Using Virtual Technology to Expand Employment Supports

A collaborative project of the Midwest Disability Employment Consortium
Welcome

- Overview
- Application in 3 States
- Outcomes & Lessons Learned
- Policy & Practice Implications
- Questions & Discussion
I Assessment/Discovery
II Job Development
III Customized Job Placement
IV Job Training
V Fading/On-Going Support

SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT
People with disabilities are disproportionately un- and underemployed

- The U.S. is facing a workforce shortage crisis, particularly in rural areas
- Job coaches want and need training, support and resources
- Job seekers lack access to behavioral supports
Innovation

Technology can be used to address common service delivery issues

- Follow-up supports and crisis intervention
- Train, support and retain quality job coaches
- Expand availability of behavioral supports
A regional approach

- Founding State / University Partners
  - Iowa (University of Iowa)
  - South Dakota (University of South Dakota)
  - Nebraska (University of Nebraska)

- Expanded State/University Partners
  - Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, North Dakota, and Ohio

The Midwest Disability Employment Consortium aims to be venue for promoting system change and scaling up of innovative and best practices.
Population Served: Year 1
(Pilots in IA, NE, SD only)

- 29 Job Seekers and Workers with IDD and/or MH Challenges
- 12 Community Provider Agencies
- 32 Employment Support Specialists
Iowa

Job coaching and crisis intervention services provided via technology to employers and supported employees in both rural and urban areas

- Identified appropriate iPad applications to facilitate long-term employment supports and crisis intervention services in the workplace
- Provided training and ongoing supports to job coaches and supported workers
- Tested and evaluated the impact of intervention
Iowa outcomes

Who initiated contact
Iowa outcomes
Type and intensity of contact
Reasons for on-site follow up:

- Medical
- Uploading updates and information on iPad
- Training on use of new apps
- “Regular” coaching visits

Iowa outcomes

Follow-up required?
Job coach feedback

“I feel that using this tool is allowing [participant] to become more independent at work.”

“She really liked using the iPad and even uses it as an alarm to wake her up for work and to contact her transportation staff.”
“Mickey”

- Employer was concerned with a perceived drop off in productivity (amount of time it was taking to complete cleaning/stocking of rooms)
- Used iPad to track time spent per room.
- Used baseline data collected to facilitate discussion with manager who affirmed the times were consistent with their expectations for productivity.

“Due to being able to provide real data collected today, the employer revised their previous concerns regarding the client’s productivity.”
South Dakota
Texting supports for job coaches

Technical Assistance
Immediate problem solving
Brainstorming
Information/Resources
Sharing ideas
Support
South Dakota

Activities

- 53 individual and group texts
- Pre-placement issues
  - Job development
  - Job site problems

Facilitated by:

- Relationship building,
- Initiation of resource sharing
- Group community of practice
South Dakota Outcomes

- **People with disabilities**
  - 7 employed, 2 first time
  - 20 hours, $9.77 hour

- **Job coaches**
  - Increased competencies
  - Greater satisfaction

- “I loved having other people in my field at my fingertips…”
- “Different points of view and ideas from live people…”
- “…utilizing collective knowledge of everyone…”
- “Networking and identifying resources and options.”
- “Being able to apply advice right away.”
South Dakota Benefits

- Great tool
- Use of phone vs. website or email
- More support to the people supported in the community
- Assists with job coach shortages
- Help serving more difficult clients
- Ideas to build off in poverty income areas
- Expand to see something that may be overlooked
- Receipt of support at time needed
- Easy and quick
South Dakota
Impact & Next Steps

Do you feel this would be a possible option for your organization?

Expand year 1 pilot
Replicate & evaluate efficacy
Model development & capacity building
South Dakota

How it works

“Practicing interviews with others, using pictures, having words and pictures to point to, using zoom, practicing with phone generally.”

“...client will have a phone interview. Has fear of phone. Any tricks to phone interviews for people with cognitive disabilities?”

“...used flash cards and point to answer rehearsed. Tried picture idea also. Said interview better in person.”
Nebraska

Using technology to offer behavioral supports to help people with disabilities obtain and/or maintain employment

- Provided technical assistance to job coaches and employment teams via virtual technology platforms using a Board-Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA)
- Increased job coach engagement by including behavioral supports in the plan
Nebraska

GoPro Hero’s used to collect participant data at actual jobsite
Nebraska outcomes

- Decreased inappropriate behaviors
- Increased job coach awareness of available behavioral health services
- Clarified policy affording greater flexibility in funding to utilize concurrent DD and MH services
Challenges experienced

Technology challenges (e.g., accessing WiFi, lack of familiarity/comfort, “forgetting”)

Addressing the culture change in the workplace to make the use of technology a standard operating procedure

Evaluating both the process and the outcome
Sustainability

- Ongoing access to training and technical assistance (keeping up with the pace of technology)
- Opportunities for sharing information is vital to problem solving
- Developing and maintaining relationships with job coaches is essential
Service Delivery & Policy Implications

- Funding rates and procedures
- Provisions for training
- Access and referral processes
- Measuring outcomes
- Oversight and management
- Other
Thank you!

Questions and Discussion

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