

Event ID: Peer Mentoring for Employment Success

Event Started: 6/8/2017 11:23:13 AM ET

Good morning and welcome to Peer Mentoring for Employment Success. I'm with University of North Texas Workplace Inclusion and Sustainable Employment. Also known as UNT WISE. For those of you joining us on the Internet, look at the webinar control panel on the right side of your screen. There is a question box there. If you have questions during the session, we encourage question, please use the box to type and I will get that answered for you. For now, I want to make sure that everybody can hear me. And everyone is doing well. If you would please type yes, hello, I'm here, I'm alive. Something along those lines, that would be appreciated. I have a few coming in. There we go. Thank you so much. I always worry when I don't see something. If you are joining us by telephone, please send an email to UNTWISE to make sure you receive credit for your participation today. At the end of the session I will provide you more information about how you received credit for the seminar. I want to introduce our fabulous speaker for today, Doctor Brandi Levingston. This is a senior lecturer and an undergraduate coordinator for the University of North Texas in the Department of Rehabilitation and Health Services. She received her doctoral degree in special education with a concentration in rehabilitation counseling from the University of Texas at Austin. She has worked as a CR counselor for the state of Texas and her interest include psychosocial aspects of disability, and postsecondary the condition -- education. Doctor Levingston, thank you for joining us today.

Thank you. We should also change the bios. I'm in the Department of Rehabilitation and Health Services.

Yes, our names have officially changed. We are in the same area but the College of Health and Public Services is the new name. If you're looking for us on the Internet, that is what we are under. Thank you.

No problem. Good morning, everyone. I hope everyone is having a fabulous day. We will look at peer mentoring and employment success. This is something that I'm quite familiar with both as a professional as well as a person with a disability. I access peer mentors and mentors in general on a daily basis. I can't even say frequently, it is on a daily basis. As we are going through the process, I'm going to try to provide a -- an example of things that I have used both on the professional setting and as a peer counselor and as an educator. Also I have worked in committee rehab programs and I want to provide some of those type of examples for you. Also some more personal ones that I have used as an individual with a disability in terms of mentoring. As we go along, if you have a question or a comment, I like to be interactive, please feel free to ask. As Freda can tell you, I am pretty open about discussing my own experiences.

I'm somewhat informal but not overly however I want this to be engaging. So that these concepts will stick in your mind. I will start us off by looking at the objectives of our webinar. So that we have not idea of what we -- so that we have an idea of what we are looking at.

Let's look at the decision process. Let's look at the steps in terms of the process. To help individuals with disabilities with peer mentoring as well as the employment process. Then we will look at peer mentors, how they can assist individuals with disabilities.

Then we will talk about when what a peer mentor be appropriate to assist an individual with a disability throughout the employment process. Then look at peer support as an experience for the individual with a disability. When we talk about employment success, were not just talking about actually getting a job, we are talking about maintaining a job. We know it is important for us as individuals with disabilities to get jobs, but it is also important for us to maintain those jobs, perhaps get promotions so that we have longevity in the workplace.

When we start thinking about supportive decision-making, I thought it would be beneficial to break it down -- what decision-making is and you see this throughout the presentation, as you move from one area to another, we will start broad and then built specifically to what we will be doing specifically. The first thing is talk about support decision-making but in an effort to understand the, we need to think about what is decision-making in general. There are tons of information on the Internet about process that one could use to make a decision but I try to pick one that I thought was fairly simple, something that most of us do in our daily lives. And when we make decisions. Unless there are certain things that you know you go to the grocery store perhaps and you think do I want frosted flakes or do I want bran flakes? That is a quicker and easy yes or no. But there are more complex decisions that we make about maybe buying a house, buying a car, choosing a Doctor. Decided whether to keep your job or look for a job. We may require to use decision-making process. This is a simple one and the kind of step to help you make a decision. The first one being, to accept to identify a goal. And were talking in the framework of employment, the goal might be to get a job. That is step one. You have identified that the individual wants a job. Then he wants -- step two, gather information to weigh your options. You want to get a job, so now you're deciding okay, do you want to get a job because you want money, you might want independence, you want to do something for filling for your life -- and you start thinking about what kind of job, what would I want to do. Where do I want to work? Do I want to work during the day? Do I want weekends? These are things that most of us might start to think about.

Step three, start thinking about the consequences. Should I -- if I leave my current job, am I going to make as much money? Am I going to like the people there? Are they going to like me? Am I going to have to travel further. You start thinking about all these different consequences of making a decision. Here are things that will happen. Then in step four, you will make the decision. Let's you decide that you will leave your current job for another one. So you leave the job. You're starting to look for another job. Once you have gotten to step five, you will evaluate your decision. Was is a good move for me to move to this new company. Do I like it here. Am I going to work here for a few months and then transition to something else. You can evaluate and monitor. We want to go through the process simply and then you say oh I'm leaving my job. And then weigh the consequences. However, for an individual who has a more significant disability, it might be difficult for them to do the steps without the support of someone else. So that is where the supportive decision-making comes in. We have a decision-making process, however, as individuals with more significant disabilities, we may need support in making decisions. I would even go so far as to say I have a visual impairment, which is significant but I feel pretty good about making decisions for myself. However, I'm still depending on other people when making decisions that I am concerned about. Which is where I bring in the peer mentoring. Though it is somewhat like supporting decision-making, I may not follow necessarily all the steps. For the framework of today, what we are talking about is having supportive decision-making. We will move on to discussing the definitions of what supportive decision-making is.

When we think about people with more significant disabilities, but we often think about is guardianship. Where you have someone in place to make decisions for an individual. However, when we are talking about supportive decision-making, we are now talking about an alternative to guardianship where an individual would gather a team to help him or her make decisions about their own life. Instead of with guardianship where someone is making decisions, the does -- the supportive decision-making process brings together a team of individuals to assist a person with more significant disabilities and make decisions about their life. This is just one simple definition of how we might want to think about supportive decision-making. But there are certainly alternative definitions to supportive decision-making. I wanted to provide you with another one. In the second definition, we are talking about a process of supporting and accommodating an adult with disabilities. That will talk about where this person might want to live, what support services, perhaps looking at where they want to work, and self-determination in terms of being a person with some type of independence. The first one is a broad definition that you will gather people to assist. What is in the second definition, it breaks it down in terms of independent living, where they want to work, but it is still promoting self-determination. What we know about individuals with disabilities, is that self-determination is very

fundamental. In particular when we think about employment. The earlier that we can look at self-determination, to help individuals get employment, the better off the employment success will be. The supportive decision-making definitely plays a role and assisting individuals with the self-determination process.

As a part of the self-determination, -- as part of these supportive decision-making process, we have what is called a supportive decision agreement. When we think about a supportive decision-making agreement, it is somewhat like a contract but not necessarily something that you would see as being legally binding. Perhaps like guardianship papers. Or power of attorney or medical power of attorney where you give someone permission to make decisions about your life. What we are now talking about is more of a contract between you and this other person who will assist you in the process. As I mentioned, Texas is a state that does support this type of agreement. However, not all states are going to support, such an agreement. Additionally, internationally, supportive decision-making is something that is recognized, however, the language may be different in terms of the wording that is used when we discuss supportive decision-making. It is definitely something that is internationally recognized in particular when looking at people with significant disabilities. Are you still there?

Hello?

Yes, I am here. [Laughter]

I'm going to start checking. [Laughter] Is a part of this process, what an individual will do is to select someone that they would see as a supporter. And we probably all have people in our lives who are supporters whether it is family, a friend, a spouse, a coworker or a former coworker, etc. You will select someone who would be a supporter. This individual -- who can understand the risks in their decision-making but then also help them to communicate their wishes. So, in thinking that I would like to make a lot of my own decisions, and I'm independent, if I were to wake up tomorrow and someone would decide to me what time to wake up, where to go, what to wear, what job I should have, it would certainly be helpful if I could have someone to speak on my behalf and to work with me -- speak on my behalf and to work with me. Are there any questions at this point?

One question. About -- when you're talking about a supporter, sometimes that raises the question about who exactly is that? Is it a family member, is it a counselor, is it a physician? Is it a -- please speak more to that.

We will cover who could be a supporter. To get started -- it could be the individual with the individual -- the disability choosing the supportive. In the supportive decision-making, you could have one person or as you saw before, it could be a team. You could have a team of people or an individual. I know in my own life, there are certain times when I make decisions and there's a particular person that I want to go to about work. I may have a mentor at work who I only go to this one person that I go to about work. In personal, in more personal decision, I may go to my husband, I may go to a family member or a friend. Those are three people so that is a team support being me. -- Supporting me. The person is generally there to support the individual with the significant disability. You're in it for that individual, not necessarily for your own personal gain. Or for the gain of for your work. It is strictly about meeting the individual with the disability. As I go further, I will break it down into who could be a supporter and how they could be helpful.

I do have one other question. Pamela wants to know is this included a person -- person centered planning.

This should be included in person centered planning. I don't know if it is always included. Definitely something that should be a part of that. I know from my own professional experience, I like to come from that place of support where I firmly believe when I work with consumers or clients who have disabilities, we are working together in the decision-making process. I understand that there is your rockers -- your accuracy where you work but mice job is to support the person with the disability. Here are some options, here might be some consequences if you choose. This is still a part of the decision-making process. It must include the individual with the disability and that process. And you also should go into that knowing that sometime you may have your client -- maybe the individual with a disability, they may need to have another person with them. To help support them through the process. I used to work with college students with visual impairment. A team could make decisions, but for many of my students, they still wanted to have a parent or a teacher because if you're coming from a transition place of being in high school where you have a whole team behind you, and adult services where we are saying to you, be independent, you might not be there yet. So there were times when some of my students did bring someone else to the meeting. It is still person centers and we still focus on them, but they had a person there to support them through the process. Very good question.

Are you still here?

Yes, you're doing great.

I'm going to ask every time now that I know I went away. [Laughter]

Earlier we talked about self-determination. It is definitely something that is connected to the supportive decision-making process. We know with self-determination that an individual has a goal that they are working toward. As a part of the process of getting to that goal, they have to make certain decisions and they have to choose certain things to get them toward that goal. So supportive decision-making definitely helps to promote self-determination so that an individual can start to go toward their goals. In this case, we talked about employment but for others it could be independent living, it could be marriage and family, it could be medical decisions. Whatever the case may be. Supportive decision-making definitely supports the notion of self-determination for people within the -- disabilities.

We talked about how supportive decision-making was an alternative to guardianship. When we are thinking about something being an alternative, it now feels [Indiscernible] It gives them control to have control in their life with making decision. By no means let me say that we will have all people with all abilities make all the decisions. I am not saying that. However, what I am saying is that individuals with disabilities or without Frank look like to have control in their lives with decisions that are being made. I know we as Americans, particularly when we think about westernized culture, we like to be in control and we sometimes don't want to have all the -- want to have all the control. And there are times will we need support from other people. I know that many of us on here, I'm sure there is someone, I know everybody has one person that you are depending on and you probably also are someone that people can depend on to make decisions. With supportive decision-making, that gives an individual with a disability or control in their own lives. It also promotes the notion of autonomy, where we are looking at independence and a person's ability to self rule in their lives. Once you have the ability to start making decisions, then that promotes your ability to be more independent and to be in control of your own life. Which is very important for an individual, regardless of disability but it particularly when you're talking about people with more significant disabilities. Historically, we've looked at professionals making those decisions for individuals with more significant disabilities. However, now temporarily we are looking at having that more supportive decision-making process and as Pamela mentioned, coming from the person centered planning approach. Where we are working together as opposed to I will tell you what to do and you will do it.

Freda, still there?

Great. This speaks to what Freda was asking earlier about who is a supporter? When you talk about this notion of a supporter, who is that, what does that mean? It could be a family member. Whether it is a parent, a sibling, who may be a supporter. I know

even for myself, I am married, I am expecting a baby soon, I have a job, I am very independent, have been for a long time. I still am very dependent on my family for support. In terms of making decisions and doing things throughout my life. Culturally, many people also are very dependent on family. Where individuals may want to work in that family systems perspective as opposed to being dependent on professionals. I am one of those people that again, my family has been highly involved. They have been involved throughout my life. I do have family members who are supportive in terms of when I make decisions. Does that mean that the individual couldn't make the decision for me? No. But they will be helpful throughout the process in terms of making a decision. I know when working with consumers who often will work with parents or siblings as well, so does that mean the individual parent or sibling should be making the decision for your consumer? No. But they should be there to support him in the process. As professionals, we should be there to respect that addition of a family member in the decision-making process.

It could also be a friend. So you may have someone who is a friend and remember, we think about a supporter, that is someone who is trustworthy. I know that I have a core group of friends that I have been friends with for many, many years. I also will bounce things off of when I'm trying to make a decision. The same thing for individuals with disabilities. If they have a friend who they have been very close to who they think should be trustworthy, that would be a good person to be dependent on in terms of supporting the in the decision-making process. Coworkers. We are talking about employment success. Not just getting a job but keeping a job. You may have a coworker and I have a set of coworkers and colleagues who I definitely depend on for mentorship as well as decision-making. Who I may go to and say, okay, I'm having a certain situation with a student, and I teach at the university, is this something that you have faced? Here are some things I'm thinking about, what you think about these options? They can tell me, okay, no I have done this, yes, or look at this. I have done the same thing for other colleagues, as well. You may begin a work environment where you can bounce ideas off of people. It may not be everybody, but maybe there are one or two people that are your core individuals that you go to in terms of making decisions at work.

Then past or present providers. We think about individuals with disabilities, we know that we use many services with many different providers. I can honestly tell you that I still get emails from my old location, we have counselors, who have helped me throughout my process, just checking in to say hello. I run into them at conferences and its not that I contact them all the time, but I still engage in some type of a conversation with them. However, when we are thinking about using past providers, we have to keep in mind that when we are thinking about supporters, we need to be careful with that. Because a supporter should necessarily be someone [Indiscernible].

Then that brings up a whole another layer of ethics and boundaries when we think about decision-making. If I am paying you to help me with my decision, and I told you that I really want to get a job working at a bank, and you are insistent that no, you need to get a job working at an animal shelter, I could tell you, I am not going to pay you. This relationship is over. Instead of the relationship being built on trust and assisting the individual with the disability. The relationship then becomes built on the monetary thing. For the supporter. It is important that when we think about using providers that we are doing it more from a framework of trust and supporting the individual with the disability and less about monetary gain. Freda, are you there?

I am. Pamela had a great comment. I think you covered it and I want to make sure that -- accepting a past or present provider of services to act in a supportive decision-making capacity, does that create a bias for the provider?

Pamela, you are so on it. That goes back to what I just said about having the providers and now basing it on monetary gain as opposed to being client-centered and focusing on the goal of the client. Definitely. Not saying you cannot do that but you have to be very careful in how you approach that area. I will say that we know that working with clients, even when we talk about providing employment related support, sometimes those go outside of the realm of just employment. You may have to support that individual with a disability with maybe, maybe they need to move somewhere where they could be closer to the job. So that may require some type of supportive decision-making that you also have to get involved in. Then, there would still be the notion of supporting the person to get the job. It could be a process where you are doing multiple things to kind of assisted that assistant individual -- assistant that individual. But you're doing it anyway were is not a bias created. Good comment.

Moving on. The components of the supportive decision-making process. Kind of what we've been talking about -- the first thing is whether you choose the person to assist you with the decision-making process. Family, friend, coworker, provider, whomever. Or perhaps work with multiple people. So you'll have a team approach. Choose those individuals or the one individual. In the case of having a supporter, they will perhaps give you a trip to the individual with the individual [Indiscernible] will be the person who makes the decision. You will be accepting new advice, here are things that I might do, if I'm looking for a job, here's where I may start but you is the individual with the disability going to be the person that actually makes that decision.

Thinking about a supporter, a Goodwin will respect the wishes of the individual with the disability. I know that probably for many of us, we have either a friend, or children or family members and your seeing them going into the situation and you just don't think it is a good idea. You really don't. This is not going to go well. You try to

give advice and you try to give advice and you want to step in and just say no, I will do this for you. There are times when you have to back off and say okay, I have given you the advice but I'm going to respect what you're going to do. Now, I'm not saying you would let an individual to something that will endanger themselves or others, certainly not bad. However, I am saying that we as -- if you are a supporter for someone, you are not in control of that decision-making process. You're only there to give advice, sit back and assist with the decision.

A good supporter is also going to listen. Be a good listener and provide ways to help the individual make their decision happen. Okay, so you say you want to look for a job. What does that mean? Listen to what the individual is saying about wanting a job. And then you provide perhaps some good suggestions. Have you thought about transportation? Have you thought about your medication? Have you thought about when you need to have treatment? Have you thought about that you don't like to work with a lot of people? Okay -- maybe the individual has not thought of that. You listen and talk through that. Maybe they haven't. I still want a job okay, you want a job. Let's talk about ways that we can help you start finding a job. It is the notion of being a good listener in terms of helping an individual but then try to make that happen for an individual.

Any questions so far?

None. A couple of comments here. The choices -- the final decision -- sometimes this is the hardest process because employment professionals see -- they might feel that this is not the best decision but you have to supportive. That is what it is implying.

Trust me, I completely understand. I have seen this working with consumers, I have seen this working with students. All the time. It's like a car accident you can see getting ready to happen. Okay, I am here to support you. And you perhaps have had past experiences where you think it has not gone well. What I say to that, that was being a good listener and you could share the information with the individual. Not that you tell them don't do this because I know this will be horrible for you. And you will not working. You can say, you know, I want to give you the good and the bad about a scenario. We are making a decision -- remember the individual is supposed to be weighing the consequences. You as a supporter, if I don't know what the consequences are, that would be helpful for you to supporter to tell me. That you know, I know you're really want to get a job working at pet Smart, but your friend works there, and you'll love the commercials, I hear that -- but you told me that you have bad allergies. And you have to take medication, perhaps working with animals and dust will not be helpful. Just because -- this might cause you to be sick. You're not telling them not to do it, here are things that could potentially happen. Things that we

want to know. I see those commercials and I know we all see those commercials where there some type of medicine or whatever. And like at the very end they are speed reading the effects of the medication and they say or you could die. And then you think oh my God who would want to take this. It is slowing down as a supporter and going through the list of potential effects where an individual knows that here are positive things with this decision and here are negative things. So you have done your due diligence as an employment specialist where you're providing the informed consent. Here are options and here are the positives and here are the negatives. Then you support the client. Which I completely understand. It is difficult when we know based on our experiences that this could go wrong. Sometimes you have to support the client in terms of making the decisions.

Good comment. Now we will switch gears. Let's switch gears in terms of decision-making. Supportive decision-making. Now we will talk more about mentoring. And the impact that mentoring can have specifically in this decision-making process and in the overall employment process.

Our first notion is what is a mentor. Keeping it very broad and very basic. What is a mentor. Now we're talking about somebody or an influential person who supports you and guide you throughout life. They might be best they could be a role model for success. A mentor as we are going to talk about, can also be different people and different types. Again, we all, I'm sure, we have a person that we view as a mentor. Someone who guides us, maybe it is a past professor, or a past teacher, maybe it is someone you currently work with. Maybe it is a friend that you know. We all have mentors. I know I use them constantly. Mentoring has been found to be beneficial for people without disabilities but especially for individuals with disabilities. As we talk about this notion of mentoring, I will break it down into more specifics.

When we think about this notion of mentors, there are certain characteristics that are definitely more beneficial than other -- beneficial than others. We want them to be supportive. Again, you're not looking for a mentor who is going to sometimes be there for you, we don't want someone that's we want someone who will be supportive. Very similar to what we talked about with supportive decision-making and be supportive you choose, mentors can come in different forms and fashion depending on the type of decision you are going to make. You want someone who is responsible. If you are talking again about having a mentor, or to help people with disabilities, clearly want the individual to be somewhat who has been working who will have a long career, it could be an individual who is retired but someone who has worked and has been in the situation and who had a good job record. Not necessarily when we are talking about providing someone with a mentor, not someone who bounces from job to job like every month or so. Not saying that that individual is not a good person, but they

are not responsible in that area of employment success. You will also want someone who is honest and upfront. This, for me, is one of the most important one. I want you to be supportive and responsible, but I want you to be honest and upfront. When I asked for people to help with decision-making, I don't need you to tell me yes, you're right. Of course I like to think that I'm right all the time but I'm not. It is helpful if the individual can be honest and upfront. Especially when we think about individuals with disabilities. It is important that we have this honesty and upfront us. And there is a way to do it. It doesn't mean that you have to be sharp with the individual and quick to the punch and no, you can do this. But there's a way to be honest and upfront with an individual and so that the expectations are set in terms of what you may be looking for. Definitely being honest and upfront is one of the more important one for me as a person.

You want someone who will be a good listener. It goes hand-in-hand with being honest and upfront. If I'm talking to you because I need help with the situation, I need you to listen and provide that support to me throughout the process. Then you want someone who will be helpful. That is what we are looking for. Were trying to do supportive decision-making and looking for a mentor, we are looking for help. We all needed so at the end result -- we are looking for help. Helpfulness is part of being -- of being a good mentor.

Still good, Freda?

Yes, we are.

Here are some benefits when we think about mentoring. You have increased self-esteem. Not only for the person who is being mentor, but also for the mentor. When we are thinking about disability mentors and peer mentors, it's a great relationship for each person to benefit. So you have the self-esteem increased for the peer mentor, as well as for the mentee. You have a sense of accomplishment. You have this great relationship and you are now being supportive -- supported and you have a sense of accomplishment. Then you start to have a network of volunteers. I have mentioned, a peer mentor could be a friend or family member or a coworker or whomever. It could even be a provider. Now you are setting up this network that you will be dependent upon so that you know when you have to make a decision, you have these people behind you that can assist you through the process. You now have the network built.

For the mentor, it is also providing a sense of appreciation -- a sense of patience and supervisory skills. Now it is teaching you -- again, reinforcing how to work to assist someone and then it is giving you the good supervisory skills that are needed to mentor someone.

Do we have any question so far?

No, we don't pick

Now, we will get more specific into the types of mentors. We talked about the overarching, what is a mentor. Now we will talk specifically about disability and about peer mentoring.

When we talk about disability mentor, it is exactly what it sounds like. Are you have an individual with a disability who is mentoring another person with a disability. It could be the same disability or it could be a different disability. Most people in mentoring relationships have disabilities. You're assisting with independent living, maybe they had a traumatic incident, maybe the individual is starting to work, or maybe they don't have a good work history. But we know as individuals with disabilities, we have that shared cultural characteristic of knowing what it is like to have a disability. Who better to turn to that another individual with a disability in terms of mentoring. For me, I have a mentor who I work with who has a disability, we do not share the same disability. But we both have disabilities. I often will turn to her to sometimes ask questions that are disability specific or that maybe work specific. I can make decisions. I also have a network of individuals with visual impairment like myself. I will turn to them because I know that they are going to have some of the shared experiences of not having vision or as much vision and I may ask questions of them. Sometimes it could be job related, it could be related to using technology, sometimes frankly, it is going to be more personal related. I might want to ask someone about healthy eating or about exercising. And that I go to the network. As I mentioned I'm expecting a baby, so I talked about people who are blind to have children so I have those kinds of questions and have decisions made. I have that network of people with vision impairment but I have a network of other individuals that have disabilities but maybe not the same disability. But we have the same shared characteristic of a disability that I can go to for mentoring and for making decisions. We know again, very important, for people with disabilities to have someone to go to. Even as a professor at the University, I mentor students at the program but frequently I will see students from across campus who are not in the rehab program but who heard from a friend or they may have taken a class of mine, that I have a disability and I work at the University, so quite often they show up in my office. Mentoring. We may not have the same employment or the same professional aspirations, but we have that shared experience of disability. Were I could mentor students and talk to them about being at the University. At about being a successful student. When we are thinking about perhaps matching people with mentors, if you can't find someone who

has a similar disability, it is okay if the person has a disability that might not be the same. It is still beneficial for the individual.

Any questions, Freda?

No ma'am not at this time. Great points on the matching. I think most universities try to do that. That they work hard to ensure that there is accessibility for all. In terms of mentoring. I want to look like you one day.

IMacs to a lot of people. [Laughter] It keeps me busy.

Now, when we talk about a peer mentor, and in this context were talk about a peer mentor who would be an individual with a disability but not necessarily but I know we are talking about individuals with disabilities. Now you're looking for someone who works to motivate people with disabilities. By being a role model, offering encouragement, and then providing someone with referrals to resources. Peer mentoring is very similar to what we said all along about being a supporter. In this case, now we are motivating. We're looking for someone who will motivate individuals with disabilities. Again, that could be another person with a disability who is serving as a role model, who shows you that I want you as a mentor because you are where I want to be. What you're doing is something I am interested in but also someone who provides resources. I know when I worked with the students across campus, I'm having to have resources that are disability related, rehab related, and sometimes it is universal -- University related. So having -- so it's good thing I'm trained as a rehab counselor because I have those resources available to provide to them. Or I can assist them with finding those types of resources. So we have a disability mentor, or can be an individual with a disability that we have the peer mentor where somebody is a role model who will help motivate individuals with disabilities to get to their goals. Similar but a little different.

On the process of peer mentoring. The first thing you will talk about might be some of the barriers that an individual with a disability is going to face in terms of being independent as they want to be. In the case of maybe looking for employment, some of the barriers could be that an individual doesn't have the education level. They don't have the job experience. They don't have the transportation to get there. They may not have the disability skills they need to overcome certain barriers in the workplace. They may not have the technology. These are all barriers that we know could prevent an individual with a disability from getting a job. We have identified those barriers. Now you will work with the peer mentor to come up with some goals to overcome these barriers. In the case of maybe the person who doesn't have an education, that they need for the job, does that mean you might want to think about going back to

school. Or does that mean that instead of going for a higher level job, you may want to go for a lower level job in that same industry. Is the individual lacking experience. How can I get experience in this field. What is the goal to help get it in the field. Is the individual -- does the individual have transportation. Maybe learning the transportation system, moving weather is good transportation, learning how to drive, perhaps finding someone to carpool with. All these different goals or options that a person could work out. If it is the notion of not having the disability skills, okay, so now you need to get some training on how to use the computer with specific technology. Or you may need to perhaps learn how to use a cane or learn sign language. Here are some goals to help you get there. Let's come up with those goals. Maybe it is that you don't have the technology you need. How can we get that type of technology where our resources to get those types of technologies. Making these goals to get past the barriers.

Then develop a plan. This goes back to what Pamela mentioned. Now you have a goal and now you have to have a plan to help you get to those goals that we just mentioned that might be barriers. You're going to have guidance and encouragement from your peer mentor. If you are facing a situation that you had never been in before, and you're saying, how can I do this. It is always best to ask someone, I've never been in the situation but maybe you have. Someone who can provide that guidance to you along with the process. When I started looking for a job, I had a vocational counselor, but I also talk to other people so that I had both my rehab counselor who was serving as a martyr, but then other people -- serving as a mentor but then other people in the field who could help her maybe information that my rehab counselor could not give me. But sometimes we need that peer mentoring and you need to hear it from someone else, someone who is like you who has been through the situation. Any questions?

We have one from Pamela. She wants to know are we talking about transitional goals or IEP goals? It could be either. It is just a goal. Whatever the goal may be. Depending on the situation that you're in. If it is something in terms of transition or an actual IP. It is just a go. Whatever it is. It will help you get over a barrier. It could be transitional or something on IP or it could be something for an adult who is trying to seek employment. Good question.

When we talk about peer mentoring relationships, we're not just talking about oh I have this mentor who is also. Now we're talking about high quality. The better quality of the relationship the better outcomes the relationship -- the individual have. We are talking about long-term relationships. That is something about your mentoring, in a peer relationship, the longer the better. So we're not talking to somebody who is a peer mentor for a week. It could be someone who peer mentor's you for a year or longer if that -- if a person has access to that. It doesn't mean everyone will have access to a

peer mentor for a year, but the longer the person spends engaging with the peer mentor, the more beneficial the process will be. You also will want to screen the mentors. We talked about the characteristics earlier. You will want to look for those characteristics to assure that this person will be a good mentor.

You want to have good structured matches. I work with students in their undergraduate programs, they in particular I work with a program that supports students who are African-American and Latina coming into the field. As part of this, they have a mentor that they work with. So the students are matched with someone in the field who is also African-American or Latino Latina so that they can provide good mentoring relationships and part of that is that they have structured times when they meet and activities. It's not like, here's your mentor, she's going to help you. Freda needs to know what is happening in the relationship and what she will help you with and then the student needs to know what should he or she will go to Freda with with mentoring questions. As part of that, you would have training for both the mentor and the mentees. So they know what to expect and what the relationship should look like. What you don't want to have is an individual who thinks this is my mentor and who will help me of any person is calling every night and on the weekends. Wanted to ask you did you see this on Facebook -- did you see this new story. Wear your mentoring relationship should generally focus on something more structured.

Again, you want to focus on the need of the mentee. Not necessarily the mentor. It is great for us to mentor people and it's a great relationship, but it goes back to focus on the needs of the person being mentor. And helping them get their needs met.

You want to have the appropriate levels of accountability and visibility. Maybe at the beginning you meet with a mentor once or twice a month or maybe you have phone calls or email communication. But then as the person starts to meet those goals, then maybe they don't have as much contact with the mentor. But they know that this person is still there to help me. Again, going back to building up the boundaries and relationships where you know, I'm not supposed to call on the weekends or at night, this should be something that is is this and we focus on employment. Any questions?

A few comments about the screen. Question was in the screening, of finding a mentor, is this something that the ER would do or the employment provider or both or either are?

[Laughter] Yes. Yes to all. Than the other comment was about the relationship. Question was is this a professional relationship and not a friendship?

I will speak to the first one. If you are working with a client and you feel needs a mentor, some people do and some people don't. Some people might have those in the support network. They have built up. But if you're working with a client and this person could really benefit from a mentor, it would be helpful if you had a list of people may be that you have worked with that you have successfully placed and who are doing a great job. Or people that you know of who have disabilities who are working you could say, would you be interested in having a mentor. Give that person the option. If they say no, I have a teacher or professor, or I have someone. Or yes maybe I would like to talk to that person. You could, it is not a requirement but is definitely something that is beneficial. There is tons of information out there -- I hope God on mentoring and how to set up mentoring relationships. I would encourage people to look at it if you're thinking that this is something to include. Again, we'll talk about peer mentoring. Were not talking about a friendship. We are talking about a professional relationship. You may have a friend that is a mentor, but we are talking more about that mentoring relationship. I have a colleague that I am friends with but who is a mentor. Sometimes when we are meeting, I will save look let's talk about something but I need you to put on your mentor head, not your friend had. Forget me as a friend, I need you to talk to me as a mentor. I have done the same thing for other individuals as well. That I may be friends with but who may need more mentoring. And I say okay, I have the boundaries and I have to separate what is happening and I put on my mentor had. They will look different sometimes. Good questions.

When we talk about peer mentoring and career development, which is the crux of that this presentation, there are ways or times when a peer mentor could be helpful. Particularly when we think about job shadowing and career exploration. If you have a role model or someone who is been through the process, they can provide individuals with disabilities good information on job shadowing, informational interviews, doing career exploration. Give you some guidance on where to go toward finding a career or finding a job. Also when we think about communication and writing skills develop, this is one where I know we constantly ask professors that communication and writing skills -- we are definitely in the tech age, and a lot of students want to use the slang language with texting language. This is not what we consider professional communication. I might be able to do some analysis with the student and let's talk about communication. But sometimes they need to hear it from a peer mentor. Someone who has been in the same situation as them so that they will say oh, okay I see why communication and writing skills are important. When looking for a job and keeping a job. People might need jobs for support. You used to be you look for a job in the newspaper but nowadays, most people look for it on the Internet. You go to different sites, a lot of times you might still have to go out and go up to companies and ask if you are hiring. You might have to network. If you have peer mentor, you can build up that network to help you do the job search. Finally, looking at job

applications and resumes. Being able to get the mentoring and say yes, your resume looks great. Or perhaps you don't need to include this type of information. Then assisting them in the application process. What to disclose and what not to disclose. We know with certain disabilities, there is a stigma attached to that. If you don't disclose, perhaps you won't receive your needed accommodation. If you have someone who is a peer mentor or a role model, they could assist you with deciding what to disclose and when to disclose it in terms of the whole job process that you can get the accommodations you need.

I think we have about 30 minutes?

About 25 minutes. And then the bridges done.

There are tons of resources out there in terms of peer mentoring. One of the things that I thought was [Indiscernible]. Information about the benefit of peer mentoring in the workplace. I want to share some of those with you. Peer mentoring is a great way to do both recruitment and retention. This is an employment settings. If you do have an individual that you have connected with a peer mentor, maybe they are working somewhere that they know they are hiring people. That could become a network for individuals with disabilities to find a job but then it could also be a way to retain employees. Now we have a peer mentor and where they are working who felt -- who helped him get a job but now can help retain and keep employees happy at the job because they have a peer mentor they have one built in at the job.

It could also improve supervisory skills, work productivity and habits because now the supervisor may not have to be constantly looking over the shoulder of the employee. Perhaps they have someone they can turn to to help them. It helps you to learn your work culture, so that you keep the work productivity going. When you are new at a job, you might not know what the call -- work culture is. Do they socialize, do they meet in the lounge, to the E together, or -- to they eat together, or do they eat at their desks. It's helpful to know the kind of information. And then this helps with employee satisfaction. You know that there is someone here who can support me and be helpful to me that I can turn to. That makes me feel better versus going to a job but I don't know what I'm doing and I don't know anybody. If you know you have someone you can turn to come it will help you be successful at the workplace.

A good way to promote professional development in the organization. You may have a mentor who gives you good mentoring and then you may need that she may become a mentor for someone else. It promotes professional development for yourself. You're seeing a good role model so that the personal could become a role model. You could promote good attitudinal changes in a workplace culture. Now you have people who

are engaged in these good professional relationships, people are having good job -- job satisfaction so it booster lifts the job culture where they work. It is something that is an expensive to impact the community where you are using peer mentor's to help one another. It is a good way to promote networking and the job.

Is a great opportunity to work the -- shape the workforce of tomorrow. If you have a good mentor, we know that individuals who are getting older and that we will move on to retirement, then that lets the individual who has been meant toward -- who has been meant toward move up the ranks.

I want to mention that even at the University, when we sign on as faculty members, one of the first things they do now is a peer mentoring process where they met you with someone you have a mentor when you come in. More and more workplaces are actually doing this. When I came in it wasn't as formal but I do have a professional mentor who I do go to and she has been my mentor since I have come to the University. She is still there and I still talk to her and I still go to her. I also know, because I have been at the University for a lot of, I am a mentor for someone. We have a more structured relationship where we have certain meetings, it is recognized that I am this person's mentor. It works out for both of us. Again, I am there to assist her in terms of finding resources at the University but now she can become a mentor for someone else. It makes her job satisfying as well as for me.

Do we have any questions before I go into the last two examples?

A couple of comments. People are very intrigued by the notion of being a job coach. And then in turn becoming the person's mentor after the job coaching inns.

That is such a good -- that is something we do well and the field of disabilities. Or rehabilitation. We don't see -- when I talk to students about this, we provide jobs coaching which is essentially there to support you. To learn your job. But then that person could become a peer mentor later on throughout the job process to help maintain your employment. Wouldn't it be great if every person regardless of disability, when you got a new job, you had a job coach there with you to help you learn the workplace meet people, learn your job tasks, and that eventually fade off. Than they could become a mentor for you. That would be fabulous. You just know that doesn't exist but having a job coach, when we think about people with more significant disabilities, is very helpful to have that individual there with you helping you learn the job but then once you have the skills, fading away and perhaps becoming more of a peer mentor for you. That is perfect. What a great relationship to have. Any other comments?

Have to mentioned that that is my favorite all-time ever field -- I still keep in touch with quite a few of people that I was a job coach for. I call me and they call me. -- I called them and they call me. We catch up and we find out how things are going. It would be a dream if we could all have one. [Laughter]

As I mentioned, I still hear from some of my old rehab counselors who were there with me going through college and helping me look for a job. Just a little check-in. Not that we are having a big relationship and going out and having coffee, nothing like that. It's just someone who reaches out. Somebody who says, I can't believe you got married, I can't believe you're teaching at the University. Just having someone to see where I am and providing that mentoring support that people with disabilities often a it's a great way to transition into that.

What I have next are two different ways that we can apply the notion of supported decision-making and peer mentoring. To assist the person with a disability. I will go through the first one and then we will start talking about -- but here's where I would like you to provide your own comments and feedback. I hope you have the slide in front of you that we will talk about it as I'm talking through this. If you had comments, that would be great. I love to get feedback from you out there in the field.

Imagine that a person with a disability wants to find a job. However, they don't know how to begin the job search. They might not be up to make a decision about how to look for a job. What their interests are, what jobs are available, or what employers are looking for. How can we have a peer mentor help with his process? Now we are talking about a person who might be new to the workforce, or who maybe has been at the same job for 10 years and is now deciding they want to leave. They don't know where to start. How often do we have clients who are consumers who are looking for jobs and they have no idea where to start. As we talked about earlier, when we think about peer mentor's, we think about supporters, families, friends, coworkers, past or present, may be providers, how then is a peer mentor going to fit in this process. They had you as a provider who is giving great information but how could I use a peer mentor to assist me through this process. Maybe I go to my peer mentor NSA, okay, -- peer mentor and say, I want to be more independent. I want to start making my own money. I want to get a job. The peer mentor, the first thing I will do, remember we talked about being a good listener. I will say, what are your barriers. Oh, well, I don't know where to look. I want a job but I don't know what I want to do. Then we go back to making the goals about -- you don't know what you're interested in, you want a job. Let's take it piece by piece and help the individual with making decisions. What I don't tell you, maybe you shouldn't get a job at this time. I don't say to you, you should definitely go to work at this place but we sit down and listen and we talked through how you will get there. The first thing could be, I could say, when I was

looking for a job, here are some places that I looked. Perhaps -- you go online and your options you might to look at. Here are things to look at, you create a task list. Here are options and maybe in the next couple of days get back to me and tell me where you have looked. This will help me help you in the process. If you are not sure what you're interested in, we could talk about maybe hobbies, the things you like, where might you want to work. Oh, I love Tripoli. I might want to work at chipotle. So now you're thinking about -- do you want to work weekends, do you work at night. Can you stand a lot. Is that still interesting to you. Just talking through the exploration of that. Have you worked in food services before? Talking through those barriers so that you can help them think about that.

Pamela has provided us the five step process.

I love it, Pamela. (Step one is the person is mentored with the best job that. Number two is review the pros and cons of each step and I'm assuming that applies to all five steps. Number three, we talk about transportation. Number four, the living situation, the living needs. And the number five is practice interviewing.

Pamela, that is phenomenal. What one would be doing. And you could do that as the employment specialist but then you could also tell the individual, okay you have a mentor and I will give you this five-step process, how about you start practicing with your peer mentor. Before they come back to see you Pamela maybe they are practicing with their peer mentor on interview. I know that has been helpful for me, practicing with someone, it could be a friend or sibling. Could you help me practice. Perfect, love it. Definitely the way to go.

We have a few more from others. They talk about likes and dislikes. And that a sense of what did you like about the previous job, what you do not like about the previous job. Others have written career assessments. And -- start searching the Internet, look on LinkedIn. Get involved in a network area outside of your current job. [Indiscernible]. You may be [Indiscernible]. Be careful. [Multiple speakers]

If you are at an employment setting and are leaving, that is something your peer mentor can help you navigate. They can help you get through that. You may not want your current employer to know that you are seeking employment. Your peer mentor may be able to provide you with a path like they have used. There are certain things you really don't like and then your next job, you will say I don't want to work in this industry or work weekends or from home. You can seek that out in the next job. All really good suggestions. This is how we work through the decision-making process. Again, we are providing advice, support, and you're listening but at the same time not making the decision, we are supporting you in that decision. Very good.

I will move onto the next one. Similar but different. Now you have a person with a disability who has begun a new job. The individual may not know how to make decisions about completing job tasks, in a timely manner, how to apply work procedures, how to engage in other work cultures, how to engage with coworkers or supervisors, or how to ask for assistance. We talked about this earlier. How many of us have been in a brand-new job and we're trying to feel out what is this place like. How great would it be to have that peer mentor with you to be able to share information and to explain to you okay, who do I go to for office supplies. Who do I go to if my cash register brakes? Who do I turn to if the scissors I'm using no longer work. Where do I go? If you had someone that you could ask and they could tell you where the great resources are or where to go, that would be helpful. Who do I talk to about eight -- attire. Some places are casual, some are business casual, business, how do I learn what is accepted at the new place. Do they only wear uniforms? Do they only wear scrubs or jeans? Can I wear tennis shoes. Do I need to wear slacks, I dress? Who can help me navigate that. At the University, we are what we consider to be business casual except for certain events. There are certain events where I have to wear business attire. Where I am in a suit and jacket. As opposed to a sweater and slacks. On Fridays, a lot of people wear jeans. Who would I go to to ask about what is the dress like here. Work culture -- we know that social skills are a huge barrier to employment for individuals. You may have all the employment related skills, professional skills, education, but you may not know the social skills at that setting. Who do I turn to -- do I need to eat with everyone at lunch? Is it okay to grab a cup of coffee and chit chat for five minutes or should I go specifically to my workstation, get my work done and then take my break. And then go home. Are they communicating here, do they go out once a week or every other week to celebrate birthdays. Do they do outs that do they things outside the office. This is where a peer mentor would be so helpful. Especially with the younger generation, with Facebook and twitter and instagram and all the social media things, is that acceptable for me to check at the office? Should I wait until it's over? Is there a Facebook page on the office? Do I need to join that or should I keep that separate. Learning those boundaries in terms of social media. If I'm friends with someone from the office, and I put pictures up on the weekend, when I lose my job, what kind of things do I share. Thinking about those things that a peer mentor could definitely be helpful with in helping people with disabilities get good advice. Any questions or comments?

Some suggestions. Specific to the scenario. For the majority of the class, the first two, the decision making, completing job test, that is a supervisory kind of question. The work procedures as well. Seeking out the supervisor, asking if there's training involved, I'm just reading comments -- asked the supervisor for directions on how to prioritize. Is that what the supervisor would do or something I should do. As for

training, if the person is eligible, recommend job coaching. If they are in the VR system and that is a possibility. I think the job coach with fit and help with all of these. That is my personal opinion. With the social and engaging -- tell the person don't expect to learn all of this the first day.

All great points. If you don't know to go to the supervisor for training, it is helpful if you have had that peer mentoring before you get to the job where someone can tell you, on your first day, you don't have to know everything. However, on your first day, you have these questions, if you could ask your supervisor, then have your meeting and see what their expectations are. Is there training provided. If someone doesn't know that, it's helpful to have the peer mentor to guide you and tell you to go talk to the supervisor. Again, job coaches are phenomenal because they can help with many of these things that are on here. In terms of helping a person maintain -- I can recall starting a new job and I was completely overwhelmed. I didn't know what to do. I didn't know where to go. If I would've had a good peer mentor before I began the job, it would have helped me to feel less anxious and to figure out where I was going in terms of my job path. All great, great points. You guys are right on target. Remember we are supporting the person, we are not making decisions for them.

I provided several resources for you. After the training is over, feel free to use the information about supportive decision-making, about mentoring. And about peer mentoring. I would suggest that you visit those resources if you need further information. Now I know we are almost done with the time. Does anyone have any final questions before we wrap up?

I don't have any at this point. If any of the participants have questions, please put them in the question box. Brandy, do you want me to wrap up? We are out of time.

I think the information was beneficial and I hope you found it to be engaging. Thank you for the work that you do out there. It is beneficial.

No question. We appreciate your participation today, Brandy. We appreciate when she comes and spends time with us. It is also time and rate information. We have recorded the webinar and if anyone wants to go back and look at that, I have had a couple people who had audio problems, not where we dropped off, but we will record it and we will post it. You can go back and review it, feel free to do that. I apologize for the technical difficulty and I'm not sure what happened. I'm glad you stuck with us. You will receive an email which is an evaluation link for this webinar. Please complete that survey and please give us feedback. We appreciate that so much. If you have suggestions for future webinars, let us know. That will be uploaded to the user portal and about 3-5 business days. We offer CRC credit for this. Please send an email to us

if you need the form. Q for attending today. We hope to see you again. Have a great day.

[Event concluded]

Actions

Save as Text

Save as HTML