

***The
Rehabilitation
Counselor
Mentoring
Program***

**Guiding Rehabilitation
Counselors to Professional
Excellence**

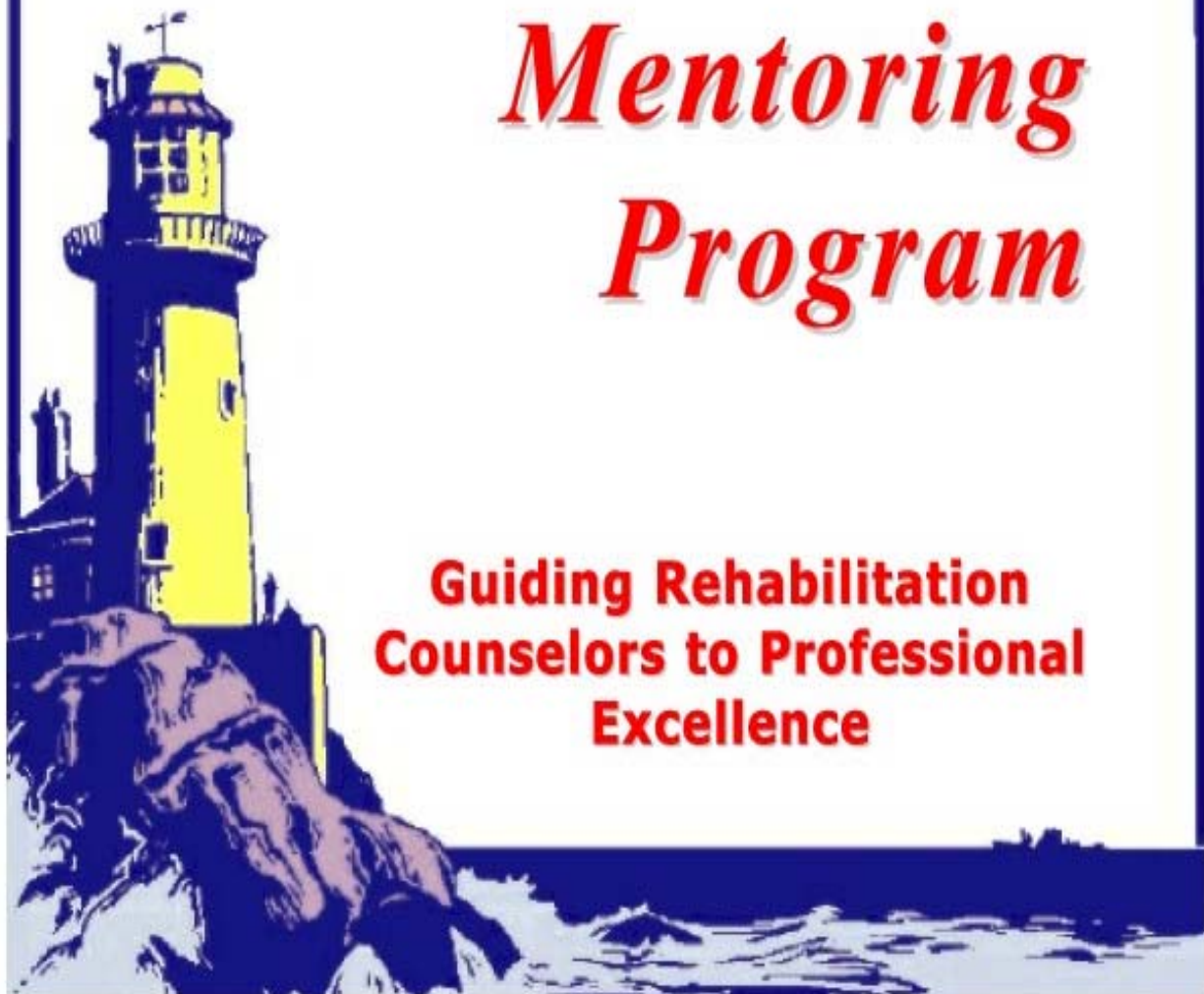


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Introduction

Congratulations, you are one of the few to have been selected as a Counselor Mentor. You were chosen because of your outstanding counseling skills and superior casework. You are the type of counselor the Department wants new counselors to emulate. In addition, you have been identified as having the interpersonal skills and interest needed to be an effective mentor.

You have agreed to take on a task that will be both challenging and rewarding. Although it will take a great deal of time and effort, your success will positively impact the Department and Kentuckians with disabilities for years to come.

This guide outlines the basic competencies a new counselor is expected to master prior to independently managing a caseload. Each section includes suggestions for assisting the new counselor develop the skills as well as resources you might find helpful in conveying the information. However, you can, and should, use any method that you and the new counselor find most beneficial.

There is no set time frame for completing the guide. Individuals learn in different ways and at different rates. It is our intention that the mentor assists the new counselor to independently complete the more routine aspects of the position (i.e. conduct interviews, make eligibility decisions, write IPE's, etc.) within the first three weeks of employment. The Field Administrator is an integral component of this learning process. However, the timeframe should be determined by the needs of the new counselor. The goal is to assist the new counselor in mastering the competencies, not in completing the outline within a predetermined timeframe.

This guide includes the "New Counselor Competency Checklist" which is to be utilized throughout the initial mentoring process. Once the new counselor acquires and demonstrates to the mentor the ability to independently perform tasks related to the competency, the mentor is to record the accomplishment on the form. Once all the competencies have been mastered, the mentor is to sign and date the checklist and submit to the new counselor's Field Administrator. The Field Administrator will review the competencies with the new counselor and make recommendations for additional training, if necessary. Once the Field Administrator is satisfied that all competencies have been met, he/she will submit a copy of the checklist to the HRD Branch in Central Office, which will issue a certificate of completion. A copy of the completed "New Counselor Competency Checklist" should be given to the new counselor and the field administrator.

This guide may also be used to assist staff who is supervising vocational rehabilitation practicum or internship students. However, all new counselors are required to have a mentor and complete the "New Counselor Competency Checklist" even if they went through the process as a student.

MENTOR PHILOSOPHY

The word mentor derived from Greek mythology. It was used to describe a person who was in charge and who was teaching the young individuals in their community. Today it is defined as an adviser, supporter, and teacher. Although thousands of years has passed between Greek time and the present, the understanding of a Mentor has remained the same.

As a mentor with the Department of Vocational Rehabilitation, you will not only assist a new counselor in learning the competencies required to succeed on the job but you will develop a relationship with the new employee that will involve trust, dedication, and friendship. Such as in Greek mythology, you will be an adviser, supporter and teacher.

PURPOSE OF VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

The Department's primary goal is employment for persons with disabilities. This goal can benefit other entities as well through the following means:

- Assisting individuals with disabilities in obtaining and maintaining employment that reaches their highest interest, abilities and ambitions.
- Assisting employers in fulfilling their on-going needs for qualified employees. This includes helping employers maintain excellent employees who have an injury or an illness that jeopardize job security and matching the unique skills of individuals with disabilities to employer labor needs.
- Decreasing the taxes paid to support Social Security and other social agencies. When individuals work, they become taxpayers and their social service benefits are reduced. This decreases the amount of money taxpayers must pay to maintain these programs.

KEY POINTS

- Values, mission, and purpose of VR
- Emphasis on serving individuals with the most significant disabilities
- Emphasis on abilities, choice, and inclusion
- Employment as a right
- Appropriate Employment to the individual's potential

TEACHING METHODS

- Review the philosophy, mission and values statements of the Department
- Review the preamble to the 1992 Amendment of the Rehabilitation Act
- Share personal experiences regarding how each of these identified areas has been applied in a caseload

SUGGESTED RESOURCES

- Counselor's Manual
- Internet: <http://kydvr.state.ky.us/>
- Intranet: <http://kygovnet.state.ky.us/protected/dvr/DVR>
- Journal of Applied Rehabilitation Counseling
- DVR Consumer Guide
- Department Staff
- The Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended
- Skills Enhancement Training (SET)

TEACHING NOTES

CONFIDENTIALITY AND ETHICS

All consumers have the right to privacy. The Department is responsible for safeguarding the personal information obtained throughout the rehabilitation process. Personal information can only be released under very strict guidelines.

- Informed written consent for release of personal information
- Disclosure to prevent clear and imminent danger to self and/or others
- Disclosure to a third party of a contagious and fatal disease (differences may vary among state laws)
- Court ordered disclosure
- Limited disclosure to subordinates, assistants and other professionals working with the individuals

The confidentiality laws must be explained to consumers when the relationship is initiated and throughout the rehabilitation process. All confidential information obtained is to be used for professional purposes only and accessed only by Department personnel who require the information to perform specific job duties.

The Department expects all counselors to demonstrate the highest ethical standards in the delivery of rehabilitation services.

KEY POINTS

- The principles of ethical behavior
- Procedures and guidelines for obtaining and sharing personal information
- Release of information to entities involved in carrying out the rehabilitation program (CRPs, colleges, etc).
- Protecting confidentiality within the office
- Use of e-mail
- Services to family members and friends
- Gifts
- Boundaries of the counselor relationship

SUGGESTED TEACHING TECHNIQUES

- Review the CRCC Code of Ethics with the new employee
- Give sample scenarios regarding confidentiality issues, allow new employee to state what their actions would be and discuss for accuracy of choice
- Provide examples of how ethics and confidentiality should be reflected in case files
- Review the Release of Information forms utilized by the Department

SUGGESTED RESOURCES

- DVR's Counselors Manual
- Commission on Rehabilitation Counselor Certification <http://www.crccertification.com>
- National Rehabilitation Counseling/Kentucky Rehabilitation Counseling Associations
- Department Staff
- American Counseling Association
- Skills Enhancement Training (Segment on Confidentiality and Ethics)

TEACHING NOTES

REFERRAL AND APPLICATION

Obtaining appropriate referrals and conducting successful initial interviews are vital to the success of the rehabilitation process.

KEY POINTS

- Referral sources
- Joint intake through One-stop Centers
- Completion of the application
- Releases of information
- Voter registration
- Documentation
- Obtaining and utilizing existing information
- 60 day requirement to determine eligibility
- Referral to other resources
- Disability Coding
- Appropriate referrals
- Explanation of services
- Consumer Guide
- Appeal rights
- Emphasis on positive employment outcome
- Informed Choice
- Retrieving information from previous cases or CMS
- When to refer to specialty caseloads or DFB
- Developing Rapport

SUGGESTED TEACHING TECHNIQUES

- Have the new counselor discuss referral and application with field administrator
- Have the new counselor observe the mentor and other counselors during the referral and application process
- Role-play a referral and application process. Provide the new counselor with the opportunity to play the role of a counselor as well as a consumer in order to give them both perspectives
- Video or audio tape role-play sessions as a learning tool
- Encourage the new counselor create a personal journal regarding ideas and concepts that they observed which they would like utilize or replicate
- New counselor may create a script in order to role-play the "explanation of services" to a consumer
- Provide a sample of completed forms that may be utilized in the referral and application process
- Have the new counselor work with assistant on data input into CMS

SUGGESTED RESOURCES

- Counselor Manual
- Skills Enhancement Training (SET)
- Department staff

TEACHING NOTES

ASSESSMENTS

A thorough assessment to determine eligibility and vocational rehabilitation needs is the key to developing an appropriate rehabilitation program. The assessment process uncovers the consumer's unique strengths, interests, abilities, limitations and life circumstances which establish the foundation of the counseling process.

KEY POINTS

- Use of existing information (medical/psychological/school reports)
- Vocational assessments (when & where)
- Appropriate procurement of formal assessments
- Assessment for eligibility versus assessment of rehabilitation need
- Assessment of need for rehabilitation technology
- Assessment resources (CRPs, manuals, on-line resources, etc.)
- Ongoing assessment
- Informed choice
- Documentation of assessment
- Person Centered Planning
- Accommodation for Assessment

SUGGESTED TEACHING TECHNIQUES

- Emphasize the importance of assessment as a continuous process through case examples
- Reinforce the use of vocational guidance and counseling through shadowing and observation of counselors that are strong in these skills
- Provide examples of medical documents that might be found in case files and have new employee review and interpret
- Assist the new employee in creating or obtaining a list of acceptable diagnostic resources from outside resources
- Establish a list of community resources for vocational assessment and evaluation purposes that the new employee can utilize for a reference in their geographical location
- Review acceptable practices for outsourcing the formal assessment and provide a list of services and service providers for the geographical location of the new employee
- Provide a mock case with basic information and have new employee outline process for assessment

SUGGESTED RESOURCES

- Counselor Manual
- Dictionary of Occupational Titles
- Occupation Outlook Handbook
- Guide for Occupational Exploration
- JIST Career Curriculums
- Rehabilitation Technology Consumer Guide
- “Common Sense Approach to Assessment Manual”
- Supported Employment Branch
- IHDI
- CDPCRC

TEACHING NOTES

GUIDANCE AND COUNSELING

Vocational rehabilitation guidance and counseling is a helping process in the rehabilitation program to assist eligible individuals in analyzing, understanding, and using their assets (e.g., capacities and abilities) to overcome their social, emotional, educational, vocational, and/or physical limitations. Counseling includes the use of interpersonal contact and specialized professional functions such as assessment, adjustment counseling, coordination of services, identification and mobilization of resources, placement, and follow-up. These elements are not separate steps in a sequence but they are interrelated parts of a whole.

KEY POINTS

- Career Exploration
- Disability awareness
- Acceptance of disability and development of coping skills
- VR role vs. therapist role (when to refer to another professional)
- Strengths and abilities
- Realistic goals (with or without accommodations)
- Empowerment
- Self-advocacy
- Family education
- ADA
- Informed choice
- Documentation of guidance and counseling
- Intensive Guidance & Counseling

SUGGESTED TEACHING TECHNIQUES

- Observation of mentor in counseling session
- Observation of other counselors in counseling sessions
- Role-playing
- Mentor observation and guidance of new counselor
- Video-taping counseling session for review
- Reinforce the use of vocational guidance and counseling through shadowing and observation of counselors that are strong in these skills

SUGGESTED RESOURCES

- Counselor's Manual specifically sections on Consumer Choice, ADA, and Guidance and Counseling
- ONET Online.htm
- State ADA Coordinator
- "Common Sense Approach to Assessment" manual
- Handbook of Severe Disability
- Merck Manual
- DSM-IV
- CDPCRC
- Local resources such as Comprehensive Care Centers, Community Rehabilitation programs, One-Stop Centers, Assessment Centers

TEACHING NOTES

ELIGIBILITY

An individual is eligible for vocational rehabilitation services if he/she:

- 1) has a disability. That is, has a physical or mental impairment, which for that individual constitutes a substantial impediment to employment and can benefit from vocational rehabilitation services in terms of an employment outcome

and

- 2) requires vocational rehabilitation services to prepare for, secure, retain, or regain employment.

KEY POINTS

- Definition of disability
- Substantial limitations of functional capacities
- Expanded definitions
- Requires VR services
- Attendant factors
- Agreement of Understanding
- Disability does not equal eligibility (coding/priority codes/order of selection)
- Ineligibility decisions/referral and information
- Presumptive eligibility
- Trial work experience
- No single service
- Informed choice
- Documentation of eligibility in case record

SUGGESTED TEACHING TECHNIQUES

- Work through an eligibility which needs to be processed (explaining worksheet, CMS process, and progress notes)
- Service Corps of Retired Executives
- Give examples of cases which are ineligible if none are available on new counselor's caseload
- Work through example of Trial Work Experience case
- Review eligibility through SSI/SSDI and what is needed before IPE
- Review authority/regulations

SUGGESTED RESOURCES

- 781 KAR 1:030 (DVR Intranet <http://kygovnet.state.ky.us/protected/dvr/DVR.html>)
- CITE: 34CFR361.42
(http://www.access.gpo.gov/nara/cfr/waisidx_00/34cfr361_00.html)
- Internet websites: (<http://www.makoa.org>, <http://www.halftheplanet.org>, <http://www.rarediseases.org>) to name a few.
- Merck Manual (<http://www.merck.com/pubs/mmanual/sections.htm>)
- DSM IV (<http://www.psychologynet.org/dsm.html>)
- Disability Handbook published by the University of Arkansas
- Counselor's Manual (found on DVR Intranet)
- Disability Handbook published by the Nebraska Department of Education

TEACHING NOTES

APPEAL RIGHTS AND MEDIATION

Every individual applying for or receiving services from the Department must be informed of the appeals opportunities available. The Client Assistance Program and the mediation process as well as other, more formal, appeal processes play an important role in protecting the rights of consumers. Most disagreements are the result of miscommunication or a misunderstanding and are handled informally, however, most counselors will experience this process sometime in their career.

KEY POINTS

- Informed Choice
- It is okay to say no
- Appeal rights and time frames
- Client Assistant Program
- Mediation
- Informal/Formal Reviews
- Hearings
- Documentation of appeal rights and mediation

SUGGESTED TEACHING TECHNIQUES

- The Mentor may provide personal examples of situations that required a "no" answer, CAP involvement, informal/formal reviews, hearings and informed choice
- Have other counselors share experiences with the above listed items
- Utilize role-play regarding instances that might involve saying "no", CAP interaction, etc
- Contact CAP representative for additional information
- Reinforce documentation through examples

SUGGESTED RESOURCES

- Counselor Manual
- CAP Representative
- 781 KAR 1:010
- Skills Enhancement Training
- KRS 13B
- Rehabilitation Act, as amended

TEACHING NOTES

DVR SERVICES

Services provided by the Department will enable an individual with a disability to obtain and maintain employment. The services provided are based upon the individual's needs, informed choice, capability, resources, strengths, and abilities. These services to be provided are a joint decision between the counselor and consumer.

KEY POINTS

- Local Services
- CRP's
- Supported Employment
- Rehabilitation Technology
- Driver Evaluation
- CDPCRC
- Comparable Benefits (private insurance, medication, loans, grants, etc.)
- Job Placement Professionals
- Post Employment
- P.A.C.E Program
- Core vs. Ancillary Services
- Attendant Care
- Employment Follow-Up
- CBWTP/Transition
- Comprehensive Care
- Mental and Physical Restoration
- Assessment
- Guidance and Counseling
- Documentation
- Informed Choice

SUGGESTED TEACHING TECHNIQUES

- Make appointments to visit local service providers
- Create a "Hotlist" of contact names and numbers
- Shadow other Department staff to learn specific job duties (ERS, Rehab Tech, etc.)
- Show examples of cases where a particular service was provided

SUGGESTED RESOURCES

- Consumer Guide
- Counselor's Manual
- Internet
- Intranet
- Resource material available in your district
- Forms (i.e. a referral form for a particular service)
- CDPCRC Catalog
- Skills Enhancement Training (SET)

TEACHING NOTES

SELF-EMPLOYMENT

For many DVR consumers, self-employment is a viable option. The DVR counselor need not be an expert in small business development or in the intricacies of business administration. What is crucial to success, however, is willingness on the part of the counselor to coordinate closely with the consumer and all available resources.

KEY POINTS

- Self-Employment Definition
- Home-Based Business Definition
- Telecommuting Definition
- Business Plan
- Consumer Success Indicators
- Small Business Development Center
- Service Corps of Retired Executives
- Small Business Administration
- DVR Self-Employment Committee
- Case Follow-Up and Closure

SUGGESTED TEACHING TECHNIQUES

- Review key points in Counselor's Manual
- Review Department policy and guidelines
- Provide information on self-employment from Small Business Administration
- Review a consumer's case who was successful in self-employment if available

SUGGESTED RESOURCES

- The Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended (found on DVR Intranet)
CITE: 34CFR361.45-46
(http://www.access.gpo.gov/nara/cfr/waisidx_00/34cfr361_00.html)
- DVR internet and intranet websites
- Counselor's Manual (found on DVR Intranet)
- Small Business Administration (<http://www.sba.gov>)
- Small Business Development Centers

TEACHING NOTES

IPE/PLAN DEVELOPMENT

The Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) is a pathway for the individual with a disability to reach the desired vocational goal.

KEY POINTS

- Negotiation
- Needs vs. wants related to Vocational Goal
- Informed choice
- Developing an appropriate vocational goal and time frame
- Eligibility and expanded definition as related to the IPE
- Non purchases services
- Amendments
- Documentation
- Reviews
- Use of IPE for supported employment, trial work experience, and post employment

SUGGESTED TEACHING TECHNIQUES

- Introduce IPE and accompanying instructions
- Work through IPE's which need to be processed (explaining IPE, CMS process, and progress notes)
- Review key points in Counselor's Manual
- Give examples of different plans which may not be available on new counselor's caseload
- Work through example of Trial Work Experience case
- Review authority/regulations
- Review local services and comparable benefits
- Observe counselor interview

SUGGESTED RESOURCES

- The Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended (found on DVR Intranet)
CITE: 34CFR361.45-46
(http://www.access.gpo.gov/nara/cfr/waisidx_00/34cfr361_00.html)
- DVR internet and intranet websites (forms and descriptions of services)
- Counselor's Manual (found on DVR Intranet)
- IPE Instructions

TEACHING NOTES

FISCAL MANAGEMENT

Managing a caseload budget can be one of the many challenges of the rehabilitation counselor role. Understanding available resources, method of payment, and budgetary constraints is a key to fiscal management.

KEY POINTS

- Comparable benefits
- Services fees
- Caseload budget units—how to manage
- Reports
- Sign off list
- Economic need
- Imprest cash
- Catastrophic fund
- Fiscal year—state and federal
- Authorizations
- Non-pay authorizations
- DVR-10

SUGGESTED TEACHING TECHNIQUES

- Meet with field administrator
- Gather information from assistant, central office personnel, CMS
- Reinforce the use of vocational guidance and counseling through shadowing and observation of counselors that are strong in these skills
- Compile community resources for consultation, assistance and guidance

SUGGESTED RESOURCES

- Local resource directories
- CMS
- Counselor's manual (Available on Intranet)
- Skills Enhancement Training
- Intranet
- DVR Hotlist
- State Plan 6.9(c)(2)
- Internet
- IHDI Resource

TEACHING NOTES

CASE MANAGEMENT

Managing a caseload can be overwhelming at times. Utilizing resources and developing organizational skills can assist in this task.

KEY POINTS

- “Statuses” (Applicant status, eligible status, plan status, etc.)
- Prioritizing, organizing, flexibility, scheduling
- CMS Reports
- Delegating and utilizing Rehabilitation Assistant
- Manage the caseload, not just the case

SUGGESTED TEACHING TECHNIQUES

- Show examples of good casework
- Make outline of what a good case may include
- Shadow different counselors to get ideas of casework strategies and styles
- Give helpful hints to assist with developing individual style
- Time management class

SUGGESTED RESOURCES

- GSC Classes

*Be sure to include the importance of documentation and informed choice in this area.

TEACHING NOTES

JOB DEVELOPMENT/PLACEMENT/RETENTION/FOLLOW-UP

Placement is a joint effort between consumer, counselor, DVR support staff, family and other representatives that are involved in the individual's rehabilitation. Employment must be consistent with their capacities, abilities, and informed choice.

KEY POINTS

- This is our job
- Choice/Documentation
- Accommodations
- ERS/PACE/other help
- Marketing to employers
- Confidentiality
- Lost customer skills

SUGGESTED TEACHING TECHNIQUES

- Provide sample documentation and forms as a guide
- Have the new employee present dialogue explaining each area in a role-play setting
- Role-play marketing to an employer
- Meet with or ask for input and assistance from the Marketing Director
- Develop written scenarios involving issues of confidentiality and have new employee explain what he/she would do and provide feedback
- Confer with rehabilitation technology staff for ideas, input and suggestions on accommodations
- Provide resource contacts for ERS/PACE and other community assistance

SUGGESTED RESOURCES

- Counselor Manual (Available on the Intranet)
- Skills Enhancement Training

TEACHING NOTES

CASE CLOSURE/POST EMPLOYMENT

Closing an individual's case at the appropriate time can effect the successful outcome of the individual in employment. Communicating with the individual during closure and offering support through resources can assist in maintaining employment.

KEY POINTS

- Forms/Procedures
- Documentation
- 90 days does not equal success always
- Unsuccessful closures
- Closing SE cases
- Informing about post-employment
- Job hopping
- Informed choice

SUGGESTED TEACHING TECHNIQUES

- Provide examples of completed forms and documentation for case closures, post employment, etc.
- Have new employee observe case closures
- Role-play case closure/post employment scenarios
- Provide examples of potential unsuccessful closures made successful to spur creative thinking
- Assist the new employee in developing a systematic method of assuring that all processes have been completed prior to closing case

SUGGESTED RESOURCES

- Counselor Manual
- Supported Employment Manual

TEACHING NOTES

SPECIALITY CASELOADS

To better meet the needs of individuals with specific disabilities, some counselors are assigned a caseload that requires extensive knowledge in the specific disability. Although training is received through the Department, guidance during the first month prior to receiving any training is crucial.

KEY POINTS

- Transition
- Mental Health
- Communication Specialist
- Rehabilitation Counselor for the Deaf
- Most Significant Disabilities
- School
- Traumatic Brain Injury
- Spinal Cord

SUGGESTED TEACHING TECHNIQUES

- Observation of other counselors in counseling sessions as they work with consumers of specialty cases
- Interview counselors working with consumers of specialty caseloads
- Provide sample copies of any required forms or documentation suggestions
- Meet with Program Administrator for Transition Services
- Talk with Director of Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services
- Shadow an RCD
- Gather data from Director of the Human Development Institute at University of Kentucky

SUGGESTED RESOURCES

- Counselor's Manual specifically section on disability types, transition, CDPCRC
- Handbook of Severe Disability
- Merck Manual
- Internet Resources:
 - <http://www.nmha.org> (National Mental Health Association)
 - <http://www.mhsource.com> (Mental Health Infosource)
 - <http://www.spinalcord.org> (National Spinal Cord Injury Association)
 - <http://www.handspeak.com> (Sign Language)
 - <http://www.biausa.org> (Brain Injury Association)
- DSM-IV
- CDPCRC
- Transition Manual
- Communication Specialist Manual

TEACHING NOTES

ONGOING RESPONSIBILITIES OF MENTORS

Although the first few weeks of mentoring will be the most intensive, mentoring is an ongoing process. After the basic competencies have been mastered, the new counselor will continue to need months of guidance and support to development into a capable and confident counselor.

The following are suggestions for making long term mentoring successful.

- 1) Make the new counselor feel that you welcome questions and opportunities to discuss issues.
- 2) Have regularly scheduled, one-on-one, mentoring sessions. Encourage the new counselor to collect cases or make lists of questions to be discussed. As the new counselor becomes more confident, gradually extend the time between sessions from once a week to every two weeks, then a month, and eventually as needed.
- 3) Recruit other sources of support at the new counselor's worksite. Help the new counselor develop meaningful, supportive relationships with his/her coworkers, supervisor and assistant.
- 4) Assist the new counselor in establishing professional relationships with other service providers, employers, etc. in the area.

The most important aspect of the mentoring process is the relationship. Hopefully, you will establish a relationship with the new counselor that will last throughout your professional careers. You might be surprised how soon you will be asking the counselor for advice on **your** difficult cases!

APPENDIX

COMPETENCY CHECKLIST

Counselor Name _____

District _____

Competency	Date Completed
<input type="checkbox"/> Purpose of Vocational Rehabilitation	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Confidentiality and Ethics	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Referral and Application	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Assessment	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Guidance and Counseling	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Eligibility	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Appeals & Mediation	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Services	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Self-Employment	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Plan Development	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Fiscal/Budget Responsibility	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Case Management	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Job Development/Placement/ Retention/Follow-up	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Case closure/Post employment	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Specialty Caseloads	_____

Mentor Signature

Field Administrator Signature

Date

Date