessible?	Is it feasible/ doable?	Reasonable Cost?	Best Option?
Example: Go with my peer sp. to VR for orientation	I have to call	Yes	Yes, she'll help me	Yes, it's free	Yes

8.7 Gathering Information

Gathering information can be a quick or not-so-quick adventure, depending on what you're looking for. Some information is readily available, while other material will take some creativity to find.

Gathering information involves three steps:

1. Ask the question(s)
2. Support the person to get/ hear the information
3. Help record the details

Scaffolding Gathering Information may involve many things. Here are some examples:



Peers may gather the first piece of information, to show that gathering the information is possible.



You may decide with the person that accompanying him or her to knowledgeable or experienced sources is useful.



Or, you may be the person they tell about it after the information is gathered.



You may also “sit with” the person as he or she gathers the information on the phone or by Internet.



Whatever the scaffold, it is important that you decide together whether, and how, the supports are offered.

3

Gather the Information

Gather enough leads to ensure you have good information

Prioritize and evaluate your leads:

- Availability-is it local?
- Accessibility-is it accessible to you and/or the person you're working with
- Feasibility – is it easy to get?
- Reasonable Cost – does it cost too much, financially or personally?

8.8 Tool: Gather Information

Instructions: Use this Tool to record information you have gathered. On the left, write in the questions you have for a service, employment or education option. On the right, record what you found out.

My Questions	Information I got
Example: How do I apply for Financial Aid, especially if I don't want to deal with student loans?	<i>I found out that I can apply through the FAFSA, and that I can let the school know what kinds of aid I am accepting. There also are scholarships out there --</i>

8.9 Example and Exercise

Instructions: Read the example of Sasha below. With a partner, complete the exercise.

Sasha wanted to know what would happen to her SSI if she goes to work. Gloria is her peer specialist, and she offered to help her brainstorm ways to get the information and to support her to get quality information about this topic. They acknowledge how scary it is to start the process, since so many people have misinformation. When they brainstorm options, they do not include in their top three options the idea of talking to friends who have had bad experiences with Social Security (right now). Sasha thought that she wasn't sure if those friends had had a chance to get good information with which to make decisions.

They decided to visit the benefits planner in Sasha's area. Sasha asked Gloria to go with her and to help her with taking notes, since she knows that it is sometimes hard for her to focus when talking about something so important.

Gloria supported Sasha to get her questions asked and paraphrased the information the planner gave, so they could 1) make sure they understood the information, 2) invite the benefits planner to give all the information possible, and 3) help Sasha hear the information from a variety of angles. Afterwards, they reviewed their notes, and added a quick search of the Red Book online to confirm that the information was correct.

With a partner: Consider the following:

1. What snippet of your Vocational Recovery Story would you consider sharing with Sasha in this scenario? Why?
2. Given the three steps of Gathering Information, what else could Gloria do to scaffold Sasha?

8.10 Evaluating the Information

This is the most important step. Much of the information that's on the Internet and other places may be inaccurate, and knowing whether it can be trusted is vital. The "5W's" are good guides for evaluating your research:

4

Evaluate the Information

Key Questions

- Who
- What
- When
- Where
- Why

WHO

- Who wrote the pages and are they an expert?
- Is a biography of the author included?
- How can I find out more about the author?

WHAT

- What does the author say is the purpose of the site?
- What else might the author have in mind for the site?
- What makes the site easy to use?
- What information is included and does this information differ from other sites?

WHEN

- When was the site created – is it out of date?
- When was the site last updated?

WHERE

- Where does the information come from?
- Where can I look to find out more about the sponsor of the site?

WHY

- Why is this information useful for my purpose?
- Why should I use this information?
- Why is this page better than another?

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Module 9

Supporting People to Work While on Benefits

What to Expect in Module 9

Supporting People to Work while on Benefits

The Big Question of Module 9

- How can we support people to work when they receive Social Security Benefits?

In this Module, you can expect to learn about the differences between the two disability programs under the Social Security program, an introduction to some of the rules that determine what happens when a person with benefits goes to work, and how to support someone who is considering, going after, or keeping work to make informed decisions.

NOTE

This Module is designed to offer you some basic information about general SSA disability benefit program rules and resources. As a Peer Support Specialist trained in VPS, you are expected to “Know the Basics; Go to the Experts.” This training will not offer information or tools as needed for every individual situation. Check with Social Security Administration materials, such as the Red Book, for updated information, and use local resources.

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9.1 A Review: Your Experience with Disability Benefits and Work

R **Real Play:** Find a partner. Decide who will speak about his or her own experiences, and who will listen and partner.

If you are the one who is speaking, be yourself. Do not play a role. You will consider the questions below with the support of your partner.

If you are the one who is listening, be yourself. Do not play a role. Orient to this exercise, use your partnering skills to demonstrate understanding of the person's situation, and share any snippets of your own vocational recovery story that are relevant to what your partner needs.

Together, consider these questions:

1. What is your experience with benefits and work?
2. What made dealing with benefits and work easier?
3. What made working while on benefits harder?
4. What resources did you use to support you?
5. What did you wish you had known?

At the conclusion of this exercise:

Listener: Review your partnering skills. How did you demonstrate understanding? Did you decide to share a snippet of your story? Why or why not?

Both: Be ready to share with the class your learnings from this exercise.

9.2 Myths and Facts about Social Security Benefits

➤ *Myth: If I go to work, I'll lose my check right away.*

Fact: Both SSI and SSDI have “work incentives” that give people the opportunity to test out work while continuing to receive cash and/or health benefits. These Work Incentive Programs have been put into place to encourage people to work. Work impacts SSI and SSDI in different ways, but in both programs, the work incentives allow people to start working without losing their check right away.

➤ *Myth: If I work, I'll lose my health insurance.*

Fact: The Social Security Work Incentives also protect people from losing their health insurance when they return to work. The rules cover ongoing Medicare and Medicaid, often for many years despite increased income from work.

➤ *Myth: Social Security is out to get me – there doesn't seem to be any rhyme or reason to their decisions!*

Fact: When people begin to work, benefits usually change in specific ways according to the Work Incentive regulations. When people understand the SSI and SSDI program basics, changes can be anticipated so that decisions by Social Security feel less random. Sometimes, Social Security makes mistakes, but knowing the options and having supports that understand Social Security can help resolve these issues.

Questions to Ponder:

- Which of these Facts are the most familiar to you? Which are the least familiar?
- What are you most looking forward to learning about in this Module?

9.3 What’s the Difference between SSI and SSDI?

Questions to Ponder:

- What do you know about some of the differences between the two major disability benefit programs under the Social Security Administration?
- Is there a difference between them in terms of how Social Security deals with working?

Similarities and Differences

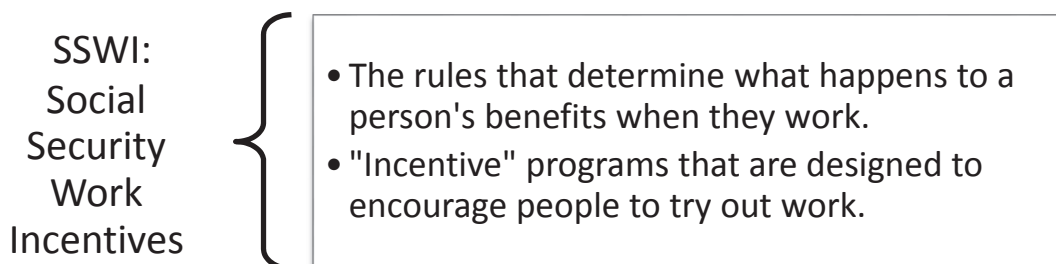
	SSDI	SSI
Name of Program	Social Security Disability Insurance	Supplemental Security Income
Type of Program	<u>Insurance Program</u> : If paid in through FICA, and person becomes disabled and unable to work, can get insurance benefit.	<u>Security Income</u> : Financial Need-based program/Public Assistance for folks with little work history and little money or assets.
Disability Eligibility	Social Security’s Definition – Inability to do any significant work due to documented physical or mental impairment, which can be expected to last for at least 12 months or result in death.	
Work History Eligibility	Significant work history required, plus payments into FICA through work.	Little to no work history needed.
Asset Eligibility	Doesn’t matter how much money or assets one has, no impact on eligibility, as insurance program.	Person has set asset limits that vary depending on situation (i.e. \$2000/individual in 2015).
Effects of Earnings	Either receive full check or no check, depending on timelines and other factors.	Checks decrease as work income increases.
Health Care Associated	Generally Medicare after 24 months of eligibility.	Generally Medicaid.

9.4 How Does Work Impact a Person's Benefits?

Questions to Ponder:

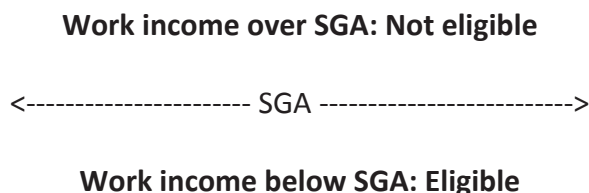
- What do you know already about how work impacts a person's benefits?
- Does it make a difference what type of benefit the person has?
- How have you worked to support others to deal with benefits in the past?

What we will learn in this section of the Module is about some of the differences between how work affects different Social Security Disability Benefit programs.



Key Concept SGA: Substantial Gainful Activity

What is it for? Eligibility for benefits often is determined by looking at work income: above or below SGA?



What is it now? In 2015, the SGA level is \$1,090 for people with disabilities other than blindness. The figure changes each year in accordance with federal cost of living increases. Find annual SGA levels on the Social Security website, www.ssa.gov.

9.5 SSDI Work Incentives: Timelines

Questions to Ponder:

- How much do you know about how SSA makes their decisions about whether a person receives or does not receive an SSDI check?
- What do you know already about the timelines of SSDI?

Trial Work Period (TWP)

What is it? People can try out work without impact on cash or medical benefits.

How do you know you're in it? SSA considers TWP to be any 9 months (not necessarily in a row) within a 5-year period in which earnings are over the Trial Work Level. The Trial Work Level changes year to year; in 2015 was \$780.00.

Why is it important? During the TWP, get a full check and medical benefits.

Extended Period of Eligibility (EPE)

What is it? The EPE is an extended safety net, with which one can 1) get a check when work income is low, and 2) have immediate access to benefits if work income decreases or stops.

How do you know you're in it? The EPE starts, whether working or not, immediately after the 9th Trial Work Month. The EPE is a 3-year period, consecutive, calendar years.

Why is it important? A person can receive the full SSDI check and medical benefits during months in which before-tax, countable earnings are under SGA. (Countable earnings will be discussed in "Key Rules.") If a person is working above SGA and not receiving cash benefits, medical benefits continue. A person does not lose eligibility due to work during the EPE.

Question:

With a partner, consider: How could SSDI Timelines information be helpful to your work in VPS?

What experiences do you have that might be included in snippets of your Vocational Recovery Story?

9.6 SSDI Incentives to Keep Working: Countable Income and Impairment Related Work Expenses (IRWE's)

Countable Income

Key Concept: “Countable” earnings is what SSA *counts* after making certain allowable deductions. The Countable Income is compared to SGA.

Quick Tip:

Countable earnings are computed on paper only to determine if someone is performing SGA. The person's actual earnings are not affected.

Impairment-Related Work Expenses

What is it? Costs you pay for *out-of-pocket* that are related to your disability, without which you could not work. Some examples include:

- payments or co-payments for medications or medical appointments
- special transportation to work
- support-related portion of halfway house rent, personal care attendants, etc.

Why do it? IRWE's can mitigate the effects of income on eligibility for benefits. The amount of IRWE's can be deducted from your income to produce your “countable income.”

How does it work? The monthly total of these expenses is deducted, dollar for dollar, from your gross income to calculate your countable income.

Example: John is in his Extended Period of Eligibility and has work income of \$1200 in January, which is over the 2015 SGA limit. However, his IRWE's of therapy and medication copays for the month amount to \$140, leaving his *countable* income at \$1,060. This is below SGA, and John is eligible for his check in January 2015.

John, in 2015	
\$1200	Income is over SGA of
\$1090	
- 140	IRWE's for January
\$1060	Income now is under SGA

9.7 SSDI Incentives to Keep Working: Subsidies

Question to Ponder:

- What is your experience with subsidies?

What is a Subsidy? Social Security does not consider your full income when determining if you meet SGA if you have subsidies.

Why do it? Reporting a subsidy may help reduce your countable income when SSA determines whether you meet SGA.

There are **TWO** kinds of subsidies (as of 2015):

Job Coach Subsidy: When a person receives job coaching, a monthly deduction is calculated by multiplying the number of hours he or she meets with the job coach by the PERSON's hourly wage. This total is then subtracted from a person's gross earnings.

Job Coach Subsidy: Anne makes \$10/hr, and receives 10 hours of job coaching per month from Gary, 4 hours onsite at the job and four hours at his office.

\$10	Anne's salary
<u>X 8</u>	hours of job coaching/mo.
\$80	Job Coach Subsidy deduction

Employer Subsidy: Deduct the value of any support or adjustment the employer makes because of the disability, including doing less than peers in a similar position or changing the structure, hours, or way in which the job is done. Many "reasonable accommodations" may fall under employer subsidy. The employer must describe the subsidy for SSA, and can indicate the value of the subsidy.

Employer Subsidy: Due to his psychiatric disability, Sam is allowed to go to the doctor during work hours, has flexibility in his schedule and gets extra supervision.

His employer wrote about this in a letter: Approximately 10% of Sam's work time is impacted by these accommodations.

Sam earns \$1150, but after deducting 10% of his earnings (\$115), his *countable* earnings are \$1035. This is *under* SGA in 2015.

9.8 SSI Work Incentives: Exclusions

Questions to Ponder:

- What do you remember about SSI, as different from SSDI?
- What do you know about the concerns of people who receive SSI?

NOTE: In SSI, there are no timelines to consider. SSI is computed monthly. If earnings change monthly, the amount of the SSI check also changes monthly.

Key Concept: People on SSI who work part-time generally have more money to live on than those who have SSI alone. It's usually worth it to work!

Income Exclusions (1619 a): SSA does not count a certain amount of income when calculating how much the SSI check should be for that month. SSA does not count:

- General Income Exclusion: The first \$20 of income (earned or otherwise)
- Earned Income Exclusion: The next \$65 of *work* earnings.
- Impairment Related Work Expenses (IRWE's): The total amount of costs you pay out-of-pocket for, that are related to your disability, and without which you could not work.
- ½ Remainder Exclusion: After discounting the above exclusions, SSA divides the person's remaining income by 2 (in half) to determine the portion of work income that will actually count as income when calculating the SSI check.

Example: Phil has SSI only (no SSDI), and is starting a part-time job on Monday.

Phil's Gross Work Income/mo:	\$700.00
General Deduction	- 20.00
Earnings Deduction	- 65.00
IRWE's (copays, group home)	- 100.00
Subtotal	\$515.00
½ Remainder exclusion: Subtotal/2	\$257.50 Countable

Question: Decide with a partner and get ready to discuss as a class: Is it worth it for Phil to work? Why or why not?

Income

Subtract PASS expenses (if relevant)

Impact on Income:

If the person's SSI check is usually	\$733.00	
Subtract Countable Income	-257.50	
New SSI:		\$478.50

Total Income: Add new SSI + Work 478.00 + \$700 = **\$1178**

9.9 SSI Work Incentives: Plan to Achieve Self-Support (PASS)

What is a PASS? PASS is said to be the most under-utilized Work Incentive of all. A PASS is a written agreement between the person and SSA to use earnings and/or other income (i.e., SSDI benefits) to purchase items and services needed for work in an entry level job, such as:

- training, equipment, uniforms, job coaching, licenses, certifications

Who is eligible? The person must have a form of income besides SSI to help fund the PASS. PASS plans allow the person to save up for or pay for PASS expenses, and SSA in return will maintain or increase eligibility for SSI so there is some money to live on while on PASS.

Why do it? PASS can help people to fund what is needed to start a job, gain credentials for a job, or even start a small business. PASS can, for some people, make it financially feasible to get into a job or field through which it is possible to become “self-supporting.”

How is it done? PASS is a written contract that starts with a written application, much like a small grant application. It is best if done on SSA Form 545, a 16-page application form.

Applicants generally must have:

- A work goal, especially if it is backed by vocational rehabilitation.
- A plan with steps that will help achieve that goal.
- A financial plan detailing how the person will pay for any items, services or training needed to achieve the steps and/or goal.

Example: Is it worth it for Juana to have a PASS? Why or why not?

<p>Juana has a goal to become a medical assistant. She needs training, uniforms, books, and transportation to school. She plans to save \$300/month for two years. Juana has SSDI of \$350, does not work right now, and gets an SSI check of \$403. Right now she lives on \$753, and if she puts aside \$300/mo, without a PASS, will have \$453 to live on.</p>	<p>Juana’s SSDI: \$350 General deduction - 20 PASS/mo <u>- 300</u> Countable Income \$ 30</p>	<p>SSI Federal: \$733 - Countable: <u>- 30</u> New SSI: \$703</p>
	<p>Subtract the countable income from the Federal Rate for SSI: \$733 in 2015.</p>	<p>***** SSDI: \$350 New SSI: \$703 -PASS: <u>\$300</u> \$\$ to live on: \$753</p>

9.10 Expedited Reinstatement (EXR) SSI and SSDI

Classroom Discussion Questions:

- What do you know already about expedited reinstatement?
- If you tried to return to benefits in the past, what was your experience?
- How have you worked to support others to facilitate a return-to-benefits in the past?

What is it? Expedited reinstatement is an additional safety net created by the SSA work incentives that allows people to easily return to benefits without having to file a whole new application.

If the person needs to return to using cash benefits (SSI or SSDI) because work income stops or drops below SGA within five years of the end of their benefits due to work, the person can request an expedited reinstatement.

Once a person has requested reinstatement, Social Security restarts the benefit check(s) and provides up to six months of benefits while it is determined if the person continues to meet requirements. If they decide that the person isn't eligible, the provisional benefits do *not* have to be repaid.

Who is eligible? Any SSI or SSDI beneficiary who lost their cash benefits due to working.

TIP:

Remember to stay peer in this process.

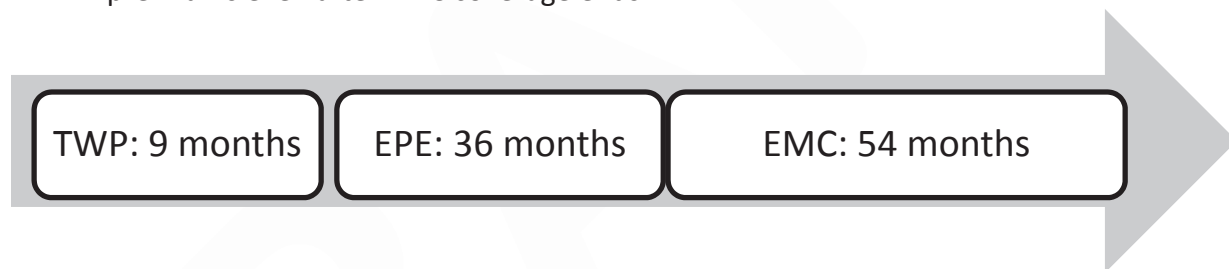
You do not need to have all the answers or know all the information.

Know the Basics, and Ask the Experts!

9.11 Medical Benefits and Work Incentives

Extended Medicare Coverage (EMC)

What is it? Medicare coverage continues in the usual way for at least seven years beyond the completion of the Trial Work Period. If, at the end of the EPE and EMC periods (below), the person is still not working or working below SGA, Medicare coverage continues on in the same manner until the person's income rises above SGA. The person may be entitled to maintain Medicare coverage with the payment of full premiums even after EMC coverage ends.



Continued Medicaid Eligibility (1619b)

What is it? Eligibility for Medicaid is automatic as long as someone gets at least \$1.00 in SSI, even if the person is working. If the cash benefit stops as a result of high earnings, the person is still eligible for continued coverage if earnings remain under the “threshold amount” for your state. Some states may provide a waiver for a Medicaid buy-in program to those who qualify.

The state threshold amounts vary widely from state to state and are listed under the 1619b section of the SSA website, <http://www.ssa.gov/disabilityresearch/wi/1619b.htm>

Who is eligible? The person must have been eligible for SSI benefits for at least one month, and still meet the disability and non-disability eligibility requirements for SSI, need Medicaid benefits to work, and not have enough income to replace SSI, Medicaid, and any attendant care services. The person must contact SSA, not Medicaid, for eligibility.

Question: Discuss in a small group:

What does all this mean to the people you work with?

How does knowing some of the basics support you in your VPS work?

9.12 Now that you Know the Basics, Go to the Experts

Your Role:

- You are not expected, after studying this VPS Module, to know everything there is to know about the Social Security Work Incentives, how to deal effectively with the Social Security Administration, or to fix every (or any) problem.
- You are invited to continue to be a mutual peer supporter, to share your own experience to support the discovery of inner wisdom, and to have enough basic information to both have hope for the person who is considering how to proceed and to ask good questions.

How can we scaffold?

Find the experts in your area	Talk to VR
	Look up Work Incentives Planning and Assistance in your area
	Contact the person's Ticket to Work provider
Help create access to resources	Support the person to make phone calls
	Go with the person to appointments if desired
	Learn about the Work Incentives together
Work with the person to follow through	Help track and work on gathering documents and reporting to SSA
	Check in with the person over time to support the person to stay on top of reporting to SSA
What would you add?	

9.13 Resources and Experts

Questions to Ponder:

- Who can people go to in your own organization for assistance with benefits?
- What other organizations in the area offer benefits assistance?
- What experiences have you had with the local Social Security Office?

National Resources:

Social Security Administration

www.ssa.gov

<https://www.socialsecurity.gov/disabilityresearch/wi/generalinfo.htm>

Social Security “Red Book” on Work Incentives:

<http://ssa.gov/redbook/>

Disability Benefits 101: Information and examples of SSI and SSDI. (Some info is AZ-specific):

<https://az.db101.org/programs.htm>

Ticket to Work:

<http://www.chooseworkttw.net/about/work-incentives/index.html>

Work Incentive Planning and Assistance: find information about local experts:

<http://www.ssa.gov/work/WIPA.html>

Local Resources: (Add resources here as you find them or as discussed in class):



Module 10

**Using the Scaffolding:
How do we keep this going?**

What to Expect in Module 10

Using the Scaffolding: How do we keep this going?

The Big Question of Module 10

- How do we use VPS concepts, skills and tools to support the vocational aspirations of the people we work with?

In this Module, we will review the knowledge, skills and tools we have learned throughout this Vocational Peer Support training, and explore how they fit into the work we do, what we expect to start doing, stop doing and continue doing as a result of this training, and make a plan for utilizing VPS in our work.

We also will see a Questions Map that can help to orient us when we are working with someone but are unsure of “where” in the VPS framework the person is working from. The Questions Map can, like all of the VPS materials, be shared with the person.

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10.1 What Skill Areas do I think I will use the most?

Small group exercise: *Get together with 3-4 people you either work with, or could collaborate with, in your work. In view of the following topic areas, what will you take home with you? Which areas are the best fit for your work?*

Skill Area	How does this fit into my work?
Supporting Vocational Recovery	
Partnering: Orienting, Listening, Sharing My Voc. Recovery Story	
Building Motivational Foundations	
Supporting Choosing Work	
Scaffolding the “Getting” Process	
Keeping Jobs and School	
Coordinating with Employment Services	
Researching Resources in the Community	
Other:	

10.2 Exercise: Start-Stop-Continue

Get together with a different group of 3-4 people, and talk together about what you will **Start** doing, **Stop** doing, and **Continue** doing as a Peer Specialist, now with VPS training, skills, and tools. Dig deep!

I plan to Start ...	
I plan to Stop ...	
I plan to Continue ...	

10.3 Your Plan: What's Next?

Think for a few minutes about where you want to take your new skills.

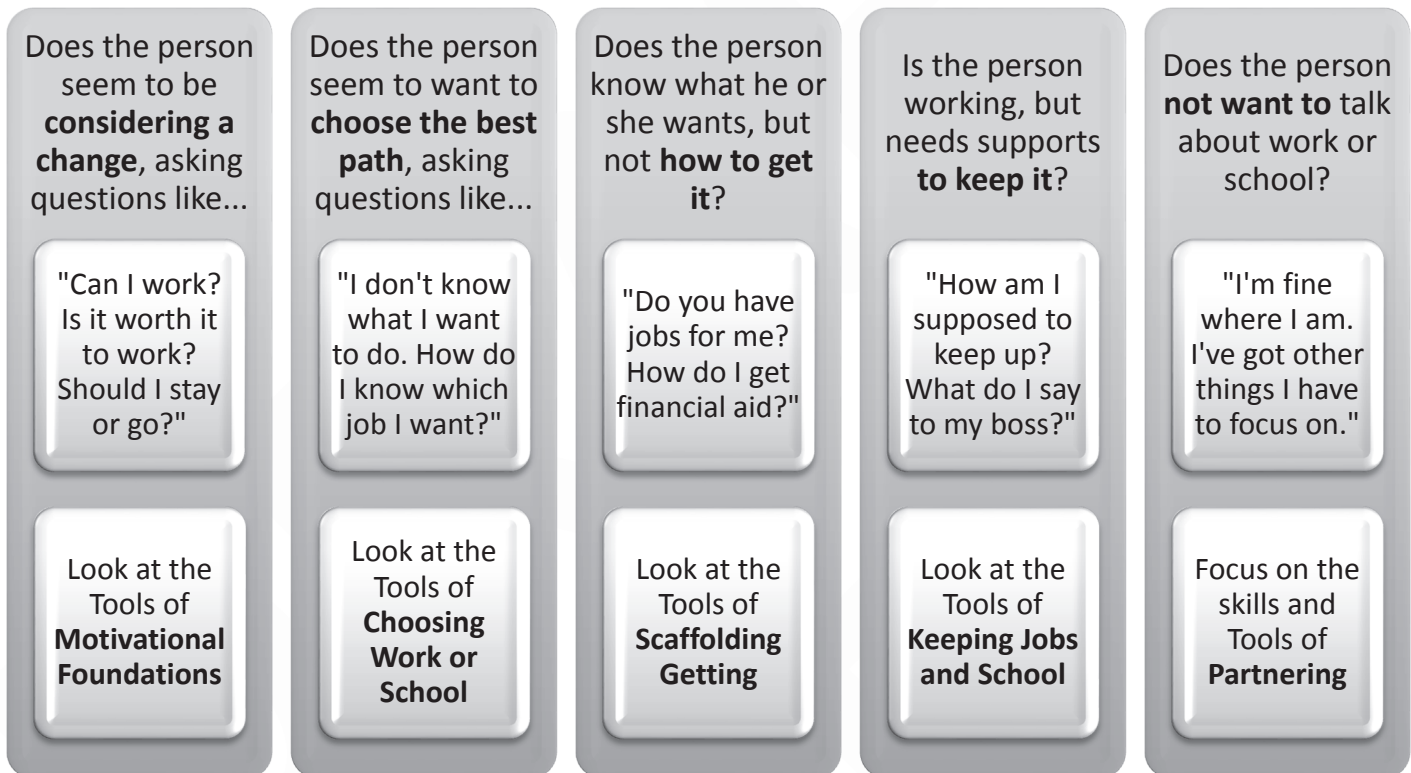
1. How do you want to support the vocational recovery of others?

2. What scaffolds or supports will you need to do this?

3. What additional skills or information do you think you will need in order to support vocational recovery?

10.4 QUESTIONS MAP: Where should we start in VPS?

Instructions: Use this Map when you are not sure what part of VPS would be helpful to the person. Listen for the essential questions the person is asking, and then use the Map below to help decide where in the process they may be. Make sure to check it out with the person and involve the person in deciding on which process, and which tools, to use.



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