Once funky, always funky: Building inclusive work environments from Day One

26 March 2024
Hotel Realm Canberra
Milton Tyree • Marc Gold and Associates

ImagineMORE   MG&A

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Five Themes
(If I'd known then what I know now.)

1. Appreciating the significance of the valued social role of employee, *while minimizing the footprint of the human service client role.*

2. Starting with what's typical and valued *instead* of special.

3. Learning about a person's interests, conditions, and contributions *instead* of using test scores.

4. Focusing on relationships, belonging, commonality and competencies *instead* of becoming overwhelmed by a person's differences.

5. Recognizing the power of mindsets and expectancies.

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Always learning.
Staying curious.

"Do the best you can until you know better. Then when you know better, do better."
Maya Angelou

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Topics for today

- Five Themes

- Origins of "once funky, always funky"

- How supports got to be funky

- Why it may be difficult to change from funky

- Principles and practices to move from funky to typical and valued ways of life

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Origins of: "Once funky, always funky"

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Natural Supports Research

- typical business practices result in:
    - better integration and interaction with non-disabled co-workers
    - higher wages
- greater hours of direct support result in:
    - less typical orientation and training*
    - lower wages and less typical compensation package*
    - *regardless of level of disability
- "…these data show that if a person's employment features and conditions are atypical in the beginning, then their employment is likely to continue to be atypical over time." (In other words, it's important to begin the right way; very difficult to change later.)

Mank, et al. (1997) Analysis or Typicalness of Supported Employment Jobs, Natural Supports, and Wage and Integration Outcomes. *Mental Retardation*

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How supports got to be funky
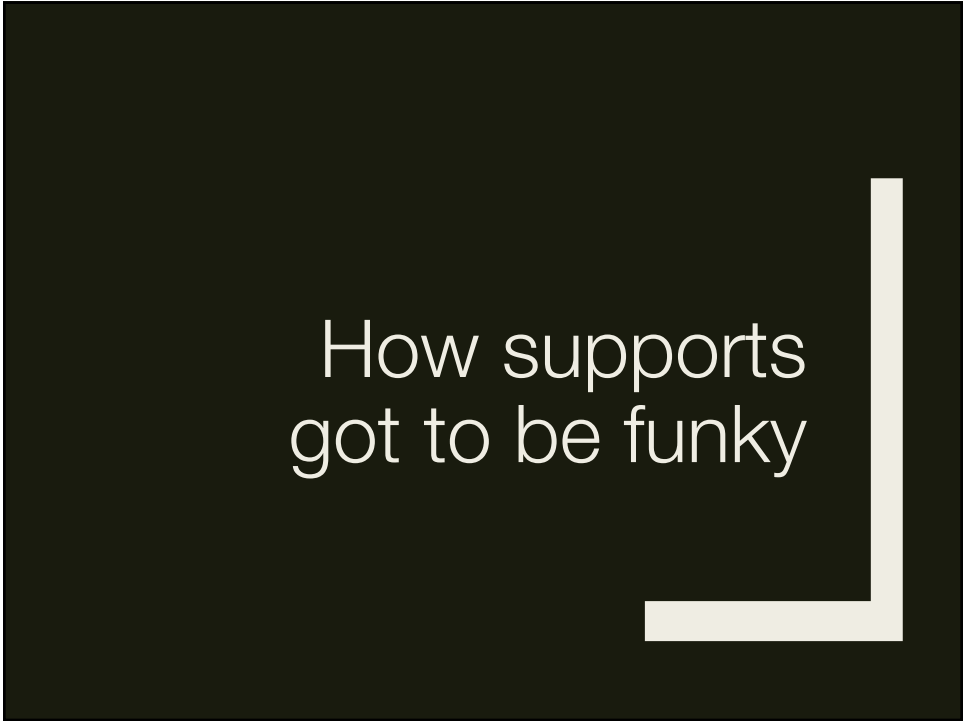
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How supports got to be funky

- Readiness mindset and programs that don't get people ready
    - Sheltered workshop readiness
    - Work experience readiness
    - Corporate readiness
- Job "placements" without support
- Job "placements" with too much support

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Sheltered Workshop Readiness
(Disability Enterprises)

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Demystifying congregated/segregated vocational "readiness"

o If an individual with a severe disability entered the continuum in a day-activity program and progressed through the continuum at the estimated average rate…

o he or she would spend 37 years preparing for a work-activity center…

o another 10 years in such a center before moving to a workshop, and 9 more years in a regular program workshop.

o In other words, an individual who entered this continuum upon completing school at age 21 would begin his or her first job at age 77.

Bellamy, Rhodes, Mank and Albin (1988) Supported Employment: A Community Implementation Guide Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co., Baltimore, 1988.

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Work transition readiness via predetermined sites for students

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For Transition-Age Students, Mock Store Offers Job Training

by Sandra Stokley, The Press-Enterprise/TNS | March 1, 2016

The store – the only mock CVS on the West Coast – is a replica of a neighborhood CVS, complete with a front counter and cash register; magazine rack; shopping carts; shelves stocked with toothpaste, toilet paper and other household items; circular clothing racks; and a red neon "Open" sign in the front window. Its grand opening was Jan. 28.

The store serves as a laboratory to teach retail skills to the 52 students enrolled in the Riverside district's Project T.E.A.M., said Constance Wahlin, project specialist/site administrator.

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How supports got to be funky

■ Readiness mindset and programs that don't get people ready
  – Sheltered workshop readiness
  – Work experience readiness
  – Corporate readiness
■ **Job "placements" without support**
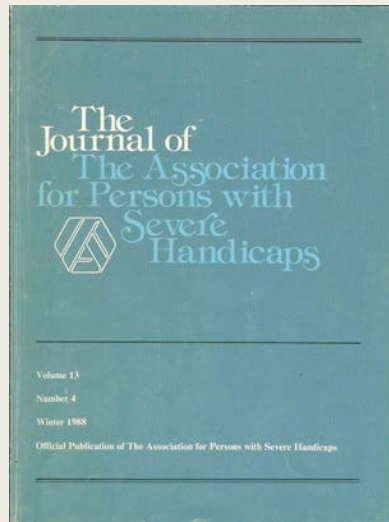■ Job "placements" with too much support

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Job placements without support

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Job placements with too much support

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job coaching problems identified

1. Fading the presence of the job coach may be difficult.

2. Job coach presence may be obtrusive. People may behave differently.

3. Job coaches may call attention to and exaggerate the disability of supported employees and contribute to their stigmatization.

Nisbet & Hagner, (1988) "**Natural Supports in the Workplace: A Reexamination of Supported Employment**"

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Why it may be difficult to change from funky

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- Human service models may be slow to change (even when we know better)
  - Data from 2023 study on the Essential Elements of Customised Employment
  - "Everybody can work" causes significant problems for service systems developed under opposed assumptions
  - Structural problems – service funding
  - Professional develop is a low priority
- Wrestling with the complexity of choice – Do you want to work?
- People with disability captured in human service client role and human service people captured in "provider" role

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The Essential Elements of Customized Employment for Universal Application

WINTAC and Y-TAC partnered with MG&A, Griffin-Hammis, TransCen, Inc. and Virginia Commonwealth University to develop Essential Elements of Customized Employment.

These elements provide the opportunity for universal application across service delivery and training providers.

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From the Essential Elements of Customized Employment for Universal Application (June 2017)

1. Determination of the individual's interests, conditions and contributions should be the result of a qualitative approach of Discovery.
2. And this qualitative "no fail" process presumes that all individuals can work.
3. The planning meeting should be held in a timely manner following Discovery.
4. Customized Employment occurs in businesses in the community or in businesses owned by the individual.
5. Involves negotiation of job duties. Job Supporters should avoid job openings and the typical personnel process when approaching targeted employers.
6. Requires individualization, involving a job for one person.
7. Negotiated pay of at least the minimum wage.

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From the Essential Elements of Customized Employment for Universal Application (June 2017)

8. Job Supporter "agents" are used to represent the job candidate.
9. Job Supporters should develop strategies for assisting employers to identify specific areas in which the business might benefit.
10. The Job Supporter's primary customer in Customized Employment is always the job candidate.
11. Job Supporters should emphasize an informational relationship with potential employers.
12. Job Supporters should negotiate a support plan with employers that honor typical ways of new employee instruction and support as much as possible.
13. Customized Employment facilitates mutually beneficial voluntary employment relationships.

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What's known versus what's practiced

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What's known versus what's practiced

Inge, et al, 2023

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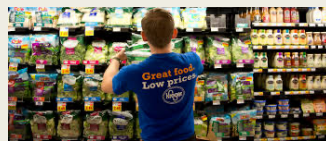
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Appreciating the complexity of choice

From EFE, Hope Leet Dittmeier

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Choice is *developmental*

People learn to make decisions over a
lifetime; they do not learn how to
make good choices overnight.

From EFE, Hope Leet Dittmeier

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Choice is *interdependent*

People typically rely on trusted allies to help make good decisions.

From EFE, Hope Leet Dittmeier

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Choice implies *alternatives*

People we support won't actually have genuine choices until we embrace service strategies that afford alternative, personalized options – where, who, how, when, etc.

From EFE, Hope Leet Dittmeier

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Most people tend to choose ...

- What is familiar

- What is certain, less risky

- What is simple, concrete

- What is quick, immediate

- What requires less investment

- What we think others want us to choose

From EFE, Hope Leet Dittmeier

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Early Example of "Job Coaching"

early '80s

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Principles and practices to move from funky to typical and valued ways of life

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Principles and practices to move from funky to typical and valued ways of life

- Discovery
- Customised Employment
- CVA
- Mindsets and Expectances
- Follow-up

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Principles and practices to move from funky to typical and valued ways of life

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Discovery Characteristics

- Beginning with the person, not the job
- Finding ways to promote genuine involvement, opportunities for contribution and personal growth – rather than settling for keeping people busy, happy…
- Testing preconceived notions. ("Everybody knows that Tim can't _____." vs. "Are there circumstances where Tim can ___?")
- Thinking in questions.
- Beginning with familiar.
- Moving toward new/novel.

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The Iceberg Analogy of Discovery

What we usually know about the people we try to assist – just the tip of the iceberg

We need to know much more

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Lessons Learned through Discovery

Discovery as a way to <u>avoid</u>:

– *Congregation and segregation*

– *Low/limiting expectations*

– *Tasks not fitting – not interesting, not challenging, low pay*

– *Getting "readiness" – simulations and approximations of the real thing instead of the real thing*

– *Place and Pray - Arbitrary "placements" performing low status tasks, without regard for interest or fit, in typically high-turnover businesses*

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Three facets of learning in Discovery

- **Conditions** for Success
- **Interests** toward an aspect of the Labor Market
- Potential **Contributions** to Employers

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Organizing three facets of learning in Discovery

1. **Conditions** – What needs to be in place for this person to be at his or her best?

   Conditions – examples
   - *Types of tasks/activities*
   - *Setting/environment features*
   - ***People/social situations***
   - *Routines/rituals*
   - *Timing/pace/scheduling*
   - *Learning and support strategies/approaches/*

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Organizing what we're learning in Discovery

2. **Interests** are characteristics that provide direction toward a certain area of life. These should be stated in the broadest possible manner.

   - *Can't simply rely on "What would you like to do?"*
   - *What kinds of things does the person do on his or her own, without request from others?*
   - *Especially seeking interests that are typical for age, gender, & culture that are most highly valued.*
   - *Given the person's strongest contributions, are there areas of interest that should be explored?*
   - *Often requires exploration, translating what is already known into new possibilities.*

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Tim's interests to be discerned

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Sam's clear interests

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Translation puzzler

Claw machine expert

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Organizing what we're learning in Discovery

2. **Contributions** – Including: Skills, Personality characteristics, Credentials, Experiences, Recommendations & Connections, Resources, Knowledge, and Passion
   - *Skills* – *e.g., innate mechanical ability, makes minute discriminations, an excellent cook*
   - *Personality* – *e.g., generous, hard-working, or determined*
   - *Credentials* – *secondary school diploma*
   - *Experiences* - *survived institutionalization, or success with weight watchers*
   - *Recommendations* - *Aunt/Uncle own a neighborhood café*
   - *Resources* – *e.g., sewing machine, or camera*
   - *Knowledge* – *e.g., sports facts, or species of plants*
   - *Passion* – *e.g., the environment, gender equality, social justice*

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Intersection of Discovery Characteristics
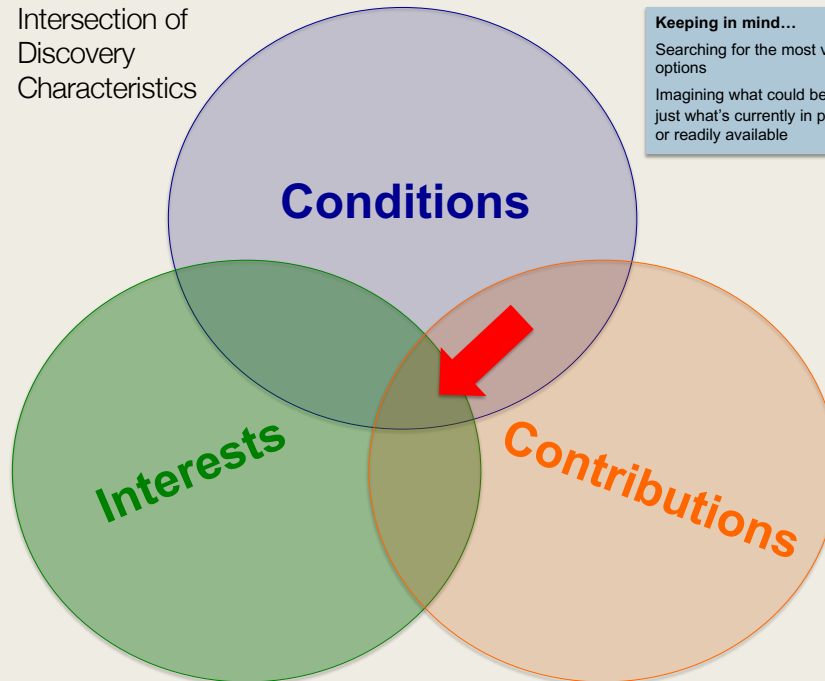
Keeping in mind…
Searching for the most valued options

Imagining what could be, not just what's currently in place or readily available

Conditions

Interests

Contributions

Derived from work developed by Hope Dittmeier and Mike Callahan

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Principles and practices to move from funky to typical and valued ways of life

- Discovery
- **Customised Employment**
- CVA
- Mindsets and Expectances
- Follow-up

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The Essential Elements of Customized Employment for Universal Application

THE ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF CUSTOMIZED EMPLOYMENT FOR UNIVERSAL APPLICATION

June 2017

Background

The Workforce Innovation Technical Assistance Center (WINTAC) and the Youth Technical Assistance Center (Y-TAC) are national technical assistance centers funded by the Department of Education's Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) to provide technical assistance and training to state vocational rehabilitation agencies and their partners. The WINTAC and Y-TAC entered into a partnership with Griffin-Hammis Associates, TransCen, Inc., Marc Gold & Associates, and Virginia Commonwealth University to develop a document to identify the essential elements of customized employment (CE) as a guide for the universal application of these elements across service delivery and training providers. This effort began in response to attempts by VR agencies and other core partners in the workforce development system to effectively achieve competitive integrated employment for individuals with barriers to employment, especially individuals with significant disabilities, as stressed throughout the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and the Rehabilitation Act as amended. Representatives from the Department of Labor's Office on Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) and RSA have reviewed and approved the content of this *Essential Elements* document.

It is the hope of all of the parties involved in this effort that *The Essential Elements of Customized Employment* will result in consistency of CE training content across the nation, an increase in CE training providers, an increase in the capacity and sustainability of CE as a service to individuals in need of the service, and a significant increase in the number of individuals who obtain competitive integrated employment through the strategies, techniques, and interventions articulated in this document.

Although this document articulates the essential elements of CE almost exclusively from the perspective of working with individuals with significant

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The Business Case for Customized Employment: Balancing the Equation (variation of this slide on page 59)

Explore 3 primary areas of a targeted business:
1. Employees 2. Work Setting 3. Customers

Job Candidate

1. Addressing *Conditions* for success

2. Focus on *Interests related to work*

3. Specific *Contributions*

Business

1. Addressing *unmet needs* of business

2. Tasks that *enhance the business*

3. Tasks *better performed by others*

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Discovery in action - always evolving

Interests		Contributions		Conditions for success	
People ✔	Consistent interactions with the public	Strong sense of ✔ precision in tasks	Neatly stacks DVD's/CD's	Working in a small team ✔	5 consistent volunteer team members
Instructing individuals or small groups		Detailed instructing skills		Short interactions ✔	Donators: always asks how their day is going and if Jack can assist
Collecting mail from home	Collecting donations ✔	Delivering and collection of ✔ documents	Receives donations quickly and delivers to sorting team	Minimal downtime ✔	Always tasks to cycle through, no room for uncertainty
Helping people carry and lift things ✔	Lifting heavy bags, deconstructing packing boxes, donation station set up	Welcoming ✔	Greets members of the public warmly	Step by step tasks with a clear end result ✔	Tasks with limited judgement ✔

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Julia – study of culture, workers, identifying fitting tasks on Jack's behalf

Lifeline

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Not saying yes to everything

✓Yes!   ✗No!

- Tasks completed with team would be motivating.
- Clear range of correctness when task is completed

- Lots of judgment with cleaning
- Working alone
- Image vulnerability – working with children's books

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Lifeline - Employer Needs & Benefits Analysis

Explore in these 3 areas ➡️ Explore 3 business benefits: ⬇️	Employees	Work Settings	Customers
1. Unmet Need		Boxes piling up - employees cut them when they get a chance	
2. Tasks that Enhance Business			Greeting and taking items from customers helps to reduce waiting lines.
3. Tasks Better Performed by Others	Would make it easier if someone could focus on taking items from general area to specific sorting area		

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Julia – study of culture, workers, identifying fitting tasks on Jack's behalf

UniLodge

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UniLodge - Employer Needs & Benefits Analysis

Explore these 3 areas ➡️ Explore 3 business benefits ⬇️:	Employees	Work Settings	Customers
1. Unmet Need			
2. Tasks that Enhance Business			Enhance customer experience if packages could be delivered to their room (in development)
3. Tasks Better Performed by Others	Logging parcels Giving parcels to students at reception		

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Jack's UniLodge Tasks

1. Handle package deliveries,
2. Use camera to capture package details for tracking and security purposes
3. Log package information into internal system
4. File packages alphabetically
5. Serving students at reception for parcel collection
6. Parcel delivery to students
7. File letters into student pigeonholes
8. Issuing temporary key cards for residents
9. Weekly room audit
10. Bike audit
11. Scanning student ID during intake
12. Event set up for Res Life

Award wage, 5 days a week 2-2.5 hours a day

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Principles and practices to move from funky to typical and valued ways of life

- Discovery
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- Mindsets and Expectances
- Follow-up

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Culturally valued analogue (CVA)

A Societal Practice:

- Which can be encountered with at least reasonable frequency in the valued sector of society.

- With which most members of society would be familiar.

- Of which most members of the society would hold mostly positive expectations and images.

In other words:

- "What happens for people who have a societally valued status – having the same age, gender and culture?"

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Beginning with Ways that are Typical and Valued

"Just like everyone else"

As much as possible.

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CVA Employment Questions

How do people find fitting jobs?

How do people typically learn their jobs?

How are people compensated for their work?

What's considered a desirable job?

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UniLodge

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Gus at Martino's - new tasks over time

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Gus at Martino's - new tasks over time

Initial Tasks

- Brushing hair off shoulders
- Folding capes
- Sweeping the floor
- Wiping down chair and bench
- Disinfecting combs
- Bringing hot towels
- Greeting clients
- Emptying the bins

New Tasks

- Ordering coffee for clients
- Preparing cut throat razor
- Learning the product names
- Restocking shelves
- Setting up decorations
- Mixing hair colours
- Preparing right number of hot towels

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Gus at Martino's - new tasks over time

Planned future learning

■ How to charge for extra services and products

■ Making bookings

■ Crew cuts

■ Other hairdressing skills

■ Selecting the day's playlist – generation appropriate!

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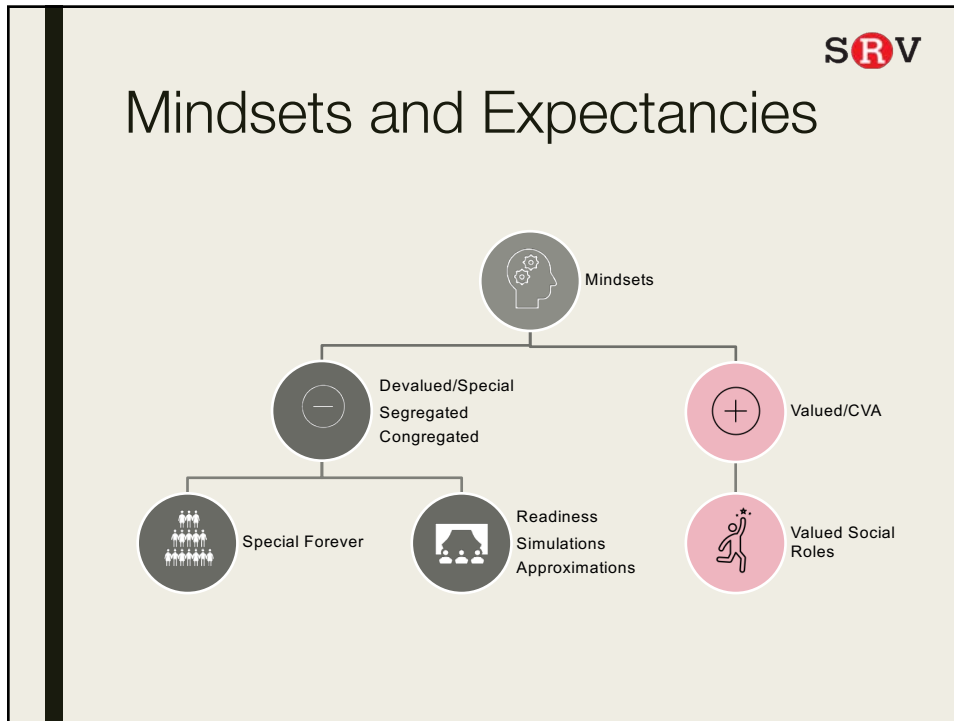- Follow-up

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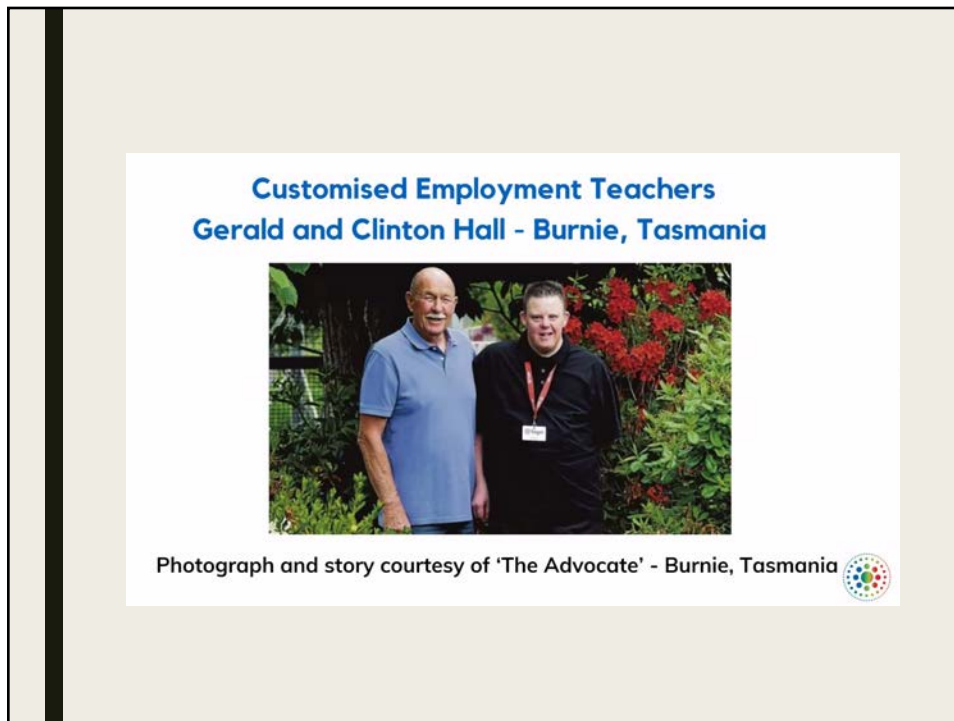
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The Power of Mindsets and Expectancies

Mindsets are powerful shapers of action – our mindsets govern what we see, what we perceive, and how we respond to the world around us and the people we encounter.

- Betsy Neuville

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Mindsets and Expectancies

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Experiences are especially likely to leave powerful impressions when they are:

- First Impressions
- Experienced early in life
- Intense
- Confirming of earlier stereotypes
- *Dramatically counter to expectations*

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Negative Mindset "Shatterers"

See above.

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Follow-up – Julia Shumaker's insight

- In Jack and Julia's conference presentation last May in Canberra, Julia talked about her follow-up in Jack's jobs at Lifeline and UniLodge as "targeted."
- What do you think she means by the term "targeted"?
- What would be some examples?
- What would be the risk of follow-up not being "targeted," and what would be the risk?

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Follow-up – Peter Symond's insight

- In telling his story about Clinton's job at Target, in Burnie Tasmania where he's been recognized as the longest serving employee, 17 years, Peter says this:

- "You've got to be there for the long haul. For Clinton, 17 years fading in and fading out on the job as needed. Natural supports are powerful. What I've come to understand is that its not a case of either natural supports or paid supports - it's both and they fluctuate."

- What kinds of changes could there be at Target over the period of 17 years? What could be the cost of not staying in touch with Clinton and other store personnel?

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As open employment evolved…

✓ there's been more focus on personally fitting work - **starting with the person, not the job**

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As open employment evolved…

✓ there's been more focus on learning how instruction and support are typically provided – **the primary role of employee** *(instead of human service client)*

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As open employment evolved…

✓ there's been more focus on negotiating **jobs of mutual benefit for employee and business** instead of being limited to job descriptions.

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Thank you!

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