

VR Counselor Guidance Manual



UTAH STATE OFFICE OF
REHABILITATION

Vocational Rehabilitation
Program Transition Services
2015



This VR Counselor Guidance Manual provides an overview of ten workshops designed to teach youth with disabilities about self-discovery, job-readiness, job-seeking, and job-keeping. Research shows that youth with disabilities continue to fall behind in these four domains and employment opportunities. Throughout this workshop, we hope to teach youth with disabilities basics skills necessary to be successful in the workplace, as well as the support and services they may be able to access through the Vocational Rehabilitation Program. For any questions or additional information, please contact the USOR Transition Coordinator.

Brought to you by:
Utah State Office of Rehabilitation
Vocational Rehabilitation Program
Transition Services

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★This manual is from the VR Counselor perspective. Additional material available, by request: Student Workbook, Teacher Information Guide, JRW report and research findings, JRW 2014-2015 pilot evaluation results and workshop specific material.

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Introduction

★This curriculum has been developed by the Utah State Office of Rehabilitation (USOR) to be utilized by VR Transition Counselors statewide for teaching transition-aged youth with disabilities about the world of work. This can be modified to meet the needs of any particular school, population, timeframe, location, and any other factor that may present itself.

★USOR has made efforts to provide consistent services to transition-aged youth across the State of Utah, while leaving room for flexibility and individualization. This *Job Readiness Workshop* curriculum was developed based on USOR need, national research on youth with disabilities and employment, and successful job clubs. The workshop topics were specifically chosen based on research and need, and made to fit Utah and USOR culture.

★The workshop topics, ideas, values, and lessons were chosen because of a need in our community. Activity suggestions and guidance have been provided for the counselor to choose what will work best for them and their particular group. Throughout this guidance manual, the counselor will be provided with goals and objectives for each workshop, as well as suggested activities and resources, guidance for working with the teacher, and additional suggestions for outside the workshop activities.

★The workshops are broken down into the following domains:

- 🚧 **Self-Discovery**, Workshops 1 & 2
- 🚧 **Job Readiness**, Workshops 3 & 4
- 🚧 **Job Seeking**, Workshops 5 through 9
- 🚧 **Job Keeping**, Workshop 10

★Each workshop provides powerpoints, student workbooks with reflective questions and notetaking pages, suggestions for activities to teach the concepts, appendix resources, and other considerations. Prior to workshop implementation review all provided material to ensure understanding of content and resources. However, counselors are welcome to take the material/content and use it in other formats to meet the needs of their school and population. Activity lists and suggestions have been provided by USOR staff across the state, but these are only suggestions. Counselors are able to use any activity to teach these concepts, as long as it is appropriate for the school setting and meets any guidelines and approval process set by the teacher/school.

★Mentoring and professional development is available to make counselors comfortable with the curriculum and variations to meet the needs of individual schools and communities.

What do I need to know to get started?

★Preparation and establishing expectations for the workshops in your school is one of the essential aspects for a successful Job Readiness Workshop. Planning sessions with the teacher are crucial in order to outline roles, responsibilities, schedules, timelines, activities and adaptations for each workshop.

★A Teacher Information Guide has been provided for you to share with your teacher. This will provide them with information on their role and expectations when considering this VR service in their school. Some information to keep in mind when working with a teacher to set up the Job Readiness Workshop in their school or classroom are:

- **School/class schedules:** Make sure you understand the structure of the school. Do they have A/B days? Do they have an ‘early day’ each week? What time does school begin and end? For example; if you agreed on every Tuesday at 10:30a.m. for 10 weeks, will that be affected by A/B days and need to be adjusted?
- **Assembly and testing schedules:** During certain times of the year your school may be involved in school wide testing. Regular classroom schedules may be affected by these adjustments. Also, assemblies can be planned or last minute. Coordinating with the teacher regularly will help avoid scheduling mishaps and make it easier to adjust accordingly.
- **Holidays:** Remember, school schedules can change due to holidays, teacher preparation days, snow days, etc. Keep this in mind when scheduling.
- **Student Workbooks:** Teacher’s can reinforce the objectives and work with students to complete workbooks outside of the workshop period. Teachers can learn the material and continue to use it throughout their class, or when helping students with transition planning. Work with the teacher if homework is a viable option for students to complete questions or activities outside of the classroom or workshop.
- **Flexibility:** Unforeseen circumstances can always arise. Make sure you are flexible when partnering with your school. It is always a good idea to plan for multiple objectives when scheduling. For example; on days you are scheduled to present the JRW, can you also attend an IEP or meet with teachers, parents and students while there? Your trip to the school should never be a ‘waste of time’ as you have plenty of opportunities to strengthen your relationships (partnering, IEP’s, drop-ins, etc.).

- **Teachers MUST be involved:** You need to make it clear that the teacher and/or teacher's aid need to be involved during this workshop. You are not there to take over their class period. You are there to teach the workshop lessons, but need support from the teacher. Some of the reasons they need to be involved are:
 - They know the students and their disabilities,
 - They have the ability to provide consequences and keep students on track,
 - You will often need help with activities,
 - Teachers can co-facilitate the workshops and provide input,
 - It can take time to build trust and relationships with the students, the teacher can support you as they already have this with their students.

- **Remember:** Your relationship with the teacher and school is crucial. The teacher will not have an investment in the Job Readiness Workshops if they do not trust you or see the value in the VR program, or what you as the VR counselor have to offer.

★For more information about USOR's VR Program Transition Services or the Job Readiness Workshops, please visit our website at www.usor.utah.gov/transition or contact the USOR Transition Coordinator. Through the transition website, we have provided many resources for you and the schools you are serving including; contact information for your schools VR Counselor, JRW material, resources and guidelines, applications and service options, etc.

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Getting Started!

Why are the students here?

To learn about the importance of work and how to find a job that will make them happy, and they will be good at!

Ground Rules!

- Use phones and technology as appropriate
 - Respect each other
 - Be on time, there is a lot of information
- Come to each Workshop willing to participate
 - Weekly Workbook needs to be completed
- Use positive language throughout the workshop
 - Ask questions!!!

Feel free to add any ground rules the class has suggested, or you feel are particularly necessary for the population or group. You or the teacher may want to write them on the board/sticky paper. Remember to discuss the rules each week



We are also here to discuss
disabilities & other
barriers to employment

Workshop 1: The Value of Work

The objective of this workshop is to teach the students why we work, and the value of work. We work for a variety of reasons. These reasons are based on external and internal factors. Work has value, no matter what the job is. Helping the students discover their personal motivations for work is the foundation of the Job Readiness Workshop.

★ During the first workshop the VR Counselor needs to begin by building a relationship of trust with the students. Starting the workshop with an icebreaker or game is a great way to get to know the students. Prior to beginning the workshops, you have already met with the teacher and should have a good understanding of student needs, accommodations, and behaviors. Make sure you consider these when developing activities.

★ When engaging in group activities, the VR Counselor needs to consider the group as a whole, while also meeting the needs of individual students. Careful planning and observation will ensure individual needs are being met, students are benefitting from the group process, and students remain out of harm or trauma's way.

★ Important areas to address during Workshop 1:

- **Student Workbooks:** If using student workbooks, explain their purpose to the class and how they will be used. You will already have discussed plans for their use with the teacher.
- **Activities:** Students need to be engaged and involved in the workshops. Lecturing or presenting only will not work for this population. Make sure you have plenty of activities and teaching strategies planned to teach the concepts.
- **Ground Rules:** These are an important aspect of the group process. Make sure to discuss the rules with the class, and add any they decide are important. When having difficulty throughout the ten weeks, it is helpful to refer back to the ground rules to hold students accountable.
- **Workshop Concepts:** Make sure you understand the value of work. It's important to know your own external and internal motivations for work in order to help the students discover theirs. Money is not the only motivator, but it's a realistic component of work. How will you help students understand their motivations for work?

★ *How can the VR Counselor help students understand the value of work? This is your chance to provide information about the VR program and the specific services and supports you can provide to help the students discover their values, interests, and motivations in regard to work. Encourage them to seek out VR services and describe what that means.*

Workshop 1: Counselor Notes



VS



Workshop 2: Self-Advocacy & Communication

The objective of this workshop is to get the youth thinking about their own communication style and learning how and why to become a self-advocate. Learning how to speak up for themselves (in whatever mode of communication they use), having the ability to communicate their needs and wants, understanding their rights and responsibilities, and having input in their life decisions are all important aspects of being a self-advocate. It is also important to show how self-advocacy and communication play an important role in successful employment.

★Workshop 1 spent a lot of time on what to expect from workshops themselves and getting to know the students. This week you get to dive into more content, starting with self-advocacy and communication.

★Self-advocacy and self-determination may be a new concept to many of the students. This is a great time to discuss self-advocacy in terms that apply to the students, which can be done in a variety of ways.

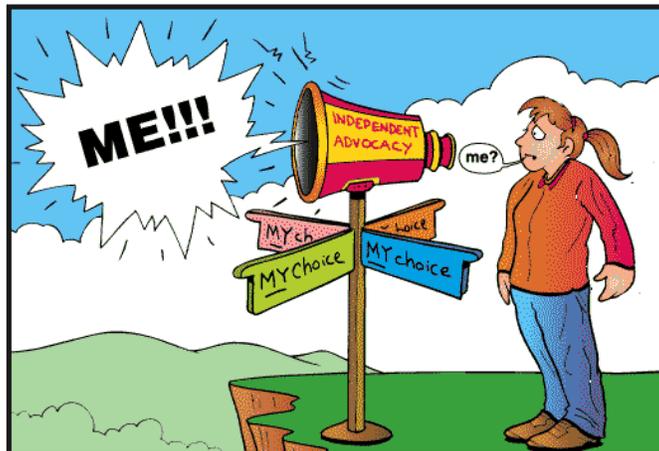
- **Videos:** There are many videos that show concepts of self-advocacy, including those from a student's perspective. Find videos related to the students experiences. The Utah Parent Center, and many other organizations, have videos that show 'student led IEP's' and tips for students who want to be more self-determined.
- **Activities:** Plan for activities that help students identify areas of their life where they want to make more decisions or be more involved in choices made for them.

★Communication skills are extremely important when gaining and maintaining employment. Students need to learn that we all communicate in different ways, which is one way we are all unique. However, how we communicate at work may look very different than how we communicate at home or school.

- **Activities:** Communication activities can be a fun and engaging way for students to learn that everyone communicates differently, while helping them learn there is a time and place for certain types of communication. Try finding activities that are very appealing for youth or in the 'Skills to Pay the Bills' activity book. This provides many great options for communication activities.

★*How can the VR Counselor help students understand self-advocacy and appropriate ways to communicate at work? This is your chance to provide information about the VR program and the specific services and supports you can provide to help the students become self-advocates and practice their communication skills.*

Workshop 2: Counselor Notes



Workshop 3: Career Exploration

The objective of this workshop is to introduce the idea of career exploration. Everyone has their own hobbies, interests, and values that can direct the kind of career path best for them. This workshop teaches the youth to understand how personal aspects relate to employment and what training they may need. Money is also an important aspect to consider when discovering a career path. Giving the youth some real life information about cost of living will help begin the discussion of wages and career paths.

★Career exploration is a very large and individualized task to complete in just one workshop. It becomes even more difficult in a group setting as it adds more barriers in the ability to personalize and individualize the idea of careers. This workshop only touches on the concept of careers and creates an opportunity for students to start thinking about their future and who they can become in regards to a career.

★This workshop teaches the students the differences and similarities between hobbies and employment, as well as how interests impact career paths. Often, students appear to have unrealistic employment goals. The VR Counselor can play an important role in explaining how the ‘world of work’ and our hobbies don’t always align with one another. This is not the time to discount a student’s feelings or goals, even if they appear unrealistic, but to build a relationship and help him or her discover more appropriate career goals for themselves.

- **Activities:** Choose activities that students can do on their own, or with help, to discover their own motivations and values regarding work. Students can also identify their hobbies and interests to explore employment options in these areas, and begin the conversation of work experiences and career paths.

★This workshop also provides an opportunity for a reality check regarding income and money, which is a huge motivator for employment. *How much is it going to cost to live independently? How much money will I need to make? Is there a difference between jobs and careers?* These are just some of the questions you will help students answer.

- **Activities:** Find activities that are interactive and show students how much they will need to make, in order to live the kind of life they are expecting.

★*How can the VR Counselor help students identify a career path that matches his or her strengths and interests? Finding a career path is an ongoing process. It is important for the student to understand how you can help them throughout this exploration stage, and get on a path to successful employment and independence.*

Workshop 3: Counselor Notes



Workshop 4: My Skills & Goals

The objective of this workshop is to teach the youth the difference between ‘hard’ and ‘soft’ skills. This can be a confusing topic for many youth, but does play an important role in the success of employment. This workshop provides opportunities to help the youth discover their personal skills, and the skills they need to improve. The concept of ‘goal setting’ is taught in alignment with improving skills. Helping the youth set specific, measurable goals will help prepare them for the world of work.

★Hard and soft skills can sometimes be a difficult concept for youth to understand. They may misinterpret this to mean ‘easy and hard’ skills to acquire. Because the concept and practicality of having or developing hard and soft skills is an important aspect of employment, it is important to help students identify their current level of these skills.

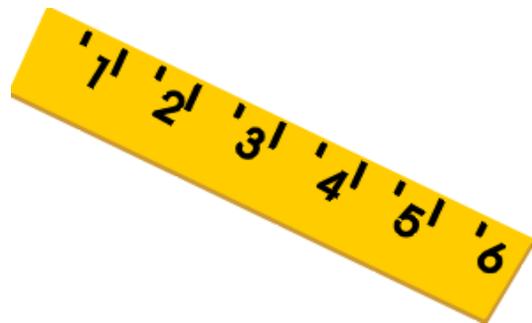
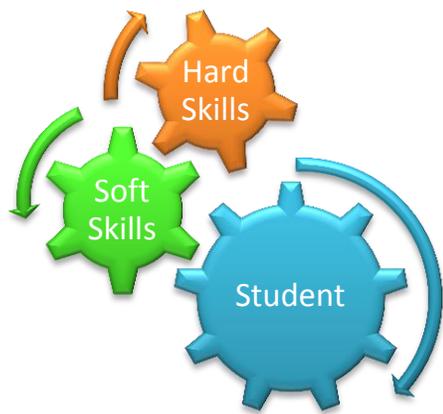
- **Activities:** Provide activities for students to identify which skills they already have as well as the skills they would like to develop. Video examples may be a good way to show other youth using their hard and soft skills in the workplace.
- **Student Workbook:** In the student workbook appendix, there is a list of the qualities that employers look for when hiring employees. This would be a great resource to begin the conversation, or reference these skills in regard to employment throughout the workshops.

★This workshop introduces short and long term goal setting and how careers take a lot of planning in order to lead to success. Students are encouraged to write their goals down, and how to make them measurable.

- **Activities:** The type of goals will vary between students and his or her circumstances. Provide activities for students to create goals in a variety of areas, and show how they relate to employment (personal, employment, education, wellness, spiritual).
- **Teachers:** Don’t forget to involve the teacher with goal setting. Teachers engage in goal setting activities with students during transition and IEP planning and can be a huge asset during this workshop.

★*How can the VR Counselor help students identify his or her hard and soft skills, and develop any that may be lacking? Remember, you are working with youth who have a variety of disabilities. Assisting the students in developing skills that will likely result in gaining and maintaining successful employment will take time and a variety of strategies. This workshop provides the framework and introduces the idea of skills and goals. It is your job as the VR Counselor to identify the individualized needs of the students and provide opportunities for them to practice.*

Workshop 4: Counselor Notes



Workshop 5: Making a Good Impression

The objective of this workshop is to help youth understand the concept of personal appearance and how to make a good first impression with an employer. The workshop teaches what an introductory speech (30 second commercial, elevator pitch, etc.) entails, and provides the opportunity for each youth to create and practice their introduction.

★This workshop provides activities that will teach the students the *who, what, why, when and where's* regarding a personal introductory speech. The workshop has multiple opportunities for class interaction, as well as individualized development of an introductory speech. Throughout the workshop you will notice introductory speeches also being referred to as a 30 second commercial or elevator pitch. The objective of the workshop is to teach the importance of having an introductory speech. It may be necessary to explain to your students an introductory speech is referred to in many different ways within the community.

- **Videos:** A video link is provided that shares the importance of having a planned introductory speech (elevator pitch). This video is intended to provide a basic starting point for discussing interviewing and introduction skills to your students. The video is presented by college level youth and while it is an excellent video, there are other appropriate options, depending on your specific student population.
- **Student Workbook:** In the student workbook appendix, a 30 second commercial guide is provided. This can be used as a part of your activities, as a homework assignment, or as a reference for students to use ongoing.
- **Counselor and teacher examples:** This is a great opportunity for both the VR Counselor and the teacher to demonstrate a real example of an introduction. The workshop emphasizes practicing to make it sound natural and create conversation. This is the perfect time to model that process for students.

★Personal appearance is just as important as having an introductory speech. The students need to understand the differences and similarities of personal appearance between home, interviewing, and employment. By both modeling appropriate interview wardrobes and discussing it with students, you have a great opportunity to reinforce this message.

- **Student Workbook:** In the student workbook appendix, there is a personal presentation checklist for students to use and refer back to as needed.

★*How can the VR Counselor help the students understand the concept of an introductory speech as well as the importance of making a good impression? Students need examples that apply to their lives, and understand no one is trying to change them. This is your opportunity to connect with students on personality and professionalism.*

Workshop 5: Counselor Notes



Workshop 6: Creating a Resume

The objective of this workshop is for the youth to learn what a resume is, as well as taking the skills they have identified throughout other workshops to actually create a resume for themselves. Many youth have not had employment opportunities, so teaching them how to bring skills and experiences from other areas of life to create a resume will be necessary.

★Creating a resume can be difficult for students when there is no work history, or if there is a lack of understanding the resume's purpose and importance. Throughout the previous five workshops, you have been helping students explore and identify multiple areas of their life, which can now be developed into a resume. This is one of a VR Counselor's area of expertise, so why not show the students how you can help them.

- **Examples:** Share examples of resumes. Providing examples of good and bad resumes can help the students understand professionalism and how to make a good impression on paper.
- **Considerations:** Create an opportunity for students to brainstorm areas in their life that could be a strong addition to a resume; home, school, work, community. Students may be involved in activities that relate to employment and have no idea; babysitting, mowing the lawn, theater, band, sports, religious activities, etc. Keep in mind, there may be students that really struggle with identifying strengths or anything they do well, so don't be afraid to use the teacher to help with those students. Avoid singling out any students in the class room. Make sure the students understand a resume is a work in progress and will improve over time.
- **Activities:** Have students complete a resume they can keep as a working document. Having this master resume will assist them in keeping accurate information when filling out future applications. If possible, as homework, have students pick up an application from the community and bring it to Workshop 7 for practice.
- **Student Workbook:** Students may not have all of the demographic or reference information needed to complete a resume. Use the workbooks to challenge students to get the necessary information from their parents, prior to practicing applications.

★*How can the VR Counselor help students understand the purpose of a resume and how to tailor it for different work experiences in which he or she may be interested? Reemphasize the role of the VR Counselor and your ultimate goal of helping students succeed in employment. Though every service is individualized, express the many ways you can help the students tailor their resume and gain additional work experiences to add to his or her resume.*

Workshop 6: Counselor Notes



Home

- Chores
- Babysitting
- Lawn mowing
- Music lessons
- Dance class
- Sports lessons
- Etc.



Community

- Volunteer work
- Religious activities
- Internships
- Job shadowing
- Community events
- Etc.



School

- Course work
- Band
- Art classes
- Theater
- Languages
- Honor society
- Sports
- Etc.

Workshop 7: Job Applications

The objective of this workshop is for the youth to understand the difference between a resume and an application, and explain why both are important aspects of employment. Because applications have to be completed for each job, this workshop provides the opportunity to practice filling out applications, while also using their resume to gain information requested on the application. Resumes and applications are all about the youth, and this workshop is designed to develop individualized relevance for the youth.

★Gathering personal information and applicable work skills to develop a resume in workshop 6 provided the framework for discussing and practicing filling out applications. The differences between a resume and application may be confusing to students, as this may be very new information. Make sure you consider the student population with which you are working, and break down these concepts to a level they will understand and benefit.

★**Preparation:** This workshop will take some preparation by the VR Counselor. In order to practice filling out applications there are many considerations before moving forward with this type of activity.

- **Technology:** Many applications are online; however, if you decide to do this activity online, make sure you find websites or word documents that can be used for practice. It is unlikely you will be filling out real applications with the intent of submitting. Also, do the students each have access to computers/tablets? Would use of a computer lab be more productive?
- **Applications:** Bring a generic application, or multiple applications from the community that are realistic employment opportunities for these students. Providing applications for an employer they know will have a stronger impact than a generic application.
- **Help:** The VR Counselor and the teacher may not be enough help when all students are filling out applications; plan ahead for additional assistance (teacher's aide, fellow VR Counselor etc.). Also, the student's ability to write may have an impact on how the activity is presented as well as the amount of time you will need.

★*How can the VR Counselor help students with applications for work experiences in their community? VR has the goal of providing work experiences to all youth with disabilities prior to graduating from high school. Preparing students with resumes and applications, as well as getting to know their skills and strengths, will give you an opportunity to provide individualized supports needed for a successful work experience.*

Workshop 7: Counselor Notes



Workshop 8: Searching for a Job

The objective of this workshop is for youth to understand the many ways to search for employment. The concept of *networking* is introduced to help youth understand how their introductory speech and resume can benefit them when in their everyday communities. Also, many of the youth may need assistance with job searching activities. This workshop shares different opportunities for youth to gain assistance, including through Vocational Rehabilitation.

★Networking is a large part of this workshop. Some students may already have a job, which makes for a great discussion about how they got those jobs. Often, it is because of someone they knew, which helps other students understand networking on a personal level. Because many of the students will not have much work experience, it is crucial you help them understand who in their lives can assist them with searching for a job.

- **Three degrees of networking:** It is important for students to identify people in their lives who can help them search for employment. It may be difficult for them to process all the degrees of networking, so choosing activities that help identify their personal network will be beneficial.
- **Remember:** Because many students have little to no work experience, and all home lives vary, it may be difficult to identify people who can help and support them. This is a great opportunity for the teacher to explain their role and support for the student as well as you, the VR Counselor, and how the VR program can assist with job searching.
- **Activities:** Make sure you provide activities that engage the students, but do not exclude anyone. If students have a smaller support network, or feel as if they do not have any friends, this could potentially be a negative experience. Find creative ways to get students excited about talking to people they know when searching for a job.

★Social media and technology is also added for discussion points during this workshop. This provides the opportunity to discuss online job applications, technology that can help, online profiles, etc. It also opens the door to discuss social media and other online profiles, and to be aware of how a student's online presence can affect his or her job search.

★*How can the VR Counselor help the student identify their network and start searching for a job? Students may need one on one assistance to identify their network and the supports they will need to be successful. This is the perfect opportunity for the VR Counselor to describe the knowledge and resources available through the VR program which promote success for the students to gain and maintain a work experience.*

Workshop 8: Counselor Notes

'Networking'

1st

(family, friends, coaches)



2nd

(co-workers, teachers)



3rd

(employers in your community)



Workshop 9: Understanding the Interview Process

The objective of this workshop is to introduce the interview process. It allows for youth to practice what to say, and teaches what questions may be asked. The workshop breaks down the different steps of an interview including preparing for, during, and after the interview. The workshop also teaches youth how to stand out in an interview and reinforces the idea of making a good impression.

★ Interviewing is an important aspect of finding employment. The workshops thus far have been helping prepare the student to think about the idea of work and how it applies to them personally, what skills they have and need to develop, as well as steps in actually applying for employment (resume, application, job search). It is important to show the students how the Job Readiness Workshops all play a part in gaining employment.

- **Introductory speech:** Making a good impression was introduced during workshop 5, and provided activities for the students to develop a 30 second commercial/elevator pitch. Hopefully the students have been practicing their introductory speeches, as it will help them become more comfortable with talking to strangers, interviewing and networking.
- **Activities:** Try showing examples of both good and bad job interviews. This can be a done in a variety of ways including a video or role playing with the teacher and VR Counselor. If available, invite an employer from the community the students would know, and have them talk to the students about the importance of an interview, and provide tips for success. Depending on the student population, having students role play together can be a great activity for practice. Make sure you prepare this activity with the teacher to ensure any student considerations are taken into account, and avoid making anyone uncomfortable or feel out of place.
- **Student workbook:** An interview is more than just answering a few questions about a job. This workshop helps students understand all aspects of an interview and provides suggestions for success. The student workbook also provides information for student reference regarding preparing for, during, and after the interview.

★ Interviewing is a skill that generally develops overtime. Encourage students to practice their introductory speeches often as this will help build confidence and stronger skills when an interview opportunity presents itself.

★ *How can the VR Counselor help students understand the importance of the interview, and provide opportunities for practice? VR Counselors provide a strong skill set in helping students with mock interviews and partnering with community employers for training and practice.*

Workshop 9: Counselor Notes



Workshop 10: ADA & Staying Motivated

The objective of this workshop is to review all of the concepts discussed throughout the ten workshops. This workshop also provides an opportunity to discuss the ADA and an employee's responsibility when accommodations are needed. Disability disclosure is defined, but not pressed too much to prevent an uncomfortable situation for any workshop participants. Terminating a group relationship is important and meaningful. This workshop allows an opportunity to celebrate the completion of the workshops and make plans for moving forward with the VR process for any interested youth.

★The end of the Job Readiness Workshops can be a bittersweet experience. Anticipation has likely been building due to students, teacher and the VR Counselor knowing the workshops lasted only a short 10-weeks. It is important for the VR Counselor to discuss the nearing end of the workshops weeks in advance of the actual completion. Though the official workshops have ended, this may be the very beginning of counselor/client relationships you have built with the students. Students will express varying feelings of sadness, anxiety or excitement as the workshops come to an end. It is important to reinforce your role as a VR Counselor and the steps each student must take in order to continue a VR counseling relationship. Individualized needs will be identified with each student and teacher to ensure VR can provide the necessary supports and services to help transition out of the education system toward employment and independence.

★Areas to keep in mind when terminating the Job Readiness Workshops include, but are not limited to:

- Reinforce the progress made throughout the 10-weeks, both as a group and as individual students. Remind students of continuing their relationship with VR.
- Provide suggestions and reminders on how the students can successfully incorporate information learned, and where to gain additional support needed.
- The Job Readiness Workshops may be a new experience for everyone, and asking for feedback and suggestions will help improve this service in meeting the needs of future students, teachers, and schools.
- Be creative in activities you choose to teach ADA and for termination of the group.
- CELEBRATE! What a huge accomplishment! Coordinate with the teacher to celebrate the end in a meaningful way (certificates, pizza party, reference letters, etc.).

★ADA and disability disclosure are topics introduced as additional components for successful employment. Be cautious of discussing student's personal stories. The goal is to provide basic information and, in most cases, follow up will be necessary based on student's individual circumstances.

Workshop 10: Counselor Notes



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Additional Activities

★A lot of material was covered over the past 10-weeks. There may be topics that need more time or a refresher workshop. Additionally, there may be topics or activities that were not presented during the 10-weeks, but are identified as important or necessary. Here are some extra activities that have been identified and may be necessary and beneficial to develop. These activities can be developed by the teacher, or as a team with the VR Counselor. Again, this is all based on individual need.

- Vocational Rehabilitation Office Field Trip
- Community Employer Day with Mock Interviews
- Follow Up Workshops
- Computer Lab Activities
- Review/Certificate of Completion Party
- Individual Activities/Meetings
- Other

★This list is not exhaustive. There are many activities that you and/or your teacher may need to add or implement to the JRW, depending on the needs of the school and students.



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Ending the Job Readiness Workshop & What's Next?

★ Now that the 10-weeks of Job Readiness Workshops have come to an end, what does that mean for your relationship and involvement with your teacher? VR Counselors will need to continue their relationship with the students and be a resource for the school. Throughout the workshops, you discussed the value of the VR program and the possible resources and impact students could gain by working with their VR Counselor. Now that the workshops are complete, it is time to look at the individual needs of students, and how the relationship with the school can be expanded.

- **Individualized Education Program (IEP):** Attending student IEP meetings is a great way to meet the family and start working on individualized goals. Because of the student's participation in the JRW, they may be more willing to apply for VR assistance, now that they have a relationship with you, and hopefully a better understanding of what VR can do for them in and outside of the school setting.
- **Work Experiences:** Very few of our youth with disabilities have employment in the community. One of VR's goals is to increase opportunities and services for students to engage in work experiences. This could be a summer job, social skills training in the community, career exploration, after school jobs, etc.
- **Teamwork:** VR needs to be a member of the team; district team, SpEd team, IEP team, family team, etc. Coordinating time with the varying personnel will help you spend time in your school working on all levels of team planning, increase your partnership, and increase successful outcomes for students.
- **Staying Involved:** VR Counselors need to be involved in all schools in our community. Encourage your school partners to invite you to agency fairs, parent nights, group orientations, etc. The VR Counselor skillset in disability, employment, and resources can be a huge asset to teachers and students while involved in transition planning.

★ Remember, VR values the relationship with each of our schools and teacher partners. VR strives to individualize services in order to meet the specific needs of each school and student. Continue to contact teachers and schools for further discussions on collaboration, additional workshops, team planning, and IEP meetings. We are excited to provide the Job Readiness Workshops in schools statewide, while keeping in mind all other areas where VR can be involved. We hope to provide the necessary supports to increase employment outcomes for youth with disabilities.

JRW Counselor Notes

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