Employment First Initiative

Who Needs Section 14c?
Employment First in Action!

Melissa Van Hook

Janice Bradford

Jules Hyde

“History has shown us that courage can be contagious, and hope can take on a life of its own.

-Michelle Obama”

A brief History on how VR/STARS Employment First Initiative started.

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Five main points to consider

- Employment First style programing
- Discovery process
- VR services for bulk of support
- DDD for extended vocational services
- Staff management

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Why Employment First Style Programing?

- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-IEG27VlQ_k -Employment first video
- A critical priority for the U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP)
- Employment First, means that employment in the general workforce should be the first and preferred option for individuals with disabilities receiving assistance from publicly funded systems. Simply put, Employment First means real jobs, real wages.
- The change to WIOA policies soon
- Federally considered best practices
- Provide one on one service
- Improved funding
- Ability to provide choice

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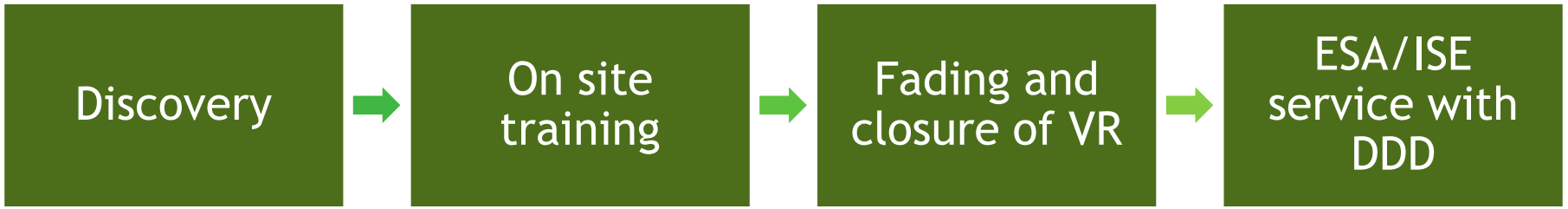
Discovery

- Job search skills development outlined in JDR
- Job search assistance and job placement outlined in JDR
- Provides choice
- Allows a strong trust to be built for excellent pairing
- Builds opportunity for buy in from the job seekers employment supports
- Many resources out there

Four phases to Employment First initiative



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DDD

- Create a comprehensive program
- Use ISE/ESA to allow for service within an end goal
- Helps with buy in from the employer and family supports
- Communicate, communicate, communicate!

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Staff hiring and management

- Two phased approach Discovery/ on site
- Meet varying schedule per employers' needs
- Technology to work remote in the community
- Pliable schedules while providing work life balance
- High quality staff with knowledge and experience
- Agency wide support

- A new perspective on a traditional service
- Collaboration and communication
- VR Successes
- Avery VR Counselor: https://photos.google.com/share/AF1QipOVxH2FRRLUff3mbo0VsJrJ49v_zLdyT121XlyT5HqLgL4KiJfAWeP16p46vNCigA?key=SXJMOGxaRHpBT0VlN2lVbXBjdUZ4WE81Y1ZLQjVR

VR Services

Success over the last year

14 job seekers have been placed in independent positions and graduated

Of those 14 placed independent persons, the average time with our JPC's was 3.25 months

We have helped another 9 job seekers find employment in the community, but still need to fade

And we currently have 8 more job seekers in the discovery process.

We have been able to make 13 new employment partners

Testimonials

- Tom, STARS EFI Supervisor: https://youtu.be/4i8o8DzVLD8
- Brian: https://youtu.be/ODBrTHgKmPI
- Melanie: https://youtu.be/zwn7Xd5D2mM

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Thank you

Useful resources

- https://www.dol.gov/agencies/odep/initiatives/employment-first
- https://www.nationaldisabilityinstitute.org/employment/discovery-and-customized-employment/
- https://www.azed.gov/specialeducation/transition/employment-first

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