

Discussion of the Employment and Self-direction Modules

January 2015



Employment, Volunteer, and Training Module



Potential Purpose for Module

- To learn about and discuss participant interest in employment, volunteer and/or training opportunities
- To identify skills or strengths
- To identify barriers (perceived or real)
- To identify and link the participant to resource needs for supporting interest in employment, volunteering and/or training



Key Considerations for Purpose and Scope of Assessment Module- Best Practices

- Promising practices for this level of assessment include
 - Screening for interests, skills and identifying barriers which may need to be addressed
 - Identifying linkages that can assist with
 - matching interests and skills to potential work
 - addressing barriers to a work arrangement
 - Identifying general support needs
- Definition of employment
 - Employment is generally seen as integrated and making at least minimum wage-this includes customized employment with supports
 - Need to ensure that module is correctly adapted for the range of CO employment supports and/or settings
- Performance assessment is best done within the employment site/setting to determine specific support needs
 - Module will not include a job performance assessment but will be used to 1) document self reported needs in a work setting and to 2) identify the need for further evaluation by an employment specialist in the work environment.



Key Considerations for Assessment Approach – Differences in Age Related Interests

- May need variation in what is emphasized for 3 adult groups
 - Participants ages 18 (not in secondary school) through 60
 - Begin with emphasis on employment interests and options
 - Participants ages 18-21 in secondary school who will be transitioning
 - Begin with emphasis on options for post-secondary education and/or employment (e.g., many colleges now sponsoring initiatives for supported higher education aimed at young adults with intellectual disabilities)
 - Participants 60+
 - Less likely to be seeking new employment, should conversation begin with volunteer or continuing education interests **unless person is employed?**
 - Developing plans for other meaningful activities - if participant's goal is to retire from employment in near future should tool screen for referral to retirement coaching/counseling (goes beyond asking about volunteer interests)?
- Items likely to be same or similar even though flow of items may be different for age groups



Proposed Approach

- Use module to screen for interests, skills, barriers and needed linkages (Slide #2)
- Build flow for three age groups – age and interest will trigger specific flow of items
 - 18-60 Group
 - 18-21 Group in Secondary School
 - 60+ Group
- Consider at later step how support needs for specific performance problems demonstrated on the job should flow into the support plan.



Proposed Approach for Mandatory vs. Voluntary Items

- CMS requires the support plan to include opportunities for employment, including integrated options.
- CMS is silent about volunteering or training/education opportunities.
- Propose it be mandatory for assessor to use trigger questions for each area to determine how much further to go within the assessment.
 - The flow may vary a little by age and other factors, e.g.
 - If a 64 year old does not have interest in employment, there may not be much need to go further
 - If a 30 year old does not have interest in employment, it may be appropriate to ask one or two items about reasons to see if concerns have to do with perceived barriers that can be addressed



Potential Items

- Consider items from MnCHOICES and MA tools, adapt for CO system
 - Add some items concerning special skills and interests
 - Adapt flow of items to account for different age groups
 - Adapt items to fit CO definition of employment
- Consider trigger items (or other means) for how to incorporate specific performance assessment information conducted on the job into the support plan.



Advantages of Proposed Approach

- Provides opportunities for meaningful and age appropriate discussions about employment, volunteer and training/education interests
- Screens for referral needs to related agencies for training, benefits counseling, or job or volunteer placement
- Provides a basis for including integrated employment option discussions in development of individual's support plan
 - Consistent with new CMS regulations to include discussions about employment
 - Consistent with recent federal court settlements requiring states to offer integrated employment options –Oregon and Rhode Island)
- Supports efforts related to post-secondary experiences for younger adults transitioning
- Facilitates informed choice - doesn't limit choice without offering access to resources that can assist participant toward meeting desired outcome (e.g., benefits counseling, training, integrated work assessment, etc.)



Disadvantages of Proposed Approach

- May be “new territory” for many assessors and case managers who have little knowledge of employment and related options
 - Requires training and information to be available
 - Case managers may not consistently have strong relationships with other agencies that provide help
 - These other agencies may not have priority for this group, setting up need for interagency effort
- Colorado may be lacking some of the needed infrastructure
 - Benefits counseling (such as DB 101), services such as customized employment and supported employment services for all HCBS groups, etc.



Next Steps

- Develop flow and items for module based on agreed purpose of module
- Will be reviewed with stakeholders during March site visit



Self-Direction Module: Purpose and Structure Discussion



Potential Purposes of the Self-Direction Module

- Ensure that all participants can make an informed choice about self-direction
 - Implies the module will include a high-level review of self-direction
- Evaluate whether individuals have the capacity to self-direct alone or will need more assistance
 - Assume that individuals can self-direct even though some may need substantial assistance
- Others?



Review of Two Versions of MnCHOICES Module

- Original module
 - Extracts information about cognitive impairment from cognition section
 - Set up as a structured conversation providing real world examples of what self-direction might entail
 - Includes protocols for review if assessor thought the person needed help, but participant disagreed
- Revised module
 - 3 questions designed to address whether individual has capacity to self-direct
 - Verification that information is given about options
 - Assessor's conclusions



Pros and Cons of Two Approaches

- Original approach longer, but may have fostered a more concrete understanding of what self-direction entails
 - Could allow participants to make a more informed decision
- New approach shorter, but may allow assessors to play a stronger role in shaping the decision (they don't need to show their work)



Possible Enhancements

- Clearly incorporate information gathered as part of the cognition section – minimize repetition
- Add brief summary about what self-direction entails
- Add clear selection of self-direction vs. non-self-direction and description of why the decision was made



Who would make the decision about capacity to self direct

- If individual/representative come to same conclusion, no further action?
- If assessor thinks the individual needs more assistance than the individual representative?
 - Assessor makes decision?
 - Physician attestation?
 - Supervisor review?
 - Department review?
 - Other?



Comments and Questions

