

Helping individuals to consider employment opportunities.

Tips for Clinical Staff

The Vocational Interest Tool is designed to help you and your service users begin some meaningful discussions about access to employment, education or volunteering.

Before you begin, please consider these strategies that other health professionals have found helpful:

- **Try not to encourage the person in one direction or another.** In other words, don't push the person to get a job or advise the person to slow down. Just be curious to hear the person's feelings and thoughts about work.
- **Take your time.** You don't have to complete the worksheet in one meeting. Encourage the person to share all of his or her ideas. For example, if someone describes a couple of their hopes for a job, ask "what else?"
- If someone says that they know how their benefits would be affected by a return to work, ask where they got their information:
 1. Make sure that they aren't relying on rumours.
 2. Offer a meeting with a benefits advisor or a better off calculations with JCP or a Welfare to Work Provider.
 3. Please speak to an Employment Specialist (ES) for more information.
- When working on the rating scales for confidence and importance, ask the person about the number that they chose. For example, "Why did you select a 5"? Or "Why a 3 and not a 1?"

Design a next step

- Organise a meeting with an employment specialist to learn about how they help people with jobs.
- Schedule a meeting with a benefits advisor, if there is not one available in your team talk to your OT or ES about how you can refer the individual to Job Centre Plus or a welfare to work provider for a 'Better Off Calculation' which can give them an understanding of where they will stand financially when they come off benefits. They may be entitled to tax credits and other benefits.
- Plan to have more discussions about work and education needs.
- Set up a meeting with another person who has gone back to work or share recovery stories from service users who have returned to employment.
- Make a referral to supported employment (IPS), or an external provider if you do not have access to an ES in your team.
- Help with identified barriers to work. For example, help find options for childcare

Tips for talking about work on an ongoing basis

- When you are feeling positive about yourself, how do you imagine your life to be? Will you be employed, doing volunteer work, studying, in training?
- Ask about job preferences. What is your dream job? What type of job would you like next?
- Ask about the person's work history. What was your favourite job? Why? Least favourite? Who was your favourite boss? Why?
- Ask if the person knows others who are working? What do they do
- Ask the person to describe their life 5 years from now. Where will he/she be living? What relationships would they like to have in their lives? How will they be spending their days?
- Repeat this worksheet from time to time (for instance, in a few months). With your client, compare the old worksheet to the new one. Did the answers change? Why?

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