

The Center on Knowledge Translation for Employment Research in the Context of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)

Kathleen M. Murphy, PhD and Rebecca Gaines
RRTC-EBP-VR Symposium on
Evidence-based Practice in Vocational Rehabilitation

Presentation Overview: Part 1

1. Factors that shaped AIR's response to NIDILRR's request for proposals for the KTER Center:

- A. Mandated outcomes and activities
- B. Key Aspects of Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)
- C. NIDILRR's investment in VR- and transition-related projects
- D. KTER Center survey of VR and CSAVR's survey

Presentation Overview: Part 2

2) Research agenda and activities

- A. Central Role of VR supervisors in promoting evidence-based practice
- B. Research Track on Transition-aged Youth
- C. Research Track on Adults with Autism
- D. Research Track on VR Outreach to Business
- E. Next steps

Questions and Comments?

At any point during the hour – please speak up!

1A. Goals of the KTER Center

- Increased understanding of processes and practices that will lead to successful KT in the field of employment for individuals with disabilities
- Increased adoption and use of relevant research findings funded by NIDILRR and other entities, to improve employment of individuals with disabilities
- Increased capacity of NIDILRR's employment-focused grantees to plan and engage in KT activities

1A. Mandated activities

- Work with employment-focused NIDILRR grantees to identify research findings that can be used to improve employment outcomes for individuals with disabilities
- Identify areas in which stakeholders' needs for research-based knowledge are most pressing
- Investigate and promote effective strategies to increase the appropriate use of the best available knowledge in the field

1B. Relevant WIOA Provisions (NGA, 2014)

- Encourages identifying and sharing information about best practices related to helping people overcome difficulties—including having a disability—in finding and keeping jobs
- Names VR as one of the core government programs to which the law applies
- Requires measuring the impact of VR's outreach to businesses

1B. WIOA's Focus on Transition-aged Youth

- Includes several mandates prioritizing transition-aged youth with disabilities as a population with respect to
 - funding
 - writing state plans
 - and providing services for supported employment
 - (NCEEAPD, 2014).

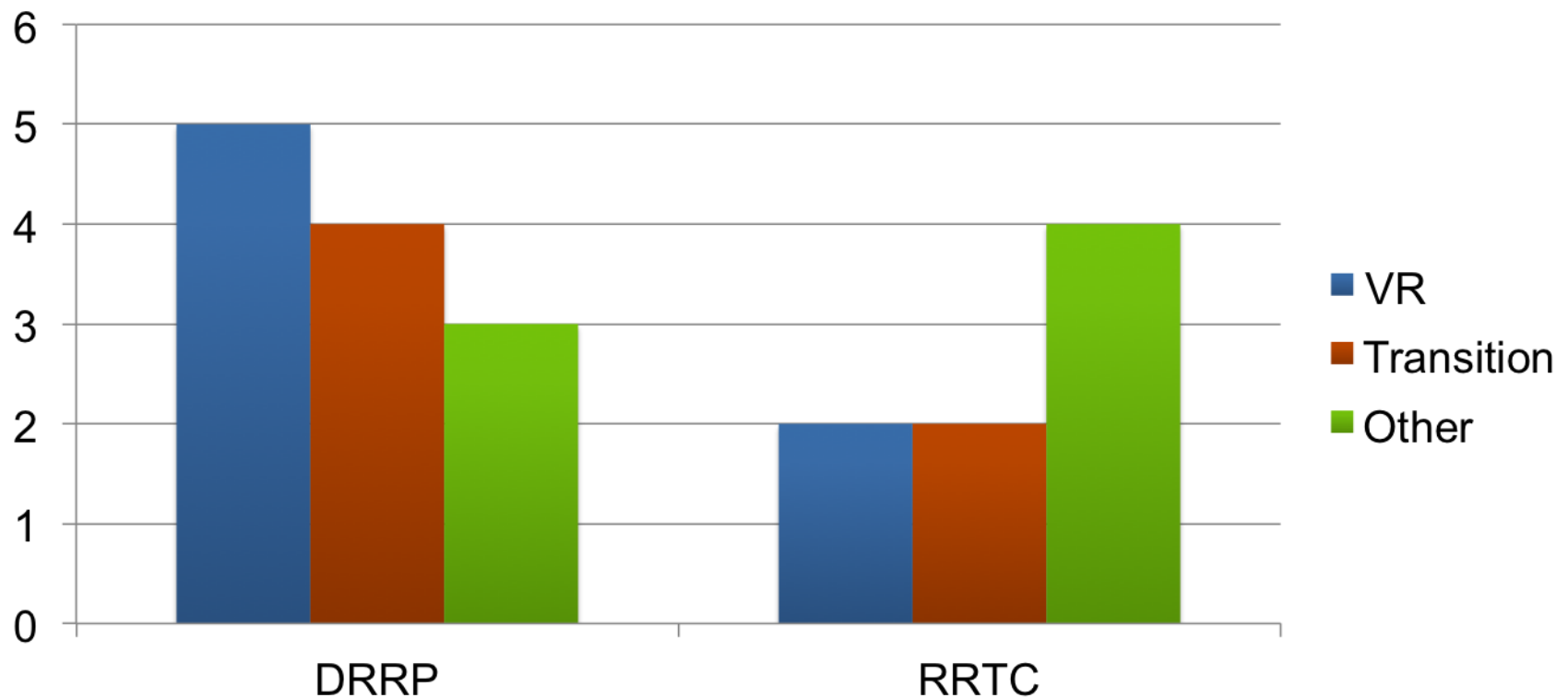
1B. Take-away Implications for KTER

- Focus on VR and decision to partner with the Council of State Administrators for Vocational Rehabilitation
- Include a focus on Transition-aged Youth with Disabilities
- Address need for measure of service to businesses
- *What NIDILRR-funded research can be leveraged?*

Questions and Comments

about what parts of WIOA influenced AIR's decisions about project themes to emphasize in its response to funding agencies' mandated goals and activities?

1C. NIDILRR-funded Active Projects (DRRPs and RRTCs): 2015 Overview



1C. NIDILRR-funded projects re VR

- VR-ROI Project: Estimating Return on Investment in State VR Programs.
- VR and Developing Strategies to Meet Employer Needs in Changing Economic Environments
- Creating Evidence-Based VR Service Delivery Practices
- Research and TA Center on VR Program Management.
- Center on Effective Delivery of Rehabilitation Technology by VR Agencies

1C. NIDILRR-funded projects re Transition (General)

- The Learning and Working During the Transition to Adulthood Rehabilitation Research and Training Center
- Center on Transition to Employment for Youth with Disabilities Learning and Working During the Transition to Adulthood.
- RRTC on VR Practices for Youth and Young Adults.

1C. NIDILRR-funded projects re Special Populations

- Manual and Training Program to Promote Career Development Among Transition Age Youth and Young Adults with Psychiatric Conditions.
- Project CAREER: Development of an Interprofessional Demonstration to Support the Transition of Students with Traumatic Brain Injuries from Postsecondary Education to Employment.
- RRTC on Improving VR Services for Individuals Who Are Blind or Have Severe Visual Impairments.

1C. NIDILRR-funded work at AIR on VR and Autism

- Systematic Review on Adult Employment Assistance Services
- Systematic Review on School-to-Work Transition
- Effective Program Model Identification in Vocational Rehabilitation
- An Evaluation of CARD Direct Service Practices and Employment Outcomes
- CARD Case Studies of Successful Individuals with ASD

1C. Systematic Reviews on Autism

Effectiveness of Adult Employment Assistance Services for Persons with Autism Spectrum Disorders

John D. Westbrook, Chad Nye, Carlton J. Fong

Pre-Graduation Transition Services for Persons with Autism Spectrum Disorders: Effects on Employment Outcomes

John D. Westbrook, Carlton J. Fong, Chad Nye, Ann Williams, Oliver Wendt, Tara Cortopassi

1D. KTER Center Survey (2012)

- KTER Center developed and administered a survey for VR counselors ($n = 535$) in six states, called *Making Research Work in VR Agencies* (Murphy et al., 2011).
- Six states, N=535.
- *“Please tell us about any area of your job where you think information about evidence-based practice would be helpful to you.”* Collected 457 comments.

1D. KTER Center Survey (2012)

- 42%: referred to the VR system's policies and procedures (e.g., discussions of caseload size, intake, assessment, individualized education programs, case management, job placement, and other topics related to how agencies are structured/organized)
- 32% mentioned specific populations of consumers. Mentioned most often:
 - individuals with severe mental illness
 - transition-aged youth
 - adults with autism

1D. KTER Center Survey (2012)

- Another key finding was that: ***a supervisor who emphasizes evidence-based practice*** influenced whether VR counselors sought out and used research on the job (Graham, Brooke, & Murphy, 2013).
- Consistent with finding from Rehabilitation Research and Training Center (RRTC) on evidenced-based practice (Tansey, Bezyak, Chan, Leahy, & Lui, 2014).

1D. CSAVR Needs Assessment (2012)

- CSAVR surveyed members regarding “*the top three issues your agency faces in the next four years for which you think additional research might help you better serve consumers and employers.*”
- Responses included:
 - transition-aged youth
 - autism
 - human resources, client services, and return on investment.

Part One: KTER Center Take-away

- Central role of management, and Senior VR counselors in particular
- Research Tracks:
 - Transition-aged youth
 - Adults with Autism
 - Business

Questions and Comments

**about the data that informed the
KTER's choice of research
tracks?**

2. Technical Working Groups (TWGs)

- Goal: provide guidance & feedback on research activities
- Helps recruit focus group participants, develop instruments and protocols, participate in webcasts, & promote KTER Center's products to partners & stakeholders
- Members: disability-oriented leaders, NIDILRR grantees, consumers who reflect the population, and individuals from the VR and employment communities.

2. Research activity 1: Focus Groups

- What are the most pressing informational needs related to three key VR constituencies and the VR staff who work to serve their needs?

2. Research Activity 2: Scoping reviews

- Which NIDILRR-funded and other research findings can be used to meet identified pressing needs related to improving the employment outcomes for KTER's three target audiences?

2. What is a “scoping review”?

- Scoping reviews or studies “aim to map *rapidly* the key concepts underpinning a research area and the main sources and types of evidence available” (Mays, Roberts, & Popay, 2001; cited in Arksey & O’Malley, 2005). The purposes of a scoping review include examining the extent, range, and nature of research activity; determining the value of undertaking a full systematic review; summarizing and disseminating research findings; and identifying gaps in the research literature (Arksey & O’Malley, 2005).

2A. Third research activity: Senior VR Counselors as RLs

Will Research Liaisons (RLs), who receive training and support in the use of research-based practices, increase the uptake of VR counselors and businesses, respectively, to improve consumer labor market outcomes (including employment and retention)?

2A. What is a 'Research Liaison'?

The project is working with CSAVR to recruit Senior VR Counselors who specialize in transition or adults with autism to act as liaisons between TWG members and VR staff.

Their role will be to learn about the scoping review findings and other related research, so they can pass on that knowledge to their staff.

Questions and Comments

about the KTER research activity?

2B and C. Step One: Focus Groups with Consumers

- First six months spent developing focus group questions:
 - Built on literature review conducted for proposal
 - Consulted with TWG members and AIR Fellow Dr. Osher
 - Conducted cognitive interviews
 - Reviewed by AIR's Institutional Review Board
 - Questions translated into Spanish
 - Currently recruiting participants: youth with disabilities aged 18 – 24; adults with autism (two separate sets)

2B. Transition TWG Members

- Dr. Teresa Grossi, advisory board for the National Postsecondary Outcomes Center, external evaluator for the National Secondary Transition and Technical Assistance Center.
- Dr. Marsha Langer Ellison, Associate Director for Knowledge Translation for the Learning and Working During the Transition to Adulthood Research and Training Center
- Ms. Sandra Miller, Transition Coordinator for Delaware VR

2B. Transition Focus Group Topics

1. Supports and Training for Family
2. Tailoring VR Counselors' Training for Transition-Aged Youth
3. Long-Term Support for Employment and Career
4. Self-Empowerment for Transitioned-Aged Youth
5. Work Experience (paid or unpaid)
6. When VR Poses Barriers to Employment Success

Questions and Comments

about these themes?

2C. Autism TWG Members

- Frank McCamant: Texas Council on Autism and PDD
- Carol Schall: Co-Director of the Virginia Commonwealth University Autism Center for Excellence, Director of the Virginia Autism Resource Center
- Stephen Shore: President emeritus of the Asperger's Association of New England, board member of Autism Speaks, the Autism Society, the Asperger Syndrome and High Functioning Autism Association, the US Autism and Asperger Association

2C. Autism Focus Group Topics

1. Types of jobs in which people with autism tend to do well.
2. What VR Counselors can do to help clients identify their strengths and support long-term employment planning.
3. The role of programs like those at Walgreens, Project SEARCH, and AMC Theaters.
4. VR counselors' specific knowledge about autism.
5. Support during the hiring process and on-the-job.
6. Pre-employment training or internships.
7. Other training for adults with autism.

Questions and Comments

about these themes?

2D. Business TWG Members

- John O'Neill: Co- Director of two NIDRR-funded Rehabilitation Research and Training Centers (RRTC), “Rehabilitation Research and Training Center on Disability Statistics and Demographics” and “Rehabilitation Research and Training Center on Individual-Level Characteristics Related to Employment Among Individuals with Disabilities”
- Kathy West-Evans, CSAVR Director of Business Relations

2E. Next steps

- Focus groups with VR counselors for the Transition and Autism tracks
- Summer/Fall 2016: Scoping reviews/design RL training
- Spring 2017: RL training and intervention

- Gear up work with Business Track in Years 3-4, working with VR business consultants as RLs applying research to their work with businesses.

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Disclaimer

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