



Wisconsin Department of Health Services

Positive Behavior Supports in the Workplace Module 2: Discovery and Job Matching

Transcript

SPEAKER: Welcome to the Positive Behavior Supports in the Workplace training series, module 2-- discovery and job matching. Before we begin, let's review what we've learned in module 1-- rethinking challenging behaviors. Behavior is a form of communication. Positive behavior support begins when we use empathy and person-centered thinking to determine the root cause of challenging behavior.

Person-centered thinking focuses on the five quality-of-life experiences-- sharing ordinary places, making choices, developing one's abilities, being respected and having valued social roles, and having meaningful relationships. Learning about quality-of-life factors that are important to the person lets us understand what they want so we can provide the right support.

Here's a look at the learning objectives for today. After completing this training, you will be able to define discovery as a tool for job matching, apply discovery strategies used for job matching for people with complex disabilities, identify negative consequences related to a poor job match for a person.

The discovery process is an evidence-based alternative to comparative standardized assessments and evaluations. Discovery involves getting to know a job seeker before supporting them and developing a plan for employment. Discovery is the first component of the customized employment planning process.

Customized employment is a job development process that personalizes the relationship between a job seeker and employer to meet the needs of both. Customized employment emerged as a best practice in the early 2000s and was written into the Federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, WIOA, of 2014 as an effective strategy for increasing competitive integrated employment for people with the most significant disabilities.

Traditional employment assessments are used to determine if a job seeker can perform a typical entry-level job. These comparative assessments are not an effective way to evaluate people with significant disabilities. They will likely highlight an individual's deficits versus their strengths and capabilities. The discovery process provides a strengths-based approach to learn about a person's skills and abilities, when and where the person is at their best, and identifies the supports needed to ensure success.

A job developer using the discovery process collects information from people who know the person very well, observes the person in familiar and new environments to verify and gather more information, and develops a positive comprehensive profile about the person. Team-based discovery works especially well with people with significant disabilities who may not be able to fully explain their interests, skills, and vocational goals.

The discovery process focuses on getting to know the following information about a job seeker-
- the person's current skills, both those performed independently and with some support. Skills the person has the potential to develop with training. Preferred approach to learning and support. The person's preferred environments and ideal conditions.

When, where, why, and how the person is at their best. Connections, the people and places with whom the person is connected. Personality traits and characteristics. Interests and activities the person enjoys. What motivates the person. The types of jobs or supports work for the person and jobs or approaches that would not work.

Sonya was referred to Vocational Specialists Inc. for help finding a job. Her previous jobs included a short stint as a cashier at Target and bussing tables at a Texas Roadhouse. Given Sonya's communication skills and upbeat personality, these jobs seem like they would be a good fit, but they did not last long. Sonya would experience occasional verbal and physical outbursts with coworkers and customers, which resulted in job termination.

When Sonya met with the employment specialist, John, she wasn't sure what kind of job they should look for. John brought job ideas and applications to complete with Sonya for a few weeks, but she did not seem interested. He decided to use some discovery strategies to learn more about Sonya.

John decided to use discovery strategies with Sonya. Watching and asking. John got to know Sonya's hobbies and interests, observed her in different places, and talked with people who knew her best, including a former piano teacher who told him about special talents she has reading, composing, and memorizing music.

Ideal conditions. He learned more about her ideal conditions for employment, especially the people and environment she prefers. He learned if she was in a busy place or felt hurried or pressured, she became quickly agitated. If he tried giving her direction at these times, she would swear at him and her behavior became unpredictable.

Finding opportunities. After taking inventory of Sonya's interests, skills, positive characteristics, and ideal conditions for employment, John started researching music-related businesses in the area. He wanted to find a small, flexible employer with a low-key environment. He contacted Sonya's former piano teacher and did some relationship mapping with her. John contacted a business that sold and repaired instruments and specialized in selling hard-to-find sheet music online.

He contacted the employer for an informational interview. During this interview, John was able to get a sense of the work environment, people, and work culture. He also learned about the employer's needs, both in the store and his growing online business. Believing this employer would be a good match for Sonya's ideal conditions, interests, and skills, he negotiated a customized position for her keeping the store organized and fulfilling online orders.

Putting it together. An employer's needs are connected to a job seeker's strengths. Sonya's story shows us why it is important for employment specialists to get to know the unique skills, characteristics, and ideal conditions of the people they support. We all have ideal conditions. When many or most of our ideal conditions are met, we are happy, well-motivated employees.

Think back to your teenage years and how you learned what you wanted to do in the future. Did you have jobs that you did not like or were not good at? What did you do? Did you find a new job?

For many people, early work experiences shape your preferences and sense of self. However, many people with IDD have not been afforded the same breadth of opportunities to explore and experience job opportunities that you had. They may have attended high school years ago or attended a school that did not have a school-to-work transition program for students.

At first, employment specialists had a hard time differentiating the discovery process from traditional supported employment assessment. Experts in discovery and customized employment developed the discovery fidelity scale to assist with evaluating a job seeker's strengths, interests, and best working conditions to help them find the right fit.

This scale helps employment specialists measure how well they are implementing strategies based on a set of tenants that are essential to successful discovery. An employment specialist can assign themselves a score based on how closely they follow the model. The next slide contains an excerpt from the discovery fidelity scale tool. Link to download the discovery fidelity scale-- www.griffinhammis.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/dfs-december-2018-4-2.pdf.

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The Workforce Innovation Technical Assistance Center developed a guide called the Essential Elements for Customized Employment for Universal Application to identify and describe the essential elements of the customized employment process. This document, available through the lead center website, is a comprehensive guide for customized employment service providers-- leadcenter.org/resources/the-essential-elements-of-customized-employment-4-universal-application/.

Be aware of the bad job match. A bad job match can lead to poor work performance or challenging behaviors in response to a negative situation. This could result in disciplinary measures or even job termination.

Square peg plus round hole. Bad job matches happen when employment specialists put job seekers into any available job rather than genuinely getting to a job seeker's ideal conditions for employment. Your role as an employment specialist is to help job seekers learn more about themselves and their goals. If you do the discovery process well, you will have the foundation you need to find the right job match.

Consequences of bad job matches. Bad job matches not only affect the people you support, they can also compromise your reputation as an employment specialist. If you match someone to the wrong job, the employer will be dissatisfied.

This may result in job loss for the person and a poor reference. A poor reference will make it harder for you to find another job for the person, especially if the employer shares their

experience with other employers in your area. The employer may also lose trust in your ability to identify suitable candidates for future opportunities.

Learn from the experience. Despite your best efforts, bad job matches can happen. This can be a good learning opportunity. If a bad job match occurs, there are two options. First, you can facilitate a conversation about the issue between the person you support and their employer to determine if there are other job duties or positions available.

The second option is to have the person you support resign on good terms and start looking for another job that is a better fit. Pro tip-- doing things like adding extra job coach support to keep a person with a disability in a bad job match is not fair to them or their employer.

Best practices for discovery include observing the person in more than three familiar activities in the community and identifying emerging vocational patterns and preferences. For example, after a home visit, the employment specialist and other team members identify and schedule three to five activities. The activities begin with what the job seeker is familiar with and advance to related but less familiar scenarios.

The team helps the job seeker complete the activities as needed. They observe the skills used, tasks, supports needed, adaptations needed, and learning needs. Then less familiar places are visited based on emerging observations and vocational interests. Doing a job shadow or tryout at a business alone is not acceptable discovery.

Discovery case studies. Case studies are a helpful way to learn how discovery can lead to the right job match. Take some time to read through some of the stories listed here. Griffin-Hammis case studies. Griffin-Hammis Associates, leaders in the discovery process, developed a collection of stories called Customized Employment-- Stories and Lessons From the Field to point out the sometimes less obvious nuanced methods vital to customization--
www.griffinhammis.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/updated-ce-stories-optrevfourwithpw.pdf.

Virginia Commonwealth University case studies. VCU's Work Support Training and Technical Assistance Center has developed a series of case studies describing the discovery and job negotiation process for five people.

- [Dan's case study](#)
- [Sarah's case study](#)
- [Betsy's case study](#)

- [Terry's case study](#)
- [Randy's case study](#)

Discovery is an essential person-centered planning strategy for job seekers with complex disabilities. When done well, discovery results in a better job match for the job seeker, which reduces the likelihood of challenging behaviors at work.

The cornerstones of discovery. Focusing on strengths, not deficits. Gathering input from people who know the person well. Engaging in experiences in the community. Identifying vocational themes, interest areas, and transferable skills. Employer engagement, including scheduling informational interviews with employers, learning about the work environment and culture, assessing employer needs that match the job seeker rather than only applying for open positions.

After completing this training, you can now-- define discovery as a tool for job matching. Apply discovery strategies used for job matching for people with complex disabilities. Identify negative consequences related to a poor job match for a person.

Thank you for attending Positive Behavior Supports in the Workplace, module 2-- discovery and job match. We hope you will join us again soon.