1. (Title Slide) The Importance of Specialized Services
   1. Michele McDonnall
   2. Jennifer Cmar
   3. NCSAB April 2019
   4. NRTC logo: National Research and Training Center on Blindness and Low Vision at Mississippi State University
   5. The following information is included at the bottom of slides 2-43: NRTC logo, Mississippi State University logo, blind.msstate.edu
2. History of Research
   1. Prior to 1998
   2. Cavenaugh studies (1998, 1999, 2010) found separate agencies
      1. Serve higher percentage of “disadvantaged” consumers
      2. Accept higher percentage of legally blind consumers
      3. Close a higher percentage of consumers in competitive employment
      4. Close lower percentage of consumers as homemakers
3. Recent Studies
   1. Specific subgroups
      1. SSDI beneficiaries
      2. Employed applicants
      3. Deaf-blind
      4. Combined TBI & B/VI
   2. Utilized data from 2010 to 2015
   3. Separate agency outcomes not primary focus
4. SSDI Beneficiaries
   1. Researcher: Marty Giesen
   2. Goal: identify factors associated with employment for SSDI beneficiaries
   3. RSA-911 data/VR consumers
   4. 3 studies
      1. Personal characteristics that predict competitive employment
      2. Service factors that predict competitive empl
      3. Factors that predict earnings above SGA
5. Predictors of Comp Employment
   1. Age x Agency type interaction:
      1. As age at application increased
         1. Those served in combined or general agencies had a declining competitive employment rate.
         2. Those served in separate agencies had a steady, and higher, competitive employment rate.
      2. Older SSDI consumers (mid-30s+) in separate agencies were more likely to obtain comp employment.
6. Graph (1)
   1. Graph represents average competitive employment rate by age at application and by agency structure type, illustrating the interaction between agency structure and age at application. SSDI recipient consumers who applied for services in approximately their mid-thirties or older were more likely to achieve competitive employment when served by blind agencies, and the higher likelihood seems to be maintained through older ages. In contrast, those served in combined or general agencies showed lower and declining rates of competitive employment during the same age periods.
   2. Graph shows:
      1. Younger ages had similar rates
      2. Differences became noticeable around age 35
      3. Most profound differences were after age 60
7. Predictors of Comp Employment
   1. Asian consumers were less likely to obtain competitive employment, BUT…
   2. Asian x Agency type interaction:
      1. Asian consumers served by separate agencies had much higher odds of comp employment.
   3. Both findings indicate that separate agencies do better with more “disadvantaged” consumers.
8. Predictors of Earnings Above SGA (1)
   1. Female gender associated with lower odds of earnings above SGA
   2. Gender x Agency type interaction:
      1. Moderates negative effect of female gender
      2. Females served by separate agencies have similar odds of SGA earnings as males
9. Predictors of Earnings Above SGA (2)
   1. Older age at application associated with lower odds of SGA earnings
   2. Age x Agency type interaction:
      1. Revealed different patterns of success by age based on agency type
      2. Between approximately age 35 to 45, outcomes similar by agency type
      3. Before age 35 and after age 45, separate agency consumers have advantage
10. Graph (2)
    1. Graph represents average earnings above SGA rate by age at application and by agency structure type, illustrating the interaction between agency type and age. Consumers served by blind agencies had higher odds of earnings above SGA before approximately age 35 and after approximately age 45.
    2. Graph shows:
       1. Between approximately ages 35 to 45, results were similar for consumers served by each agency type.
       2. Between ages 20 to approximately 35, consumers served by blind agencies more likely to have earnings above SGA.
       3. Between ages approximately 45 and older, consumers served by blind agencies more likely to have earnings above SGA.
11. Predictors of Earnings Above SGA
    1. Receipt of job readiness training associated with lower odds of earnings above SGA
    2. Job readiness x Agency type interaction:
       1. Service by separate agencies moderated relationship
       2. Consumers served by separate agencies who received job readiness not less likely to earn above SGA
12. SSDI Beneficiaries Summary
    1. Agency type – no direct effects on employment/earnings above SGA, but…
    2. Agency type interactions
       1. Four factors associated with lower odds of positive outcomes remediated by separate agency services
       2. Indicate separate agencies do better with “disadvantaged” consumers
    3. Strong policy recommendation to preserve separate agencies
13. Employed Applicants
    1. ~1/3 of VR applicants are employed
    2. Providing services quickly important to retaining employment
    3. Follow-up analyses
       1. Time between application & IPE: separate agencies took less time
       2. Time between application & case closure: separate agencies took less time
14. Consumers who are Deaf-Blind
    1. Identified predictors of competitive employment & job quality
    2. Agency type predicted competitive empl
       1. Using logistic regression
       2. More likely to be comp empl if served by separate compared to combined agency
       3. No difference for separate agency compared to general agency
    3. Agency type not associated with job quality
15. Consumers with Combined TBI & VI
    1. Identified predictors of competitive employment
    2. Agency type predicted competitive empl
       1. Using logistic regression
       2. More likely to be comp empl if served by separate compared to combined agency
       3. No difference for separate agency compared to general agency
16. Multilevel Models
    1. Most appropriate way to analyze data
    2. Direct effects for agency type tend to be less likely
    3. But often find significant agency type interactions
17. Summary
    1. Have summary of specialized services research on our website:
       1. *Does VR Agency Structure Matter?*
       2. https://www.blind.msstate.edu/our-products/separate-vs-combined/
    2. Questions or comments?
18. Other & Future Work
    1. Need data from states to conduct study of WIOA impacts
       1. Want to evaluate impact on combined vs. separate agencies
       2. Can you share data?
    2. Recognize the importance of services specific to our population – created two training programs
       1. Job search skills training
       2. Business development training for VRCs
19. Job Search Skills Trainingfor youth with visual impairments
20. Project Overview
    1. 5-year research project
    2. Funded by NIDILRR Grant #90RT5040
    3. Purpose of project
       1. Create job search skills training program
       2. Evaluate effectiveness of program
21. Why teach job search skills?
    1. Early work experience associated with future employment
    2. Many youth with VI lack work experience
    3. Sponsored work experiences may not be effective
    4. Finding jobs independently more beneficial
    5. Job search interventions are effective
22. A silhouette of a young person sitting on the edge of a pier holding a fishing rod.
    1. “Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day. Teach a man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime.”
23. Our Program
    1. Putting Your Best Foot Forward
       1. Job search skills training for youth with VI
    2. Based on two job search programs
       1. JOBS
       2. School to Work
    3. Modified School to Work program
       1. Added and removed content
       2. Added afternoon sessions
24. Program Goals
    1. Develop job search skills
    2. Strengthen self-efficacy & self-confidence
    3. Encourage a proactive approach
    4. Develop strategies to overcome barriers
25. Program Structure
    1. Train-the-trainer model
    2. Flexible implementation
    3. ~40 hours of content
    4. Group sessions
    5. Individual activities
    6. Homework
26. Program Principles
    1. Diagram showing the five program principles: active learning, referent power, self-efficacy, social support, and overcoming barriers.
27. Program Content
    1. Graphic showing program content areas, divided into five main topics: identifying strengths and skills and the employer’s point of view, presenting your skills and thinking like an employer, finding job vacancies, preparing for a job interview, and the job interview as a whole and starting a new job.
28. Program Materials
    1. An image of the front cover of the program binders. Putting Your Best Foot Forward: Job search skills training for youth with visual impairments is on the top left. Six pairs of brightly colored footprints go across the center, from bottom left to top right. The Mississippi State University and NRTC logos are in the bottom right corner.
29. Study Information
    1. 3 states over 2+ years
    2. 1 VR agency, 3 schools for the blind
    3. Research questions
       1. Is the program effective?
       2. Are effects maintained over time?
30. Participants
    1. 92 youth with VI
    2. Ages 15-22 years
    3. 18.5% previous paid job
    4. A doughnut chart showing participants’ vision categories: 71% legally blind, 16% totally blind, and 13% other VI.
31. Research Design
    1. Image showing split of 92 youth participants into two groups: intervention (44) who took part in Putting Your Best Foot Forward and comparison (48) who were business as usual.
32. Data Collection
    1. Timeline showing 4 data collection points: 1 pre-test, 2 post-test, 3 6-month follow-up, and 4 12-month follow-up. Pre-test and post-test are circled.
33. Measures
    1. Job search knowledge
    2. Job search behavior
    3. Job search behavior self-efficacy
    4. Job search outcomes self-efficacy
    5. Job obtainment
34. Results
    1. A bar graph titled % Change from Pre to Post, which shows percentages for the intervention and comparison groups for four measures. Knowledge: intervention 24.6%, comparison -1.3%. Behavior: intervention 60.0%, comparison -0.6%. Behavior self-efficacy: intervention 8.9%, comparison 3.7%. Outcomes self-efficacy: intervention 3.5%, comparison 0.5%.
35. Paid Jobs at Post-test
    1. Image showing employment at post-test: 9% of intervention and 2% of comparison group.
36. Trainer Feedback
    1. Successful
    2. Preparation essential
    3. Beneficial
    4. Long sessions/days
    5. Image of a flower
37. Youth Feedback
    1. Important, helpful, and understandable
    2. Liked hands-on activities
    3. Long sessions/days
38. Conclusions
    1. Is the program effective?
       1. Short-term – Yes!
       2. Long-term – TBD
    2. Positive feedback from trainers and youth
39. Implications
    1. Youth may need
       1. Guidance regarding sponsored work experiences vs. paid jobs
       2. Benefits counseling
40. Sponsored Work Experiences
    1. Graphic of an unbalanced scale showing benefits versus unintended consequences, with the balance tilted towards unintended consequences. Benefits: skills and connections. Unintended consequences: fewer paid jobs, unrealistic expectations, and reduced motivation.
41. Image of a young person fishing and a platter stacked high with fish.
    1. “Will a man fish if he already has unlimited access to fish?”
42. Proposed Model
    1. Image showing progress: a platter of fish, then a young person fishing, then a young person catching a fish.
43. Next Steps
    1. Image adding a 5th item to the timeline for training & public availability.
44. (Final Slide) For more information, please contact the NRTC:
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* 1. Social Media:

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Twitter logo www.twitter.com/msu\_nrtc

* 1. NRTC logo: National Research and Training Center on Blindness and Low Vision at Mississippi State University