Transitioning Differently

You may think this is about transition from school to work for kids, but it’s about all the stakeholders, what we get right and why we haven’t got the whole picture right. It’s not unreasonable to say that disability employment and employment services in general is a dynamic setting today. Our government, like its counterparts globally are looking for solutions to what could be called a static situation in that economies are supposedly healthy, but unemployment numbers are at best unchanged at worst hiding the real extent of the unemployment and the under employment problem. This is even more so if you have a disability.

Future of work research is painting a different picture and we are witnessing the spectacle of one demographic group complaining that the demographic before won’t leave the workforce so that they can take their jobs. If you happen to be unemployed, have a disability or worse; leaving school and have a disability, you could be forgiven if you think your future is bleak.

There are a number of observations that I’ve made while living and researching in the USA that highlight some
fundamental errors, small may they be, that impact on successful transition from school to employment or the wider society. Significantly when a child gets to the service provider overlooking these factors can magnify the outcome be it good or bad. These observations are informing the design of CDERP’s transition and organisation work, something that we hope to also use to educate LAC’s and planners about. This will of course flow into how and what we develop and provide to our clients.

**Transition from School**

Evidence is pointing to transition starting as early as primary school. This is about developing the concept of work early and exploring the “I want to be a fireman” construct as a promoter of work as a normative factor, not just for kids, but teachers and parents. This also has the added advantage of engaging with employer stakeholders earlier and changing the narrative for them.

We have a lot of politics when it comes to kids and schools, something that needs to be changed. The NDIS can support this change as an early intervention program. Importantly service providers need a different skill set and approach to work. We’re developing a new transition model based on new and emerging evidence that will inform our clients and their work.

**Evolving Employment**

Based on the evolving research around employment practice, we’ve started evolving our employment program and organisational change materials to highlight new processes that shift the goal posts and hopefully improve outcomes. Some of these new techniques and evolutions will be rolled out in September for clients. It’s an exciting time for those providing services and the recipients of those services.

**NDIS & Employment**

As you will know, the agency has a taskforce examining employment, the outcomes of which we’ll see in due course. But clients don’t wait and employment is a priority for them, so based on some defects that we’ve identified, we’ll shortly have available a tool that will assist planners, LAC’s and families to have an informed discussions about employment supports and funding that should lead to better planning outcomes. Stay tuned!

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**Measuring Employment Outcomes Differently**

As you may know, Dr Pete has spent the past two months based at the Yang-Tan Institute on Employment and Disability @ILR School, Cornell University NY working on our new disability employment outcome measure.

I’m pleased to say that he has been fruitful and has completed the development of the measure and supporting evidence. The measure will know be examined for face validity before being subject to field testing and analysis over the coming months.

In the interim, the supporting paper and evidence will be refined, edited and submitted for publication. Exciting stuff, which will be shared at out 2019 Retreat, along with the evolutions in programs that are discussed elsewhere in this Practice Notes.