

Employability Dimensions

Employability Dimensions are broad competencies, skills and knowledge related to improving employability and through it, to obtain and maintain employment. Self sufficiency in these skills increases the probability of suitable and stable employment.

Generally, acquisition of these skills is sequential in nature, i.e. clients often need to become self-sufficient in career decision making before they contemplate acquiring specific occupational skills, and so forth.

Client self sufficiency is determined jointly by the counselor and the client. The client reports his/her perceptions of independence and competence, in terms of the Employability Dimensions, and the employment counselor validates the client's perceptions.

When client self sufficiency has been validated in each of the four employability dimensions, below the client is said to be "self sufficient".

Career Decision-making

This dimension involves the types of competencies related to making career choices or to being able to come to one (or more) decisions regarding a career choice. Such skills are demonstrated by:

- selection of potential occupation(s);
- setting criteria for alternate choices in occupations;
- establishment of priorities and/or preferences in terms of career choice; and
- researching and exploring different career options.

Possible questions for determining a need in this dimension:

- Does the individual have the ability to identify personal aptitudes and interests?
- Does the individual know how to research career possibilities/
- Can the individual use sound decision-making strategies to make a career decision?

Skill Enhancement

Skill enhancement is the dimension that involves the types of generic competencies required for most occupations, and specific competencies associated with performing in a particular occupation.

Generic skills refer to more general competencies (e.g. life or employability skills) that may be at the basis of performing most if not all occupations, including one that may have been selected by the individual.

Possible questions for determining a need in this dimension:

- Does the individual have the generic skills required to obtain employment?
- Does the individual have the specific skills required for employment in a chosen occupation?

Job Search

Under this dimension are the competencies required for effective job search or for independence in job search. Job Search skills include applying job search techniques such as résumé writing, use of labour market information (e.g. identify potential employers and job opportunities), networking, employer contact skills (job interview skills, letters, etc.)

Possible questions for determining a need in this dimension:

- Does the individual have the ability to identify potential employers and job opportunities?
- Is the individual able to prepare a résumé and complete a job application?
- Does the individual know how to market him/herself in an interview, and follow up an interview?

Job Maintenance

Job maintenance deals with the types of competencies that are related or conducive to an individual's job stability. This is the ability to maintain or retain a job after being hired for that job. Employment maintenance skills may overlap with generic skills.

Possible questions for determining a need in this dimension:

- Does the individual know what employers expect of their employees?
- Does the individual have the ability and behaviours required to keep a job?

Sample Client Assessment Process

Step 1: Open interview

- Greet individual and establish his/her objective
- Confirm the purpose of the interview (collaborative process)

Step 2: Gather information and identify issues

- Establish individual's goal(s)
- Gather information on background, education and assets
- Determine individual's key issues and barriers

Step 3: Determine type of needs

- Summarize the information obtained
- Obtain individual's agreement on identified needs
- If predominant needs are not employability-related (i.e. client is not ready to address employability issues), refer to alternate service

Step 4: Examine eligibility

- Gather data relevant to Skills Link eligibility
- Determine eligibility and confirm individual's understanding

- If ineligible, discuss alternate sources of assistance and refer appropriately

Step 5: Selection

- Confirm individual's readiness, interest and motivation to address employability issues
- Confirm individual's selection for Skills Link

Step 6: Clarify client's needs

- Clarify issues re. individual's ability to look for, obtain and maintain work
- Identify specific skill needs
- Summarize individual's profile, employability needs, and support requirements

Step 7: Examine options and interventions

- Describe and link appropriate and available options to the identified needs
- Assist individual in choosing relevant options
- Agree on options

Step 8: Develop action plan

- Discuss and decide on action plan steps
- Finalize action plan and ensure individual's commitment to the action plan
- Document the action plan and provide client with a copy
- Identify case manager and establish date for case manager's first contact
- Close interview

Step 9: Complete documentation

- Complete documentation key points and result of the interview
- Ensure client data is complete

Developing Action Plans

An action plan should be considered as a written agreement that is developed collaboratively by the client and the service provider. The action plan should support the achievement of the employment goal. A formalized action plan also supports the client's commitment to and motivation for attaining the stated employment goal.

The following criteria should be considered when developing an action plan:

- Activities that form the action plan should be tied to precise client-centered deadlines, i.e., a specific date for completion by the young person and follow-up by the case manager.
- Activities are described in terms of "who", "what", "when", and "where."
- The majority of the stated activities should be carried out by the client.
- Most activities in the action plan take place outside the interview sessions.
- Action plan activities can consist of program interventions, counselling sessions and client-specific activities that help achieve the employment goal.
- Activities should be logical and sequenced.