Hope for the Future: Career Counseling for Military Personnel and Veterans with Disabilities

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ACA Webinar Series
November 21, 2012
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Experience Working with Active-Duty Military and Veterans with Physical and/or Psychological Issues
- Career and Personal Counseling
- PTSD as well as Traumatic Brain Injury
- Adjustment
Issues within Military Population

- Roughly 1.7 million troops deployed to Operations Enduring and Iraqi Freedom (OEF/OIF; Berger, 2010).

- Recent engagements unique in that psychological wounds of war outstrip physical injuries related to military experience (Sammons & Batten, 2008).
Between 19 and 38% of recently returning veterans report having emotional difficulties (Katz, Cojucar, Davenport, Pedram, & Lindl, 2010).

As many as 20% of Iraq and Afghanistan veterans and 27% of Vietnam veterans suffer from some form of invisible wound of war, e.g., PTSD or Military Sexual Trauma (Tanielian & Jaycox, 2008).
Issues within the Military Population

- Traumatic brain injury (TBI) - signature wound of these conflicts (Bagalman, 2011).

- High numbers of active duty military and veterans with various injuries such as loss of limbs, blindness, hearing loss, and disfigurement (Marchione, 2012).
Connection to Career Counseling

- Potential reorganization of one’s life related to career.
  - Can I continue doing what I was doing before?
  - Will I be able to stay in the military?

- Often veterans entered military just after high school and have not learned the skills necessary to successfully engage the civilian job market (Clemens & Milsom, 2008).
Connection to Career Counseling

- Found to have a tangible benefit for those with TBI (Keyser-Marcus, Bricout, Wehman et al., 2002).

- Addressing career issues often reduces depression, likelihood of substance abuse, and other secondary deleterious outcomes (Wehman, Targett, West, & Kregel, 2005).
Help clients make an appropriate current career choice and in the process, learn improved problem-solving and decision-making skills which can be utilized in future choices (Sampson, Reardon, Peterson, & Lenz, 2004).

Examines the “knowing” and “doing " associated with career problem solving and decision making
- “Knowing” - Pyramid of Information Processing
- “Doing” - CASVE Cycle
Metaphor for Career Decisions

Recipe for Career Decisions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ingredients</th>
<th>Steps</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Knowledge about myself</td>
<td>1. Realize I need to make a choice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Knowing my options</td>
<td>2. Make sure I understand myself and my options</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Knowing how I make decisions</td>
<td>3. Expand &amp; narrow my options (as needed)</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Thinking about my decision making</td>
<td>4. Choose an occupation or field of study</td>
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<tr>
<td>Knowing</td>
<td>5. Implement my choice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doing</td>
<td></td>
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Cognitive Information Processing

- Cognitive-Behavioral in nature
- Focus on career problem solving and decision making process
- Assess readiness—adapt interventions to client needs
- Expand knowledge of self, options, and decision-making
- Intended to empower client to effectively engage in career problem solving and decision making

(Sampson, Reardon, Peterson, & Lenz, 2004)
Pyramid of Information Processing

Thinking About My Decision Making
(Metacognitions)

Knowing How I Make Decisions
(Decision-Making Skills)

Knowing About Myself
(Self-Knowledge)

Knowing About My Options
(Options Knowledge)

CASVE Cycle

Important to assess readiness for career decision making.

*Capability* - refers to the cognitive and affective capacity to engage in effective career problem-solving and decision-making (Sampson, Reardon, Peterson, & Lenz, 2004).
Complexity – contextual factors originating in various areas (e.g., family, society, economy, etc.)

These factors make it more difficult (or less difficult) to process information necessary to solve career problems and make career decisions (Sampson, Reardon, Peterson, & Lenz, 2004).
CIP - Readiness

There has been discussion of the connection between CIP and veterans (Bullock, Braud, Andrews, & Phillips, 2009; Clemens & Milson, 2008; Phillips, Braud, Andrews, & Bullock, 2007).

Negative career thinking found to be associated with negative factors: lower satisfaction, emotional stability, higher career worries (Bullock et al, 2009).
Assessments

Career Thoughts Inventory (CTI)

- **Assessment**
  - (Sampson, Peterson, Lenz, Reardon, & Saunders, 1996; 1998)

- **Workbook**
  - (Sampson, Peterson, Lenz, Reardon, & Saunders, 1996)

- Measure of dysfunctional thinking in career problem solving and decision making

- *Single global indicator of dysfunctional thinking* in career problem solving and decision making.

- Subscales of Construct scores include *Decision-Making Confusion*, *Commitment Anxiety*, and *External Conflict*
Assessments

Self-Directed Search – Form R
(SDS; Holland, 1994)
- self-administered, self-scored, and self-interpreted vocational counseling tool.
- one of the most widely used interest inventories (Spokane & Holland, 1995)
- SDS Interpretive Report (Reardon & PAR Staff, 1994)

Additional Assessments
CIP Application

- Important to deal with negative thinking
  - If negative metacognitions are present, everything else can be difficult
    - Career Thoughts Inventory (Sampson, Peterson, Lenz, Reardon, & Saunders, 1996; 1998)

- Veterans with disabilities often receive messages related to limitations associated with changes in functionality
  - Continual treatment can focus on deficits
CIP Application

1.) Establish working alliance
   • Civilian provider
     • Need to be knowledgeable of military culture

2.) Assess readiness for career decision-making
   • Complexity/Capability

3.) Develop Individual Career Learning Plan
   • Analogous to Individual Transition Plan
   • Co-construct goals and activities; connect the two
   • Intermediate/Long-term Career Goals
Goal: #1: Determine marketable skills associated with military experience

Goal: #2: Enhance understanding of options related to interests, values, and skills

Goal: #3: Determine job options in civilian work related to helicopter pilots.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Purpose/Outcome</th>
<th>Estimated Time Commitment</th>
<th>Goal #</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Transferable Skills Sheet</td>
<td>Determine transferable skills</td>
<td>1 hour</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complete interest inventory</td>
<td>Find jobs that match interests</td>
<td>1 hour</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I will speak with doctor related to status of being medically discharged.</td>
<td>Learn if I will continue to be able to be active duty or enter civilian work force</td>
<td>2 hours</td>
<td>1, 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research options related to interests and skills</td>
<td>Find tangible opportunities tied to values and ability</td>
<td>4 hours</td>
<td>2,3</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
4.) Track progress on various activities
   - Continually assess negative thinking

5.) Expand knowledge of self, options, and decision-making process

6.) Process CASVE Cycle and progress moving through the phases

7.) Conclude - client demonstrates ability to effectively navigate through career problem-solving and decision-making process with functional thoughts and emotions associated with the process.
While it can be important, obtaining work often seen as panacea for veterans with disabilities.

- Focus on skills associated with career decision making and problem solving

Veterans with disabilities encounter several transitions within their lives.

- Career, familial, social, etc.
- Culture shock (Buzzetta & Rowe, 2012)
Final Thoughts

- View disability or injury as an experience as opposed to identity

- Focus on current and future skills
  - Rehabilitation on a continuum.

- Collaborate with fellow service providers to coordinate efforts

- Be sure to consider level of functionality and readiness when constructing ILPs
Final Thoughts

- Emphasize the client as the mechanism of growth related to career decision making and problem solving.

- While considering process and future decision making, still important to determine time-frame of current decision.

- If married, consider familial consultation to triangulate effort
  - TBI – issues with memory, perceptions
References

References


