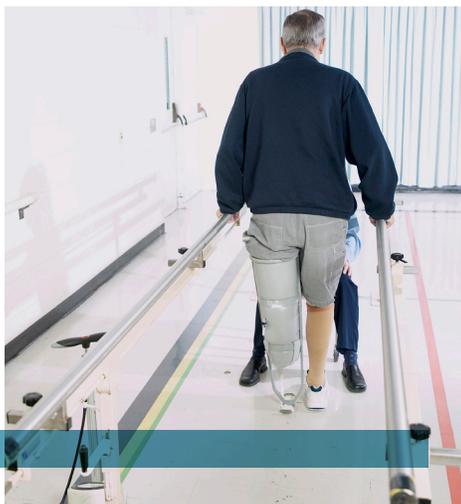


Overarching Themes of the KT Casebook

The *Casebook* represents a broad cross-section of NIDILRR's collective experience across employment, community living and participation, health and function, and technology for access and function outcome domains. Overarching themes presented in the first four editions of the *Casebook* include active stakeholder involvement, building meaningful partnerships with organizations, tailoring knowledge to specific audiences, and allowing time within a project to enable and practice KT.

Consumer Involvement and Stakeholder Engagement

Consumer involvement in research is integral to many NIDILRR projects and their KT activities. The *Casebook* highlights grantees' efforts to provide mutually beneficial connections between their projects and people with disabilities and other stakeholder groups to ensure that the research is useful to the intended end users.



The Rehabilitation and Research Training Center (RRTC) on Developing Optimal Strategies in Exercise and Survival Skills to Increase Health and Function saw that implementation of its research required ongoing stakeholder feedback. This was necessary to determine the barriers to and facilitators of using its high-intensity walking training program, titled *Focused, Intensive Repeated Stepping Training (FIRST)*.

The RRTC on Traumatic Brain Injury Interventions (2004–09) followed an augmented participatory action research approach to collect information on its needs from more than 300 individuals with traumatic brain injury (TBI). Working with a large study population of people with TBI ensured that information produced through the research was highly desired by people with disabilities and other stakeholder groups.

Initially, the Model Systems Knowledge Translation Center (MSKTC) was challenged to find consumers willing to take part in user testing of its factsheet-development process. By increasing its collaborative efforts and broadening its network of consumer organizations, MSKTC attracted new participants to its process (which leads to the next theme found in the *Casebook*—the importance of partnerships).

Partnerships

Knowledge brokers help to facilitate interaction between knowledge users (e.g., disability advocates) and knowledge creators (e.g., NIDILRR researchers), a KT strategy that helps to promote the use of research (Bowen & Graham, 2013). Many NIDILRR grantees develop partnerships in their areas of expertise to increase the visibility, access, and use of their projects' resources. Such partnerships also help researchers to define research questions that are aligned with the needs of organizations' constituents and that increase the use of their tools and products.



For example, the Center on Integrated Health Care and Self-Directed Recovery worked with state and regional leaders to expand the use and evaluation of its *Nutrition and Exercise for Wellness and Recovery* online course to help people in mental health recovery acquire knowledge and skills for healthier eating and increased physical activity.

In addition, the Research and Training Center on Independent Living at the University of Kansas partnered with the university's schools of journalism and business to plan and implement its KT efforts. Not only did these partnerships increase the visibility of the Center's project, but it also was a cost-effective measure that was mutually beneficial to the NIDILRR grantee and the university's schools.

The Rehabilitation Engineering Research Center on Universal Design and the Built Environment partnered with large organization such as AARP, the Congress of New Urbanism, and several chapters of Habitat for Humanity to adopt "visitability" standards for homebuilders. These standards help people with disabilities—particularly mobility impairments—live in and visit homes that are absent of significant barriers to movement.

Tailoring Knowledge for Specific Audiences

Tailoring knowledge to specific partners as a means of promoting the use and dissemination of research findings and, in turn, to improve the lives of people with disabilities was a common practice among many grantees who contributed to the *Casebook*.

The Center on Integrated Health Care and Self-Directed Recovery confirmed that providers and clients need a variety of formats to learn new practices and apply them in real-world settings.



The Rehabilitation Research and Training Center on Evidence-Based Practice in Vocational Rehabilitation used social media to disseminate information and interact with stakeholders. The project shared "digestible chunks" of information on its social media platforms with targeted stakeholders and linked this information to more in-depth content if stakeholders wished to acquire deeper knowledge.

The Center on Knowledge Translation for Technology Transfer composed a randomized controlled trial (RCT) on tailoring and targeting "contextualized knowledge packages" designed to use language and formats customized to stakeholders' backgrounds, to emphasize readability, and to be available in both print and digital versions. The RCT showed that tailoring information to specific stakeholder groups and then targeting the dissemination of that content to those groups increased understanding and use of the shared knowledge.

KT Takes Time

The use of research often is neither linear nor predictable; but we do know that the timely dissemination of research evidence can increase its prospects for research use (Lavis, 2006). Thoughtfully planned KT activities—from writing a proposal to developing research questions based on end users' pressing needs to carefully considering barriers to and facilitators of effective dissemination and use—is imperative to successful KT (Ngamo, Souffez, Lord, & Dagenais, 2016). All grantees featured in the first four editions of the *Casebook* built time into their projects for the meaningful and sustained use of their research findings.



Looking Ahead

To be good stewards of NIDILRR funding, our research, products, tools, and training activities must be relevant and useful to our intended audiences. Active dissemination strategies alone are insufficient to bridge the knowledge-to-action gap or to ensure that knowledge is known, understood, and used by its intended audiences (Bowen & Graham, 2013). KT frameworks and strategies help to bridge this gap. The KTDRR Center will continue to develop and share NIDILRR grantees' KT experiences in upcoming editions of the *Casebook*. This endeavor will continue to share examples of KT strategies for NIDILRR grantees to learn from and build upon. It will provide documentation of the outcomes and impacts of KT activities as well as grantees' measurement strategies. We look forward to describing the many insightful ways that grantees leverage KT strategies to increase the use of their products. If you are an NIDILRR grantee interested in sharing your KT experiences, please contact us at KTDRR@air.org.

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