Welcome!

Session 1: Focus on Policymakers (12-2:10 PM)
Break: 2:10 – 2:50 PM
Session 2: Focus on VR Professionals (2:50-5 PM)

September 16, 2014

www.kter.org | www.vcu.edu

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This presentation was developed for grant number H133A100026 from the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research (NIDRR), Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS), U.S. Department of Education. However, the contents do not necessarily represent the policy of the Department of Education, and you should not assume endorsement by the federal government.
Center on Knowledge Translation for Employment Research (KTER)

- Located at SEDL in Austin, TX
- Initiated activity in October 2010
- Conference Overview
Dual purposes of the KTER Center

• To assess, describe, and inform relevant stakeholders about the current research base related to improving employment outcomes for persons with disabilities

• To explore and test knowledge translation strategies that can increase the appropriate use of that information among key audiences
Major target audiences include:

- policymakers
- vocational rehabilitation professionals
- individuals with disabilities, and
- employers or business leaders
Partner: Virginia Commonwealth University – WorkSupport Center

• Dr. Paul Wehman
• Dr. Katherine Inge
• Valerie Brooke
• Grant Revell
• Dr. Mike West
• Dr. Carolyn Graham
SEDL Staff

- Dr. Kathleen Murphy
- Joann Starks
- Steven Boydston
- Ann Williams
- John Middleton
- Tracy Bauman
State of the Science Conference

- Online format
- Adobe Connect Platform
  - Chat Box
  - Download materials
  - Technical problems: 800-266-1832
John Tschida – NIDRR Director

- Director of the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research since March, 2014
Senator Tom Harkin

- Representing Iowa since 1974
- Author/sponsor Americans with Disabilities Act
- 2014: WIOA
- Retiring at the close of the 113th Congress on January 3, 2015.
Policymaker Session

Facilitator: Joann Starks, SEDL
Research Report: Kathleen Murphy, Steven Boydston, SEDL
Presenters: Katia Albanese, Hope Adler, ePolicyWorks
Panel Discussion: Myrna Mandlawitz, Peter Blanck, Tracy Boehm

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Agenda

• 12:40 – 1:00 KTER Policymaker Research Report – Kathleen Murphy, Steven Boydston
• 1:00 – 1:20 “Policymaking 2.0–Using New Technologies to Inform Disability Employment Policy” – Katia Albanese, Hope Adler (ePolicyWorks)
• 1:20 – 1:30 BREAK
• 1:30 – 2:05 Panel discussion – Facilitator, Joann Starks (SEDL)
  • Myrna Mandlawitz (MRM Associates)
  • Peter Blanck (Burton Blatt Institute)
  • Tracy Boehm (RTC: Rural)
• 2:05 – 2:10 Policymaker session takeaway message – Kathleen Murphy
Overview of Research Goals

R.1) Identify evidence from the literature in selected specific employment topic areas for persons with disabilities,

R.2) Describe factors that impede or facilitate the use of employment research, and

R.3) Test effectiveness of KT strategies that promote research use.
Guiding Questions

- **What is the evidence?**
  R1. Systematic reviews and research synthesis

- **What are barriers and facilitators to use of the evidence?**
  R2. Concurrent investigation of barriers to the use of research in four target audiences:
  - Vocational rehabilitation professionals
  - People with disabilities
  - Policymakers
  - Business people (Employers)

- **What are the best strategies to promote use of evidence?**
  R3. Testing of strategies to promote use of KTER systematic review findings among target audiences.
# Methods, Samples and Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study #</th>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Sample</th>
<th>Data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>R1.1 &amp;  R1.2</td>
<td>Systematic reviews</td>
<td>Studies of interventions that facilitate 1) RTW for adults with TBI 2) Employment for cancer survivors</td>
<td>Effect sizes pooled from various studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R2.1</td>
<td>Online survey</td>
<td>VR professionals in six states (Northeast, East, South, South, Southwest, West)</td>
<td>N=535</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R2.2</td>
<td>Interviews</td>
<td>Federal and state-level policymakers</td>
<td>N=25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R2.3</td>
<td>Focus group</td>
<td>Business people</td>
<td>13 groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R2.4</td>
<td>Focus group</td>
<td>People with disabilities</td>
<td>6 groups</td>
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Defining the terms: what is a ‘policymaker’?

• “Policymaker” a mandated KTER audience, but award did not mandate a specific type of policymaker.

• During Fall 2011, KTER staff and staff from partners at Virginia Commonwealth University interviewed 25 Congressional staff and other individuals who had been involved in setting federal and state policies related to vocational rehabilitation and cancer, or in advocating for policy change and asked them how they defined the term.

• Goal was to inform selection of KT strategy to test.
Defining the terms: what is a ‘policymaker’?

- Writes legislation
- Votes on the adoption of policy
- Writes, publishes, issues or promulgates policy, regulations or guidelines
- Develops handbooks and “instructions to the field”

Also

- Policymaking happens at the staff level
- Advocates are part of the policymaking process: “I just don’t think of the policymaker as being the person at the top of the diagram.”
#### Oliver et al. 2014 Systematic Review Findings

Most frequently reported barriers and facilitators of the use of evidence (n= # of studies in which factor reported)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Top 5 Barriers to the use of evidence</th>
<th>Top 5 Facilitators of evidence use</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Availability and access to research/improved dissemination (n=63)</td>
<td>Availability and access to research/improved dissemination (n=65)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clarity/relevance/reliability of research findings (n=54)</td>
<td><em>Collaboration</em> (n=49)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timing/opportunity (n=42)</td>
<td>Clarity/relevance/reliability of research findings (n=54)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policymaker research skills (n=26)</td>
<td><em>Relationship with policymakers</em> (n=39)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Costs (n=25)</td>
<td><em>Relationship with researchers/info staff</em> (n=37)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Italics added to indicate facilitators relevant to KTER study’s choice of KT strategy to test.

Source: Oliver et al. BMC Services Research 2014, 14:2, p. 6. [http://www.biomedcentral.com/1473-6963/14/2](http://www.biomedcentral.com/1473-6963/14/2)
KT Strategy Selection

- Content analysis of KTER interviews also highlighted importance of relationships in reaching policymakers

- though can act both as a barrier or a facilitator to achieving goal of reaching this audience with your research findings
What is a champion?

• Cited as a facilitator of knowledge use (Barwick 2010, Grol & Grimshaw, 2003)

• “Linkage agent” approach to knowledge broker role: “focuses on the interface between the ‘creators’ and ‘users’ of knowledge and seeks to foster links between the two” (Ward, House & Hamer, 2009).
Research Question

KTER Center worked with a trainer from the Equal Opportunity Employment Commission to develop a webinar promoting awareness regarding cancer survivors' workplace issues and rights to reasonable accommodation.

The webinar included research findings identified in KTER’s systematic review, and policy content developed in collaboration with the Southwest ADA Center.

*Research question:* Does the use of a "champion" in requesting policymakers' endorsement of the webinar increase the number of endorsements the statement receives?
Method

- Use of "champion": an individual the organization is likely to know or trust
- Two-part campaign: introductory letter with request for signature on letter to be sent to employers; followed up with phone call then at least two reminder emails.
- Intervention (n=15): materials include cover letter signed by a champion pointing out aspects of champion’s background compatible with recipient organization’s mission
- Comparison (n=15): no cover letter
Outcome measurement

• Count of endorsements (intervention vs. comparison)

• Follow-up interviews (n = 9) to ask about reasons for decision to sign letter or not.
Results: Champion vs. No Champion

Champion

- Did not endorse: 9
- Endorsed: 6

No Champion

- Did not endorse: 10
- Endorsed: 5
Results: Endorsements

- Cancer: 4 endorsed, 5 did not endorse
- Disability: 7 endorsed, 8 did not endorse
- Business: 6 did not endorse
Proxy actions

Three (two in champion group) said no, but offered to support the webinar in other ways:

- Promoted the webinar on its website for no-cost
- Agreed to have its content used in webinar
- Sent registration information to constituents
- Posted registration information on social media
Findings: Barriers to endorsement

- No response at all (n = 4)
- Organizations wanted to be involved in product development
- A formal policy prohibited endorsement (board or funder)
- There was no policy in place to handle such requests
- Bad timing: staff turnover, change of leadership
- Recipient was a network and did not want to speak for all members
Facilitators to endorsement

- Webinar was consistent with organization’s mission
- Recipient knew and trusted KTER or its Principal Investigator
- Knowing other endorsers confirmed decision
- Recipient had personal connection to cancer
Did not seem to make a difference

- Sending a hard copy letter
- Whether or not the webinar was evidence-based
- The trainer: when people knew him they were favorable but it did not mean they endorsed on that basis
Final Thoughts

• Outcome related more to domain than champion vs. nonchampion

• Relevance of domain related to the KTER’s Center/SEDL and its PI own positioning within the network of organizations to which we were conducting outreach

• Strengthening some ties may mean weakening others; relationships can be barrier or a facilitator

• “There's a plus and a minus to being with a spokesperson, because that person and that organization comes with baggage as well.” (KTER Center policymaker interview)
References


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Presentation Outline

• What is ePolicyWorks?
• Changing the Way the Government Does Business
• Adopting New Technologies
• Online Tools for Policymakers
• Examples from the Field
• Lessons Learned
What is ePolicyWorks?

- A collaborative approach to federal policymaking that leverages Web-based technology, stakeholder involvement and real-time information sharing
- Empowers national experts to shape policy and address specific barriers to employment faced by people with disabilities
- Establishes a model for national policy-building efforts
- Serves to support the federal government’s pledge to modernize government, heighten transparency and maximize efficiency
- Integrates productivity and crowdsourcing tools, including online workspaces and dialogues into policymaking efforts
Changing the Way the Government Does Business

- **The New Federal Government:** *Open, Transparent and Participatory*

- **Expanding Beyond Information Sharing to Policy Development**

- **Information Sharing**
  - Ensuring public better access to agency information
  - Providing citizens opportunities to contribute input

- **Policy Development**
  - Ensuring meaningful citizen engagement and input from critical stakeholders
  - Providing opportunities for stakeholder and interagency collaboration
BORPSAT
Bunch of the Right People Sitting Around the Table
BORPSAVT

Bunch of the Right People Sitting Around the Virtual Table
The Virtual Table is:

- Much bigger
- Less reliant on logistics
- More accessible
- Much cheaper
- Available all day
Open, Transparent, Participatory…

• …and Inclusive
  – Inaccessible technology can exclude large segments of our constituency
  – Educate technology providers about developing accessible products
  – Encourage policymakers to demand and use accessible products
A New Policy Development Model
Adopting New Technologies

Benefits

• Overcome organizational challenges
• Enhance communication
• Increase productivity
• Save money
• Increase inclusiveness of outreach

Challenges

• Hesitancy to use new and unfamiliar technology
• Resistance to changing business practices
• Insufficient participation from the entire group
• Lack of leadership
Online Tools for Policymakers

- **Blogs/Microblogs**
  - WordPress, Tumblr, Twitter, etc.

- **Team Collaboration Workspaces**
  - Microsoft SharePoint, Truonex, Igloo, Cloud HQ, Glasscubes, Weboffice, Teambox, etc.

- **Document Sharing/Collaborative Writing**
  - Microsoft SharePoint, Google Docs, Microsoft Docs, Hackpad, Wikipedia, etc.

- **Group Communications**
  - Google Hangouts, Yammer, Tibbr, Chatter, etc.

- **Instant Messaging/Chat**
  - Skype, AOL IM, Yahoo Messenger, Google Chat, Jabber, Windows Live Messenger, etc.

- **Social Networking Platforms**
  - Facebook, Google groups, Yahoo groups, Ning, etc.

- **Podcasts & Web Conferencing**
  - Elluminate, Adobe Connect, Google Hangouts, Webex, etc.

- **Crowdsourcing**
  - Challenge.gov, IdeaScale, Crowdhall, User Voice, Bright Idea, Idea Bounty, ChallengePost, etc.
What is Crowdsourcing?

- Coined by journalist Jeff Howe in the 2006 Wired article, “The Rise of Crowdsourcing”
- Crowdsourcing is the practice of soliciting ideas or contributions from stakeholders to solve problems and make decisions using online tools
- Commonly referred to as “online dialogues” or “virtual town halls”
- Connects agencies to stakeholders/constituents
- Provides cost benefits and efficiencies
- Serves as an outreach and awareness tool
Why Crowdsourcing for Policymakers?

- To gather feedback and ideas from stakeholders to inform policymaking
  - Easier, cheaper, faster, more flexible than traditional tactics
  - Encourages interactivity (submitting, voting, commenting)
  - Expands reach
  - Promotes transparency
  - Allows flexibility in engagements ("one-and-done" or multiple)
  - Produces quantitative and qualitative data
How does Crowdsourcing Work?

• Decide on the issue and present the challenge for ideas to stakeholders through targeted outreach
• Set up a participatory, self-moderated community and decide on the window of time for participation
• Interact directly with the community that is formed around the ideas
• Upon registering with usernames and passwords, visitors to the dialogue submit ideas
• Visitors also vote, post comments and communicate the status of an idea through email, Twitter or Facebook
• The best ideas bubble up
Examples from the Field
Federal Partners In Transition (5/13-5/27/13)

• Question:
  – What legislative and regulatory changes need to happen to effectively implement employment, education, health and human and social security services for youth and young adults with disabilities under public law?

• Collaboration between Federal Agencies:
  – U.S. Department of Labor
  – U.S. Department of Education
  – U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
  – Social Security Administration
Federal Partners Online Dialogue Results (5/13-5/27/13)

- 3,387 total registrants
  - 5% federal
  - 11% state/local
  - 18% nonprofit
  - 24% other
  - 42% did not report
- 355 total ideas
- 1,618 comments
- 9,887 votes
State Governments: What Can We Do? Join the Conversation for Change (8/4-8/18/14)

• Questions:
  – What policies, programs and practices have been enacted (or are under discussion) to support individuals with disabilities in gaining state employment? What has your state done (or what is under discussion) to encourage private employers to hire and retain individuals with disabilities?
  – What state agencies, programs and organizations do you believe are most important to be involved in successful efforts to increase the employment of individuals with disabilities in state government and in the private sector?

• Targeted Groups:
  – State Human Resource Divisions
  – Developmental Disabilities Councils
  – State Office of Disability
  – National Association of Governors
  – State Grantee Representatives
State Governments: What Can We Do? Results (8/4-8/18/14)

- 427 total registrants
  - 351 new registrants (82%)
  - 76 registrants participated in first dialogue – 9/13 (18%)
  - 83 active registrants (submitted ideas, voted or commented) (20%)
- 37 total ideas
- 133 comments
- 335 votes
Turning Input into Action

Dialogue

Results/Data

Analysis

Policy Action
Lessons Learned

- Constituents and stakeholders want to participate and to be heard – they have valuable information to share.
- Outreach, Outreach, Outreach. Be creative in finding stakeholders and asking them to be part of the process.
- Go Viral. Encourage others to share the information about your dialogue. Social Media can be your friend.
- Crowdsourcing is a way to inform as well gather information. Many more people visit the dialogue then participate – use the opportunity to inform and educate.
- Your list of participants is a resource that you can go back to again and again – use it wisely.
- Follow up and let participants know how they affected change – close the circle.
Connect with ePolicyWorks

- Subscribe to our newsletters & updates about online dialogues at www.ePolicyWorks.org
- Follow us & engage with us on Twitter (@ePolicyWorks)
- Contact us at epolicyworks@dol.gov
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BREAK

1:20 - 1:30 PM
After the Break

1:30 – 2:05 p.m.
Panel discussion – Facilitator, Joann Starks (SEDL)
  • Myrna Mandlawitz (MRM Associates)
  • Peter Blanck (Burton Blatt Institute)
  • Tracy Boehm (RTC: Rural)

2:05 – 2:10 p.m.
Policymaker session takeaway message – Kathleen Murphy
Policymaker Panel Discussion

- Panelists:
  - Myrna Mandlawitz (MRM Associates)
  - Peter Blanck (Burton Blatt Institute)
  - Tracy Boehm (RTC: Rural)
Policymaker Panel Discussion

Guiding Questions:

1. When developing new policy, or reauthorizing existing policy, what kind of assistance might policymakers need in identifying relevant research evidence and in understanding its implications?

2. What strategies work for researchers to build relationships with policymakers?

3. What formats help policymakers to better understand and use research evidence? (For example, research data/tables, graphics, or personal stories)?

4. Are there other factors related to promoting research (uptake packaging, evidence, timeliness) that are essential to developing and implementing a knowledge translation strategy?
Policymaker Session

Policymaker takeaway message: Kathleen Murphy

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