

Discovery as it Pertains to Employment

Discovery as it Pertains to Employment is just what it sounds like – thoughtfully structuring time to discover if someone is interested in working – and, if so, what jobs they are interested in pursuing.

The initial stages of *Discovery as it Pertains to Employment* should be done under DMRS community-based services. As explained further in this document, referral to the Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) could happen in the later stages.

As you read and use this information, keep in mind the key principle of *Discovery as it Pertains to Employment* - “exposure precedes interest.” In other words, for people to make informed choices, they must know and understand what the community has to offer.

The Initial Stages of Discovery as it Pertains to Employment

The initial stages do not happen in any particular order. The components presented here are presented as tools and resources that providers can use and change based on the needs of each individual.

-Conducting Exploration in the Community: All day activities should be conducted to promote opportunities for productivity, independence and inclusion. With the philosophy that “exposure precedes interest,” community-based activities should be re-structured to place a special emphasis on exploring employment-related activities and concepts. Examples include activities such as volunteering and job shadowing.

- Job Exploration: Recognizing that a person’s idea about a particular job may be quite different from the actual job, providers should seek opportunities for people to experience work in the community. This may occur either through volunteering or through brief, paid work experiences. These experiences must be customized to the person’s interests.

-Discovering the Potential Interest in Employment: In the past, this has been determined to a large extent by asking, “Do you want to work?” Sample questions that may facilitate this discussion can be found in *Sample Questions*.

The Later Stages

If the initial stages resulted in a determination that the person wants to pursue community-based employment and with a consensus of the person’s Circle of Support (COS), the provider needs to make a referral to the Division of Rehabilitation Services.

Sample Resources and Tools

The following are only examples of questions that may facilitate a discussion of a person’s interest in employment. This list is a resource to glean ideas for generating a meaningful discussion of employment – it is not a list of questions to be gone through methodically with a person. It is imperative that this is done in a manner which respects the communication needs and styles of each person. Interviews with people who know the person well are also another key component of facilitating clear communication about the person’s interests and goals.

Mere conversations are *not* to be used as the sole factor in determining someone’s interest or non-interest in work. In adhering to the principle of “exposure precedes interest” the provider must use time in community-based services to allow a person to have meaningful opportunities to explore the possibilities of employment.

Sample Questions

1. Service Recipient's Understanding of Work

- A. How do people make money to buy the things they want and need like clothes, movies, music, and food?
- B. What does it mean to work?
- C. If you could do any type of work you wanted to do, what kind of work would that be?

2. Service Recipient's Motivation to Work

- A. What makes people want to work?
- B. How would your life be different if you worked? Or, what would your life be like if you didn't work?
- C. How would working make you feel? Or, how would not working make you feel?
- D. Imagine getting paid for working a job, how do you think that would make you feel?
- E. If you had a job to go to, what would be the most important reason you would want to get there?
- F. Do you have friends or family that work?
- G. What parts of their jobs do they like best? Least?

3. Service Recipient's Likes/Dislikes

- A. What is your favorite place to go in _____ (your home town)? What makes you like this particular place? Have you ever seen anyone working at this particular place? What kind of work did they do? What would it be like to work at or near a place like this?
- B. What is your favorite food? How often do you get to eat this particular food? How would you like to have more money to buy this type of food and similar foods? What is your favorite restaurant? How would you like to have enough money to eat there more often?
- C. Where is your favorite store to shop? How often do you get to shop there? How much money do you usually get to spend there? What would you buy if you had more money because you were working?
- D. Tell me which you prefer: spending time in quiet places with few people or spending time in places where there are lots of people? Describe some places like this that you've been to, what was going on and why you liked or didn't like the place.

4. Service Recipient's Self -Assessment of Skills and Limitations

- A. What are you really good at doing?
- B. What do you like to do more than anything?
- C. Tell me what other people compliment you on the most?
- D. If you could do better at one thing (improve ability), what would that be?
- E. What is something else that you wish you could do better?
- F. What is one thing that you think that you could do if someone taught you?

If you have questions, please contact your Regional Day Service Coordinator or the State Director of Day Services.