

Do you Speak VR? How to Build a Relationship with Your VR Agency

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State of the Art Conference
November 14, 2019

Relationships with VR Agencies??

- 2018 Survey: Disseminated widely through multiple email listservs; Individual follow-up with programs where additional information was needed or in states where we had gotten no response
- Heard from 32 states, 65 schools;
- But:
 - Changing rapidly based on personnel changes, agency changes, relationship changes
 - Inconsistent between state; within state; by counselor;
 - Issuance of new guidance!!

VR Survey

➤ Results:

➤ Reasons for limited VR involvement in states?

- Program not a CTP or VR did not view CTP as meeting 'credential' definition
- Issues around how VR perceives IHE:
 - IHE not viewed as supporting employment goals
 - College programs for students with ID viewed as redundant or unnecessary when in conjunction with VR programs and services
 - In one case, VR will only fund a college program independent of the IHE program

➤ Limitations on tuition assistance

- Limit on the amount of class hours VR can/will fund
- Age constraints – at one program, students are aged 18 to 21 and therefore deemed ineligible for pre-ETS
- Only certain types of classes (credit, degree seeking, non-electives)
- Only classes that support IPE vocational goals
- No funding for program fees exceeding the VR max
- VR refusing to designate a program as a 'viable fundable program'

Department of Education Guidance on Postsecondary Opportunities and Success for Students and Youth with Disabilities

- Issued September 18, 2019; FAQ format
- Follow up to address questions from [Addressing the Policy Tangle: Students with Intellectual Disability and the Path to Postsecondary Education, Employment and Community Living](#), Lee, Will and Rozell
- Addresses use of IDEA and VR funds for supporting students in inclusive postsecondary programs
- What does it say??? Bottom line...

Yes, VR funds can be used to support students in comprehensive transition programs (CTPs)

Department of Education Guidance on Postsecondary Opportunities and Success for Students and Youth with Disabilities

➤ VR funds CAN be used:

“A comprehensive transition program is an example of one postsecondary option for which the VR program could provide assistance to students and youth with intellectual disabilities when appropriate and agreed to on their approved IPE. “ (page 6)

“**Nothing in the Rehab Act prohibits or precludes VR** agencies from supporting individuals with disabilities (including those with ID) who have been determined eligible and are receiving VR services under an IPE, at comprehensive and postsecondary education programs in order to achieve their employment goal.” (page??)

“In sum, **individuals with disabilities may be supported by VR agencies using VR funds to support “students with intellectual disabilities”** as defined in Section 760(2)(B) of the HEA and by LEAs with funds under IDEA Part B, **when the students have IEPs under IDEA and are dually enrolled in secondary and postsecondary education programs, including comprehensive transition and postsecondary programs.**(page 14) (my emphasis added)

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➤ Definition of a “student with a disability”

Appendix: “It is important to note that pre-employment transition services are only available to those individuals with disabilities who meet the definition of a “student with a disability” in Section 7(37) of the Rehabilitation Act, **meaning that the individual must be enrolled in an educational program and meet certain age requirements**” (page12) (my emphasis added)

“ Preemployment transition services must include, among other activities, counseling on opportunities for enrollment in comprehensive transition or postsecondary education programs at IHEs. Section 113(b)(3) of the Rehabilitation Act; 34 C.F.R. § 361.48(a)(2)(iii).” (page 5)(my emphasis)

Department of Education Guidance on Postsecondary Opportunities and Success for Students and Youth with Disabilities

- Does a student have to be working toward a “recognized postsecondary credential”??

Does NOT say you need a recognized postsecondary credential to be supported by VR, to be a “student with a disability” or to receive pre-ETS

“The Department supports states in their work to increase postsecondary education options and opportunities for individuals with disabilities, including students and youth with ID, through participation in comprehensive transition programs as IHEs **regardless of whether the completion credential is a degree, certificate or other recognized credential**” (my emphasis added)

Appendix: “It is important to note that pre-employment transition services are only available to those individuals with disabilities who meet the definition of a “student with a disability” in Section 7(37) of the Rehabilitation Act, **meaning that the individual must be enrolled in an educational program and meet certain age requirements**” (page12) (my emphasis added)

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- Definition of CTP – Uses Higher Education Act definition of CTP throughout, but does NOT mean only Department of Education approved CTPs who are eligible for financial aid...
- “Q3 What are comprehensive transition programs (CTPs)? CTPs are a type of postsecondary education. CTPs offered at IHEs provide inclusive, academic, social, and career and technical education programs for individuals with intellectual disabilities seeking a postsecondary or college experience and career path. Participation in a CTP may generate academic credit leading to a postsecondary credential or degree. These programs embrace high expectations and provide valuable opportunities for individuals with intellectual disabilities to gain skills that will maximize their opportunities for achieving employment, including competitive integrated employment. After exiting high school, students can enroll in CTPs on a full-time basis. Additionally, since CTPs are a type of postsecondary education program, students can dually enroll in CTPs while still attending secondary school.”

Department of Education Guidance on Postsecondary Opportunities and Success for Students and Youth with Disabilities

- Confirm that financial aid is available in form of Pell grants and work study for CTPs (approved)

“Q14 Can students with disabilities who participate in CTPs receive Federal student financial aid?”

Yes. Under Section 484(s) of the HEA (20 U.S.C. § 1091(s) and 34 C.F.R. Part 668, Subpart O), students enrolled in a comprehensive transition and postsecondary program for students with intellectual disabilities who are maintaining satisfactory academic progress in that program may receive Federal student financial aid under the Federal Pell Grant, Federal Supplemental Opportunity Grant, or Federal Work-Study programs. The term “comprehensive transition and postsecondary program for students with intellectual disabilities” is defined in Section 760(1) of the HEA (20 U.S.C. § 1140(1)) and includes degree, certificate, and nondegree programs that meet certain requirements.” (page 6-7)

Department of Education Guidance on Postsecondary Opportunities and Success for Students and Youth with Disabilities

- How should we use this??
- Now what???



**Most commonly
asked
question of me is .**

. .

**. . . . “How do I
Get My VR
Agency to
Work With
Us?”**



The second most commonly asked question of me is . . .

. . . “How do I Get My VR Agency to Pay For Student Participation?”

After 3 years of Think College
and RRTC engagement, I have
come to the conclusion that,
in large measure, it is a matter of
“Trust.*”





Three Elements of Trust (Zenger & Folkman 2/2019)

- Using data from 360 assessments of 87,000 people, Zenger and Folkman were able to :
 - Look for correlations between trust ratings and all other items in the assessment,
 - Select the 15 highest correlations, then conduct a factor analysis to reveal key elements for trust to exist.
 - Identify three key clusters of items that serve as the foundation of trust.
 - Show, through further analyses, that the majority of the variability in trust ratings could be explained by these three elements



So, What are the Three Key Elements of Trust?

1. Positive Relationship
2. Good Judgement & Expertise
3. Consistency



Are the Three Elements Equal in Impact?

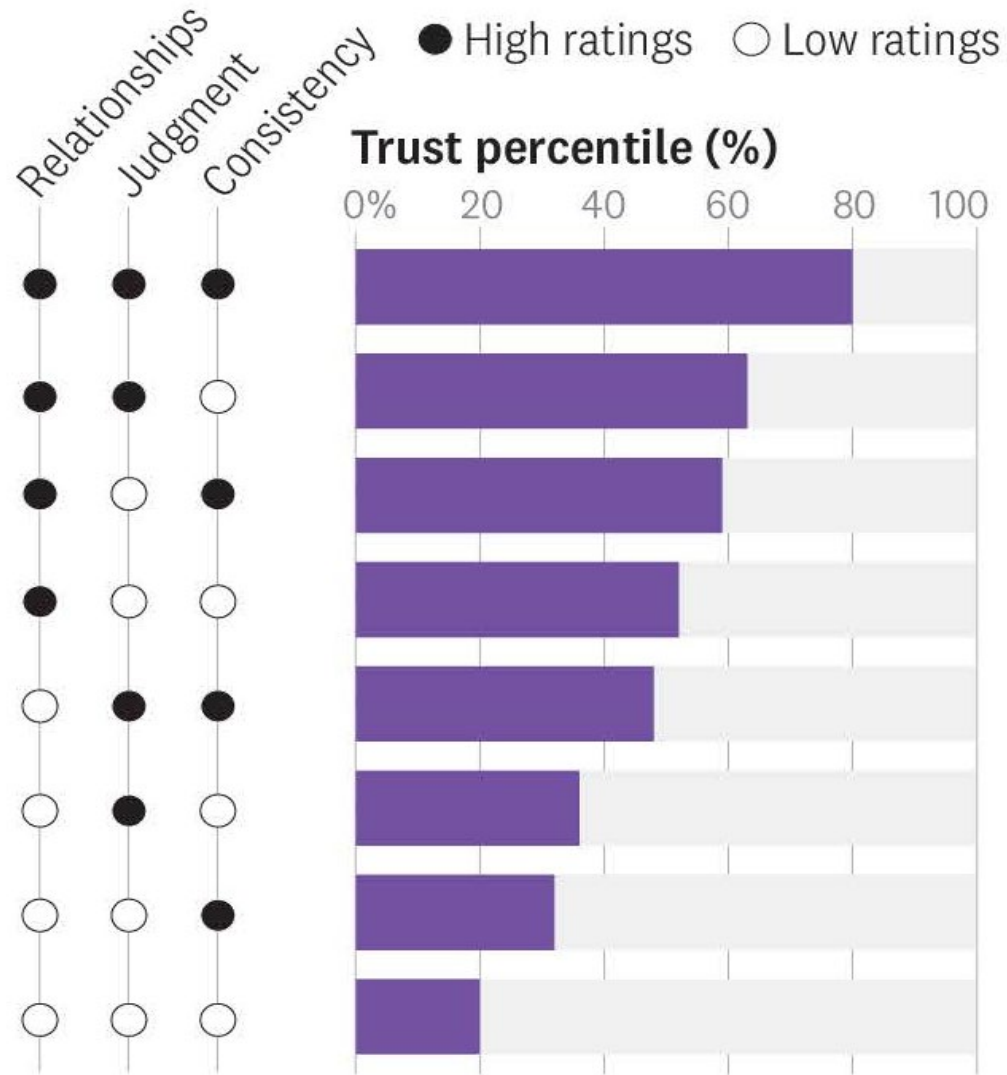
- **Zenger and Folkman found:**

- *Contrary to their intuition, inconsistency did not have the most substantial effect on trust.*

- *It was relationships that had the most impact.*

- *When relationships were low and both judgement and consistency were high, trust went down 33 points.*

Combinations of the three elements of trust



Source: Zenger Folkman

HBR

Relationships

Research indicates several important factors for professional relationships, of which I want to share a few

- Mutual Respect
 - Acknowledge they are trying to do right in their work, as you are in yours. Don't let frustration on one point become a wedge that prohibits progress in other areas.
- Communications
 - Communication is the platform on which you are able to connect. It provides for finding common ground, introducing ideas and innovation.
- Mindfulness
 - Be aware and listen. Watch for destructive patterns; recognize when they start to arise. Seek to understand rather than be heard. Be present and not just prepared.

Once
relationships
and are
established . . .



- Trust leads to working together (collaboration),
- Collaboration can result in achieving new heights of mutual achievement,
- Mutual achievement leads to deeper relationships and strengthened trust, innovation, persistence, and unexpected outcomes.

How does VR Speak VR?



Eligibility:

- Substantial Impediment to Employment
- Required Need for VR

Planning:

- Rehabilitation Needs Assessment
- Informed Choice
- Financial Needs Assessment

Services:

- Consistent progress

Outcomes:

- Competitive Integrated Employment

Due Process:

- Client Assistance Program (CAP)
- Supervisory/Administrative Review

What are your experiences with your VR???

- How can we help?
- Can we talk it through and brainstorm together?
- What have you don't that is successful?

