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Long Term Supports

Long term supports represents one of the least analyzed, discussed, and researched components of supported employment. Yet, it remains one of supported employment's most unique and distinguishing features. Unlike other rehabilitation service options, the notion of terminating services at case closure, is never discussed in supported employment. Rather, supported employment seeks to establish and maintain consistent services and support over the longevity of an individual's employment tenure.

By definition, once a new employee is able to complete his or her job duties under the conditions of the natural environment, he or she moves into the final phase of supported employment known as long term supports. Long term supports are dependent upon the work that has occurred prior to this final phase of supported employment and focuses on the changing needs of the employee. Specifically, the information that has been gathered, relationships that have been built, training that has been conducted, services that have been delivered, and supports that have been utilized will determine the success or failure of this phase. At times, the customer and employment specialist will wait until the initiation of fading assistance, either at or away from the job site,

to discuss and plan for long term supports. If this happens, then it becomes extremely probable that there will be difficulty for the customer, employer, and/or employment specialist during this phase. Fading assistance and instituting critical long term supports are two concepts that must be discussed from the very beginning of employment.

Today, supported employment is governed by new regulations and an ever increasing field of technology and support options. These options have expanded, and in some cases, changed our vision of long term supports. Supported employment customers, employers, and employment specialists now have access to an enhanced array of possible support options. These include new low and high assistive technology options, creative community and work place supports, federal work incentives, personal assistance services, person-centered planning techniques, and vouchers. However, these exciting options have increased the complexity of designing well developed plans of supports. In addition, establishing techniques for the systematic delivery and evaluation of the identified supports are of critical importance.

The remaining section of this chapter will focus on the best practices associated with

planning, delivering, and evaluating the effectiveness of long term supports. Approaches, strategies, and techniques will be discussed to assist employment specialists in turning best practices into daily practices.

BEST PRACTICES

Long term support services are imperative for persons with significant disabilities to ensure their participation in today's work force and career advancement. The nature and amount of support will vary from person to person and business to business. Factors that influence both the level and the type of supports that are ultimately used by a customer are related to employment satisfaction, expanding job duties, and career development in a variety of corporate cultures.

The type and intensity of support required typically will change during an individual's employment tenure with a specific company. Generally, supports fall into one of two categories: 1) employment specific supports and 2) individual or community supports. Employment supports are those supports and/or services that are directly related to the employee's job. This may include such services as training, service coordination, orientation and mobility, employer and/or co-worker support, and assistive technology. Individual and community supports are supports that are arranged and delivered away from the workplace. They include areas that, if left unresolved, directly or indirectly impact employment stability. Supports in this category include housing and/or personal living

situation, leisure, financial support, transportation, and relationships. Using research data from the Rehabilitation Research and Training Center on Supported Employment, the following table lists primary reasons for providing long terms supports. The items are arranged by the type of support provided most frequently during this phase of supported employment.

PRIMARY REASONS FOR PROVIDING LONG TERM SUPPORTS

1. Monitor work performance including work quality and work rate.
2. Facilitate job changes and career movement.
3. Crisis intervention.
4. Monitor socialization and overall integration.
5. Support training for employer and/or co-workers.
6. Retraining of previously learned skills.
7. Assess job satisfaction.
8. Training in new skills.
9. Support to family.
10. Assess employer satisfaction.

SATISFACTION APPRAISAL

Maintaining regular contact with both the supported employee, as well as the supervisor and co-workers at the job site will be vital to long term success. Establishing a plan for regular communication will allow the

employment specialist and the customer to be proactive in their approach to new situations and events. Life is a series of changes for all of us and employment is no exception. Business environments do not remain stable: supervisors leave; co-workers get transferred, building renovations occur, new equipment is bought, and work routines and job assignments change. Change is inevitable and should be embraced as positive. Quality services dictate that an employment specialist works closely with customers to plan for some of the predictable changes and to establish back-up plans and communication strategies for success.

Employee Satisfaction

Regular discussions with the customer, both at and away from the job site, regarding satisfaction and contentment with work will yield the best information. Customers with very limited language should not be excluded from these discussions, since they are able to express satisfaction, as well as, dissatisfaction through facial expressions and behavior. The employment specialist, with direction from the customer, also can meet and talk with the important people in the individual's life.

Conducting face-to-face interviews is only one way to gather important information. The employment specialist can make unobtrusive observations at the job site to review co-worker and supervisor interactions, confirm job duty analysis, verify production, and review personal leave records. Each of these sources can be rich in data and assist in the development of a proactive plan for support.

Supervisor Satisfaction

Once the individual has moved into the long term supports phase of supported employment, it should be clear which supervisor has authority over employee performance and review. After identifying the supervisor, the format and schedule for the company's employees' performance review process should be determined. In the event that evaluation is a regular part of the business establishment, the supported employment program should adhere to the typical company schedule. Additional meetings between the employment specialist, customer, and supervisor should occur regularly during the early phase of long term supports to solicit everyone's input and degree of satisfaction. Initially, these meetings will take the form of informal checks and will occur approximately every 2 weeks, if everything is going well. This contact should gradually fade to the mandatory twice monthly contacts or other appropriate schedule as determined by the needs and requests of each customer.



EXPANDING JOB RESPONSIBILITIES

In many cases, a new employee with a significant disability who has never worked before may be hired to perform a limited work scope. Yet, after working for several months, the now-experienced employee may be ready to expand her or his job duties. Generally, employees who enjoy a long tenure with a company will have their job duties or work responsibilities increased or expanded over time. This occurs naturally as employees seek to add variety to their daily routine and as employers

begin to assess individual employee strengths. Employers will match and delegate new job responsibilities to their work force as the business grows and improves. A business should not view a customer associated with a supported employment program differently than any other employee. However, adding new job duties or responsibilities to an existing work routine may prove problematic for some individuals.

Approaching the expansion of job duties from a proactive stand point can prevent employee and employer frustration. The employment specialist can initiate these discussions with the customer and employer, and as a team identify areas for future expansion. Assisting the customer in developing a list of possible areas for growth gives the individual support to direct his or her career path and stay focused on goals and objectives rather than on a single job.

When job expansion occurs, the customer and employer may ask the employment specialist to return to the job site for a period of time. Depending upon the needs of the employee, she or he may require assistance with job reorganization, scheduling, skill acquisition, and/or production. It is important to remember that the decision to expand job duties is based upon the employee's desire and ability to increase his or her present work scope and the company's need or interest to increase work performance.

Becoming a valued member of a company's work force is important to all supported employment customers. Expanding job responsibilities is an excellent way to accomplish this

goal. However, this requires a commitment on the part of the employment specialist to be thinking about this from the point of hire. Typically, the most successful placements are the ones which have co-workers and employers providing the needed support and assistance directly to the customer. Yet, the employment specialist must continue to work with the individual to analyze support options, to select the most feasible ones, and then to evaluate the effectiveness of the type and level of support provided.

CAREERS

As discussed in the previous sections of this manual, supported employment is not just about obtaining and maintaining a job. It is about identifying and pursuing a career. This career process begins during the customer profile and job acquisition phases of supported employment and remains a focal point throughout the entire process. During the long term supports phase, the customer reconvenes her or his employment support team to identify and evaluate further work that needs accomplishing. Part of this process will include revisiting or re-evaluating previously identified career interests, dreams, and goals.

An individual who obtains the "right job", in the "right company", and on the first try is extremely rare. Generally, an individual who is new to the labor market or who is attempting to re-enter the labor force after an injury will seek to gain several different work experiences over a period of time. The accumulated work history is then used to identify

career goals. However, career development is only one reason why a person accepts an employment position. There are numerous other reasons; not the least of these is a paycheck.

Therefore, while a supported employment customer may accept an employment position and perform well at his or her job, additional career supports may be necessary. When supported employment programs ask customers to dream and to identify career interests and desires, there is an obligation and responsibility to follow-up with each customer. On-going supports must be offered to determine if dreams and career interests are being met or if personal goals and interests have changed.

For example, Mary Beth, a supported employment customer, accepted a position at a local grocery store; however, her dream was to work at a health spa. After working for several months at the grocery store, Mary Beth decided that she really liked her job and had become aware of many employment opportunities available within the store chain. At a follow-up employment meeting she shared new dreams and career aspirations and together the employee and employment specialist discussed potential career interests with her current employer. They developed a new plan for career advancement that was included as part of Mary Beth's long term support plan.

MONITORING & COORDINATION OF SUPPORTS

The development of strategies that ensure the maintenance of past, present, and future supports is vital to the continuing job

success of supported employment customers. Regardless of the type and number of supports that are in place throughout the individual's employment tenure, provisions for the extended coordination and monitoring of the supports must occur. Developing a well established plan for long term supports with the customer ensures that the necessary supports are maintained.

There are many different factors that can affect the quality and stability of an established support to include changes in a customer's needs and preferences, a new supervisor, co-workers resigning, change or re-design in a workstation, and so forth. Change in any one of these critical areas could result in an interruption of work routine or work quality. When these issues are left unaddressed, job termination can occur.

Key features of a long term support plan include clear delineation of responsibilities, specific schedule for monitoring, and a stable point of contact that can temporarily provide services to the customer in the event that a community or work place support becomes ineffective. Vital to this plan is the careful documentation of pertinent customer-specific information such as identification of necessary supports, status of the supports, list of potential options to meet the needs, customer preference, including a primary and a backup, and, if necessary, additional support resource. Typically, the employment specialist, working with the customer, serves as the stable point of contact for all long term supports. The following table overviews key ingredients for a long term support plan.

FEATURES OF A LONG TERM SUPPORT PLAN

1. Documentation of Support Need
2. Identification of Need Areas
3. Confirmation of Current Status of Needs
4. Description of Potential Options to Meet Needs
5. Substantiation of Customer Support Option Preference
6. Selection of Primary Support
7. Designation of Back-up Support
8. Identification of Additional Resources

EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

Employee Assistance Programs (EAP) have been part of the corporate world since the latter part of the 19th century. However, it wasn't until the 1970's that these programs broadened their range of service options and began to develop comprehensive plans for company employees. Today, EAPs have developed a variety of services to include child/elder care, retirement options, fitness and health maintenance programs, counseling, drug or AIDS testing and supports. In general, EAPs can be described as company supports for employees in resolving personal and family issues. These programs offer assistance and in some cases, a remedy designed to support workers in maintaining that delicate balance of roles and responsibilities between work and home life.

While EAPs appear to be a valuable re-

source for many customers in supported employment, these programs remain under-utilized by employees with significant disabilities. Providing these services to all employees, EAPs have the potential to reduce the stigma that may be associated with a local disability organization designed to provide many of the same services. In addition, using EAPs can serve to increase the integration of supported employment customers into the general employee population and potentially increase the range of services offered.

Typically, EAP service information is disseminated during an employee orientation meeting or simply handed to the employee when tax forms are signed. For many customers, the information will not be provided in an accessible format and therefore is often discarded. The employment specialist can assist the customer by including EAPs as a potential source for many vital work place supports. However, follow-up investigation should occur to determine the strengths and limitations of each support option available through the EAP. This will provide an opportunity for the customer to direct this process and to make proactive decisions regarding the use of EAP services prior to the need arising.

Yet, in the case of most employees, EAP information and services are typically left undiscovered until an employee has an immediate need for a particular service. This was the case for Jane, a thirty year old woman who sustained a brain injury as a result of a car accident. Jane had been a supported employment customer working for a large national retail corporation as a gift wrapper when a co-worker

and the employment specialist noticed a marked change in her behavior. Some of the behavioral changes that were noted included a pattern of mood swings, weight loss, and an inability to focus on her job duties. The employment specialist spoke to Jane and her sister about this behavior pattern. As a result of this meeting, they agreed to contact the county mental health and substance abuse program which Jane had attended sporadically for substance abuse services.

On the following day Jane's co-workers presented her with a packet of information about the company's EAP. Listed among the array of available services was psychotherapy and substance abuse counseling. In the end, Jane decided that she would use her company's EAP services, because they were provided at a local medical center and were part of her employee benefit package.

EMPLOYMENT MENTOR

As discussed earlier in this section, business settings are dynamic. Change is going to occur. The job of the employment specialist is to work with the employee to plan for predictable changes in the employment setting. New management is one of the most predictable changes that will occur in most job settings. Before reviewing strategies for a proactive approach to dealing with new management, it is critical to understand why this factor can lead to the termination of a customer.

If the customer and the employment specialist have been successful, the employer

will be an integral partner in the customer's employment. In most situations, the manager has received the supported employment marketing materials, agreed to a thorough job analysis, hired the customer, assisted in problem solving work issues, and observed the skill acquisition process. In general, the manager takes on a mentoring role with the customer. This is an important factor and is the product of establishing an excellent rapport between the manager, the employee, and the employment specialist.

As with any partnership or team-work situation, when a valued member of the group leaves, the loss has a serious impact on the remaining members. This is clearly the situation in supported employment. Many employment specialists refer to a customer's supervisor as the employment mentor or job site advocate. This is not surprising for all the reasons that were listed above. Therefore, strategies need to be developed to reduce the loss and potential negative side effects of a change in management and/or mentor.

One of the best strategies that an employment specialist can develop is maintaining a strong communication network with the manager. Sharing issues and concerns with the mentor-manager regarding change of management and its impact on the employment stability of the customer, is an important first step. This should be done in all cases, even in employment situations where the potential for management transfer or job change appears remote. Begin by requesting that the manager inform the customer and/or employment specialist when a transfer is being discussed or

is scheduled. If this happens with approximately two weeks notice the customer and the employment specialist can work together to develop a plan. A variety of creative strategies can be developed and implemented to address this change. However, it will be important to ensure that the strategies match the corporate culture and are respectful of the new manager's time. Therefore, when developing strategies, do not leave the mentor-manager out of the planning process. The following is a process that has proven to be useful for many supported employment customers who have been confronted with the loss of an employment mentor.

CHANGE OF MANAGEMENT

1. Ask the manager for ideas on addressing this issue.
2. Ensure that all supervisor evaluations have been filed in personnel file.
3. Ask the "old" manager to write a letter of recommendation.
4. Develop a plan for marketing supported employment to the new manager.
5. Develop brief packets of supported employment materials.
6. Implement plan during the manager's first week on the job.
7. Evaluate effects of marketing plan.
8. Revise plan as needed.

FUNDING SUPPORTS & SERVICES

Obtaining and maintaining funding for the long term supports and services of a customer

in supported employment is an important and complex issue. Funding of long term supports is **important**, because it ultimately determines the retention strategies that are utilized for supporting the career advancement of a supported employment customer. In addition, funding is an extremely **complex** issue, because it requires collaboration among local, state, and federal agencies.

A wide variety of services and funding approaches are possible for the long term supports component of supported employment, often referred to as extended services by state vocational rehabilitation services. Combinations of these approaches are increasingly used across states and within local communities by customers and individual providers as alternative resources are identified.

Utilizing a mixture of new, existing, and natural resources can reduce the burden on any service system or provider. Yet, using these resources successfully necessitates flexibility in service and funding structures due to policy and procedural differences across funding resources. This will mean adjustments in activities, service fees, or payment approaches for supported employment service providers.

Differences in individual support needs and funding resources will require creativity in how, and from whom, services are purchased and provided. Diversity and flexibility within approaches to long term supports facilitates access to new dollars, use of non-traditional resources, and expansion of ongoing service capacity.

Essentially, funding models come in all different shapes and sizes and are typically tied to the mission, goals, and objectives of sup-

ported employment organizations and/or agencies. Key to establishing the appropriate mix of long term supports with customers is understanding the following five concepts defining a successful employment experience.

SUCCESSFUL EMPLOYMENT EXPERIENCES INCLUDES:

1. Satisfying Work;
2. Mutually Enjoyable and Supportive Relationships;
3. Career Advancement;
4. Improved Resources; and
5. Reduced Reliance on the Service System.

Federal vocational rehabilitation (VR) dollars are the largest single source of funding for supported employment services. These funds are typically used to pay for the initial training phase and continue until the supported employment customer reaches employment stabilization. The Rehabilitation Act restricts the use of these funds for long term supports. State vocational rehabilitation agencies define supported employment stabilization in many different ways across the country. Essentially, stabilization and ultimately VR case closure will be related to the achievement of the Individual Written Rehabilitation Program (IWRP) goals and the customer's ability to maintain employment performance with limited assistance from the employment specialist. However, a level of continuous assistance is maintained for at least twice monthly checks

from the employment specialist. A resourceful supported employment service provider will need to develop a multiple of funding sources to assist in maintaining supports and services at the level that is necessary to successfully maintain employment satisfaction among customers.

In order to meet the growing demand for long term supports and services, new sources of funding must be identified and utilized. All existing service funding must be re-analyzed to determine if resources, services, and funding can be re-directed for the funding of long term supports. This needs to occur at all levels of government and service delivery. The following two examples demonstrate how this can be done on a service level and a state level.

Case Study Examples of Redirecting Services and Resources

Case Study: Redirection of Organizational Resources

Mark, his employment specialist, and the supported employment program manager realized that Mark's long term support needs would, at times, be greater than his financial resources (PASS and other community supports). They recognized that other funding would be needed. The day program that Mark attended prior to employment had two staff responsible for 15 individuals. This support generally occurred at the program site, but individual off-site services had been provided on occasion. The day program is funded by the local mental health/mental retardation agency which pur-

chases days of attendance by individuals. Mark's funding averaged about 12 days per month. The organization decided that these funds could be used to purchase 3 hours a week of day program support staff time for Mark. This support would be provided away from Mark's employment site, but was necessary for maintaining employment. These funds would be coordinated to supplement job coaching services covered by his PASS.

(Rheinheimer et al., 1993)

Case Study: Redirection of State Level Resources and Funding

In the early 1990's, the state of Oregon recognized the need to expand the long term support options for supported employment customers. To accomplish this goal, the State Developmental Disability office incorporated strong policy language for integrated employment as the option of choice. Long term supports were determined as a priority area along with the proactive encouragement for the conversion of segregated facilities to integrated community employment. Many different steps have been taken to encourage and support these policy decisions to include the redirection of funds to provide for incentives grants aimed at facilitating partnerships with providers, statewide forums on long term supports, and the development of flexible funding and service arrangements with providers.

(M. Holsapple, personal communication, 11/16/96).



FUNDING SOURCE DESCRIPTIONS

To effectively serve supported employ-

ment customers, employment specialists must become extremely knowledgeable about the vast array of possible funding sources and the strengths and weaknesses of each resource. Developing this knowledge base will allow the employment specialist and customer to select the best combination of long term support resources that specifically match the customer's needs. Identifying and utilizing alternative resources involves the work of many individuals. There remains no single source of funding which supports everyone in need. This would be neither practical nor advisable. Collaboration efforts are essential for the ultimate growth of funding and resources. This section presents some overview information on an array of possible funding sources, a short description of each, and specific advantages and possible limitations of each identified funding resources.

State Mental Health Mental Retardation Agencies

The State Mental Health Mental Retardation Agency is the single most significant contributor to long term funding of supported employment services. The growth in these funds has been dramatic over the last several years. Continued growth will be found in reallocating existing resources to supported employment by defining integrated employment as the option of choice. The funds

available through this agency are the traditional source of long term funding for people with mental retardation, mental illness, and other developmental disabilities. Funds cannot be accessed by persons who do not experience a developmental disability (i.e., brain injury, physical disability, sensory disability).

Medicaid Home and Community-Based Waiver Program

This program is a waiver, applied for by states, that allows federal Medicaid money to be spent on community-based rather than institutionally-based services. The states must pay a match percentage that varies from state to state, from 20% to 50%. To be eligible an individual with developmental disabilities must have been institutionalized in the past.

This program is the largest source of federal funding for on-going specialized services to people with developmental disabilities. It can be used for initial training or long term supports. Many fears and myths exist about the program, such as complexity and predictability.

Social Security Work Incentives — Plan for Achieving Self-Support (PASS) and Impairment-Related Work Expenses (IRWE)

These work incentives are available through the Social Security Administration. They allow a person with a disability to set aside income or resources to pay for costs associated with reaching an educational or vocational objective. For example, funds may be used for paying job coaches.

IRWE's are job-related expenses that

enable an individual to work. PASS & IRWE can assist an individual to purchase employment supports. Having the power to purchase services gives an individual greater control of the service and reduces the reliance on other funding systems. These incentives offer a possible alternative for purchasing long term services for individuals who are on waiting lists and who have no other funding sources.

Individuals must make enough money to warrant the use of the incentives and the plans have to be approved by Social Security. Sometimes it is easier to use a PASS plan for initial job placement than for long-term support, since it is time limited.

State Legislatures

Some states have been successful and effective in securing funds from their legislatures by developing advocacy coalitions to request funding for supported employment. Legislators are interested in letters and calls from their constituency as well as good, reliable data to support requests. Collaboration among advocacy groups is important to avoid mixed messages and to ensure a successful outcome.

Once the legislation is passed and funds have been allocated in the state budget bills, funding is usually stable. It also allows the state rehabilitation agency to assist with long term supports for underserved populations such as individuals with physical or sensory disabilities. Some states are continuing to face serious shortages and limited resources at a time when most states do not want to raise taxes to cover the additional costs. In some

areas, coalitions are hard to build and legislative contact is a time consuming process for everyone concerned.

Job Training Partnership Act --- ---

This program is designed to reduce welfare dependency and increase employment and earnings of youth, unskilled adults, the economically disadvantaged, individuals with disabilities, and others facing serious barriers to employment. Funding is available at the local level through the Private Industry Councils (PIC's) to establish job assistance and training programs.

Once supported employment programs have a contract and are showing successful outcomes, funding usually continues. Programs can use the money for job coach salaries and provide initial training, as well as follow-up services. However, there are no assurances of funding from year to year. Funding decisions are based on the needs of the locality and amount of dollars from the federal government.

Business Supports --- ---

Companies are gaining greater experience in dealing with a more diverse work force. Employers are becoming aware of the wise investment of hiring individuals with disabilities. Employers who make decisions that they can train individuals, re-structure jobs, and manage the day-to-day activities of employees with disabilities, typically rely on the employment specialist as a consultant. Supports that are provided by the employer to other employees should also be extended to workers with disabilities (*Employee Assistance Programs*).

If the customer can access business

supports, then typically he or she will require less intervention from the external service system. Generally, this increases reliance on co-workers, and produces a "typical" work environment for the worker with a disability. However, some employers might not be able to handle the array of supports needed by some workers with significant disabilities. Back-up plans must not be overlooked by the rehabilitation and provider agency representatives.

Community Supports --- ---

There are numerous community resources which can be tapped for assistance with long term supports for individuals with severe disabilities in supported employment. Churches, volunteer groups and agencies, college internship programs, local transportation funds, civic groups, friends and neighbors are all local supports to explore for assistance. A positive feature of using community supports is that they are local and exist to be of assistance to individuals who have specific needs. Rules and eligibility issues usually are not a problem. When identifying a community support, the employment specialist needs to realize that some local community programs have limited resources and serve only a particular group.

Centers for Independent Living --- ---

In the 1980's federal funds were given to state rehabilitation agencies to assist people with disabilities to become more independent in their lives, including vocationally. Funds are available through the Federal Rehabilitation Act, Title VII-A, B, & C. Title A is to be used to establish Independent Living State Coun-

cils. Title B is for services. Title C is for the establishment of Independent Living Centers (ILC). Each local ILC board decides how the funds are spent, and who will be served. Title B funds can be allocated for supported employment services for individuals with disabilities.

This is a good source of local funds for supported employment and long term support services. If approved by the local board, any disability group may be approved for services. However, Centers for Independent Living have to gain their board's approval to provide employment services. Some ILC's don't have an abundance of funds, and may show resistance using the funds for supported employment services.

Small Business Tax Credit --- ---

This tax credit is for small businesses which incur expenses for providing access to individuals with disabilities. The amount of credit is 50% of eligible expenses for the year that are more than \$250 but not more than \$10,250. The maximum amount of credit is \$5,000 per year. Eligible small businesses are those with either \$1 million or less in gross receipts for the preceding tax year, or 30 or fewer full-time employees during the preceding tax year. Businesses can recover some cost of providing a coach, mentor, assistant, etc. to a person with a severe disability at the job site. Previously unused credit may be used in an earlier or later year, but not before a tax year ending November 5, 1990.

Education Resources

State and federal dollars are available

through vocational and technical programs and adult basic education programs. The Carl D. Perkins Vocational Education and Applied Technology Education Act of 1990 offers states opportunities to assure equal access to vocational programs for students with disabilities. This program offers a wide range of integrated and supportive services to help individuals obtain and/or maintain employment. Curriculum can be adjusted. Training activities can make it possible to use vocational education dollars to provide long term supported employment services. However, rules and administrative policies sometime make it difficult for students with disabilities to access these funds.

Private and Community Foundations --- ---

Many private foundations across the country provide grants to service organizations for program development, education, and employment. Some are more interested in start-up activities, but many are interested in long term success, follow-up activities, career enhancement and business assistance to entrepreneurs with disabilities. Community foundations are not as abundant but are available in some areas. Foundations are supported by private donations and public interest and may be more willing to fund risky projects than private foundations.

Private and community foundations can be excellent sources for start-up costs while exploring other long term resources. A variety of projects can be funded with these dollars. Some are geared to a specific target group and selected geographic areas. The research and development of these resources requires a large

amount of time from staff.

Private Rehabilitation and Insurance

Individuals who are injured workers may be paid up to a year while receiving training and support in order to return to productive activity. Insurance companies that want individuals to return to work quickly may deliver their own vocational services or purchase them from other agencies such as a supported employment provider. If there is settlement of a case, there could be a life-care plan which includes supported employment services.

The duration of services for an individual can be over a period of years. Settlement costs could cover long term supported employment for the life of one person.

Private insurance companies may not understand the role of supported employment service providers. Insurance may push for quick results and not care as much about quality and customer choice.

Veteran's Administration Special Training Benefits

The Veteran's Administration has funds for training known as "Special Training Benefits." These benefits are for disabled veterans and children of disabled or deceased veterans. Each VA office has a rehabilitation specialist who understands this program. VA will fund long term support until an individual reaches 95% independence from an employment specialist presence. The money is paid to the individual who then pays the support provider directly. This arrangement gives the individual

more choice in selecting a vendor. Some VA offices may not be familiar with supported employment. Time may be needed to secure approval and there may be a four year time limit.

Federal and State Assistance

Financial assistance for various projects are available from the state, federal, and sometimes local government. Federal grants can be written to offer technical assistance, or develop and demonstrate new approaches for long term supports. State agencies provide incentive monies for pilot projects which demonstrate innovative strategies that can be replicated across the state. The Developmental Disabilities Planning Councils, State Rehabilitation Agencies, and Mental Health & Mental Retardation Agencies are examples of federal and state programs.

Funding is available for creative approaches and usually spans long periods of time. After initial funding, services can be built into other existing delivery mechanisms. This requires a cooperative effort between agencies and local organizations. However, keeping abreast of available grants and possible requests for proposals with varying due dates is time consuming.

STRATEGIES FOR IMPLEMENTATION

The employment specialist must consider many factors when providing long term supports to persons with significant disabilities. Regardless of the customer's type or level of disability, the employment specialist should stay abreast of customer satisfaction,

employer satisfaction, expansion of job duties, career goals, coordination of supports, mentors, employee assistance programs, and funding. The following portion of this chapter will give strategies for implementing a customer-driven approach to long term supports.

Developing a Plan

The employment specialist can use formal and informal methods to develop a long term supports plan. Informal methods may include conversations with the customer, supervisor, co-workers, and family members, as well as any additional individuals who have agreed to provide supports either at or away from the job site. Formal records should also exist that describe past, present, and future areas of the customer's needs as well as strategies for supports. Once developed, these records must be maintained throughout the individual's employment tenure. These documents can provide a record of customer preferences and successful support strategies. The form at the end of this chapter is a planning tool that may be useful in assisting customers and their support teams in identifying and maintaining a permanent account of support needs.

Identification of Customer's Needs

The process of identifying a community access or support need begins by engaging the customer in discussions to document personal preferences, concerns, and future directions. The customer's career plan, developed prior to employment, will be an important tool to guide these discussions. This employment plan should contain career goals and objectives, as

well as the names of people who have expressed an interest in supporting the individual to achieve his or her personal ambitions. The customer can reconvene his or her employment support team throughout the long term support phase of supported employment to celebrate successes and to provide needed supports.

Hopefully, the employer and co-workers have become part of the individual's support team as contributing team members. If this has not occurred, the employment specialist and customer must determine the employer's and co-workers' perceptions of current and future support needs. This can be accomplished by arranging a meeting to obtain this information.

As stated in other sections, it is important for the customer to lead any meeting with the employer. Obviously, the customer's participation in discussions about her or his support needs is an important component in the customer-driven process. Setting this expectation will reduce possible confusion for the employer related to the customer's roles and responsibilities. In the event that the customer is not interested in leading meetings, he or she should attend to ensure that his or her views are represented. The table below summarizes points to remember for identifying the customer's support needs.

IDENTIFICATION OF CUSTOMER'S NEEDS

- # Ask the customer.
- # Review customer's career plan.
- # Ensure that career plan is current.
- # Discuss the support needs with the customer, employer, co-workers, and other members of the support team.
- # Talk with family members about their expectations and concerns.
- # Review previous need areas.
- # Update the support plan with a list of past, current, and future needs.

Brainstorming Options

Once past, present, and future supports have been documented, it is time to begin the process of brainstorming possible options for each of the current needs on the list. This can be accomplished by organizing a small group of interested individuals to participate in a brainstorming meeting. The objective of the session is to generate as many ideas as possible for the identified support needs.

In most cases, a brainstorming group will consist of the customer's employment support team. Sessions should be limited to 12 individuals, however; 5-6 people are usually present. Participants should be comfortable and arranged in a circle or semi-circle with an area for a group facilitator and recorder.

The location of the meeting is left up to the customer. However, the supported employment organization's meeting room is not recommended. The idea is to make this a

planning session of support and not an evaluation of the customer. All ideas are accepted by the group; this is a creative process, and members should not limit themselves.

If it is impossible to organize a small group to brainstorm solutions, then the customer and the employment specialist can work together to review and build upon all resources that were identified during the customer profile phase. They can use such instruments as the community analysis and the customer profile form. In addition, the customer should list all the supports that she or he is currently using. Family members, also should be approached to determine other possible ideas for support options. Finally, it is critical to analyze the supports that the employment setting has to offer. From this process, the customer, employment specialist, and employer can generate a list of options.

Choosing a Support Option

Once a comprehensive list is generated, it is time for the customer to select the preferred support option(s). The employment specialist can begin this process by reviewing and explaining each of the support options that appears on the list. Regardless of the individual's disability, it is useful to have concrete examples and experiences to assist the

customer in making a choice. As the employment specialist, employer, and/or others participating in the process review each option, an unbiased attempt should be made to give the pros, cons, and consequences of each choice. This would assist the customer in rank ordering the

options in a most to least favorable hierarchy.

Many factors may influence the selection process, such as the immediate availability of the support and the ability to identify a primary and backup plan specific to each high-ranking support option. For example, Tom needed to review his long term support options for transportation, because he was preparing to move into an apartment of his own. Prior to Tom's move, he had lived at home with his parents, and his father provided daily transportation to and from work. During an employment support planning meeting, all support options were reviewed and Tom selected riding public transportation. Tom's brother offered to assist him in learning how to ride the city bus, and his father agreed to provide transportation as a backup strategy in the event of a problem. Tom always wanted to ride the bus to work, but his father preferred driving Tom. During his planning meeting, Tom shared with the employment specialist and family members that he had selected an apartment near the bus stop so that he could ride the bus like everyone else.

In this example, a dependable primary support option was identified along with backup support. Judging from Tom's closing statement, his apartment selection was, in part, motivated by the location of the city bus stop. Therefore, the employment specialist can feel

confident that riding public transportation is clearly Tom's support option preference. Before closing the meeting, the employment specialist began to assist in confirming roles, responsibilities, costs, and time commitment. In Tom's case, his brother would provide the

primary support of teaching Tom to ride the bus. Tom's brother took the employment specialist's phone number to call her in case he had a problem. The employment specialist agreed to meet Tom and his brother in one week to ensure that Tom was learning to ride the bus independently.

If key support persons did not participate in the meeting, the employment specialist should contact each person involved to determine their interest in providing support. Many times, individuals will express an interest in wanting to provide assistance. However, it is the employment specialist's responsibility to ensure that the support person understands and accepts the responsibility. The employment specialist needs to provide the assistance that is requested by the customer, as well as necessary to ensure success. For example, in the case of Tom and his brother the employment specialist provided the following: 1) a bus schedule with the most efficient route to Tom's job from his house, 2) information on cost for riding a bus, 3) a brief task analysis for riding the bus, 4) safety tips and rules of etiquette for riding a city bus which had been published by the bus company, and 5) a telephone paging system to contact the employment specialist in the event of a problem. In this example, the employment specialist left nothing to chance.

Determining Level of Support

Determining the level of support needed by the customer will be critically important in selecting the support option and/or the delivery of the support or service. The overall guiding rule governing all interactions should be to:

move from the least intrusive to the most intrusive level of support. An employment specialist should not provide any more assistance than the customer actually needs. The previous chapter on systematic instruction presented a process for providing the least amount of assistance and a method for tracking results. This same philosophy should guide interactions when selecting long term supports and services.

Sometimes the needed level of long term support gets confusing, because the identification of a support or service is occurring due to a presenting problem and/or crisis. Once the plan is implemented, the employment specialist must monitor the situation closely. Careful evaluation of the plan will be critical for long term success.

Long Term Supports Case Study

In Brad's junior year of high school, he sustained a brain injury. Following his injury, he dropped out of high school and did not return to obtain his diploma. As a result of the injury, Brad experiences a variety of cognitive disabilities including short term memory difficulties, impulsive behavior, and mobility challenges. During Brad's nine month rehabilitation, he progressed from using a wheelchair, to walking with a cane. Currently, he walks very slowly and experiences poor balance;

however, he is not interested in using assistive mobility devices.

Prior to his injury, Brad worked part-time as a gas station attendant. After dropping out of high school, Brad found employment at several different community businesses. Each

of these jobs lasted between one to three months, before Brad quit or was fired by his employer. Some of the reasons which were given for terminating employment included change of residence, better job, and verbal aggression towards the employer.

For the past six months, Brad has been successfully employed as a parking attendant with the assistance of supported employment services. Brad had minimal obstacles learning the necessary skills associated with his job; he reached 100% accuracy by the third week of employment. However, Brad has worked on a variety of support issues that have a direct impact on his work attitude, quality, and production to include: 1) financial concerns, 2) domestic difficulties, 3) taking instruction from female co-workers, 4) inappropriate touching of female employees, and 5) verbal aggression when under pressure.

Presently, Brad is satisfied with his employment situation, and his employer just gave him an above average employee performance evaluation. Brad's vocational rehabilitation counselor has talked to him about terminating services due to Brad's consistent work performance. In preparation of closing his VR case, Brad called a meeting of his employment support group. The group included his girlfriend, mother, father, neighbor, employer, a

co-worker, rehabilitation counselor, and his employment specialist. Under Brad's direction, his employment support group developed the following long term support plan.

BRAD'S LONG TERM SUPPORT PLAN

Identified Need: Financial Concerns

1. Over the last three months Brad has not had enough money to pay his share of the monthly rent.
2. Social Security will need to be informed when Brad's income changes.
3. Adaptive devices can be purchased by using the Social Security Work Incentive Program.

Potential Options:

1. Budgeting support from: girlfriend, brother, employment specialist, or Uncle John who works with the local banker.
2. Social Security: Brad or Brad's father sends a form letter, designed by the employment specialist, to Social Security with a copy of Brad's most recent pay stub.

Customer Preference:

1. Brad would like his brother to assist him with the development of a budget. The least acceptable option is for his girlfriend, mother, or father to know how much money he has or the amount of his monthly bills.
2. Brad will contact Social Security when income increases or decreases.
3. Employment specialist will assist Brad with accessing the Social Security Work Incentive Program if needed.

Primary Support:

Brad's brother, Jack Smith 980-1651, has agreed to develop a monthly budget with Brad and pay bills with him on the 1st and 15th of every month.

Back-up Support:

The employment specialist, Martha Stone beeper number 770-8900 (leave a voice message), will provide back-up support to Brad and his brother as needed.

Status (check one): Past
 Present
 Future

Identification of Funding Source (check one)

Title 19 MH Services
 Medicaid SSA (attach
 MR Services VR State Funding
 Other (specify: _____

Identified Need: Domestic difficulties

Three months ago, Brad moved out of his parent's home and into an apartment with his girlfriend and her 9 year old daughter. Some domestic difficulties have been related to:

1. sharing household expenses,
2. respecting people's need for privacy, and
3. using vulgar language.

Potential Options:

1. Obtain counseling support from local clinic.
2. Ask for family support from mother and father.
3. Get together with mutual friends who are in relationships to discuss relationships, and
4. Look into Employee Assistance Program.

Customer Preference:

Brad agreed to check out the EAP services at his place of employment. In addition, Brad and his girlfriend have agreed to check out support from a local clinic and talk with friends who are in similar living situations.

Primary Support:

EAP, Personnel Office, 2114 Drake Street, or local clinic at 1925 Chester Street, 828-2194. Brad and his girlfriend independently deal with domestic issues.

Back-Up Support:

The employment specialist will provide back-up support for accessing information if Brad has any trouble. Martha Stone's beeper number is 770-890 (leave a voice message).

Status (check one): Past
 Present
 Future

Identification of Funding Source (check one)

Title 19 MH Services
 Medicaid SSA (attach
 MR Services VR State Funding
 Other (specify: _____

Identified Need: Taking instruction from female co-worker, inappropriate touching of female co-workers and verbal aggression when under pressure.

Two months ago, Brad had an incident where he refused to listen to a co-worker who was relaying a message from his employer. On the same day the female co-worker yelled at Brad after he touched her back side in the employee break room. To date, Brad’s verbal aggression has been limited to the one occasion with the same female coworker.

- Potential Options:**
1. Set up a mentor program to address employee and customer relations.
 2. Sign contract with clear company consequences.
 3. Find a job where Brad does not have any female coworkers.

Customer Preference:

Enter a mentor program.

Primary Support:

Employer Mark Adams: 817-2231
 Coworker Jack Smith: 817-2259
 Mentoring will begin two weeks from today with a weekly evaluation.

Back-Up Support:

The employment specialist will assist with providing training to the mentor.

Status (check one): Past
 Present
 Future

Identification of Funding Source (check one)

Title 19 MH Services
 Medicaid SSA (attach
 MR Services VR State Funding
 Other (specify: _____

SEPARATION FROM EMPLOYMENT

At some point in time, the customer may be terminated from employment or may choose to leave his or her job. When this occurs, it can be very beneficial to conduct an exit interview. During this time, the customer, employer, program manager, rehabilitation counselor, and employment specialist can review the entire employment experience to determine the events that led to job separation. This information may be useful for the customer and/or employment specialist as they develop proactive strategies for future employment opportunities. In some cases, a contract can be drawn up and implemented when the individual returns to work again. Using this type of process, a customer who was dis-satisfied with the delivery of services could ensure that future service would be shaped by

the contract. If the supported employment service provider was not satisfied with the customer's performance, this too could be addressed through a contract. In both cases, the rehabilitation counselor may have suggestions for increased efficiency and improved out-comes that may be addressed directly with the customer; for the performance of the employ-ment specialist or the supported employment agency.

SUMMARY

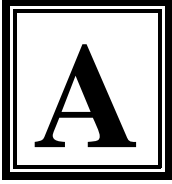
The form on the following page can be used for identifying, selecting, and tracking

long term supports. Employment specialists and customers should begin using this form from the beginning of employment. However, during the long term supports component of supported employment, this form can be invaluable. In some supported employment programs, the individual who provides the initial support services to the customer may not be the person who is assisting him or her during the long term supports component. Ensuring that all successful and unsuccessful supports, services, and strategies are charted from the beginning will help to guarantee a smooth transition between professionals with all parties committed to a customer-driven process.



REFERENCES

Rheinheimer, G.B., Van Covern, D., Green, H., Revell, Grant, & Inge, K.J. (1993). Finding the common denominator: A supported employment guide to long-term funding supports and services for people with severe disabilities (monograph). Richmond, VA: Virginia Commonwealth University, Rehabilitation Research and Training Center on Supported Employment.



APPENDIX

Long Term Supports Plan

Long Term Supports Plan

Person with overall monitoring responsibilities: _____ **Date Completed:** _____

Name: _____ SS#: _____

Address: _____ Telephone #: _____

Employer: _____ Supervisor: _____

Address: _____ Telephone #: _____
_____ Hire Date: _____

Rehabilitation Counselor: _____ Telephone #: _____

Case Manager: _____ Telephone #: _____

Employment Specialist: _____ Telephone #: _____

School Personnel: _____ Telephone #: _____

Other: _____ Telephone #: _____

Identified Need:

Potential Options:

Customer Preference:

Primary Support:

Back-up Support:

Status (check one):
 Past
 Present
 Future

Identification of Funding Sources (check one):
 Title 19 MH Services
 Medicaid SSA (attach
 MR Services VR State Funding
 Other (specify: _____

Identified Need:

Potential Options:

Customer Preference:

Primary Support:

Back-Up Support:

Status (check one): <input type="checkbox"/> Past <input type="checkbox"/> Present <input type="checkbox"/> Future	Identification of Funding Source (check one): <input type="checkbox"/> Title 19 <input type="checkbox"/> MH Services <input type="checkbox"/> Medicaid <input type="checkbox"/> SSA (attach <input type="checkbox"/> MR Services <input type="checkbox"/> VR State Funding <input type="checkbox"/> Other (specify: _____ _____
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Identified Need:

Potential Options:

Customer Preference:

Primary Support:

Back-Up Support:

Status (check one): <input type="checkbox"/> Past <input type="checkbox"/> Present <input type="checkbox"/> Future	Identification of Funding Source (check one) <input type="checkbox"/> Title 19 <input type="checkbox"/> MH Services <input type="checkbox"/> Medicaid <input type="checkbox"/> SSA (attach <input type="checkbox"/> MR Services <input type="checkbox"/> VR State Funding <input type="checkbox"/> Other (specify: _____ _____
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