

The Vocational Rehabilitation Comprehensive Assessment



Developed in Collaboration
with South Dakota Disability
Rehabilitation Services (DRS)
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The Comprehensive Assessment

- What is assessment?
- Assessment, Making Decisions and the Acts Requirements ?
- The VR Process and the Comprehensive Assessment (CA)?
- Documentation of the CA
 - South Dakota DRS Values and Approach
 - Informed Choice and the CA

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What is "assessment"?

- 1. The preparation for exercising *judgment in making an anticipated decision*
 - Discerning subjective state: what you and your client bring to the anticipated decision in terms of motivation
 - Gathering objective information to support the anticipated decision

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Jaw Exercise

- Why do you suppose the Comprehensive Assessment is identified so frequently as a VR training need across the Region?
- What do you need to know about the CA?

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Precept Language

The VR Mantra is a repeated phrase that addresses both the consumer and agency rights and responsibilities in the comprehensive assessment process. Precept language is Spirit-of-the-Law language meant inform the whole process



"to determine the unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice, including the need for supported employment, of the eligible individual..."

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What does the Act Require?

- Critical thinking
- Individualized and responsive assessment services
- Assessment integrated with an ongoing counseling process

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Decisions and Moments of Truth

- The VR process requires certain substantial decisions be made at predictable critical points in case development
- It is helpful to see those decisions as Moments of Truth (MOT) for counselor and client
- All MOT decisions must have a basis (rationale) merging data and judgment
 - Data must come from a qualified source

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The Key MOTs

- Stage 1: Eligibility and OOS:
 - Decision: is this person in or out? If in, and if your program is in OOS, what classification?
- Stage 2: Direction and Goal
 - Decision: is this person ready for VR changes in his or her life? And if so what general direction and specific goal?
- Stage 3: Need and Resource
 - Decision: Given the goal, what is needed? And what will be the strategy of service provision?
- Stage 4: IPE and Commitment
 - Decision(s): Can I, as a professional, sign off on this consensus of need and strategy? Can I sign off on any needed amendments?
- Stage 5: Outcome:
 - Decision: Does this outcome meet the spirit and requirements of the Act.

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Comprehensive Assessment; What the Act Requires?

Data for five stages of the process:



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What the Act Requires: Eligibility and OOS

Eligibility and Order of Selection



Says the Act: "a review of existing data"- and to the extent additional data is necessary

DATA for what? Counselor decisions regarding eligibility and/or Order of Selection; all other data is either unnecessary or a downstream bonus



Rule of thumb: If you have enough data to document eligibility and /or OOS you have enough for now. Start thinking about client directions and goal commitment.

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What the Act Requires: Direction and Goal

Direction and Goal: Where do we go to find an employment goal?



Says the Act: to the extent additional data is necessary ...

DATA for what? To find a direction to look for an employment goal and/or to find the goal itself



Rule of thumb: If your client knows the direction and goal you need not do any more assessment than what is necessary for you to assess resources, ability, and capability. The state of intrinsic motivation is a potential consumer resource or impediment and this is the place for motivational assessment.

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Direction and Goal Assessment Requirements



The IPE shall at a minimum contain mandatory components consisting of . . . a description of the specific employment outcome that is chosen by the eligible individual . . . consistent with

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Assessing readiness for the VR Ride?

- The client's willingness to change is an absolute requisite for participating in VR services. How ready for change is the person in front of you?
- Three common states of motivation:
 - I know what I want to do and where I want to go.
 - I am not sure... maybe, ...but then maybe not.
 - I don't know.

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Jaw Exercise

- You are packing for three trips this winter
 - You are going on a cruise to Alaska to see the whales, the ice, and spectacular winter scenery
 - One week later you are going to Costa Rica for some serious beach time.
 - Your family has just surprised you with a gift vacation but don't want to tell to you where you are going. What are you going to pack?
- You get one suitcase. Talk about your packing strategy.

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Assessment: Need and strategy



When you know where you are going you know what you need to get there

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What the Act Requires : Need and Strategy

- Need and Strategy: Given where we are going, what is needed and what's the strategy for meeting those needs?



Say the Act: to the extent additional data is necessary ...

DATA for what? Supporting and justifying goal, selection, service need, and performance criteria.



Rule of thumb: This is the data that supports the IPE over the long run. The hard data on the job goal may be more important and helpful than some direct client assessment info. The nature of the job is an equal partner with the nature of the client in setting need and strategy.

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What the Act Requires : Commitment & IPE

- Commitment: What kind of data will support the content of IPE strategies, the goal, and finally the performance commitments.



Say the Act: to the extent additional data is necessary ...

DATA for what? To support need for service, comparable benefits, and viability of the strategy as well as job goal.



Rule of thumb: The initial commitment should be justified by the rationale (data + counselor logic) and also any signed amendments that result from the new data entering the case record over the term of the IPE.

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What the Act Requires : Outcome

- Outcome: The overall comprehensive assessment must lay the ground work for the justification of the outcome in relationship to the VR Mantra



Say the Act: to the extent additional data is necessary ...

DATA for what? To support the agency contention that the goal is supported by the IPE and the comprehensive assessment



Rule of thumb: You need enough data about the job to tie the outcome of the program together with the job goal of the IPE and the services provided to reach that goal.

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Documentation and the South Dakota Process Based approach

Two main Sources of Assessment data:

1. External Diagnostic services including vocational testing and evaluation
2. Counselor originated data generated via VR process:

- Specific counseling derived assessment information
- Information from ad hoc performance agreements throughout intake, eligibility and IPE planning
- IPE evaluation criteria
- other

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DRS Policy Statement

Assessment for determining eligibility and VR needs – These services consist of medical and psychological evaluations as well as a wide-range of vocational assessments that are designed to help your VR Counselor determine whether you are eligible for VR Services. Diagnostic services may also be needed to gain an understanding of the nature and implications of your disability and to help determine the services you will need to attain your employment goal.

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This Matter of Documentation

- **Passive Documentation:** Med/psych reports, various external evaluations, Social Security reports etc.
- **Narrative Documentation:** Counselor generated reporter style case entry that describes people, motivation, and events and puts both in a timeframe.
- **Rationale Documentation:** counselor generated case entries describing the basis of your decisions; combining data from qualified sources and your judgment.
- **Target Audiences for all this documentation:**
 - Yourself: you probably don't have a perfect memory
 - The next counselor: continuity of service is your responsibility
 - The Case Reviewer: these people need to assure & demonstrate we are working using rationale that is compatible with the Act, its regulations, your state law etc.

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How Comprehensive is Comprehensive?

To decide how comprehensive, ask yourself; "what does the counselor and the consumer need from the assessment"?

Conservative Response: Only enough information to . . . :

1. to establish the basis for eligibility;
2. Provide the counselor and consumer with sufficient information to counsel to goal selection and commitment (or address OOS).
3. Determine what impediments lie between consumer and goal;
4. Justify and provide the services (including AT) to overcome impediments; and
5. describe the quality of the outcome for closure.

If you have information sufficient to build rationale for each of the above five thresholds, you have achieved "comprehensive".

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Jaw Exercise

Administration

- What does DRS want to accomplish through the Comprehensive Assessment?
- What does the counselor need to focus on in terms of documentation?

Staff

- What does staff want to know in addition to what has been covered today?

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