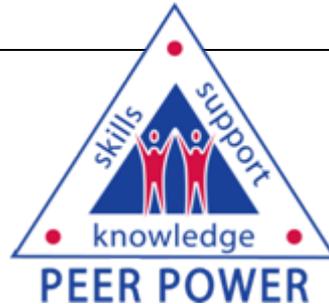


Concept for DVR Service to Groups Funding



Peer Power-Vocational Rehabilitation Preparedness Program

Presented by Cheryl Schiltz

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Peer Power Background

- 2005 - U.S. Senator Herb Kohl – BPDD - Pilots
- 2008 - ILCW – Peer Power transition program
- Increase transition knowledge, skills, support
- Prepare for adult life that includes
 - Meaningful and integrated employment
 - Post-secondary education options
 - Community involvement
 - Independent living



Peer Power Demographics

- ◎ 10 groups – 83 students
- ◎ Ages 14 to 21+
- ◎ Disability types include:
 - Autism
 - Physical
 - Learning Disabilities
 - Emotional/Behavioral
 - Cognitive/Developmental
 - Down's Syndrome
 - Aspergers
 - Cerebral Palsy



Demographics

- Slightly more males than females
- Serving minorities
- Groups serving rural and urban areas in:
 - Madison
 - Milwaukee
 - Waukesha
 - Kenosha
 - Superior
 - Eau Claire/Stanley
 - Oshkosh



Peer Power Youth Are Empowered

- ⊙ Actively participating in IEPs
- ⊙ Career exploration, interviewing, employment applications
- ⊙ Disability awareness and understanding
- ⊙ Self-advocacy, leadership, self-determination
- ⊙ Independent living options and skills
- ⊙ Community involvement
- ⊙ Social and communication skills
- ⊙ Peer support, mentors
- ⊙ Personal safety
- ⊙ Adult systems and Long term care options
- ⊙ Goal setting
- ⊙ Learning about the vocational rehabilitation opportunity



Why the Concept

Why this Presentation

- Why the Peer Power-VR Preparedness Concept?
 - Take Peer Power to the next level
 - Incorporate what's been learned
 - Empower youth with disabilities
 - There much more we could do
- Why this Presentation?
 - Well... BPDD funding ends September 30, 2011
 - Obtain your input, feedback and suggestions
 - And... youth with disabilities need this...



Taking the Next Steps

- Keep the Peer Power concept in place
 - Expand, enhance and empower
 - Strengthen the active and engaged youth participation focusing on successful employment outcomes
 - Team up with Schools
 - Team up with community services, agencies and providers
 - Invite community involvement and,
 - Partner with Vocational Rehabilitation in the...



Peer Power-Vocational Rehabilitation Preparedness Program

- *A program that empowers youth with disabilities to become interactive and engaged in their transition and vocational rehabilitation experience resulting in successful, meaningful and integrated employment.*



How would it work?

- Connect with youth *earlier* at age 14
- Help youth with disabilities develop skills for active and productive participation in transition planning that includes the vocational rehabilitation opportunity and experience
- Focus on activities that lead to achieving successful employment outcomes
- Open opportunities for students with disabilities to connect and work together
- Guide students with disabilities to take the lead as they explore, discover, problem solve and experience rewarding activities that lead to successful employment outcomes



What are the Activities?

- ◎ *Learning about and practicing skills of self-advocacy, self-determination and self-acceptance necessary for achieving successful employment outcomes*
 - Definitions of these skills, practicing them and understanding the importance of these skills on the job
 - Understanding their disability in a manner that helps them *proudly and effectively* communicate strengths, needs and concerns to VR counselors, employers, teachers and other professionals
 - Using these skills learn how to participate in their IEPs, IPEs, in planning for adult life and developing employment goals



Activities.....

- ◎ *Understanding the process of high school transition and Vocational Rehabilitation and how these opportunities support the achievement of successful employment outcomes*
 - Learning about IEPs and transition plans and how employment goals can be incorporated
 - Learning about the VR process, the IPE, and how to communicate employment goals
 - Developing skills to increase active participation, involved roles and commitment to the VR process and understand how this important responsibility can lead them to a successful employment outcome



Activities.....

- *Develop unique and individual transition goals for successful employment outcomes*
 - Identify employment concerns or obstacles and addressing them as a group
 - Career exploration and discovery
 - Make employer and community connections that can develop into employment experience and resume development
 - Appropriately advocating for what they need to be successful on the job
 - Continuing education/training to reach employment goals
 - Communicating employment goals to parents, teachers and VR counselors



Activities.....

- ◎ *Independent living skills and community integration that support employment outcomes*
 - Developing independent living skills that can support and maintain successful employment
 - Using transportation to get around the community and to get to work
 - Getting involved in community activities that provide positive life experiences
 - Developing natural supports that help maintain and support successful employment goals and outcomes
 - Identifying and understanding adult agency systems that enhance the ability to maintain successful employment



Products Produced

- A participant program workbook, program materials, training modules, advisor program guide
 - Resources
 - Tools
 - Activities
 - Each participant will receive a workbook to complete and use as a resource as they pursue their VR experience and employment goals



More for the Participants

- ◎ In addition to a completed workbook each student will take with them:
 - Personal portfolio
 - About Me Poster
 - IEP and IPE PowerPoint presentations
 - Person-centered community, agency and systems connections
 - Peer support and mentors
 - Specific and detailed employment goals and plans to reach those goals
 - Skills for active involvement and commitment to the *whole* transition and VR process



Celebration!

- ◎ Upon successful completion of each of the sections of the program, participants will be honored in a graduation ceremony where they will be presented a certificate of completion and celebrate their accomplishments
- ◎ Parents and guardians, IEP team members, and VR counselors will be invited to join the celebration and to hear the participants present their portfolios, About Me Poster and talk about their work and achievements in the program



Planned Program Outcomes

- Increase the number of students transitioning into VR services *prepared* for the experience
- Increase the number of successful employment outcomes
- Strengthen student interest and engagement in VR and in achieving employment goals
- Increase the number of students with disabilities who are engaged and active in participating in their IEPs, IPEs, transition and employment planning
- Increase the number of IPEs developed *prior* to high school graduation



Additional Outcomes

- ⊙ Higher rates of pay
- ⊙ Broader employment options
- ⊙ Stronger school-VR counselor-student relationships
- ⊙ Increased quality of IEPs and IPEs that include student goals for transition and employment
- ⊙ Greater collaboration between schools and VR
- ⊙ Reduction of VR wait lists
- ⊙ Increase outreach to minorities
- ⊙ Greater opportunities for identifying and addressing students needs prior to graduation



Innovation!

- Provide opportunities for youth, families, schools, educators, VR, communities and agencies with approaches to collaborate and partner in ways that support *active and engaged involvement* of students with disabilities as they create a transition to adult life that includes competitive and integrated employment.



Innovation!

- Open opportunities to increase education, transition and employment success through sharing information, resources, training, and services between youth, employers, schools, educators, VR, families, agencies and community
- Could fulfill the needs and interests teachers have expressed in transition-related topics while at the same time provide ways for teachers to reinforce skills learned as their students participate in the program



Innovation!

- A pioneering step for Wisconsin Vocational Rehabilitation to bring a Vocational Preparedness experience to youth with disabilities in Wisconsin
- There's nothing like this out there
- Program is malleable and could be structured in ways that could accommodate all VR consumers who wish to enhance their VR experience and employment success
- Could make positive differences in the Client Assistance Program



Benefits to VR Counselors

- Students will be able to present themselves in an engaged, focused, involved, and knowledgeable manner enhancing VR Counselors unique advising and guidance techniques for a successful employment outcome
- Students will have prepared a PowerPoint presentation to introduce themselves to their VR Counselor, describing their strengths, supports, needs, supporting documentation and their personal career goals
- May provide an opportunity to decrease case closure time and wait lists
- Open the opportunity for a broader base of Vocational Rehabilitation support in the schools that lead to an increased acceptance to be a VR Consumer



Cost Savings

- ◎ Youth with disabilities will:
 - Know what career direction they want to take
 - Know what to expect
 - Know what their responsibilities are
 - Know what services and resources VR can provide (and what they can't)
 - Know where they can find services, supports and resources to be successfully employed and know how to ask for what they need
- ◎ This could potentially streamline VR funds spent on assessments, accommodations, time, internships, and other VR supported services costs



Regular Vocational Rehabilitation Service Practice?

- Change how youth are involved in their transition and employment planning
- Introduce employment possibilities and goal setting at an earlier age (14) that develop employment goals for youth to be:
 - Prepared and job ready sooner
 - Focused on employment options
 - Able to identify internships that support their employment goals
 - Developed in personal responsibility and self-sufficiency skills
 - Empowered with self-pride and belief in themselves



Supporting the DVR State Plan

- ⊙ DVR Statewide Transition Action and Resource Team (START) to improve consistency and engagement in the transition process
- ⊙ Promote Transition Action Guide (TAG) providing participants, parents and teacher with copies and incorporating content into program activities
- ⊙ Support the Inter-Agency Agreement between DVR-DPI-DHS
- ⊙ Engage youth in activities that allow development of an individualized plan for employment *before* they leave high school
- ⊙ Introduce career exploration, job shadow and internship opportunities that lead to IPE development and coordinate these goals into the schools IEPs



Supporting the DVR State Plan

- ⊙ Reach out to students with disabilities who are not in special education plans on how they can also access vocational rehabilitation services
- ⊙ Provide school districts and VR Counselors with assistance, strategies and creative ways to connect with students who have not yet applied for VR services that help them explore and discover employment goals, need for services and concerns that need to be addressed to achieve these goals



Supporting the DVR State Plan

- Help coordinate services and transition activities for students who are eligible for both IEP and IPE services that can assist them in transitioning from school to work by helping students focus on employment goals and needs
- Help identify financial responsibility for funds relating to rehabilitation goals and services by helping develop students abilities to focus on their employment goals and what is required to meet those goals



Decrease Disparity of Employment Statistics for Persons with Disabilities

- It is the goal of Peer Power-VR Preparedness to provide transition and employment education and preparation that increases effective, responsible, engaged and positive student *partnering* by helping them become *invested* in their employment success and to reduce the disparity of employment for persons with disabilities



Who Would Be Involved?

- ⊙ High school students with disabilities ages 14 – 21
- ⊙ Teachers, IEP Teams
- ⊙ School administration
- ⊙ Program Coordinators (2)
- ⊙ On-Site Program Advisor
- ⊙ Transition Coordinators
- ⊙ DVR Counselors and other appropriate staff
- ⊙ Employers
- ⊙ Independent Living Centers
- ⊙ ADRCs
- ⊙ Parents and Families
- ⊙ School Counselors



Partnerships and Connections

- The EmployAbility Project – Student Transition to Employment Program (S.T.E.P.)
- Wisconsin Board for People with Developmental Disabilities
- Independent Living Council of Wisconsin
- Independent Living Centers
- WI Community on the Practice of Transition (WICoT)
- Wisconsin Statewide Transition Initiative (WSTI)
- Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI)
- Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS)
- Wisconsin Youth First, YiPPE, PIP



When to Start

- Immediately upon funds
- Fall Semester 2011
- Three Years:
 - 2011-12 – Pilot
 - 2012-13 – Expansion
 - 2013-14 – Expansion
 - 2014-15 – Non-funded extension to release reports, present at conferences



Enrollment Milestones

- 2011 – 12: 25 Students
- 2012 – 13: 60 Students
- 2013 – 14: 105 Students
 - Total: 190
- Overall geographical scope of the program is to provide the Peer Power-VR Preparedness experience to students with disabilities throughout Wisconsin



Measurable Data-Baseline Indicators

- Student preparedness pre and post program based on program activities
- Student demonstrated knowledge, skills and understanding of the session topics
- Service time with VR
- Employment attachment
- Wage, benefit and job quality

Note: Reporting requirements will be based upon program growth and requirements of DVR



How Would Peer Power-VR Preparedness be Managed?

- That's the big question...
- DVR Services to Groups cannot fund positions, only services
- Options:
 - Stand alone - Cheryl Schiltz as a consultant as a fee for service
 - Work with a Non-Profit
 - EmployAbility – this is a perfect precursor to S.T.E.P. program



Sustainability Plan

- Incorporate Peer Power-VR Preparedness into the DVR Individual Plan for Employment as a fee for service
- Incorporate as a service/program of VR
- Incorporate Peer Power-VR Preparedness into the schools IEP for school funding support
- School “flow-through” monies
- Team up with Transition Coordinators
- Train the Trainer seminars
- Encourage mentors to become advisors and develop groups in their areas
- Conference presentations



Sustainability Plan

- ⊙ After establishing groups, including the focus and basic function of the program, turn over advising and organization of the groups to Transition Coordinators. The program would be an afterschool activity. The advisor will coordinate the program based upon central management by the Peer Power-VR Preparedness Coordinator oversight



Why do all this?

- The future of youth with disabilities depends on it!
- Knowledge is empowering
- It makes a difference
- Builds connections, partnerships and collaborations
- Is replicable
- Is innovative and groundbreaking



COMMENTS?
INPUT? IDEAS?
SUGGESTIONS?

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