

PRACTICE NOTES

Centre for Disability Employment Research & Practice

Redefining 2019

2019 has started with a flourish for us at CDERP. We're only a few weeks away from our non accredited Employment Support course with a focus on Customised Employment being signed off by the University of Melbourne, which in a sense is the first community visible outcome of our new partnership with the university. Step one in creating fidelity of practice for CE in Australia and New Zealand. As a part of this relationship, Peter Smith is now a Fellow of the School of Social and Political Sciences.

Our 2019 Crystal Ball

What we are seeing accelerating is the move by providers to push the boundaries of what is employment by creating unique innovative solutions that work in their setting. This is consistent with the idea of client driven choice and control and the offering of customised approach to individual employment pathways.

This isn't an aberration, it's the future being created today.



Where are the Clients?

One of the interesting aspects of the evolution of disability employment is the idea that you simply have to advertise like mad and then clients will swamp your door looking to purchase your services. A not unreasonable suggestion given that we know that we good at what we do, so where are you?

Guess what, you might know how good you are (or think that) but outside of the service provider bubble exists a whole world of families who haven't been part of the conversation and don't know that disability employment exists let alone is a possibility.

DES, NDIS and Everything else!

You might think that families and their siblings have a deep awareness of employment service providers and the possibilities that follow, but you'd be wrong to assume that.

In our acronym filled world, for families that are simply struggling with getting by another day, we're just another distraction in an already packed day. The challenge then becomes how do I stand out as a preferred service provider in an environment that is overflowing with providers offering



Discovery and Fidelity

In late 2018, we reported that Lauren Pavlidis had finished her research into adapting the US Discovery Fidelity Scale (DFS) to Australia, along with minor changes to the DPG document.

This is now ready for editing before for publication, and we will be running validity trials on the adapted DFS starting early 2019., along the adapted DPG as well. These are important steps to ensuring that authentic Discovery is taught and used in Australia particularly if we want the government to fund these processes, then they need to be authentic.

With this work done, it's now time to engage purposefully with government to ensure that we move employment into the realms of client driven services that foster choice and control underpinned by trust and a long term relationship.



pretty much that same thing with different spin on it. At the risk of sounding like a broken record, it starts with the family!

We've talked about this before and it was a topic of discussion at our Retreat in 2018, but it still seems to be a forgotten aspect of employment services.

Starting a Conversation with the Family

Increasingly we are seeing a trend towards re-engaging with families about employment. In the USA this is taking the form of Community Conversations, community being at whatever level you need to be, but from my view it's your immediate community of clients, then broader after that.

We're not talking about simply holding an event to talk about how good you are and what a saviour you'll be. We're talking about taking the time to engage and educate families about what is available to them from the NDIS and DES world to support a journey towards meaningful employment.

Employment that meets the needs of the individual, which is code for taking a holistic approach to employment that will also mean assisting the client with other aspects of their life.

If you think about it, just about every lifestyle skill that a client needs to develop is in fact an employability skill. Employment is a sense is a by-product of the successful mastery of their lived environment. See where I'm going with this?

Some Evidence

The (Family Employment Awareness Training) FEAT program used a staged process of engaging and educating families; part 1 consisted of meeting families and employed young adults to share their journeys and discuss the providers and supports they used, part 2 involved meeting with resources providers. There is some good work being done on building this type of approach.

Another approach is one of holding community conversations with the broader community and educate families and individuals on how to improve the planning process so that they have evidence to support their request for employment supports from agencies such as the NDIS. We've been using modified version of this with providers and schools to better educate clients and families using the Self Guided Discovery tool. The clients are there, you must need to think differently.