Factors Associated with Premature Exit from Vocational Rehabilitation Services
Catherine Ipsen & Rebecca Goe

STUDY DESCRIPTION

Premature Exit from Vocational Rehabilitation (VR)
The VR program spends approximately $350 million annually to serve consumers who disengage from services and drop out of the program (RSA-911 data). These dropouts are premature exits and account for approximately 50% of VR caseloads. Premature exits include cases closed to:
- "unable to locate or lost contact"
- "refused services or further services"
- "failure to cooperate"

Study Design
Conducted a prospective study to explore exit reasons.
- Study participants (n = 355) were newly enrolled in the VR program.
- Collected four waves of data at 6 month intervals to track progression through VR and dropout as it naturally occurred.

Theoretical Background and Study Hypotheses
Attachment to VR depends on dimensions of engagement including consumer-counselor relationship, delivery pacing, and reinforcement.

Consumer-Counselor Relationship
- Working Alliance – shared goals, tasks, and bonds between the consumer and counselor improves outcomes (Lustig, et al., 2002).

Delivery Pacing
- Engagement in the VR process capitalizes on short-term motivation to achieve a goal.

Reinforcement
- Reinforcement in terms of consumer-counselor contact is provided frequently and early in the process to engage the consumer and build relationship.

Measures
- Counseling Satisfaction Scale (CSS-12) – 12 items to measure 4 counseling dimensions
- Relationship: respects, listens, understands, responds
- Meeting Quality: productive, informative, comfortable
- Professionalism: follow-through, understands job market
- Responsiveness: makes time to meet, returns phone calls, returns emails

Delivery Pacing – single item
- Progress through services is too slow, at a good pace, or too fast

Satisfaction with VR services – single item
- Rated on four point Likert-type scale from dissatisfied to satisfied

Counselor-Consumer Contact Rates – 2 items
- Face to face meetings in the last six months
- Conversations by phone or email in the last six months

Reason for Exit – 12 choices classified into three groups
- Personal Reason (e.g. concerns about losing benefits, health issues, family issues, substance use issues, transportation barriers, moved)
- Dissatisfied with Services (e.g. not receiving desired services, VR stopped contacting me, problems with counselor, process taking too long)
- Met VR Goals (e.g. got a job, received desired services)

RESULTS and IMPLICATIONS

Reasons for Exit Classifications
- We classified reason for exit into three groups including personal reasons, dissatisfied with services, and met goals.
- Because individuals could select more than one exit reason, we created a hierarchy where "met goals" trumped "dissatisfied with services" trumped "personal reasons."

For example, if consumer endorsed "got job" and "having problems with counselor," exit reason was classified as met goals.

Delivery Pacing
- Almost half felt VR pacing was "too slow"
- Results were consistent across time periods
- At any time point, only 1-3% felt services were too fast
- Reason for exit varied based on feelings about delivery pacing

More engagement during the VR process may reduce exit from the VR program.
- Increased contact rates create additional opportunities for developing a strong counselor-consumer Working Alliance.

Faster service delivery may improve engagement with VR services.
- Compressing upfront services may help consumers become engaged in the VR process since most drop out occurs in the first six months.
- Data analysis from 48 VR agencies indicated that less time taken to develop an Individualized Plan of Employment was associated with higher rates of competitive employment closures (Ipsen & Swicegood, 2015). Even a small increase in consumer engagement could result in significant financial and employment outcomes.

- Using 2012 RSA-911 data, a 5% increase in retention rates could save approximately $16.3 million and result in an additional 6,650 employment outcomes.

Even a small increase in consumer engagement could result in significant financial and employment outcomes. We wish to acknowledge the contributions of Bethany Rigles and Casey Ruggiero to this research.

This research was supported by grant H133B080023 from the National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research (NICD/RR). The opinions expressed do not necessarily represent the policy of the Department of Health and Human Services or the endorsement of the United States federal government.

References

Acknowledgements
We wish to acknowledge the contributions of Bethany Rigles and Casey Ruggiero to this research.

Conducted a prospective study to explore exit reasons.
- Study participants (n = 355) were newly enrolled in the VR program.
- Collected four waves of data at 6 month intervals to track progression through VR and dropout as it naturally occurred.

Theoretical Background and Study Hypotheses
Attachment to VR depends on dimensions of engagement including consumer-counselor relationship, delivery pacing, and reinforcement.

Consumer-Counselor Relationship
- Working Alliance – shared goals, tasks, and bonds between the consumer and counselor improves outcomes (Lustig, et al., 2002).

Delivery Pacing
- Engagement in the VR process capitalizes on short-term motivation to achieve a goal.

Reinforcement
- Reinforcement in terms of consumer-counselor contact is provided frequently and early in the process to engage the consumer and build relationship.

Measures
- Counseling Satisfaction Scale (CSS-12) – 12 items to measure 4 counseling dimensions
- Relationship: respects, listens, understands, responds
- Meeting Quality: productive, informative, comfortable
- Professionalism: follow-through, understands job market
- Responsiveness: makes time to meet, returns phone calls, returns emails

Delivery Pacing – single item
- Progress through services is too slow, at a good pace, or too fast

Satisfaction with VR services – single item
- Rated on four point Likert-type scale from dissatisfied to satisfied

Counselor-Consumer Contact Rates – 2 items
- Face to face meetings in the last six months
- Conversations by phone or email in the last six months

Reason for Exit – 12 choices classified into three groups
- Personal Reason (e.g. concerns about losing benefits, health issues, family issues, substance use issues, transportation barriers, moved)
- Dissatisfied with Services (e.g. not receiving desired services, VR stopped contacting me, problems with counselor, process taking too long)
- Met VR Goals (e.g. got a job, received desired services)

RESULTS and IMPLICATIONS

Reasons for Exit Classifications
- We classified reason for exit into three groups including personal reasons, dissatisfied with services, and met goals.
- Because individuals could select more than one exit reason, we created a hierarchy where "met goals" trumped "dissatisfied with services" trumped "personal reasons."

For example, if consumer endorsed "got job" and "having problems with counselor," exit reason was classified as met goals.

Delivery Pacing
- Almost half felt VR pacing was "too slow"
- Results were consistent across time periods
- At any time point, only 1-3% felt services were too fast
- Reason for exit varied based on feelings about delivery pacing

More engagement during the VR process may reduce exit from the VR program.
- Increased contact rates create additional opportunities for developing a strong counselor-consumer Working Alliance.

Faster service delivery may improve engagement with VR services.
- Compressing upfront services may help consumers become engaged in the VR process since most drop out occurs in the first six months.
- Data analysis from 48 VR agencies indicated that less time taken to develop an Individualized Plan of Employment was associated with higher rates of competitive employment closures (Ipsen & Swicegood, 2015). Even a small increase in consumer engagement could result in significant financial and employment outcomes.

- Using 2012 RSA-911 data, a 5% increase in retention rates could save approximately $16.3 million and result in an additional 6,650 employment outcomes.

Even a small increase in consumer engagement could result in significant financial and employment outcomes. We wish to acknowledge the contributions of Bethany Rigles and Casey Ruggiero to this research.

This research was supported by grant H133B080023 from the National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research (NICD/RR). The opinions expressed do not necessarily represent the policy of the Department of Health and Human Services or the endorsement of the United States federal government.

References

Acknowledgements
We wish to acknowledge the contributions of Bethany Rigles and Casey Ruggiero to this research.

This research was supported by grant H133B080023 from the National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research (NICD/RR). The opinions expressed do not necessarily represent the policy of the Department of Health and Human Services or the endorsement of the United States federal government.