

COMPREHENSIVE ASSESSMENT

AUTHORITY

Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended, Sec. 102, 103

Federal Regulation: CFR §361.42, 361.45, 361.52

*For the purpose of this manual, use of the terms **must** and **shall** reflect requirements of Federal law or regulation or state or administrative regulation and must be adhered to strictly.*

A vocational assessment is an individualized, comprehensive process that identifies an individual's physical, mental, and emotional abilities, limitations, and tolerances. In accordance with federal law, the rehabilitation counselor is required to conduct a comprehensive vocational assessment for the purpose of gathering information that will assist and empower the individual in making decisions. The assessment provides information on the unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, interests, abilities, capabilities, and the need for supported employment. This information is used to increase the individual's knowledge of his/her capacities so appropriate and informed choices can be made during the rehabilitation process. It enables the individual to identify an optimal vocational outcome and to reach their maximum vocational potential. The comprehensive assessment must be limited to information that is necessary to determine eligibility, identify the rehabilitation needs of the individual and to plan for services or activities that are required to assist the individual to become employed.

DETERMINING VOCATIONAL POTENTIAL

A comprehensive vocational assessment is required to determine what services will best assist the individual to meet his/her vocational potential. The assessment process begins at referral or initial contact with an individual and ends when the consumer exits the rehabilitation system. The focus of an assessment should be work readiness with the expected outcome of the assessment being appropriate and successful job placement.

There are two components to work readiness: employability and placeability. Employability refers to the physical, intellectual, and emotional attributes as well as social and environmental support necessary to meet the varied requirements of certain jobs and occupations. Placeability refers to the individual's job search and interview skills, the impression he/she makes during the process of getting a job and whether the job market supports his/her career choice.

The consumer's personal attributes should be examined and a determination should be made as to how these attributes relate to the world of work in general. The assessment may examine personality, interests, interpersonal skills, intelligence and related functional capacities, educational achievements, vocational attitudes, personal and social adjustment and employment opportunities. It may also include medical,

psychiatric, psychological, and other pertinent, vocational, educational, cultural, social, recreational, and environmental factors that affect the employment and rehabilitation of the consumer. In general, the comprehensive assessment explores what the consumer brings to the job in terms of work attitudes and behaviors, habits, tolerance, social patterns and how do they relate to successful job performance.

SOURCES OF DATA

The primary source of assessment data must, to the extent possible be current existing information. "Current" in this instance, refers to that information that provides an accurate reflection of the consumer as of the date of eligibility and date of development of the Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE). It should be used before considering the purchase of any additional evaluations or tests. This can include information available from other programs and providers, particularly information used by education officials and the Social Security Administration, and information provided by the individual and the family of the individual. Additional sources for obtaining information can include an analysis of work history, educational and social data, medical and psychiatric consultations, psychological testing, work sample evaluations and/or an analysis of part-time, temporary, or on-the-job work experiences. Any one or a combination of these sources may be adequate to obtain the information necessary for eligibility and planning purposes.

ASSESSMENT TOOLS

In selecting assessment tools and strategies the rehabilitation counselor must first decide what question or questions he/she is attempting to answer about the consumer. Questions are determined by the consumer's rehabilitation needs and experiences, therefore the assessment process is highly individualized - neither the questions nor the process should be standardized. One resource to consider when determining what assessment tool to use is A Common Sense Approach to Assessment. This manual was developed by a DVR team and lists and describes many assessment instruments. Each district has a copy of this manual.

As part of the comprehensive assessment, reasonable accommodations should be addressed. The consumer may be the best source of information based upon life experiences. However, simulated or trial work experiences may provide the counselor and the consumer with valuable insight into appropriate accommodations that can be transferred to the actual work site.

ROLE OF THE COUNSELOR

The role of the counselor in the assessment process is to assimilate all of the information obtained and translate it into employment terms. The comprehensive assessment is an ongoing process. It is essential that the rehabilitation counselor

continually assess the consumer during the rehabilitation process to determine if the individual is making progress toward his/her goal and what intervention or changes to the program might be required. Any information obtained must be communicated to the consumer so that he/she is able to make informed choices during the rehabilitation process. It is important for the counselor to use the information to reinforce the consumer's capabilities.