

Issue Six 2023

# Practice Notes

*An Occasional Newsletter from the Centre for Disability  
Employment Research and Practice*



Inside, we also discuss Employment Counselling, Psychosocial Recovery Coaching research, the Retreat 2023, and professional development.



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## Employment Counselling and the NDIS

When the NDIA created the Employment Related Assessment and Counselling item, they inadvertently created a new stream of counselling that until recently didn't exist. In the USA, employment services for people with significant barriers are linked to what is known as Vocational Rehabilitation Counselling (VRC). Initially, it grew out of what was known as insurance rehabilitation or what we might call traffic accident rehabilitation. In the USA today, rehabilitation counselling takes in professions such as rehabilitation counsellors, nurses of multiple specialties, occupational therapists, physical therapists, speech therapists, social workers, physicians, psychologists, and career counsellors, to name a few.

This, in many ways, mirrors the roles that exist in Australia with the professional linked primarily to TAC or Worker's Compensation programs. Service delivery runs across counselling, case management and vocational rehab from injury and return to work. You may ask how this is different. Employment Counselling requires not just professional qualifications and training in counselling but a deep understanding of employment methodology,...

## Employment Counselling continued...

and a willingness to engage in community settings. But the biggest difference is that it isn't rehabilitation or career counselling; it is about employment on the client's terms; it's about capacity building, not returning to a workplace that they may have come from, as many clients have never experienced work.

Our employment staff are qualified counsellors who learn about employment methodology (Customised Employment and IPS) and apply it using a counselling lens. Employment for NDIS clients isn't about rehabilitation; it's about understanding the client, their family and the community, and it isn't a linear path. It isn't about applying a single method but about adapting the process to the client.

The other side is about employer engagement and support while developing relationships that support employment that is mutually beneficial. I have a three-sided coin, so let's not forget that families are inexorably linked to this process.

What you see is that Employment Counselling is a multi-dimensional process that requires a highly skilled individual who can operate alone in the community with maximum flexibility. It's an emerging profession that, in real terms, didn't exist until recently, thanks to the NDIA.

***“Employment-related counselling may benefit participants who have, for example, experienced traumatic injury and need significant support (over and above a mainstream employment-related service) to develop a new work pathway (NDIA).”***



## Psychosocial Recovery Coaching

The NDIA describe these support items as providing assistance for participants to build capacity and resilience through strong and respectful relationships to support people with psychosocial disability to live a full and contributing life. This support is designed to be able to maintain engagement through periods of increased support needs due to the episodic nature of mental illness. Recovery coaches work collaboratively with participants, families, carers, and other services to identify, plan, design and coordinate NDIS support (NDIA, 2023).

Significantly, we are seeing higher numbers of people with mental illness or psychological disability seeking employment. In some ways, this parallels the experience of DES and Workforce Australia. Many clients want employment but recognise that they are not ready and need support and counselling to develop an understanding of workplace behaviours and the capacity to manage their illness in the workplace and community. We know and recognise that employment isn't possible for many people unless the other aspects of their lives are stable; hence, this service provision is worth considering when working with your clients.

We have a small but growing cohort in this area and have now made the decision to make it one of our service offerings and training. It's another illustration of how the NDIA is subtly, potentially unknowingly meeting its goal of fostering innovation in service delivery. Food for thought.



# Fresh Research

Iwanaga et al. (2023- preprint) have a paper coming out with the lengthy title “Supported Employment, Demographic Covariates, and Adjunctive Vocational Rehabilitation Services as Predictors of Competitive Integrated Employment for Young Adults with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities: A Hierarchical Logistic Regression Analysis. This study aims to predict CIE outcomes for youth and young adults with IDD by evaluating demographic variables, SE, and adjunctive state vocational rehabilitation agency (SVRA) services.

These findings underscore the efficacy of SE in supporting youth and young adults with IDD in achieving CIE. Consequently, this study's insights hold the potential to guide vocational rehabilitation professionals in optimizing SE delivery alongside adjunctive SVRA services.

<https://doi.org/10.21203/rs.3.rs-3335575>

Riesen et al.(2023) published a paper, “An Analysis of the Rehabilitation Service Administration 911 Supported and Customized Employment Outcome Data for Fiscal Years 2017– 2020”. Results indicated that most individuals receiving SE and CE services exit into three broad SOC code categories: Food preparation and servicing related, office and administrative support, and building grounds cleaning and maintenance occupations. Proportional differences suggest that individuals receiving CE explore a wider range of occupations than SE. There was a significant difference in wages between SE and CE but no difference in hours worked between SE and CE service recipients.

DOI: 10.1177/15407969231181901



## Group Discovery, DES and Blueprints

When working with a DES provider using Group Guided Discovery (GGD) for a cohort of their clients and staff. GGD is an excellent framework for working within DES with small or large groups when time is your enemy.

Like all systems, there is reluctance when new methods are introduced and very rarely do I expect 100% engagement when you start out. It is like anything new; it's a slow burn to steer the culture ship in a different direction.

DES staff must be convinced to leave their offices and engage business owners and clients differently. Clients need to be motivated to engage in the process and take control when their experience to date is in a system that is disempowering, if not debilitating.

However, when clients engage and are supported to develop a blueprint showing them who they are and what they have to offer, it is remarkable how they engage and take control. GGD and Blueprints for everyone!

# The Retreat 2023

Our Retreat agenda is in the public domain now. I recently came across a tool developed in the USA for Vocational Experts working with clients with Psychiatric Disability. Based on the agenda,

it nonetheless piqued my interest.

Day One is all about Discovery, its various forms and examining and evolving the methods. We

Essentially, it is a matrix based on functional discuss the current state of the evidence for

practice and contribute to the development of

new tools and research that will support the functional impairment ranges from no

ongoing evolution of practice impairment to mild, marked and extreme.

Irrespective of the virtue of the terms used, it

Day Two is all about service delivery, the skills has utility.

needed to develop staff and client capacity, and

how it all fits into the NDIS and DES space. We With that in mind, I wrote to the authors who

finish with a half-day recap on Thursday have given me permission to adapt it to

morning and celebrate our work with a BBQ Australian definitions and settings. It will be

lunch published internationally in March 2024 and

expert testimonials and US occupational titles,

ability across five domains, and the severity of

will be one of our Retreat topics as I seek input

There are still opportunities for participation from Retreat participants before I launch into

because we know Australians are a laid-back adapting it.

mob who leave things to the last minute. - but

don't be that person! Look for it in the new year as we develop more

tools to enhance and improve disability

Details and booking opportunities for this year's employment practice.

Retreat are limited. When you book for this

year's Retreat, you will receive an auto-reply

with the details and links to Oscar's on the Yarra

that will give you a booking code for the Retreat.

Follow this link to the registration portal:

<https://tinyurl.com/2p947sn9>

See you in the lovely Yarra next month.



## Customised Employment Community of Practice

The CoP meets regularly via Zoom. It is open to anyone who delivers and practices Customised Employment and Discovery with fidelity to the evidence for good practice.

If you'd like to be a part of it and join our meetings and discussions, then email Sophie as per her details below. Come along, share practice ideas and challenges and gain the support of like-minded practitioners.

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