

Customized Employment

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It All Came Together...

Jason Krolicki was referred to Way Station's Community Employment Program (CEP) by his Division of Rehabilitation Services (DORS) Counselor. Jason's major interests in life are music, people, and his faith. When Jason was 21 years old (approximately 7 years ago) his father passed away. As music is one of his primary interests and he wanted to follow in his father's footsteps, Jason attended and graduated from a certificate program to become a Recording Engineer. He soon began to experience significant depression, and was hospitalized a total of four times over the course of a few years. He had difficulty maintaining employment for a variety of reasons including lack of

motivation, bouts with depression, low productivity, feelings of tiredness from medications, and poor communication with employers and co-workers. He had a tendency to feel as though he was not accepted by others. Jason has dreadlocks and tattoos and was looking for a position where he could express his individuality and would not have to conform.

Jason knew he wanted to pursue his love of music and states that "It all came together" when he



"Where I am now in my life is like a dream."
Jason Krolicki

began working with a Community Employment (CE) Specialist in September 2003. They used the process of discovery to identify Jason's goals and (Continued on page 2, *It all came together...*)

What is Customized Employment?

Customized Employment

- is an individualized employment relationship between employees and employers that meet the needs of both.
- is a person-centered approach to employment that is based on the individual's strengths, needs and interests.

- is a blend of services designed to increase employment options for individuals with significant disabilities.

Customized Employment incorporates several different strategies:

- Job carving/creation
- Job sharing

- Supported Employment
- Self-employment or entrepreneurial initiatives
- Other individualized job development or restructuring strategies that result in job responsibilities that match both the employee's and employer's needs

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Jason Krolicki



It All Came Together... (continued)

aspirations and the type of job that would help him achieve success in his chosen field. While maintaining part-time employment at a Denny's restaurant, Jason, his CE Specialist, and his treatment team worked together to identify a place to complete an apprenticeship (paid or unpaid) where he could utilize the skills learned in recording school. Jason expressed an interest in working at his favorite radio station, WGTY/WGET. He and his CE Specialist visited the radio station and completed an application. Jason learned later that WGTY/WGET would be broadcasting from a local car dealership. He decided to go to the broadcast so he could meet the DJs. Jason told them that he had been looking to get in the music field and that he had applied for an internship at the station; they advised him to stay in contact with

the Human Resources Department. Jason must have made an impression, because the program director soon contacted him regarding a board operator position. This was much to Jason's surprise because it would not only combine his education, interests, and talents, but it was also a paid position. Jason interviewed for the job and was hired in October 2004. Working approximately 15 hours per week, Jason independently runs the show on the AM radio station when he is working as the board operator.

Jason continues to meet with his CE Specialist for ongoing support. He has shown tremendous progress and success since joining the Community Employment Program and is on his way to reaching his ultimate goal of becoming an on-air personality. Jason loves his job and feels that it is the perfect match for him. In

his own words, "Where I am now in my life is like a dream". Jason wrote a message to pass on: "Thank God first and foremost for blessing me with all the great people and great things in my life. Secondly, my supportive family, especially my mother who is very supportive of me and paid for my education. Without her, none of this would be possible. I thank my support team which includes my mother (once again), my therapist, my psychiatrist, and last but not least my wonderful CE Specialist. I would also like to thank Dave Jackson, program manager, and everyone at 1320 WGET AM Gettysburg/Hanover for the position and also the faith they have in me to be able to do the job that I love so much. Thanks also to everyone else who has helped me along the way and believed in me."

Coming Soon to our Online Instruction Center

Web-based training on Customized Employment

Lesson I: Customized Employment

- Customized employment and key features
- Positive Personal Profile
- Individualized Job Search Plan

Lesson II: Linking and Negotiating with Employers

- Strategies for building partnerships with employers
- Customized job development process
- Job task list
- Identify and negotiate customized employment opportunities

Lesson III: Customer Service

- Essentials of excellent customer service
- Seven attributes of an effective consultant
- Accommodations: ADA requirements and practical applications
- Six steps in facilitating accommodations
- Examples of four areas of workplace accommodations

Lesson IV: Case Studies

- Two case studies take the learner through the entire customized employment process.

Happiness Blossoms From Employment



Boe Brosius had considerable experience performing landscape maintenance and working a variety of construction labor positions. He also had significant gaps in his work history and had not been employed since August 2003. Boe encountered difficulty when approaching employers because he was not currently able to manage working full-time. He considered starting a small lawn care business through the RISE self-

employment program offered by DORS. In the meantime, Boe volunteered with the City of Frederick's Division of Public Works maintaining flower beds in the downtown area. He and his CE Specialist also approached nurseries, greenhouses, and landscape companies.

Once spring arrived, they called all of the nurseries listed in the phone directory to ask if they were hiring. Michael Dennis,

owner of M&W Nursery, said he was looking for some part-time help and scheduled an appointment. Boe's background made him a good fit for M&W's business needs. Likewise, there could not be a more perfect situation for Boe. He works from 11:00 to 5:00 on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, leaving time for his Tuesday and Thursday GED class. The nursery is located in the rolling countryside between New Windsor and Liberty town. Boe, a Frederick native, enjoys taking the back roads to work.

After his first shift, Mr. Dennis expressed that Boe had completed all of his assignments and had shown initiative by pointing out a problem and taking care of it. Boe has continued to do well and has impressed his employer with his knowledge, skills and ability.

Mr. Dennis has expressed an interest in understanding Boe's disability, as well as what is to be expected of him as the employer and what he can do to make the placement a success. Mr. Dennis is an extremely supportive person and is eager to give Boe a chance to prove himself. Boe has been transformed by the experience, and the happiness being employed brings him is shared by everyone involved in his life.



Additional Resources

Maryland Customized Employment Partnership at www.marylandcep.org. MCEP is a five-year demonstration model development project funded by the Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP), U.S. Department of Labor, and led by the Montgomery County Workforce Investment Board in partnership with TransCen, Inc. and the Career Transition Center, Inc.

Maryland Disability WorkFORCE Information Exchange at www.mdworkforcepromise.org. A statewide resource center providing best practices for employment and individuals with disabilities, classroom training, follow-along support, technical assistance, and web-based trainings on a variety of topics. A module on customized employment will be available in upcoming months.

The National Center on Workforce and Disability/Adult (NCWD/A) at www.onestops.info. NCWD/A is the technical assistance provider for Customized Employment initiatives across the nation. NCWD/A provides training, technical assistance, policy analysis, and information to improve access for all in the workforce development system.

U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) at www.dol.gov/odep. ODEP provides national leadership focusing on increasing employment opportunities for adults and youth with disabilities while striving to eliminate barriers to employment. ODEP is a federal agency in the Department of Labor.

Maryland WorkFORCE Promise: Our mission is to promote the personal and professional independence of individuals with disabilities by effecting systems change to eliminate barriers to employment.

Maryland WorkFORCE Promise Strategies:

- Implementation of best practices in customized employment
- Demonstration of follow-along supports
- Increased employer involvement in hiring individuals with disabilities
- Creation of *Maryland Disability WorkFORCE Information Exchange*: a state-wide resource center for information on best practices for employment of people with disabilities
- Expansion of benefit counseling across the state by funding a Benefit Counselor position
- Collaboration and enhancement of current state-supported employment initiatives
- Creation of customized employment supports

Learn More at our Online Instruction Center

Maryland WorkFORCE Promise offers a series of free e-Learning courses. A module on Customized Employment will soon be available (see page 2 for details).

Please visit us at

<http://www.mdworkforcepromise.org/trainings.html>
to browse the current listing of courses and to see what is in the works.



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- **Interviewing and Hiring People with Disabilities**
 - Describe the legal framework for interviewing and hiring people with disabilities.
 - Identify appropriate techniques for conducting an employment interview with people with disabilities.
 - Explain the Americans with Disabilities Act requirements for pre-employment testing and processing of employment applications.
 - Describe the major employment provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act.
 - Give examples of reasonable accommodations for employees with disabilities.
 - Identify obstacles to workplace accessibility and recognize appropriate remedies.
- **Motivational Interviewing**
 - Lesson I: Change
 - Lesson II: Principles of Motivational Interviewing
 - Lesson III: Building Motivation for Change
 - Lesson IV: Committing to Change
 - Lesson V: Motivational Interviewing Skill Code
- **Social Security Work Incentives**
 - Lesson I: SSI and SSDI Work Incentives
 - Lesson II: Work Incentives Case Studies
- SSI Calculation Worksheet
- SSDI Calculation Worksheet