



RRTC – EBP VR

Rehabilitation Research & Training Center for
Evidence Based Practice in Vocational
Rehabilitation

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What is the Rehabilitation Research and Training Center on Evidence-Based Practice in Vocational Rehabilitation (RRTC-EBP-VR)?

The RRTC-EBP-VR conducts evidence-based research and provides practitioners with knowledge and tools for evidence-based vocational rehabilitation practices that will improve employment rates, and quality of employment, for people with disabilities. Our goal is to ensure that new knowledge gained through the course of research ultimately improves the lives of people with disabilities, and furthers their participation in society. To learn more about us, visit

<http://research2vrpractice.org/>

Is Anything We Do Evidence Based?

In a recent survey, we asked VR Practitioners nationally this question: “In what areas related to evidence-based practice in vocational rehabilitation do you believe you would benefit from receiving more information?” One participant responded,

“Is anything we do evidence based? Or do we do things based on emotion, opinion, and fads?”

This practitioner’s skepticism was expressed in varying ways by many respondents to the survey and is taken seriously by the RRTC. We are driven to address this

concern by the sobering statistics surrounding the employment of people with disabilities:

- The employment rate of people with disabilities remains at 18% compared to 63.9% for people without disabilities (US Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2010).
- The average hourly earnings of all VR customers in competitive employment are only 57% of the general workforce (Rehabilitation Services Administration, 2009).
- The 60% employment rate of consumers receiving VR services has not changed significantly for several decades (Dutta et al., 2008).
- According to the US Government Accountability Office, the level and quality of services delivered by state and federal VR agencies vary substantially when measured by employment rates, characteristics of individuals served, frequency of providing services, and case expenditures (GAO, 2005).

Applying evidence-based practices in vocational rehabilitation requires a healthy dose of the critical thinking expressed above. To apply evidence-based practices in VR service delivery, the VR practitioner's professional expertise and judgment must be combined with an understanding of: characteristics of unique consumers, appropriate intervention strategies via reading and interpretation of specific research study results, the regulations governing the state/federal VR system, and the organizational behavior and requirements of the agency.

Using evidence-based practices involves:

- Asking critical questions
- Identifying reliable sources of information
- Evaluating the significance of the evidence
- Using professional expertise and judgment

To learn more about evidence-based practices in vocational rehabilitation, visit our website at www.research2vrpractice.

Autism Spectrum Disorder and Supported Employment

A recent study by Paul Wehman, et.al, (2012) showed that people with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) can work successfully when the right type, level, and intensity of support is available. In the study, 27 of 33 vocational rehabilitation (VR) clients with ASD successfully gained and maintained employment with the ongoing long-term employment support from an employment specialist. The support time required to achieve this average was just over 100 hours, and the need for support time decreased over time.

Supported employment (SE) can be used to help people find the right “mix” of supports. When providing SE to a person with ASD, consider providing highly individualized support in the following areas:

- Career search and job interviews
- Disclosure
- Transportation
- Job customization
- Instructional support
- Developing compensatory strategies
- Co-worker education
- Change of management

To learn more about issues and strategies for improving employment outcomes for individuals with autism spectrum disorders (ASD), visit <http://autism.sedl.org/>.

Tools for Practitioners

The Apple iPod Touch as a vocational support aid for adults with autism: Three Case Studies

By: Tony Gentry, Stephanie Lau, Alissa Molinelli, Amy Fallen and Richard Kriner

This article reports on three cases of workers with ASD who have been trained to use Apple iPod Touch PDAs as vocational supports in the workplace, resulting in improved functional performance and reduced behavioral challenges.

Find it here: <http://www.worksupport.com/research/viewContent.cfm/1061>

Additional resources related to EBP can be found at
<http://research2vrpractice.org/participate-list-professionals>

Technical Assistance and Training

The RRTC-EBP-VR is your resource on evidence-based practices in vocational rehabilitation.

To contact us, call 888-820-3929, or send us an email via (link)
<http://research2vrpractice.org/contact/>

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