

# PRACTICE NOTES

## Centre for Disability Employment Research & Practice

### Tossing IQ Out

Let's be honest, IQ isn't a valid predictor of career or employment success. Yes, I can hear the psych's screams from here, but ask yourself; Did your IQ score really predict your career achievements?

There's body of research that is evolving that illustrates a range of personal factors are better predictors of success. Intangibles such as self discipline, conscientiousness and good ole grit may be a better focus that simply someones IQ score. I think it was Einstein who said genius is 99% persistence and 1% IQ. This is something that we'll be pursuing in our work.

### Stealing from Families

In a recent interview with Katherine Carol, a parent who happens to be an employment expert, the subject of consultant preparedness came up. Katherine highlighted how parents are subject matter experts on their child and that unprepared consultants were stealing time and money from them having to give up work to attend meetings. Point taken!



## Families

Families have for years been the forgotten part of the employment equation. Often ignored or viewed as interfering, we forget that this interference is in fact the family playing the role of protector, not just of their sibling or family member but of the system as a whole. This year our work and research, along with that of our colleagues is casting the role of family in the employment process in a whole new light.

### *Looking at the Evidence*

In a recent paper by Hall et al.,(2018) it was reported that employment will flounder in the absence of clear and useful information that supports their full engagement. The research highlighted that systematic engagement with families leads to employment focused decisions. This knowledge and engagement improves employment outcomes, particularly around transitions and ownership of the process. The authors made the following observation; "the perception of low expectations of staff about what individuals could accomplish were pervasive. Families felt that the tools used to understand their family member's strengths and needs did not offer the full picture of an individual's potential."



## Tracking CE Outcomes.

No, we're not talking about tracking big game, although truthfully we could be. One of the hallmarks of good practice is the use of evidence based practices. But where does this come from?

The best evidence in our field comes from outcome data from practice. Without a comparison group its difficult to know whether the outcomes are a result of changing practice or a random outcome. In our field we have the luxury of using correlational data derived from users of new practices and from those that are receiving the same services using old methods.

Customised Employment Longitudinal Outcome Register (CELOR) has been developed by CDERP to measure outcomes and build on the evidence base for CE practice. We'll track both clients and consultants to see what's happening.



## Local Experience

Over the past few months we have been working with parents seeking open employment outcomes for their sons and daughters. This work provided further validation of the findings of Hall et al.,(2018). We find families that embrace the philosophical and practical concepts of Customised Employment, want to be part of defining processes such as Discovery, Vocational Themes and contributing to the social networking required for good job development and meaningful supports.

As an integral part of the employment process, they move in and out of the customised employment process, understanding their pivotal role in delivering positive outcomes as well as the mutual benefits of shared responsibility, shared knowledge and shared successes. One outcome of this engagement is the creation of positive relationships, along with enhancing safeguards which we have defined as protective factors (Smith,2018).

## Fieldwork

From the field, we find families who have been disenfranchised by the system and have a history where the system has frequently over promised and under delivered services for their children are often guarded and less resourced. Careful nurturing and supports need to be built around these families to allow them to feel confident and empowered by the process. Frequently their time allocation is limited while the journey of rebuilding trust with providers pervades all steps within the process. Patience and an extended hand are essential.

Taking this a step further, we have started to engage with year ten high school students around the process of Self Guided Discovery. Our preliminary findings from this work illustrate that students who where deemed disengaged, have flourished when given the guidance and involvement in their own career path planning.

## Next Steps

It's still early days for us, but without a doubt what we are seeing is encouraging and highlights an area that requires significant focus, given the potential it is showing to create potential career paths for kids that have been deemed to have limited work and career prospects.