

NEW COUNSELORS SKILLS & COMPETENCIES CHECKLIST

NEW COUNSELORS TRAINING AND ORIENTATION LEADING TO BASIC SKILLS AND COMPETENCIES

The New Counselors Skills and Competencies Checklist was developed to assist human services managers ensure Field Rehabilitation Services counselors possess a specific level of knowledge, skills and abilities as they begin their careers with the Virginia Department of Rehabilitative Services (DRS). To assist the managers in this development process, the following programs are presented to all new FRS and WWRC counselors. These programs are:

New Counselor Skills Training – Week I at WWRC

Program Purpose: The New Counselor Skills Training incorporates the core areas of knowledge essential for beginning a counseling career with the Department of Rehabilitative Services. There is a strong emphasis on consumer directed job placement activities. Counselors are exposed to consumer-focused case management skills. This is accomplished by keeping the consumer's objective(s) as the basis for our services throughout the process. The recurring themes throughout all modules include the utilization of a consumer-driven approach to case and caseload management, collaboration, effective planning, consumer inclusion, resource utilization, and job placement. Job placement related activities are the key focus of this training activity. Participants will also learn about Woodrow Wilson Rehabilitation Center (WWRC) and the many services available.

New Counselor Skills Training – Online Modules

Program Purpose: The NCST Online modules are intended to supplement Week I at WWRC with information pertaining to select Central Office programs/resources. The online modules also are intended to provide new counselors with general information and resources for select disability populations and other topics of interest. Currently modules include:

1. Brain Injury
2. Americans with Disabilities Act
3. Transition Services
4. Ethics in Rehabilitation
5. Diversity
6. Serious Mental Illness
7. Medical Consulting Services
8. Supported Employment and LTESS
9. Substance Abuse
10. RS-25
11. Hearing Loss/Deafness
12. Fair Hearings and Appeals

Additional modules may be added as need is identified.

New Employee Orientation

Program Purpose: The New Employee Orientation provides staff information on the agency's mission statement, goals and requirements associated with federal law and regulations. Agency

management team members present overviews of their division's roles and functions. Currently New Employee Orientation is accomplished through an online format (SharePoint site).

Job Development and Job Placement

Program Purpose: This training provides information to help participants understand the dynamics of job development and job placement. It focuses on empowering consumers to take the lead in securing employment. Participants will learn basic tools necessary to promote this empowerment. A series of activities including role-plays, directed job search activities and meeting with employers to define best strategies for successful employment outcomes are included.

Caseload Management

Program Purpose: This training provides counselors opportunities to increase overall consumer employment outcomes by learning more effective caseload management practices. The focus on effective caseload management tools promotes greater consumer involvement and enhances the planning process for Field Rehabilitation Services staff. Staff learn effective time management strategies, greater fiscal responsibility, practice using their caseload management tools and how to better monitor and manage case flow.

Conflict Resolution

Program Purpose: The training exposes agency front-line staff to effective ways to deal directly with conflict arising in the vocational rehabilitation process. Focusing specifically on conflict in the consumer/provider relationship, participants explore techniques to defuse conflict-provoking situations and examine personal approaches to conflict. Emphasis is placed on effective listening skills as the key to preventing and resolving conflict. Staff learn to understand the nature of conflict, their reaction to it, and how conflict impacts the provider-consumer relationship. Participants learn strategies that reduce or prevent conflict, learn conflict resolution and problem solving skills and strategies and learn to recognize when a third party is needed to facilitate resolution.

Computer Training Skills

Program Purpose: To develop counselor's skills and understanding of the agency's computer applications including but not limited to the Virginia Rehabilitation Information System (VRIS), Microsoft Windows 3.11 or 95, Microsoft Word 6.0, networking communications such as E-mail and Intranet and file management. Regional training classes are available for all staff, and new counselors are encouraged to consult with their supervisor and training coordinator to register for the classes that meet the new counselor's needs and level of competency. Training on these and other computer applications can also be received at the office level with persons designated to do such training. Refer to the checklist attached for a minimum set of computer-related competencies, which should be mastered.

Implementation Procedures

The New Counselors Skills and Competencies Checklist list is not intended as a score sheet or evaluation tool for new counselors. It is a checklist of skills demonstrated by counselors as a result of training in classroom settings, in on-the-job training or through direct supervisory contact. Much of the information, including history and theory, is found in the literature provided to the new counselors during the initial orientation. The Disability Handbook is made available to new counselors during week one of NCST.

Space has been left at the end of the form for managers to add any specific skills or competencies necessary for the individual counselor. Managers should use the checklist during the first year of employment to guide new counselors in their training and development efforts. As the NCST training series is lengthy and includes some online learning components, managers are encouraged to provide new staff with the support and guidance needed for full participation in the online training.

When the manager determines that the counselor has acquired all the skills and competencies on the checklist, the manager completes the form, signs and dates it and attaches it to the PAW and sends it to the FRS Director for review, signature and submission to Human Resources.

NEW COUNSELORS SKILLS & COMPETENCIES CHECKLIST

HUMAN SERVICES MANAGER'S CHECKLIST

INTRODUCTION TO EMPLOYMENT IN DRS (Complete prior to first NCST session)

- () *General information for all staff*
- () *Orientation to state employment*
- () *History and philosophy of Vocational Rehabilitation*
- () *Staff roles in rehabilitation process – flow chart*
 - Local office (Mentoring)*
 - Regional office*
 - Central office*
- () *Training and staff development opportunities*
- () *Travel regulations*

OVERVIEW OF DRS (Complete prior to first NCST session)

- () *Process and purpose of DRS services*
- () *DRS in partnership with community agencies*
 - Networking*
- () *Confidentiality*
- () *Appeals process*
- () *Forms, manuals, statuses and DRS resources*
- () *Resources of vocational rehabilitation*
 - Statewide*
 - Community*

INITIAL INTAKE, AND DIAGNOSTIC ACTIVITIES

- () The referral process () Developing partnerships with community agency referral sources
- () Initial interview (Application)
- () Case closure (Closed – Other)

Prior to coming counselors should have:

- Job shadowed seasoned counselors.
- Completed at least 5 independent intakes to include completing RS-3,3i, 3e, 3j, general medical, RS-13, RS-5a, social security verification.
- Participated in 1 or more introductory group orientation programs, if available.
- Completion of at least 1 closure.
- Visit the regional vocational evaluation unit in order to understand what is involved in referring an individual for a diagnostic evaluation. This should include scheduling appointments, transportation, associated fees, available vendors and any reasonable accommodations.

ELIGIBILITY

- () Client eligibility (Eligible)
- () Diagnostic services
 - Purpose and scope
 - Factors to consider in a through diagnostic study
- () Conducting trial work (Application – T) or an extended evaluation (Application - E)

Prior to coming counselors should have:

- Knowledge of what documentation is required for establishing eligibility (interpretation of diagnostics/vocational implications).
- Knowledge of eligibility criteria.
- Be familiar how to use the policy manual with specific emphasis on Chapter 3.
- Become familiar with the Service Reference and Training and Facilities Manuals.
- Written independently or in collaboration with others a minimum of 5 certificates of eligibility.

EMPLOYMENT PLAN DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION

- () Evaluating case facts for effective plan development
- () IPE planning including vocational goal and consumer informed choice (Eligible)
- () Determining financial eligibility
- () Woodrow Wilson Rehabilitation Center
 - WWRC admissions policy & application procedure
 - Appropriate use of WWRC
 - Informed consent & vendor choice
 - Confidentiality & release of information
 - Discharge planning
- () Case Closure (Closed – Other)
- () Counseling and guidance IPEs (Service)
- () Physical restoration Services (Service)
- () Training IPE (Service)
- () Case Closure (Closed – Other)

Prior to coming counselors should have:

- Knowledge of financial participation for developing their Employment Plan
- An understanding of informed choice in developing the Employment Plan
- In collaboration with the customer, write a minimum of 3 Employment Plans.
- To have reviewed cases to include physical restoration, training, guidance & counseling, Supported Employment, Mental Restoration, utilization of WWRC.
- Understand the Employment Plan implementation, monitoring and review process.
- Understand the purpose of amendments.

JOB PLACEMENT AND FOLLOW-UP

- () Agency marketing efforts
- () Employment resource centers
- () Marketing resources and tools
 - Displays
 - Handouts
 - Presentations and Modules
- () Understanding basic ADA
 - Employment Regulations
- () Roles and responsibilities in placement (Service – J, and Employed)
 - Customer
 - Counselor
 - Manager
 - Community resources
 - WWRC
 - Virginia Employment Commission
 - Employer
 - Other
- () Employer/Placement Incentives
 - Work Opportunities Tax Credit
 - OJT
 - Unpaid Work Experience
- () Understanding local business culture
- () Case Closure (Closed – Rehab)
 - 90-day follow-up
- () Post Employment Services (PES)

Prior to coming counselors should have:

- *A working knowledge of local and regional placement resources.*
- *Schedule with the PSTS a tour of the local Employment Resource Center.*
- *Call Regional Marketing Coordinator.*
- *Review the manual to understand closure procedures.*

CASELOAD MANAGEMENT

- () Organizing and managing the caseload
 - Involving the customer
 - Keeping an employment focus
 - Addressing the stalled case
- () Time management/organization
 - Planning for field work
 - Geographic responsibilities
 - Itinerary planning and preparation
 - Planning for office time
 - Telephone calls
 - Mail
 - Paperwork & documentation
 - Time wasters
- () Fiscal responsibility
 - Case service budget management
 - Time management issues
 - Aging Authorization Report

- () Caseload Management Tools
 - Caseload Management Report
 - Review Date Report
 - Client By Caseload Report
 - Pending Follow-Up Contacts Report
 - Status Report
- () Monitoring and Managing Case Flow
 - Caseload analysis

STANDARDS OF CASEWORK PERFORMANCE AS RELATED TO COUNSELOR/SUPERVISOR ACTIVITIES

- () Individual performance expectations
- () Office expectations
- () Computer skills expectations
- () Monthly reports to supervisors

STANDARDS FOR COUNSELOR PERFORMANCE

- () Ethics and confidentiality
- () Staff/customer boundaries
- () Effective decision making

Disability Populations/Central Office Resources and Other Topics of Interest

- () Serving consumers with Brain Injury
- () Transition Services for students with disabilities
- () Americans with Disabilities Act
- () Serving consumers with Serious Mental Illness
- () Ethics in Rehabilitation
- () Diversity
- () Utilizing Medical Consulting Services
- () Supported Employment and Long Term Follow-Along Services
- () Serving consumers with Substance Abuse
- () Community Based Services
- () Serving consumers with Hearing Loss/Deafness
- () Workforce Investment Act and Ticket to Work legislation

AWARE AND COMPUTER SKILLS TRAINING

Use of the AWARE System

- () Prerequisites: Basic understanding of the PC, Intro to Windows 3.11 (or Windows 95), and, if applicable, basic understanding of logging onto and using a LAN/WAN (if office is networked)
- Application, Application Documentation, and Personal Information screens
 - () Copy of AWARE Manual and other documentation for AWARE provided for counselor
 - () Introduction to Virginia Rehabilitation Information Systems (VRIS) and Reflections for Windows terminal emulator software
 - () Intro. to VRIS menu system to navigate to data entry and inquiry screens

- () VRIS data entry for Referral & Application
- () Use of Screen Print for hard copy documentation
- () Use of Edit|Copy|Paste Command for word processor (also see checklist for Word 6.0)
- () VRIS data entry for diagnostic services prior to IPE
- () VRIS data entry for Eligibility
- () VRIS data entry for IPE using new Laser Print Entry Program
 - () Review Dates Screen
 - () Planned Services Entry including entry for Comparable Benefits
 - () Printing IPE Page 1 and Planned Services to Laser Printer
- () VRIS data entry for Status Changes
- () VRIS data entry for Amendments
- () Running basic Inquiries and Reports
- () VRIS entry for Closure prior to 26 (including employer entry screen)
- () VRIS data entry for 26 Closure and 90 Follow-up
- () Orientation to office's procedures for documentation and filing of printed information

VRIS Module 2: Authorizations

- () Copy of Manual and other documentation for VRIS provided for counselor
- () VRIS data entry for Single Authorization to Vendor
- () VRIS data entry for Multiple Authorizations to same Vendor
- () Printing Authorizations in batch
- () Printing of single authorizations on demand
- () Inquiry and Reports for Authorizations
- () Understanding of office procedures for printing and filing authorizations
- () Maintenance of outstanding authorizations upon closure

Computer Skills Training

MS Windows and File Manager (required):

- () Intro./orientation to counselor's PC and LAN/WAN
- () Introduction to Windows 3.1/3.11 OR () Intro. to Windows 95
- () Intro. to use of File Manager and File Management Protocols

MS Word 6.0, Level I (required):

- () Keyboarding Skills: typing at sufficient speed and accuracy
- () Adaptive requirements, if needed (dictation program, special keyboarding or other workstation adaptations attended to)
- () Basic word processing skills
 - () typing on the blank page (normal.dot), use of word-wrap, creating paragraphs, moving around
 - () Basic View commands: page layout and Zoom display options
 - () Setting page margins & orientation
 - () Basic Insertion commands: Insert Date/Time, page break, page numbers
 - () Basic-formatting commands: font, paragraph, tabs
 - () Basic tools: Spell Checker, Thesaurus, and AutoCorrect
 - () Highlighting techniques with mouse and keyboard
 - () Basic-editing commands: Copy, Cut, Paste, Undo
 - () Using a basic fill-in form (W60 protected form)
 - () Using an existing document (form letter, outline)
 - () Basic print command and print preview
 - () Use of on-line Help and Examples and Demos program
 - () Use of toolbar shortcuts and reading the ruler
- () Basic File Management
 - () File|Open Command for retrieving existing files
 - () File|New Command for using Word 6.0 Templates
 - () Intro to difference between Word 6.0 Templates and Files
 - () File|Save as command for naming and saving files
 - () Protocol for naming and using Client Directories

- () Protocol for naming and saving client files
- () Protocol for backing up files
- () Super User/Mentor identified for help in counselor's office
- () Orientation to and use of basic files and templates provided by office staff
- () Orientation to hard copy requirements (printing and filing) by office staff

MS Word 6.0, Level II (highly recommended):

(To make the best use of the automated features of VRIS and Word 6.0 for client documentation and processing requirements, the following are needed:

- () Prerequisites: Word 6.0 Level 1 training or competency (see above)
- () Creation and management of W60 Templates
- () Review of file management and backup strategies
- () Creating and using Autotext entries
- () Extended highlighting techniques and Quick Menu (right mouse button)
- () Work with multiple files simultaneously
- () Work with multiple applications simultaneously: File Manager, W60, VRIS
- () Copying information from a VRIS screen to a Word 6.0 document
- () Creating and using Tables, including calculation of a column of numbers, autoformats, and wizards
- () Extended Edit|Undo and Re-do
- () Un-protecting/re-protecting a fill-in form to customize or use as a regular file
- () Intermediate formatting features: bullets and numbering, headers/footers
- () Extended printing and previewing commands
- () Extended Zoom commands
- () Using the ruler for tabs, indents, and margins

Word 6.0, Level III (Optional):

Level III objectives vary depending on the participants' level of competency and needs. Some of the objectives include:

- () Creating, modifying, and correcting protected forms
 - () Correcting and modifying tables, and table design
 - () Template and file management on a network
 - () Using Macros for automated commands and automated processing
 - () Mail Merge for labels and form letters
 - () Extended use of right mouse button
 - () Extended use of VRIS and W60 simultaneously
 - () Use of Word 6.0 and the Internet/Intranet
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- () TEMPLATES: MS Word 6.0 Files provided with instructions for use
 - () Appointment & Contact Letters
 - () Vocational Diagnostic Interview
 - () Field Notes, Continuation Sheet
 - () Referral/Application including Interview outline(s)
 - () Application for VR Services (client signature form)
 - () Referral forms for evaluation, medical information, etc., and cover letters
 - () Certificate of Eligibility
 - () WWRC Referral & WWRC Application
 - () IPE for Vocational Rehabilitation Services (for VRIS Laser Print)
 - () IPE for Extended Evaluation (VRIS Laser Print program)
 - () Worksheet for Substantial Amendments to the IPE
 - () DRS Intermediate Objectives
 - () New Intermediate Objectives
 - () Closure Form
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- () Use of Electronic Mail, Calendar, Tasking systems: (check application)

- MS Mail & Schedule+
- CCMail

MS Exchange/Outlook

HUMAN SERVICES MANAGERS INDIVIDUAL CHECK LIST

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COUNSELOR SIGNATURE

HUMAN SERVICES MANAGER
SIGNATURE

DATE

August 2008?