



# A Pilot Study Evaluating the Effectiveness of Person-Centered Planning

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## **Takeaways for VR Counselors & Administrators**

- Person-Centered Planning was implemented by a state VR agency after staff training.
- Rather than a “train and hope” model, the VR agency wanted to measure the effects of the training and implementation of the skills.
- An evaluation obtained feedback from consumers about of the effectiveness of implementation.
- The evaluation provided an objective measure of staff use of the skills and established a baseline.
- Ongoing evaluation and data analysis continues to inform program improvement.
- This capstone project provides administrators with a model to assess the actual outcomes of training investments.

## **Background**

In the fall 2017, Minnesota Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS) conducted a statewide training on person-centered planning facilitated by the Institute of Community Integration (ICI) at the University of Minnesota. After the training, person-centered planning was adopted as a daily practice in VRS counseling.

## **Purpose of the study**

The goal of the study was to examine whether the rehabilitation counselors used the skills or techniques that they had learned from the person-centered practice. To see if they were, this study surveyed incoming consumers on their experiences with their rehabilitation counselors. The questions developed for the survey were designed to align with three person-centered planning core values of: person-driven planning, relationship building, and positive planning. New intakes were asked the following questions:

1. I like talking with my VRS counselor.
2. I felt the VRS counselor treated me with respect.
3. I know more about the employment assistances VRS offers.
4. I feel I am in charge of planning my future.
5. I will come back to meet with my VRS counselor.

There was collaboration with the VRS intake workgroup to help develop the questions for the survey.

## Methods

The data collection was done through email survey using Survey Gizmo over a three-week period. An email survey was sent to individuals who attended an intake with a VRS counselor during a certain time period. Email was chosen because the organization wanted test the effectiveness of email surveying.

## Results

The questions on the survey were designed to provide feedback on individual experiences with the three core values and the person-centered strategies at their intake meeting. The results from the survey are included.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know/Unsure
I like talking with my VRS counselor.	7%	2%	39%	47%	5%
I felt the VRS counselor treated me with respect.	6%	3%	26%	63%	2%
I know more about the employment assistance VRS offers.	7%	7%	51%	24%	11%
I feel I am in charge of planning my future.	4%	4%	58%	26%	8%
I will come back to meet with my VRS counselor.	5%	2%	43%	46%	4%

### **Implication for practice or future research**

After examining the results of the questionnaire, the organization has decided that the survey will be administered twice a year. The data will be tracked and will be used for VR planning and training. The organization also plans to develop a person-centered planning fidelity checklist.

### **Lessons learned and recommendations**

The participant enjoyed the capstone process very much because she was able to apply what she learned from the PEQA course material. It has helped her gain new skills that she can apply to her job.