

Event: Employment and Justice Involvement
Event Started: 12/8/2016 11:20:05 AM ET

Please stand by for realtime captions.

Good morning everybody. -- You are here with us this morning to listen to our presenter give us a wonderful 90 minute presentation -- we have posted as employment for justice involvement so that is where this presentation will be going today. We are very excited about this before we get going with our speaker let me go over the control panel again for some if you could argue especially if you go into your control panel and look at the question box that is where you are going to communicate with me throughout the presentation [Inaudible] monitoring our webinar this morning. If you find the question box and open it up what I would like for you to do is sign in [Inaudible] you sound great or things are going well you may want to say hello so the people can hear your voice.

Hello.

If you can hear the two of us in the volume is good and everything else think go ahead and send us a note in the question box and say that everything is working okay. The other thing you will notice in the control panel is that the presentation itself under the handout section. If you don't have that open and available already you will see that webinar presentation is there. It does look like we are sounding okay. Look at that. We have a lot of people participating and it sounds like people are able to hear us just fine.

I want to tell people a little bit about you and it is wonderful to meet you and I have heard wonderful things about your presentation Meiko McNeil is a trainer for the school of medicine and working with -- people in psychiatric facilities, veterans, sounds like you have quite a varied audience terms of people [Inaudible]. I learned a few minutes ago that Mika has been working [Inaudible] so you have been doing this is a career for quite some time so you probably have many stories to share with us. It is wonderful you are here because I get the deployment specialist of people providing direct support the feeling there is someone who will understand a lot of what the needs are [Inaudible]. You have also done some consulting with the US Department of Veterans Affairs and [Inaudible] homeless veterans. With that background of which will be presented today you have many things to share and I think everyone is really looking for to your presentation.

Wonderful. He.

-- Thank you.

I have been doing supported employment for quite a while. Started in 1998 as employment specialist over my way to being a trainer and I enjoy the field in enjoy seeing people have the best quality of life possible through employment. How that changes their relationships. Not just within agencies that they are receiving services but that relationships that change personally with their family members and friends. I appreciate the opportunity to be able to share with you information about assisting individuals who have the background is a great opportunity to be with University of North Texas. I have some connection to Texas. My father lives in Dallas so I am going to go ahead and get started.

Hopefully what folks will take away for today's webinar is you have understanding on how to use the strength-based principles to write an explanation letter for the individuals you are serving who have the justice involved background. Your people to seek out employers who hire individuals for that background and you will also be able to tailor job development presentations while searching for employment either independently or if you have your clients with you who have challenging background. This concept or idea came from a survey that was completed by -- at the time it was Dartmouth College so Dartmouth College is where the individual placement and support service approach was developed, designs, and research for supportive employment services for individuals with psychiatric disabilities and they have since moved their operation to the Rossville Institute in Rossville Maryland. You see Dartmouth College here in the slide because this is where this operation was coming out of when the survey was completed but you may hear me referred to the Rossville Institute. Same researchers, same key players just a different institution.

In 2009 they completed a survey with employers, about 128 or so employers of the country that were part of the learning collaborative and they just asked him point-blank, have you knowingly hired an individual who has a felony? 63 of those employers stated yes they knowingly hired a person with a felony. People who completed the surveys were actually employment specialists and eight of the probably 12 or so states at that time, employment specialists who were actually serving individuals on their caseload who -- that piqued the interest of the researcher and the researchers that let's figure out why they had this success. They went out and asked those employers, if you knowingly hired someone with a justice involved background, with me to hire that person? Really what employers were saying is not they were able to see that the individual had actually completed the task they were applying for and they also were showing some changes in how they were moving along in their lives. Some of the businesses that they surveyed were accounting firms, auto dealerships,

catering, school districts, things like that. We think it is supported to point this out because a lot of times when we think about individuals who have the justice involved background and the types of jobs that they may be available are capable of doing, we tend to think of jobs, cleaning jobs, we tend to think of maybe landscaping type jobs, but really what we wanted to show is that a person with that background can't get jobs that are in offices that are in school districts that are in medical facilities. Employers did say however that they were concerned that there were that grounds that did concern them so they paid attention very closely to financial crimes, they paid very close attention to any sex offenses, violent crime, things of that nature, crimes against children. It was not that they were just looking at the backgrounds and saying, sure, but they were actually looking closely at what the background was, with the offense was and how long ago the offense had taken place prior to the job application. They were being smart as they were also trying to determine if there was going to be a risk to hiring the individual to work for them.

. Some of the offenses that were noted. You can see we had folks who had some drug-related offenses, DUIs, sexual offenses, domestic violence, reckless driving, manslaughter, murder, these are the actual offenses that these employers were able to say they knowingly hired the individuals with these offenses in their background.

The next question for the employer was why? Why did you hire these individuals? I kind of alluded to it a couple of minutes ago was that the employers felt of individuals applying for the positions were qualified to do the job. They had a resume, they had work experiences and they were able to speak clearly and concisely in interviews about their work history which with any employer -- whether or not the person could complete the task that they were being hired to do. They also said that the individuals presented well in the interview. Is as we would ask anyone to come to an interview Waring professional clothing, well groomed, shake hands, smile, everyone and everything that anyone is expected to do in an interview. In some situations the employer actually had a connection to the clients or they knew someone who could vouch for the individual and I will speak a little bit about that little later on in the presentation about having -- the applicant having a relationship with someone who knows the employer or is actually the employer themselves might know the applicant from a previous introduction. The other thing employers noted was that they were able to see that the applicants had made changes in their lives, maybe since the offense and since coming out of the justice system they'd gone back to school and maybe got a certificate or even a degree, bachelors level, Masters level degrees so they were able to see that the individual had made complete changes in their lives. The to pay attention to the length of time from the offense. One thing that I do here, I live in Maryland and one thing I to is take the employment programs that I trained to take the employment specialists out in the community and we actually do job development

with employers in the community and I will ask the question about the justice involvement peace and I have had a few employers say really we just look at how long it has been, we have grocery store chain here called giant and I ask the manager and she said if it has been seven years. Usually okay with. That is really good important information to know when we are out there job developing. The other thing that employers noted is that applicants were able to demonstrate the sincerity and they were honest about what they did and they took full responsibility. They did not try to play it off as someone made me do it or if this had not happened I would not have done it, if they took responsibility and were sincere and honest. Employers also felt that the applicants they hired are going to be dependable, come in on time, to the work and do it well. As they are thinking about the applicants that are going to be applying for these jobs, we need to have those types of things in mind when looking at our [Inaudible].

Some advice that employers gave during the survey was encourage, as the applicants to be honest and upfront. Don't try to hide anything or keep it from being revealed. We know that the employers are going to run a background check so if you are going to try to hide things and not be honest, it may come out. We all know that you need to fill out an application thoroughly. Every piece of the application needs to be filled out and filled out with what is the most accurate information. That can prevent someone from getting a job. That was one of the biggest pieces of advice was to be honest and upfront. Take the responsibility, dress well, show and talk about your work experiences and make sure your applicants have good references. People who really know the type of work that the individual can do. And that also provide information about bonding which is something we are going to talk about in a second.

As employment specialists, the advice we like employment specialists to pay attention to is to make sure you know your clients history. I had an experience myself when I first moved to Maryland and was running a supported employment program here and I was working with a client and I helped my clients get a job and I was so happy and proud for him and about two weeks after working I had gotten a call from his employer saying we're going to have to let him go. I said what did he do? What happens? He did not do anything actually. We love him here and he is doing a great job and we really want to keep them but his background check came back and there are a lot of things on there and when we looked back at the application we didn't see where he had identified that he had any type of backgrounds so I was surprised because I have been working with the client for a while and I did not know he had this extensive background check. I talked to my client about it and he said that is not me but in all actuality it was him and it was a symptom of the mental illness that prevented him from believing and taking responsibility for the fact that the background check of a showing him was his. Long story short, I as an employment

specialist do not take the time to get to know my clients history. I didn't take the time to look and see did he actually have background in making sure that on the application that he put the right information. The employer basically said he lied on his application which is why we have to let him go. We have no problem with the items on his background check, it is the fact that he did not put it on his application. It broke my heart and my clients heart and taught me a lesson which was I need to make sure I am very clear and no what my clients history is. We do have something and if you and your state have it that would be great but we have something here called Marilyn K search and that allows us to go online to the website and put in a person's name and I believe their Social Security number and birthday and if there is a public record arrest in the system with charges and convictions in the system, it will pop up and that lets us know in our vocational program that that background does exist and it also helps the employment specialist know what steps they need to take from that point forward when they begin to start developing job goals for the individual, with the individual, and going out and doing job development. Sometimes it can feel a little awkward to have these conversations with your clients, but it is going to be a really important piece of setting up that vocational goal and the type of intervention and job development that will happen with that individual.

Also some advice is used strength-based language that is intelligent and helps people to describe their situations with less stigma. It also helps people to feel a little bit better about themselves, about how they hear themselves talk about themselves. When you think about someone who has been in prison or jail, may be they are referred to by a is a number or cell number or something like that, but when you actually put that person first, put their name and their and describe the defense in a non-stigmatizing way, if carefully motivate the individual and also help increase their self-esteem. For so long you hear yourself being referred to with a negative connotation and you begin to really believe and live in that spirit. That is not what we want. We want people to rehabilitate vocationally and otherwise so we want people to be able to describe things differently in a more strict paysite and adhere themselves here themselves described differently. I have little project or exercise that I like to do. It is a glass empty, glassful type of thing. It could be a great discussion so if you have an opportunity to do this, if your opportunity was with her supervisor to do this with the staff is a great conversation. We are going to do a little portion of the. This exercise is about 2 1/2 pages of what you see in front of you. On the west side you see we have deficit-based language and what we ask is we take a few minutes and come up with a more strength-based art recovery oriented way to say the same thing. If you are an employment specialist or your supervisor is an employment specialist, when you're working with your staff this is something that is good to do with the. You would say what is another way to say eight schizophrenic or borderline? Obligate the a few minutes to see what you come up with. We have clinical case manager, frontline staff

in the trenches, substance abuse or, these are all medically related languages that I could say I was raised in my mental health world and this is the language I put in my documentation. Not saying that this is wrong because this is what we have always done but I'm saying that there is another way of saying this. Now when I click on this button there are going to float in but I would just like to address a few.

I was going to ask if you wanted to see if people wanted to give it a try. For answers they could try to respond to estimate that would be great and actually I just clicked it and one came in so apparently I changed this [Indiscernible - multiple speakers]

Person with schizophrenia was actually one of the ones that was already submitted so if you want to take a word like unrealistic because we hear that a lot some of the audit would want to take a little bit of time.

That would be great. In the meantime we did have one question and it was a question that was referencing the ocean when you were telling the story about the background check access that you have available now, is that a search website in the state of Maryland or does each state separately? Two correct. That is correct. Here for Maryland it is called Maryland case search and I think Georgia has something similar to that so you would definitely want to check with Texas is the of Texas have something similar to that. It is a public access record of background charges, convictions.

We do have folks from Oklahoma and Louisiana on the training today as far as I can see with my have a couple of other places but also I guess the vocational rehabilitation counselors should have some idea about where to get those kinds of resources.

They probably do. Okay. We had a couple of pieces of input here, ability versus unrealistic.

That is great.

And then I do have a comment that Texas has something similar but I think [Indiscernible - low volume]

If anyone else has more input, [Indiscernible - low volume] goes to the rest of the.

Are you ready for me to go to the rest of them? To make sure. And Texas has County and city website.

Okay. That is great. That will make life a lot easier for some folks to be able to have that information up front. I am going to go through what we have up here so instead of saying schizophrenic or borderline you can cite a person diagnosed with schizophrenia and follow that up with that interferes with employment. You could just really describe how the symptoms for the diagnosis has interrupted that individuals ability to move forward with their vocational rehabilitation. For clinical case manager we have recovery coach or guide and that is something we are move using a lot more in my world because we want to move in a recovery oriented atmosphere so let's change the language to be more recovery oriented. Frontline staff were in the changes. We have direct support staff and the one thing I want to point out about in the trenches, one thing that is commonly said when a staff person is going to go out outside of their office building and do work, one of the first things they say to someone as they are walking out the door is I am going out in the field or in the trenches. My suggestion is that you consider changing that to I'm going out in the community. First of all, our clients within the community. We are not going into the field or trenches, it implies a very hostile environment of war. I began using community years ago because that is really where I am going. The client to work with them are in apartment buildings or group homes. Someone for their family and I know that the programs I currently trained, their clients live in the same types of environment so it's the community, it's where I am going to provide services, where I am going to search for employment. That is where the employers are a clients our community partners. Again, just shifting from that filled and trenches to community I think will make a world of difference.

Instead of substance abuser, person living with substance use diagnosis which interferes with and then you describe what it interferes with, it interferes with housing, interferes with employment, interferes with education, but they are not abusing, they are using and we know that it is a diagnosis and we also know that they change their language from abuse to use as well. Instead of suffering from, person is living with a mental health diagnosis or substance abuse diagnosis or recovering from. One or the other. Treatment team, recovery team. And set up high functioning versus low functioning you can just describe the person symptoms and how it interferes or how the addiction interferes. The other thing I tend to use one I'm referring to someone who would be categorized as high functioning is they are pretty independent. They have the ability to make decisions independently, follow through with those decisions independently. We still need our support in other areas but I'm not going to categorize them as high or low functioning. Unrealistic, and I do like the suggestion that someone made earlier idealistic or the person has high expectations and a lot of times we think about it especially as we think about job choices and you hear someone say I want to be a doctor, want to be a lawyer, to be a police officer but they don't have the education at that time to back that up to somebody might say that is an unrealistic job

goal, but is it unrealistic who is it unrealistic to? They have high expectations of themselves, they are ambitious and we're going to work from there to do what we need to do [Indiscernible - multiple speakers] we actually did have a couple more entries are suggestions and similar to you, one was ambitious.

That. There we go.

And challenging and the other was preferences, strong preference.

Absolutely. Those are all great.

For resistant or noncompliant we choose disagrees with torches as alternatives and when someone is going to be categorized as being noncompliant, that really is the situation. They just don't agree with what it is the staff person may want to do at that time. We can hope that negative connotation out a bit more and maybe as they are moving forward we can be positive a little bit more but why do we disagree with the? What would you feel more comfortable with doing? Especially when we are thinking about employment. Weaknesses, barriers to change or support means would be the suggestion. Maintaining clinical stability and abstinence, promoting life worth living. Puts self or recovery at risk. Takes risks to try new things or grow, and then treatment work. The suggestion there is the person uses treatment as a tool in recovery. Again, I would try to email you the whole list of this and I don't know if you would be able to get it out to the participants today, but this is a 2 1/2 page exercise, we will fit comfortably a two page exercise and there are other words that have strength-based options or that I think people might enjoy.

Absolutely. We can send that out with the evaluation.

Okay. Great.

Here's an example of what I would call a strength-based explanation letter. This is something that we feel has really helped individuals who are letting employers and use advice of the employers have given around being honest and upfront. Let's say you are an employer and this letter of explanation is either electronically attached to an online application or attached to a hardcopy application and it starts off -- I put guilty to the charge and was sentenced to three years probation which I completed without violation. I have not had any arrest or charges since that incident.. They're my question to you is if you were the employer reading this and came with the application after reading the first paragraph would you continue reading? Hopefully most of you are saying yes, because what we are seeing in this first paragraph is the honesty, uprightness, responsibility, and the fact that this person has not had any other

incidences. We would move on to the second paragraph. I recognize that my behavior and decisions I have made at the time in my life when I could once. I also recognize that I wish we are also starting to hear a bit of remorse coming in that I made a mistake and I don't want to hurt others and I want to be better and do better. At that point I decided that I needed more structure so I landed in a series of jobs which would offer me the structure I thought I probably needed. I then decided -- I completed the course in building management in 2012 and have maintained to building management certificate ever since. Here we're letting people know that not only have we made changes in expressing remorse and responsibility but we are also showing the efforts and commitment to complete a task that can take anywhere from six weeks to two years depending on the program that someone can send. Dedicate and commit the time to the program shows employers what they are setting themselves up for. I also went back to school in 2011 and obtained my Maryland high school diploma. I'm currently attending Maryland College of technology completed the required courses -- I think I'm an excellent candidate for a position in your company. Would appreciate an opportunity to meet with you to further discuss the progress of the qualifying skills I have a job in your company. Again, showing that you can do the job talk of the client can do the job the tacit will be put in front of them will be able to be completed. This is one example of a letter of explanation and then I have another one which kind of addresses the psychiatric side. Again I'm going to start with the first paragraph. In early 2012 I was found guilty of aggravated assault. During that time I was living with the symptoms of an undiagnosed mental illness which played a role in the decisions I was making. I treatment for four years and have had no other interest -- incidents. -- I am reading this as an employer, I may be entry depending on that employer and how they understand mental illnesses, but hopefully we want this person to continue reading the next paragraph. Would appreciate an opportunity to share with you the experiences and successes that I have had since reentry to the community. I'm proud of the time I spent working at a shelter for use. During the time that I worked as they initiative assisted processing paperwork as well as mentoring to young people. I'm eager to young -- work you need them. I bonded by the Federal bonding program. While I do not have -- you will find my work ethic and commitment to complete the task given to me is strong. Again, you really want this letter of explanation to cover what the employer needs to know about the individual. As a deployment specialists and is thinking about going out and doing job development and engaging employers, hopefully have had an opportunity to talk to the employer about supportive employment in your services and what you do so your conversation coupled with this letter of explanation will hopefully get that employer what they need to fill comfortable to hire this individual.

From their people talk a little bit about -- I'm not sure if people are familiar with this but this is a grassroots movement that has been happening for over while across the

country where we are asking employers to remove the question from the application. Have ever been convicted of a felony. But the idea behind removing that question is it allows an individual to get further along in the application process than they would possibly if this question was on the application and it was checked yes and the employer says I'm done with this application -- it will cause the employers as this later on in the hiring process. We hope is that by that point and oppression in everything we had talked about to this point has already been made, the letter of explanation probably wouldn't come in until after we get to the hiring process but just a personal things face-to-face contact we need people to have it going to the interview and then when the process comes up with a letter of explanation you will still be able to move forward with that employer.

Right now there are about 24 state -- some states have implemented laws prohibiting private employers from asking any variation of the question in their art exhibits here of what the states are. I am going to click on here and see -- I don't know if I am able in the webinar able to access the Internet or if it will mess anything up.

If you're able to access it -- I'm going to pull that over here. The link that I just clicked on should sinew to this website and then you can -- I can tell you probably here in Maryland that the city of Baltimore started implementing it about two years ago. I'm very close to Washington DC which is also implementing an and we have another county in Maryland that is looking at it. I'm just scrolling -- I encourage you to go on here and look up your state -- did I pass Texas?

We have often, Dallas, and Travis. Double-click on Dallas and this gadget information. We have -- will click on this link to find more there and you have a contact in Dallas and his email address and a guest will be back up and see if we get something similar for Austin. We do have something similar. This is a resource for you to check into and learn more about it in your state or county or city and there is also it's of information on here. Let me back up one more time. Back to the main website. There are all sorts of information on here that will give you the information that you need to know about your state and if you go further -- a little matrixes that have been developed to break things down is a quick reference so hopefully people will utilize this to help them learn more about than the box in their community.

I'm sorry. --

We can see the PowerPoint now so it looks good.

Okay. Great. A little bit about bonding. I don't know how similar folks are with the Federal bonding program but this is a program that allows individuals who have a

hard time finding employment because of their background to be bonded for six months. It is something like an insurance program a person can be bonded and implement of five set \$5000, \$10,000, \$50,000, \$20,000. When a person is bonded, they go to the employer and let them know their bonded and for how much and then in many ways this motivates the employer to go ahead and hire that person. The employer knows if something were to happen in the individual were to take supplies from them or something that is going to cost them a financial hardship that they will have the ability to get the cost of that back to the Federal bonding program. A lot of the programs here in my state as our clients come in, one of the first things they do is go on so they can learn their history and if something is there and they need to bond the individual they will start working on the bonding process immediately so that as they are going to the other and take processes for starting to work with a new client as all this is going on at the same time. I would encourage folks to consider following that same process, you want to make sure that you understand bonding so that you can have very fluid conversations with your clients about bonding and let them know that this is for individuals who employers would see as at risk. Folks who are eligible for being bonded are those that we're talking about today [Inaudible] applicants who don't have a whole lot of work history, applicants who received entitlement ends -- I'm sure many of you are familiar about 10 or so years ago employer started checking your credit history right along with your background when you are going to the hiring process so this is Gidget another opportunity to help folks get closer to employment. I'm going to click on this link. There is no cost to bonding in case anyone was wondering so.

At least to the Federal bonding program, correct? Two correct. The link I clicked on will send you here so you should be able to get any questions that you need answered and find some other resources that should help you. We have forms and toolkits here and there is probably going to be somebody in your state who is -- I would affectionately call the bonding person. I don't know what that person's official title is but I would certainly look into it.

What is the relationship between bonding and applicants who receive entitlements?

Again I think it is about that at risk that she may be familiar with a lot of employers but not all employers have that kind of demographic worksheet that comes at the end of an application and on that demographic worksheet there are at least seven questions. One of the questions is are you affiliated with or do you work with the debilitation program? Another question is the receive food since? Are you a veteran so if anyone answers yes to any of this questions the point of it is that the employer get a tax break on that employee but also these are questions that are going to show up or should it show up on an actual application because they also asked age and that

kind of demographic information. An employer could see that somebody is receiving entitlements and think they are receiving entitlements I wonder if they are going to be a risk for coming in here and maybe -- it is an unfortunate the process to have but I think that is where the correlation is. Anyone who would be in a situation where they are really struggling with becoming employed in relying on other resources in income is that the risk for that employer. If the -- let's go ahead and give them a try.

Also, expungement. Your deposits alter clients have a clear understanding on getting someone a expunged but it is a little tricky with expungement so misdemeanors can be expunged and felonies cannot. You see -- hearing information about some states might be changing that while. Right now the only person that can expunge someone from a felony would be a pardon from the governor. I have to admit that I am not totally up on the currents process for expungement as far as whether or not they are changing not from the felonies cannot be expunged, but I would encourage you to look at those in your state. And are they hear it costs \$30 for when case what a person can get a fee waiver so you would have to look at that in your state. Whatever you want to have expunged you would have to request it for each individual thing that would fall under this the way to explain in my understanding is that if a person has a felony they cannot get the felony expunged and cannot get anything below its expunged. Anything above that they could get expunged. If there is something on your record and they wanted to get expunged, if there is a felony that exist, it would have to be above that felony and it would be a single request for each one. Once the paperwork is spelled out the need to send it to the county, you to go to the courthouse where the case was heard. You can just put it into any courthouse in that state, you have to go to where the case is heard. Once in expungement has been approved, thing you need to look into the reporting agency or the reporting entity so in our case we would have to go to them and make sure that it is removed off of that website because just because something has been expunged doesn't necessarily mean that the company that is reporting it knows that. Sometimes it is going to take a little extra effort to go back to who is reporting it and make sure that it is removed. Expungement can be a little complicated but they can also be very, very helpful. And worth looking into.

There are some resources for expungement on the criminal record and I'm going to click on here and see what comes up. Elevated over here. Again, you can go to your states and I am going to go down to Texas and we have Texas Department of Public Safety. Click on that and then here is information you need to know about criminal record services and removing those records and other issues. There are more resources for folks to read, they may not be the most entertaining, but I think it is something that would be very helpful.'s -- this goes back to the bonding. This should tell you your state representative is for bonding. I thought that was a link that would open it up state-by-state with a name and contact number and it looks like they have changed the

website.. When you have an opportunity with you can go into the website and see if you could figure out who your state bonding represented is. It looks like they changed the website a little bit.

We had one other bonding question and that was in that list of people who -- you also had veterans, while the veterans be on that? Two that is a good question. There was a project that happened maybe two or three years ago in the Obama administration wanted to get rid of homelessness for veterans overall and there was this project that happened and it was the supported employment for homeless veterans and we were chine to make sure that we trained the employment specialists who work at the VA were also veterans on helping their does the people they served to become employed. We think about someone who is homeless and experiencing some real financial hardship and it falls in line with what eligible individual for bonding would need to have in place. Not every veteran is experiencing financial hardship, but we do know that there are several who are in several better living with mental illness and several living with substance abuse diagnosis and I don't want to imply that the VA is not doing what they can to support and help the veterans, but the need to have other entities comment because maybe it is not enough staff to come in and help with that and so also being able to have the same processes for anyone to be able to get in there and also recognizing that this person is a veteran. I was that gives you a good answer but that is kind of how it has been working with veterans who are living with the diagnoses of mental illness and or substance abuse and the homeless as they are experiencing. We had one County here in Maryland that has completely gotten rid of all of their homeless individuals -- no one in the county they are aware of at this point are homeless and many are in housing and jobs and a lot of this is helping with that.

Another thing we think it's very helpful and I mentioned this a little earlier is if there is someone that could vouch for the client to the employer. This is called life mapping and is something that came out of that survey that was completed. What you would do is take the piece of paper, but the client same in the center of that paper and talk to your client about who in your life, who do you know that owns a business or that has the ability to hire where they work. Just learn from your clients who exist in their lives that meet that. We say that my mom's friends manages an insurance office. The neighbor on the dealership and Sally owns a bridal shop. The thing here is that is they know you are ready. They know what your life experiences have been likely, they know that you may have been in jail or prison or hospitalize, but they know you on an intimate level. If these folks have businesses with the ability to hire then why not as an employment specialists approach these individuals as a community employer partner, go to them into the same thing you would do with the employer you don't know but instead of it being a cold call, it is a warm call. We could talk about the services that you provide as an employment specialists and how you support people in

training them and making sure they understand the tasks and being part of their orientation when they are hired and helping them complete preemployment paperwork and all that good stuff. Just to give a quick story, I was working with the agency serving a family-owned business -- his employment specialists at the time so why don't you work for the family business in the client could it really answer the question so he went to his dad and he said well we lived with him and have been dealing with his symptoms and behaviors for so long that we just don't have time when at work to stop it do what we need to do when we are at home. We have to make sure we are getting our work done. Employment specialists refers the relationship -- to an employment specialist talking to an employer and explaining it to that father at that time and how you would support him and what he does and all of the following along in job coaching that he was doing and the father so much try. Who will do it. He gave the clients the task of mixing the ingredients that would eventually mold into the team and it worked out fabulously. They were able to -- I'm saying this because this is an opportunity to help that individual become employed does some job development strategies. I encourage the employment specialists to visit them to begin building a relationship and rapport with the employer and office building in an office suite and went say it is a doctor's office or something of that nature so when you visit the employer you want to bypass the receptionist to get to the person who has the power to hire. -- I tried not to waste my time with the gatekeeper because a person doesn't have the power to say yes we will hire you or no we won't so you have stood there and done a wonderful introduction and are feeling good about it and the person says I am not the person you're supposed to talk to. Then you are feeling like I just wasted a good introduction. Go in and right away ask -- usually at the point the gatekeeper. Ultimately get that person and then you can save your great introductions for the hiring person. Hopefully you have engaged them and are having a full conversation with you about what it is you do and how you can help them as the employers, employers must be helped and also love to talk. You can start asking some questions. The question that you want to ask is what is the company's policy around hiring individuals who are just as involved or are involved -- what you don't want to ask is you hire people with a criminal record or a criminal background. First of all it is posing the question and you may get a guess or no, but also using that word crime or criminal is stigmatizing so if we are using -- then it is less stigmatizing and you make it to go ahead and get an answer. Again, what is the policy? They will tell you are policy if they know it. You may be surprised at how many don't, but like I said the grocery store, they told me their policy is seven years in Mesa depending on what the offense was able to determine -- we will just put them somewhere else. I have been to a target and asked that question and was told well, if we see best of merchandise we won't hire someone but anything else will probably be fine. I have asked flows and they have basically said we just call it by ear. We see as we will look at each background and make a determination. It is there's it was hard for them to give

me an upfront answer but I respected that in appreciate it. I'm not sure if you're familiar with accompanied similar to Costco or Sam's Club and they flat out said we don't hire anyone with a felony and I said good to know. Years why it is important to know that ahead of time because then when you go to your caseload and you look at who will be the best match for this employer you will know that this client has a felony but I am not going to take them here but I could take them to Lowe's or to the grocery chain or that doctors office I was thinking of earlier but what this prevents is it prevents a person from going to the application process, getting to the interview, being told they are going to be hired, being hired, having a background check done it coming back and being told I'm sorry but due to your background check we can no longer employ you or we will not be able to employ you. That burst everybody's bubble because people go from feeling really happy good about the potential of employment and now the background check has come back and wiped everything away and it depletes the individual and as an employment specialists put in so much work and it takes the wind out of you as well. If you go ahead now I had with the policies are and who to take and who not to take and most likely in the situations the person is going to be hired based on their work history just like any other person is going to be hired and also keeping in mind that at this point we probably have a letter of explanation that has been attached to the application it we know that this employer is not going to [Inaudible] that is of the to keep in mind. Also keep track of your employer contacts and I would hope that most employment specialists a staff Internet anyway. It is always great to have your own personal reference to go back to because maybe when you went to the employer the first time they were not in a position to hire but they would have and they look like they would be a great employer to work for so keep your contacts handy and keep checking them and putting notes on your contacts they tell you a little bit about what the employer has said about their policy and other things that they might share with you at that time. Also learn what the hiring process is once an application has been submitted. The hiring process being, particularly for this online application, went something is submitted online, who knows where it goes. I was like to ask the question once I have submitted one of my applicants application, what is the hiring process and I will be told it will go through this person first and they might do a phone interview and then I will ask are you able to pull the application yourself? Once I submit my applicants application, but I be able to call you and tell you it has been submitted and would you be able to pull it? That is going to be one of the biggest ways to help get your clients in the door, because unfortunately not all individuals look great on paper but they would be one of the best employees that an employer can hire. We want to be able to get a jump on folks that would look great on paper so -- we want to be able to drop that name and go from there. The answer is going to be when you asked that question, we used third-party, I cannot pull any applications to the third-party have them but they are going to do and they sent the application's Ford. There's nothing anybody can do about that. All I can do is

respected and move on. Someone might say it depends on what pops up on the application. Some people use what I call the -- the application is completely filled out and has the right information on it and the right words pop up and that gets the green light and it gets ported to the hiring manager and they are able to do what they need to do or if it is a yellow light it has some of that information but not enough and they will keep it on file for 60 days or something like that or think it's a red light it is lost in cyberspace ever to be seen again. If they use that system it is going to be imported to ask a follow-up question which is what might prevent someone from being hired here so you might get if they don't put that their availability is this or if they don't put that they have work history in this. Kind of learning what would cause an application to get that red light. If we can prevent the rabbi from happening you could do that. And then also getting the name of the person who but they are submitted this application, would you please pull it? You want to make that phone call as quickly as possible after the application has been submitted. If you submit an online application and then you go to that employer a call that employer and you are trying to find -- it is going to be a lot more difficult if the employer already knows you exist, you have the name and contact of a person to call and have submitted the application and you get a jump on that. We have found that to be extremely helpful. When you do have an opportunity to stand in front of an employer into your introduction and have some engaging conversation and building that report, take the time to say thank you to that employer by sending them a thank you card, nothing big, not a big form letter but think thank you for taking -- I look forward to working with you in the future, I have applicants who would really fit your needs at this time, for your business card in there and send it on and then make it a point to check back with some of those employers as time goes on if you have not had an opportunity to have your clients hired by them.

Here's the approach I use. I encourage everybody to come up with your own introduction but this is what I say when I'm training deployment specialists here in Maryland. Once I have gotten to the hiring I wish my trail is I work with an agency that assist with getting back to work. Depending on how I am feeling at that time with the energy is like or who I am standing in front of, I might say I work for an agent the that assist with disabilities. I might say I work with an agency [Inaudible] or I might not say anything at all. I work for an agency that assist with disabilities and get back to work. I am here in the community to learn more about an employer's needs. Do you have a moment to talk with me? I'm not saying I'm an employment specialists or job coach or job developer, I'm not saying any of that. That is jargon we use in our world and employers are going to get stuck on that language. They are going to be stuck on job coach. What is a job coach? They are not going to hear anything you have set up to that. I'm also not saying I'm here to find out if you are hiring or if you are accepting applications. Those are closing the questions and I went to engaging conversation with the employer. What I want to know is what your needs are. That is my question. I

am here in the community to learn what the employer needs are or what your needs are. Do you have a moment to talk with me next if they say no I will ask for a good time to call back. If they say yes I will take that time. A lot of times with what your needs are -- I never said the word hiring, they said the word hiring. It is about capturing them to engage them in conversation and like I said they love to talk so when you start asking about what your needs are hopefully you will get a good handful -- I have an applicant who I think would be great for the position. We pride ourselves in making the best matches. What you may also notice if I'm not saying consumer. That is our jargon. I might say clients, but a consumer for many employers out there his cell projects, consumer is a person who purchases products. I try not to confuse merchandisers for saying consumer because I do not want them to get stuck on that word and not hear what I'm saying afterward. If you are asked to come back at a more convenient time then come back with some prepared questions and what of those questions would be to ask about -- ask them about some of the things that they look for in their employees that when I get someone hired there if it is a facility that would require -- it may be fun to have its work, ask if you can have tour. I have done so many tours -- each time I ask for a tour and get on I am shocked that they are actually going to take me on a tour. I think it really is about that beginning and how you make that introduction to pull the men and start engaging and builds that rapport with them. Explain how you support employers. Not just her clients, not just how do you support employers? What you do for that employer? Once they heard your client and of course this is all with disclosure then what are you going to do to help that employer out? Also consider, and I think I say this in another slide I'm sure, but consider asking existing relationships with your employees or clients if they would be willing to be a reference for you. Thing you can say to a potential employer, I work with such a such company and I have had a great relationship with them and if you are interested they would be happy to talk to you about what has been like to work with me earlier we were talking about life mapping -- just because it is a one call does not mean that you -- no one understands what you do and think great, I want to do this. You really want to take the time to do the same thing and getting this questions that you have -- one thing I think we find helpful with rural communities is if you are able to do agency partnership builds. The agency that you work for is a community partner just like the employers that are in the communities that you work in such a clients within our community partners. Sometimes we need to go to executive leadership and see if they have maybe that would open it up for some of our clients to become employed with some of those. Look at community events. Every community has community events everybody knows everybody but the land is so vast and events happen and everyone comes together at one point and go back to their own area for employment specialists it is hard to know where these employers who but these events on, who is the manager of these events? Learning from community events, who put the event on? Who manages the event? Who hires for these events? Are these

permanent hires? We don't want to have folks being integrated position and learn from that ends built from that and take the same approach is that you would and as I did say I figured it would be -- using employers that you already have relationships with in order to be a good reference for you and with your program and the clients that you serve.

That is actually my last slide. Are there any questions? Two certainly, and we invite people who have more questions, we have about 10 minutes or so to share some information. You certainly provided of large amount of information. This comic caper one of our listeners [Inaudible] the story also mentioned that it can adversely affect minority applicants, particularly black applicants who have no criminal history. Black applicants were adversely affected because employers used bamboo box -- to screen applicants by way of looking at their name and make a correlation between their name and race and potential criminal history. Can the speaker address this issue? Two --

That is a good question and a tough question. Unfortunately I don't think there is a great one answer for that. We have employers that screen on many different levels and to screen someone's name and to make an assumption, but is something that is unfortunate so I really don't know how to get beyond that other than as the employment specialists when you are going out and engaging employers that you are able to make that first impression about what it is to work with your agency, with you personally as the employment specialist and then the applicants that you would bring to that employer. If you are having these engaging conversations with employers ahead of time, before the application is approved, you have an opportunity to describe the type of applicants that you would be a good match for them and what they could expect from that person and hopefully that will deter the name of the individual from preventing that employer from moving forward with that person. I am not sure how to describe or explain or counter how ban the box is adversely affecting that, because ban the box is about that background so that is just making a poor assumption of someone just because of their name. There are folks who have non-ethnic sounding names who have just as involve the background that when I get through an employer's I don't know how to address that piece of it other than it is about the relationship and engaging of the employer from the employment specialist in the beginning.

Hopefully that is helpful and we will go ahead and move onto the next question which is many of the examples given are all examples given used [Inaudible] disclosure for their disability and their justice background so what about individuals who have no special kind of support which you provide Texas seems like we are setting this person if they do not disclose.

Individuals who do not disclose, it is trickier on how we do job development for them and how I do job development for them. I have done two things. I have talked to an employer, they know who I am of what I do, I support that I would say to that employer and this has actually happened here at a grocery store chain and I said to the store manager the individuals that I work with, many of them don't want to disclose that they have a disability because they are worried about stigma and being treated differently so you may end up hiring somebody that I work with but you never know that I work with that individual. His immediate response to that was satisfying, we treat our employees the same and we want everyone to be successful and happy while here. I did ask them about the policy of hiring individuals who have backgrounds in at their company they actually have, it happens at the corporate office he is -- he is the manager when not know what their background is but the corporate office would now and he would just go from there. The thing is we're talking about two different things. We're talking about a person living with a disability and whether or not they should disclose and if they don't how would we do job development with them and support them and we have -- where talk about whether or not they are in a state the background check is going to get run. They are going to see that anyway and they have to disclose it on the application because if they don't then they omitted it and will be identified as lying on the application. As far as disability is concerned that is an individual's choice in my comment to the clients that I held training for, talk to your client about disclosure and the risk of benefits of disclosure and how it can help you and if you choose not to disclose, what is the best way for you and I to go about doing job development -- give the information to my client and help them on the backend and if they are hired then I will provide the same follow along from the outside but I will set it up so that they can talk to me about what is happening on their job, were to the clock in, who have they come to meet and know and names of people and relationship with your employer or supervisor, are the questions you have things you want to ask that you don't know how to ask? You have to get your client to paint really good pictures for you of what is happening while they are at work sooner you can provide the necessary support from the backend. It may sound like you're trying to set them up when you have these good measures in place of work it out with your client and who is going to do what and how they are going to do it hopefully you are preventing them from failing in this. It is a huge challenge to work with someone who is not going to disclose, but as far as that involved piece, if there is to ban the box and even still it omitted from the application at some point it will be run and they will see it so you are still going -- you don't have to put in the explanation number -- you could still have a letter of explanation explaining incidents -- what they did and why they did it. Hopefully that answers your question somewhat.

That addressed some of the issues if not all of them and we do have another disclosure question, can you expand a little bit more about why give a disclose that you represent people with disabilities? I was always taught to never do this.

In our system part of the intake process is to have a full conversation about the risks and benefits of disclosing. This happens prior to ever contacting the first employer. If the client at that point says do not disclose then job development when a person goes out to do job development they will act accordingly. They will -- if the person chooses to disclose, the number one reason that it person with disclose is so that they can use in accommodation so in order to do and accommodation you have to disclose the disability. Bylaw a reasonable accommodation is anything that is not going to be a financial hardship to the employers of \$5000 or less. As an employment specialist you are a legal and reasonable accommodation. You are there's depending on your system you are free to your client and no cost to the employer. In order for our clients to be able to successfully go in and apply for work, be hired for work and do work, the support accommodation they need as the employment specialist you can go ahead and make that known in the beginning. Other accommodations such as wheelchair ramps, screen enhancers to put on a computer screen are also reasonable accommodations and in order for a person to be able to request those they would have to disclose that they have disability. Most applicants will tell you that one should not disclose that they have disability until after they have offered the job. Was there offered the job they could disclose and let them know what accommodation is going to be needed. In the case of working with an individual living with a mental illness, that disclosure may have been very early on in order even to just get to the interview process -- when I was a provider with my client and I know that the individuals being sensitive of the individuals I trained have had their employment specialist sit in with them. It is a long-winded answer and I'm going to repeat myself but it depends on what type of support that individual is going to meet in order to be able to get to the application interview process and be hired and start. If that accommodation is needed and makes a lot of sense to go ahead and describe what you do when you first become introduction because you are trying to build rapport with the employers, be up front with the employers and let them know I am the reasonable accommodation. I hope that helps.

Very nice. The next question was for those individuals with background issues, do any of them have any programs with recovery and success? Do they offer any type of additional accommodations other than what is required for the disability?

It felt like that question is for the individual licensed mental health vocational programs that are serving individuals. I think my quick answer would be yes, but there are other services and accommodations that may be needed and offered for individuals, but also think it depends on the agency that is providing the service and

any service available, just thinking about someone who may also be living with a substance abuse diagnosis there also probably being services -- and whatever support and resources could be in line for them to help them get through reentering into the work community and what may be needed for that to move forward in that. I think it is really individual agency answer if I understood the question correctly.

I think that probably head on it. We have several think is that have come through with responding to these questions and we have run to the end of our time allotment. We always want to have a little bit more discussion sometimes but we are at the end of our 90 minutes and I want to thank you for giving us your time today because there's

You are very welcome. Thank you again for having me.

What our listeners will be getting is you'll be receiving an evaluation of today's webinar session and along with that exercise when we receive your evaluation back that is where we will go ahead and [Inaudible] portal. Thank you once again in thank you again to everyone who is listening out there. I hope you have a wonderful week. This is the last session for this year so we will see all of you in 2017 so you all have a great holiday season and Merry Christmas to you as well.

Thank you. Goodbye everybody.

Goodbye.