**Knowledge Translation for Employment Research (KTER) Center’s**

**State of the Science Conference on Employment Research**

***2019 Conference Proceedings***

*a special track of the 12th Annual Summit on Performance Management Excellence*

*September 4-6, 2019*

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**Executive Summary**

The Knowledge Translation for Employment Research (KTER) Center held its State of the Science conference on knowledge translation for disability employment research, with a focus on vocational rehabilitation (VR) contexts, in Portland, Maine on September 4-6, 2019. The conference was embedded as a special track within the [12th Annual Summit on Performance Management Excellence](https://peqatac.org/summit-conference-2019/), a summit dedicated to bringing together VR program evaluators and others interested in state VR agencies sponsored by Program Evaluation and Quality Assurance Technical Assistance Center (PEQATAC).

The KTER Center develops and tests knowledge translation strategies designed to help vocational rehabilitation agencies and businesses to find, understand, and use research related to employing people with disabilities. The Center is housed within the American Institutes for Research (AIR) whose mission is to conduct and apply the best behavioral and social science research and evaluation towards improving people’s lives, with a special emphasis on the disadvantaged.

**Conference Goals**

The State of the Science Conference goals were to:

* Share the latest findings from the KTER Center’s studies on knowledge brokering in vocational rehabilitation contexts, with a focus on promoting the use of research that can catalyze the employment outcomes of adults with autism and transition-aged youth with disabilities in vocational rehabilitation settings.
* In collaboration with the NIDILRR-funded Center on Knowledge Translation for Disability and Rehabilitation Research (Center on KTDRR), facilitate a workshop on the Knowledge to Action (KTA) framework (Graham et al., 2006) to allow participants to practice applying this framework to developing KT activities appropriate for the vocational rehabilitation context.
* Showcase NIDILRR-funded cutting-edge research on employment outcomes for people with disabilities.
* Demonstrate how other sectors have benefited from knowledge brokering through a keynote luncheon presentation by Dr. Maureen Dobbins, McMaster University.

**Conference Archives**

KTER’s State of the Science Conference Archives are available, with captioned audio/video files of most presentations, transcripts, and 508-compliant presentation files. The 2019 SoS Proceedings document is available to download. Visit the KTER Center website: <https://kter.org/resources/2019-kter-state-science-conference>

**Knowledge Brokering in Vocational Rehabilitation Agency Contexts**

*Kathleen Murphy, PhD, Principal Investigator, KTER Center;*

*Amber Brown, AIR Summer Intern for KTER Center, PhD Student at Virginia Commonwealth University, former VR Counselor;*

*Melissa Scardaville, PhD, Researcher, AIR*

***Executive Summary***

* Based on the Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation’s (CSAVR) needs assessment of its members and a KTER survey of VR counselors, the KTER Center developed three research tracks that focused on:
  + the central role of VR supervisors as knowledge brokers in promoting evidenced-based practices.
  + topics identified by VR counselors as areas where information about evidence-based practices was needed: transition-aged youth, adults with autism, VR outreach to businesses.
* Each track had three research activities: topic-specific focus groups and/or a survey with members of the target audience to identify audiences’ pressing informational needs, a topic-specific scoping review that addressed one of those needs, and a Knowledge Broker Intervention Study.
* The presentation focused the study’s initial findings from two tracks – transition-aged youth and adults with autism.

***Knowledge Broker Intervention Study***

* The Knowledge Broker Intervention Study was designed to answer the research question:
  + Will Research Liaisons who receive training and support in the use of research-based practices, increase the uptake of VR counselors and businesses, respectively, to improve consumer labor market outcomes (including employment and retention)?
* The study for the autism and pre-employment transition tracks included people who work for a state vocational rehabilitation agency and supervise at least 4 counselors.
* People who enrolled were randomized at state level to either:
  + one of two training groups (the intervention) *or*
  + offered voucher for ethics training (the control)
* The training groups consisted of one self-paced online module on adult learning principles and either 1 self-paced online module about employment of adults with autism *or* pre-employment training services based on scoping review findings. After the training, each group received individual follow-up monthly check-ins from KTER staff via phone for six months.
* In total 110 VR supervisors enrolled in the study with 54 supervisors assigned to a training and 56 supervisors assigned to the control group. The majority of participants were white and were Certified Rehabilitation Counselors (CRCs) with the average age in the mid-40s and supervised 7-8 staff members.
* A survey about attitudes, knowledge, behavior and resources relating to research (known as “research orientation”) was administrated prior to the course (baseline survey) and after the completion of the 6-month check-ins (outcome survey). The same baseline and outcome survey was administered to staff supervised by those enrolled in the training. Higher scores meant more knowledge, behavioral intentions, and more positive attitudes toward research.
* Additionally, each course module had pre- and posttests, and KTER is currently collecting caseload data from states of participating supervisors.

*Study Findings*

* The control group scored 75.2% at baseline and 72.4% at outcome. The treatment group scored 72.3% at baseline and 75.5% at outcome. The intervention significantly improved the supervisors’ research orientation (*p* = .026).
* Next steps in the quantitative analysis include examining state caseload data, analyzing pre- and posttest modules (including correlations between module scores and research orientation), and comparing supervisors’ scores across treatment and control groups.
* The study also analyzed the feedback received (n=12) during the monthly check-ins.
  + Overall, people felt positive or very positive about the training and summary document. All participants said the trainings either increased their awareness of transition-aged youth or autism spectrum disorder (ASD) or positively reinforced previous knowledge.
  + 75% of participants noted that they found the adult learning principles module useful and have used the practices in their internal trainings.
  + Most participants said they had difficulty enacting change on an organizational level for three reasons.
    - Very high staff turnover made it difficult to impart lessons learned during the training.
    - VR counselors are always “putting out fires” and do not have the resources to implement best practices based on research.
    - VR counselors have a lot of competing demands and do not often have time or energy to attend trainings or put new ideas into practice.
* During the monthly check-ins, participants shared success stories such as an agency creating a position created to specifically address transition-age youth. In general, participants felt that the training materials kept spur dialogue with colleagues.

**Knowledge Brokering as an Evidence-Based Strategy**

*Maureen Dobbins, RN, PhD*

*School of Nursing, McMaster University*

***Executive Summary***

* Knowledge brokers may be people or organizations that are involved in:
  + Knowledge management (e.g., identifying and obtaining relevant information, creating tailored knowledge plans, helping to develop analytic and interpretive skills)
  + Linkage and exchange of knowledge (e.g., connecting stakeholder to relevant information sources, supporting peer-to-peer learning, facilitating collaboration)
  + Capacity development around knowledge (e.g., appraising quality of evidence, facilitating organizational change and engagement, designing and delivering tailored training sessions)
* Characteristics of knowledge brokers are:
  + Entrepreneurial (networking, problem solving, innovating)
  + Trusted and credible
  + Clear communication
  + Understanding the cultures of both the research and decision-making environments
  + Ability to find and assess relevant research in a variety of formats
  + Facilitating, mediating, and negotiating
  + Understanding the principles of adult learning
* Evidence-informed decision making (EIDM) is critical in public health but many organizations do not regularly engage in that approach. Knowledge brokering may be one strategy to increase EIDM.

*Case Study on EIDM*

* Researchers developed a case study involving three Ontario health department to investigate:
  + What is the impact of a tailored knowledge broker intervention on knowledge, capacity, & behavior for EIDM?
  + What contextual factors facilitate and/or impede impact?
* Data collection occurred at three time points – baseline, interim and follow-up, and involved quantitative and qualitative data that were triangulated. Different knowledge brokering activities occurred across the three sites.
* For changing EIDM behavior:
* Attending large-group sessions alone was not effective
* Significant improvement among those who worked intensively with KB EIDM knowledge and skills
* Several contextual factors helped support improved EIDM behavior such as:
* KB knowledge/skills and support from external sources
* EIDM processes were embedded within the organizational structure
* Organizational culture built on peer support and encouraging inquiry
* Visible senior management support and signs that EIDM was valued in the organization
* Tailored KT interventions, developed through partner engagement, had an impact on EIDM in public health by enhancing individual staff capacity and addressing organizational factors to facilitate a culture conducive to EIDM in practice.
* Dr. Dobbins is affiliated with the National Collaborating Centre for Methods and Tools (NCCMT) in Canada. Its goals are to:
  + Enhance evidence-informed public health in practice, programs, and policy in Canada and
  + Provide leadership and expertise in supporting the uptake of what works in public health
  + <https://www.nccmt.ca/>

**Working with Schools: Improving Employment Outcomes for Youth**

*Teresa Grossi, Indiana Institute on Disability and Community, Indiana University*

***Executive Summary***

* The Collaborative grew out of concerns that relationships among schools, vocational rehabilitation (VR) and adult employment providers were not efficient or effective.
* Indiana Institute on Disability and Community convened stakeholders from those groups and drafted a proposal to create a collaborative that would facilitate employment opportunities for transition-age youth. This would be accomplished by embedding employment resources into the school to focus on employment outcomes and reduce or eliminate duplication of services.
* Key elements of the local Collaborative include:
* a single point of contact (career coach)
* development of student personal profiles
* self-determination/soft skill training
* immersed internship and work experiences
* family training
* benefits counseling
* Unique aspects of the collaborative included a:
* Career coach who was embedded in the school and focused on work experiences and employment outcomes. The coach also provided adult agency navigation and focused on overlap of services. The career coach supported Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Counselors to facilitate enrollment for services.
* Coalition of providers who worked together and served as a local collaborative to reduce the number of entities entering schools, confusion for schools, and duplication of services.

*Research Study*

* The National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research Grant (#H133A130028) funded the grant to implement the local collaborative at five sites. Five additional sites were selected as controls.
* The study had three main research questions:
* Do schools with embedded employment resources (e.g., employment specialist as a single point of contact and collaborative support) have more students who leave school with a job than those from schools with no embedded resources?
* Do schools with embedded employment resources have more students who leave school with connections to adult support agencies than schools with no embedded resources?
* To what extent, if any, did implementing the local collaborative result in policy or procedure changes?
* The primary disabilities at the School-to-Work sites (N = 410) and control sites (N = 118) were similar with the highest being learning disability and mild intellectual disability.
* Over the five-year intervention period, there were 188 internships or work experiences. An internship lasted an average of 4 weeks and students participated in the internship or work experiences 9 hours on average.
* Ninety-one students (35%) left school with a paid job based on their internships/work experiences with an average salary of $9.23 per hour and working an average of 24 hours a week. Three months later, seventy-seven (85%) of them were still working and three had career advancement.
* The number of students connected to employment providers or VR agencies were higher in the intervention group as compared to the control group but decreased over time.
* Through surveys and focus groups with families, the study learned:
* The career coach was the predominant way parents learned about VR and the central person for communication and keeping things moving. The coach helped and/or understood how families apply for services. ​
* While families appreciated that agency connections began for their children at younger ages, they also were frustrated by the discontinuity of services due to staff turnover and did not always understand how VR, schools, and employers worked together.
* During the five years of the intervention, several policy changes occurred including a new VR employment model payment system, the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) of 2014, specifically the Pre-Employment Transition Services and VR Order of Selection​.
* Staff turnover occurred in many key positions beyond vocational rehabilitation counselors​ to include teachers, career coaches and department chairs.
* While students were waiting for job positions to be filled, they were provided with other employment opportunities such as company tours, mock interviews, and transportation training. These opportunities allowed students to explore occupations that impacted future decisions (e.g., workforce or attend postsecondary education). However, students were not always able to access a wide range of employment positions and types.
* When considering implementing this intervention, the study leads should make sure that they truly engage stakeholders at the beginning and throughout the process. Plans to address turnover and any new policy or procedural changes should be developed. Students and families need to feel empowered with the information they receive and ongoing professional development should be available for staff.

**The Vocational Rehabilitation Return on Investment Project:**

**Employment Research and Knowledge Translation**

*Bob Schmidt, University of Richmond*

*Joe Ashley, Ashley Consulting, LLC*

*Kirsten Rowe, Virginia Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services*

*Rob Froehlich, The George Washington University*

*Rick Sizemore, Virginia Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services*

***Executive Summary***

NIDILRR funded this Disability and Rehabilitation Research Project grant to University of Richmond. Major project partners include George Washington University, consultants from the University of Virginia, Stony Brook University, and University of Chicago Departments of Economics, and state vocational rehabilitation (VR) agencies in Delaware, Kentucky, Maryland, Oklahoma, Texas, North Carolina and Virginia.

Project goals:

1. Further refine and test the return on investment model (ROI) model developed under a previous NIDILRR development grant using a larger, more heterogeneous set of state agencies and a more recent cohort of applicants for VR services (state fiscal year 2012).
2. Develop and test a web-based approach to ROI analysis that can generate rigorous and credible estimates for any agency, for individuals with virtually any type of disability, and for many different types of VR services.
3. Provide training to interested state VR agencies and other stakeholders in the use of the ROI model.
4. Disseminate project information nationally to VR audiences, other stakeholders, and disability economics researchers.

This project estimates ROI by:

* Using readily available administrative data from a variety of sources:
  + state VR agency client data systems;
  + state unemployment insurance program wage records; and
  + Social Security disability benefits data.
* Examining the impact of VR on employment and earnings for individuals with different disabling conditions (e.g., mental illness, intellectual disability, learning disabilities, physical impairments, blindness and vision impairments).
* Examining the impact of specific types of VR services on participants’ employment and earnings.
* Starting to estimate VR’s impact when services begin, not when they end (i.e., using VR applicant cohorts rather than closure cohorts)
* Conducting longitudinal analyses that include up to three years of pre-VR employment data and at least five years of post-application data
* Examining services provided over multiple VR cases
* Estimating annual rates of return for specific populations as well as agency-wide
* Employing statistical controls to ensure that the observed employment outcomes result from the provision of VR services rather than other factors.

The project focused on stakeholder engagement by:

* Building knowledge translation (KT) into the project from the beginning by including VR training experts as major project partners.
* Allocating significant grant resources for stakeholder involvement in developing and implementing KT.
* Creating a learning community and other feedback channels to assist VR staff in using the ROI information.
* Determining how ROI results can be used for VR program decision making as well as when they should not be used in that manner.

*Selected Findings*

* For VR applicants to the Virginia general VR agency in 2000 who received VR services, 80% enjoyed earnings gains that exceeded the cost of their services.
* For every $1,000 spent by the Virginia Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services, the average (median) VR participant earned $7,100 more in the 10 years following their application than would have been possible without VR services.
* The top 10% earned $45,100 (or more) in the same period.

The project provided training and technical assistance activities throughout the project including:

* Webinars
* Social media
* Project website
* Project newsletter
* Presentations
* Journal articles (or publications) in both the economics and vocational rehabilitation literature

For more information, visit the project website: [www.vrroi.org](http://www.vrroi.org/)

**Using Knowledge Translation Models in Disability Employment Research**

*Ann Outlaw, Center on Knowledge Translation for*

*Disability and Rehabilitation Research (KTDRR)*

***Executive Summary***

Knowledge translation (KT) is the process by which new knowledge is transformed into information that benefits society through changed policies, behaviors, programs, or practices. Many NIDILRR employment researchers use the Knowledge-to-Action (KTA) framework. This presentation described the core components of the KTA framework. Workshop participants then applied this framework to developing knowledge translation activities appropriate in the vocational rehabilitation context.

* KT is important in vocational rehabilitation (VR) because:
  + Increased relevance of research
  + Increased likelihood that research will be used
  + Increased public benefit
  + Optimal return on research and development investment using public funds
* Developed for health care, the Knowledge-to-Action framework can be applied to VR contexts. The model consists of two components: knowledge creation and action cycle.
* The focus of *knowledge creation* is to identify and synthesize the latest research findings while tailoring the results to the end user.
* The *action cycle* focuses on knowledge dissemination and consists of iterative steps:
  + Identify what do stakeholders want knowledge about.
  + Adapt knowledge to local context.
  + Assess barriers and facilitators to knowledge use.
  + Implement tailored interventions to bring about the intended change.
  + Monitor how knowledge – in the form of interventions, tools or products – is used.
  + Evaluate outcomes
  + Sustain knowledge use
* Additional knowledge translation resources can be found:
* KT Strategies Database - <https://ktdrr.org/ktstrategies/>
* KT Casebook - <https://ktdrr.org/products/ktcasebook/>
* KT Library - <https://ktdrr.org/ktlibrary/index.html>
* KTDRR’s Training Activities - <https://ktdrr.org/training/index.html>
* The Plain Language Summary Tool - <https://ktdrr.org/resources/plst/>

**Roundtable: Knowledge Translation – Where Should the Field Go Next?**

**StatsRRTC Reflections**

*Ann Outlaw, Center on KTDRR; Joann Starks, KTER Center;*

*Sarah Boege, Disability Statistics & Demographic RRTC (StatsRRTC),*

*Institute on Disability, University of New Hampshire*

***Executive Summary***

* After Ms. Outlaw presented an overview of the knowledge-to-action framework, Ms. Boege discussed how disability statistics can be utilized during knowledge creation.
* The Rehabilitation Research and Training Center on Disability Statistics and Demographics (StatsRRTC) is funded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS); Administration for Community Living; National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research (NIDILRR), grant number 90RT5022-02-01.
* StatsRRTC’s goal is to be a dependable, “go-to” place to access the latest disability statistics and related research findings, learn about and how to use disability data, and ask questions about disability data and statistics.
* One example of collaboration is with the Center for Independence of the Disabled (CIDNY), New York. StatsRRTC provided data that when combined with other local level data created:
  + Subway Accessibility Maps, which show the poverty rate by local geographic area for people with disabilities and layered with a map of New York City subway stops that are lacking in accessibility.
  + ADA at 25: Many Bridges to Cross, a comprehensive report that has been used in congressional testimony, policy recommendations, and legal cases.
* These data helped NYC to better plan outreach and engagement, focus resources, and grow to better mirror the communities they serve.
* StatsRRTC’s future goals include:
  + Generating local and specific statistics
  + Assessing barriers to knowledge use and explaining statistics
  + Leveraging connections and networks as well as reaching out to other Centers for Independent Living to provide local data on populations of interest
* The group then discussed how the field of KT should evolve.

**The Diversity Partners Project at Cornell**

*Wendy Strobel-Gower – K. Lisa Yang and Hock E. Tan Institute on*

*Employment* *and Disability, ILR School, Cornell University*

***Executive Summary***

Job Developers, Employment Specialists, Workforce Development staff and others in both the public and private sector who connect people with disabilities to jobs are the “bridge” between labor supply and demand. In order to serve as an effective bridge, these professionals must form partnerships with employers. A partnership is an arrangement where parties agree to cooperate to advance mutual interests. Ideally, the approach to employers should not just be about making a single placement, it should also be about understanding and meeting the needs of the employer in order to establish a long-term partnership.

Funded by NIDILRR, the goal of the Diversity Partners project was to “repair the bridge” between labor supply and demand by:

* Learning about the context, skills and behaviors that support or hinder relationships with business.
* Supporting integration of promising practices into the everyday practices of employment service professionals serving job seekers with disabilities.
* Advancing the understanding of how disability can impact work and strategies that might mitigate that impact.
* Engaging agencies and personnel in capacity building and organizational change to create and sustain mutually beneficial employer partnerships.
* In the development phase of the project, the team used the Knowledge-to-Action Framework to guide research design, active involvement of multi-stakeholder advisory panel, qualitative and quantitative input from stakeholders, an Employer Review Panel, and multiple usability and content checks with users.
  + A literature review identified what types of resources and knowledge need to be in place to support people with disabilities and their employers.
  + Qualitative findings described how disability employment providers and employers formed productive relationships.
  + Quantitative findings highlighted the different knowledge and training needs between employment service providers and employers regarding the workplace and people with disabilities.
* Using these findings, Diversity Partners produced a combination of in-person trainings, online toolboxes, and on-demand technical assistance to users to fortify the bridge between employment providers and employers.
* Leadership materials and technical assistance aimed to create and sustain the:
  + organizational change required to improve practices in the context of business relationships; and
  + information and knowledge regarding capacity building and cross-sector partnerships.
* Direct Service personnel modules were designed to:
  + provide the skills, confidence and tools necessary to improve business acumen;
  + ensure that existing employer outreach efforts are inclusive of job seekers with disabilities; and
  + effectively serve jobseekers with disabilities to find real jobs for real pay.
* Diversity Partners was developed through a process of multi-stakeholder input, qualitative inquiry, and a piloting phase to refine the content and its delivery. It can be implemented within a single agency or among a consortium of collaborators.
* What do we know about effective Knowledge Translation?
  + Knowledge Translation is more than dissemination of information.
  + Research tells us change must be focused on organizations and not on individuals.
  + Making organizational change from outside of a system is exceedingly difficult.
* Tools that can aid in organizational change include a supervisor dashboard, guides that help with action planning and facilitating conversations, and the leadership and direct service modules.

For more information about Diversity Partners, visit

<https://www.buildingdiversitypartners.org>

**National Employment Team Members:**

**Supporting Vocational Rehabilitation’s Outreach to Businesses**

*Kathleen M. Murphy, KTER Center*

*Amber Brown, Virginia Commonwealth University*

***Executive Summary***

* In 2012, Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation (CSAVR) surveyed members regarding “the top three issues your agency faces in the next four years for which you think additional research might help you better serve consumers and employers.” Responses included concern about business issues:
  + human resources
  + client services
  + return on investment
* In 2012, KTER Center developed and administered a survey for VR counselors called Making Research Work in VR Agencies (six states, N=535). Results included the important role that supervisors play in promoting and disseminating evidence-based research.
* Together, these surveys highlighted the need for business outreach and the central role management plays in facilitating change.
* Based on these findings, KTER Center developed and administered a survey of national employment team members that asked: What are the most pressing informational needs related to their own needs and those of the business with which they work?
  + 39 people participated from 37 states
  + 30 people from general agencies; nine people from blind
  + More than half (53.8%) held Master’s degrees with about a quarter (23.1%) holding CRC
  + While 26% had been in the position for 10 years, the median time in the job was 3.5 years.
* The majority of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing that they desired training on the following topics:
  + business success metrics (e.g., impact of VR on hiring) – 92.3%
  + business needs assessment methods – 89.8%
  + outreach communication strategies to businesses – 87.1%
  + relationship-building strategies with businesses – 82.1%
  + gathering and using labor market data – 73.7%
* In follow-up focus groups, participants (N=6) noted that they wanted to find the right strategies to communicate with businesses.
* Based on the survey, focus group, and conversations with the Business Outreach TWG, the team developed a scoping review to gather relevant literature on:
  + Understanding and assessing business
  + Supporting businesses
  + Marketing to businesses
* The purposes of a scoping review include
  + examining the extent, range, and nature of research activity
  + determining the value of undertaking a full systematic review
  + summarizing and disseminating research findings and
  + identifying gaps in the research literature
* Comprehensive database search for relevant literature published from1988 through December 31, 2018 yielded 459 results, plus 3 additional articles provided by stakeholders.
* The team reviewed abstracts to include in the analysis if the study was: research or consensus-based; about helping people with disabilities obtain employment; and results could be used for training. Additionally, the study had to also focus on marketing to businesses, understanding and assessing business needs or supporting businesses that had hired people with disabilities.
* In total 74 studies coded. Preliminary themes include the importance of:
  + Identifying employers’ needs​ and assessing employment opportunities and workplace climate
  + Creating opportunities for conversation​ and explaining the benefits of VR services.
  + Maintaining relationships and educating on ADA compliance/workplace accommodations.
* The third research activity is currently underway, which will look to see if Research Liaisons (RLs), who receive training and support in the use of research-based practices, increase the uptake of businesses to improve consumer labor market outcomes (including employment and retention).
* Randomization at state level of all those enrolled:
  + 14 participants will participate in a training group that includes a self-paced online module on building relationships with business, follow-up small group discussion, and six follow-up monthly check-ins from KTER staff via phone.
  + 14 participants will be assigned to the control group
* The team will field a baseline and outcome survey to participants in both groups as well as representatives of businesses with which NET members work.

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**Roundtable: Knowledge Translation – Where should the Field Go Next? StatsRRTC Reflections** *(Outlaw, Starks, Boege)*

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**National Employment Team Members: Supporting Vocational Rehabilitation’s Outreach to Businesses** *(Murphy, Brown)*

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**AGENDA | Thursday, September 5, 2019**

**9:45 am - 11:00 am**

**Knowledge Brokering in Vocational Rehabilitation Agency Contexts**

*Kathleen M. Murphy - KTER Center, Melissa Scardaville - American Institutes for Research; Amber Brown - Virginia Commonwealth University*

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This presentation summarizes results from the KTER Center's intervention study of knowledge brokering in vocational rehabilitation agencies. KTER trained staff who supervised at least 4 VR counselors—and so were in a position to act as knowledge brokers—in either pre-employment transition services or the employment of adults with autism. KTER staff followed the knowledge brokers for 6 months. They collected survey data from study participants, their staff, and a control group of supervisors and their staff to measure impact on changes in attitudes toward and use of research on-the-job.

**11:15 am - 12:15 pm**

**Roundtable: Knowledge Brokering – Where Should the Field Go Next?**

*Kathleen M. Murphy, Joann Starks - KTER Center; Melissa Scardaville - American Institutes for Research; Amber Brown - Virginia Commonwealth University*

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Reaction/discussion session to previous KTER presentation on knowledge brokering and discussion of ideas about challenges and proposed solutions to engaging in KT in VR agency contexts

**12:30 pm - 1:45 pm**

***Working Lunch | New Hampshire/Vermont (Plenary Room)***

**Knowledge Brokering as an Evidence-Based Strategy**

*Maureen Dobbins - School of Nursing, McMaster University*

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This keynote presentation provides an overview of knowledge brokering as a comprehensive strategy to develop capacity for trainees and to support change in the work setting. Dr. Dobbins will share the results of her many years of research in this topic and will examine its application in the VR context in the US.

**2:00 pm - 3:00 pm**

**Working with Schools: Improving Employment Outcomes for Youth**

*Teresa Grossi - Indiana Institute on Disability and Community, Indiana University*

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Transition from school-to-work, including into the adult service systems can be daunting for the student, families and school personnel. The passage of the Workforce Investment and Opportunity Act 2014 (WIOA) allows for creative opportunities to work with schools on offering pre-employment transition services. This session will share the results of a School-to-Work Collaborative that embedded employment resources within the school from the adult services providers. How collaboration, roles and responsibilities between schools, Vocational Rehabilitation, community employment providers enhanced agency connections, work experiences and employment outcomes will be shared. Participants will identify strategies to work effectively with schools and ultimately improve employment outcomes for youth within your local community. Understanding the school’s culture, expectations and ways to enhance collaboration will be explored and the challenges and solutions developed by the local collaboratives.

**3:15 pm - 4:30 pm**

**The Vocational Rehabilitation Return on Investment Project: Employment Research and Knowledge Translation**

*Rick Sizemore - Wilson Workforce and Rehabilitation Center; Bob Schmidt - University of Richmond; Joe Ashley - Ashley Consulting, LLC; Kirsten Rowe - Virginia Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services; Rob Froehlich - The George Washington University*

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The VR-ROI Project’s methodologically rigorous model is used to determine the employment impacts and return on investment of the VR Program. This session describes how a multi-layer knowledge translation plan is an essential component in order to facilitate effective application of research findings to practice. The researcher/practitioner interface, facilitation of stakeholder feedback, and experiences pertaining to all these topics will be discussed. Time will be reserved for a question and answer period.

**AGENDA | Friday, September 6, 2019**

**9:45 am - 11:00 am**

**Using Knowledge Translation Models in Disability Employment Research**

*Ann Outlaw - Center on Knowledge Translation for Disability and Rehabilitation Research (KTDRR)*

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Participants will learn concepts underpinning knowledge translation to move conceptual discoveries from scientific research into practice by improving the relevance and application of research. Following an introduction to the Knowledge-to-Action framework (Graham et al., 2006), participants will practice applying this framework to developing knowledge translation activities appropriate for the vocational rehabilitation context.

**11:15 am - 12:15 pm**

**Roundtable: Knowledge Translation – Where Should the Field Go Next?**

*Ann Outlaw - Center on KTDRR; Joann Starks - KTER Center; Sarah Boege - Disability Statistics & Demographics RRTC (StatsRRTC), Institute on Disability, University of New Hampshire*

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Reaction/discussion session to the previous KTDRR Workshop session on Knowledge Translation and its application in VR contexts, with additional information from the Disability Statistics & Demographics RRTC.

**2:00 pm - 3:00 pm**

**The Diversity Partners Project at Cornell**

*Wendy Strobel-Gower - K. Lisa Yang and Hock E. Tan Institute on Employment and Disability, ILR School, Cornell University*

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Job Developers, Employment Specialists, Workforce Development staff and others in both the public and private sector who connect people with disabilities to jobs are the "bridge" between labor supply and demand. In order to serve as an effective bridge, these professionals must form partnerships with employers. A partnership is an arrangement where parties agree to cooperate to advance mutual interests. Ideally, the approach to employers shouldn’t just be about making a single placement, it should also be about understanding and meeting the needs of the employer in order to establish a long-term partnership. Diversity Partners is a combination of both facilitated training and consultation, and online learning modules, that can help professionals find better employment opportunities for people with disabilities through improved business relationships. Diversity Partners: http://buildingdiversitypartners.org

**3:15 pm - 4:30 pm**

**National Employment Team Members: Supporting Vocational Rehabilitation's Outreach to Businesses**

*Kathleen M. Murphy - KTER Center; Amber Brown - Virginia Commonwealth University*

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This presentation will summarize results from the KTER Center's research with members of the Council on State Administrators on Vocational Rehabilitation’s National Employment Team (the "NET"). KTER conducted a training needs assessment and scoping review on studies of efforts vocational rehabilitation has made to reach out to business. Their findings informed a training and follow-up support for NET members on how to function as knowledge brokers in their domains to raise awareness among other staff and employers about how vocational rehabilitation can support the needs of business.

**KTER’s Technical Working Groups**

Three Technical Working Groups (TWGs) support the KTER Center by:

* guiding research activities
* helping to recruit study participants
* developing instruments and protocols
* participating in webcasts and
* promoting KTER Center’s products to partners and stakeholders

Members included disability-oriented leaders, NIDILRR grantees, consumers who reflect the population, and individuals from the VR and employment communities. For more information: <https://kter.org/networking/technical-working-groups>

[**Autism TWG Members**](https://kter.org/research/autism-technical-working-group)

* Frank McCamant. Texas Council on Autism and PDD
* Carol Schall, Co-Director of the Virginia Commonwealth University Autism Center for Excellence, Director of the Virginia Autism Resource Center
* Stephen Shore, President emeritus of the Asperger’s Association of New England, board member of Autism Speaks, the Autism Society, the Asperger Syndrome and High Functioning Autism Association, the US Autism and Asperger Association
* James Williams, Bloom Consulting, St. Edwards University, Certified Rehabilitation Counselor

[**Transition TWG Members**](https://kter.org/research/transition-technical-working-group)

* Dr. Teresa Grossi, Director of Strategic Developments, Indiana Institute on Disability and Community, Indiana University; advisory board for the National Postsecondary Outcomes Center; external evaluator for the National Secondary Transition and Technical Assistance Center.
* Dr. Marsha Langer Ellison, Deputy Director, Transitions to Adulthood Center for Research, University of Massachusetts Medical School
* Ms. Sandra Miller, Deputy Director of the Division for the Visually Impaired (formerly Transition Coordinator, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation), Delaware Health and Social Services
* Ms. Rachel Anderson, Workforce Innovation Technical Assistance Center (WINTAC), Interwork Institute
* Dr. Marcus Poppen, Assistant Professor, Special Education, Washington State University Pullman Campus

[**Business TWG Members**](https://kter.org/research/business-technical-working-group)

* Kathe Matrone, PI, Northwest ADA Center, Director of the Center for Continuing Education in Rehabilitation, and Workforce Innovation Technical Assistance Center (WINTAC) affiliate
* John O’Neill, Director of Employment Research, Kessler Foundation
* Kathy West-Evans, Director of Business Relations, Council on State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation
* John Connelly, CSAVR Director, Research and Grants

**About the KTER Center**

Funded by the National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research (NIDILRR), the Knowledge Translation for Employment Research Center (KTER Center) plays a critical role in developing and testing knowledge translation strategies designed to help vocational rehabilitation agencies and businesses find, understand, and use research related to employing people with disabilities.

The Center’s goals are to increase:

* Knowledge of processes and practices that will lead to successful KT in the field of employment for individuals with disabilities
* Adoption and use of relevant research findings funded by NIDILRR and other entities to improve employment of individuals with disabilities
* Capacity of NIDILRR's employment-focused grantees to plan and engage in KT activities

The Center’s activities include:

* Identifying areas in which stakeholders’ need for research-based knowledge are most pressing
* Working with employment-focused NIDILRR grantees to identify research findings that can be used to improve employment outcomes for individuals with disabilities
* Investigating and promoting effective strategies to increase the appropriate use of the best available knowledge in the field

The KTER Center’s 2019 State of the Science Conference on Employment Research was developed under grant number 90DP0077 from the National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research (NIDILRR). NIDILRR is a Center within the Administration for Community Living (ACL), Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). The contents of this Conference do not necessarily represent the policy of NIDILRR, ACL, HHS, and you should not assume endorsement by the Federal Government.

For more information about KTER Center, please visit <https://kter.org/>