

## **WHAT A CLIENT SHOULD KNOW ABOUT A VOCATIONAL EVALUATION**

### I. Purpose of Evaluation

To assess current and/or future employability and wage earning capacity for the court. It can include the presentation of a vocational plan outlining specific details as to how the person will return to the job market (e.g., training time, cost, appropriate programs, entry/ceiling earnings upon plan completion, and job availability).

### II. What are the limitations of this process?

This procedure is not a method for the diagnosis or treatment of psychological problems nor does it allow for career counseling over a period of time (i.e., job development, job placement) unless it was part of the referral. Vocational tests cannot be failed, but are used only as a means of identifying the person's strengths, interests and personality, work values, and transferable work skills.

### III. Who is qualified to perform this evaluation?

The vocational/career assessment is a master's level occupation. With three years of professional experience and recommendations from supervisors, a person can sit for a written examination leading to Board certification as a National Certified Counselor (NBCC) followed by application to sit for a written examination covering five competency areas of career counseling. With successful passage, the person becomes a National Certified Career Counselor (NCCC) through the National Council for Credentialing Career Counselors, National Vocational Guidance Association. The designation of Certified Rehabilitation Counselor (CRC) is also available through a state certification process.

### IV. What happens in a vocational evaluation?

If you are the person who is being evaluated, you may be nervous about participating in a vocational evaluation, so I want you to know what to expect.

1. The first step is usually a diagnostic interview which is a question/answer procedure to gather pertinent information affecting employability (e.g. work/life experiences, health, age, length of absence from the work force, educational background, vocational/career goals or priorities, motivation, and current family/personal situation). This will also be your opportunity to ask any questions you may have regarding this evaluation process.
2. The next step is vocational testing. There are a wide variety of vocational testing instruments used to assess employability. In general, these instruments cannot be passed or failed but are used to develop a work trait

profile. The following areas are covered:

- A. Ability/aptitudes (i.e. Career Ability Placement Survey/CAPS; Wide Range Achievement Test/WRAT; Differential Aptitude Test Battery/DAT).
  - B. Interest/personality (i.e., Strong Campbell Interest Inventory/SCII; Career Occupational Preference System/COPS' 16PF Personal Career Development Profile).
  - C. Work values (i.e., Career Orientations Inventory; Values Card Sort).
  - D. Skills assessment (transferable work skills) (i.e., California Career Information System/Eureka; QUEST; Microskills).
3. The counselor will most likely conduct labor market research to produce information as to outlook, earnings, qualifications/training requirements for specific job titles within an appropriate geographical area. You should have access to this information either through talking with the counselor or by reading the vocational evaluation report.
  4. The fourth step is integrations of all information gained in the evaluation process. This includes client self-report, counselor observation, medical/psychological reports, test data, and diagnostic information. Your feedback is an important part of this process.
  5. Finally, recommended next steps are made based on both immediate and long-term job/career objectives/goals. These steps are based on your expressed interests as well as your ability to be employed, whether or not you want to return to a previously held job or career.

V. How can you “prepare” for a vocational evaluation?

Don't worry about studying or preparing for this evaluation. As notes above, you cannot pass or fail the tests. It would be helpful for you to bring a copy of your resume (it does not have to be current) or, if you do not have a resume, be prepared to discuss your educational background and work history in detail. If you are in a training program, bring all relevant details such as a description of the program, costs, length of the program, etc. If you are in the job search process, bring a written record of your efforts. In fact, it is strongly recommended that you keep a written record of all job search related activities. Bring any relevant information such as medical reports to the evaluator. It is important that you answer the questions as honestly and completely as you can. Your attorney will guide you as to whether or not you volunteer information. Be on time to your appointments and cooperate with the evaluator as your attitude will be noted in the report.

VI. What are your rights in a vocational evaluation?

You have the right to a fair and impartial vocational evaluation and to be given the opportunity to review all test results. If you disagree with the examiner's conclusions, you have a right to have the report examined by a second evaluator. There is no confidentiality in this process, so anything you say relating to employability can be reported on and used in forming conclusions.

VII. Are there any benefits to me in participating in this process?

This process can be viewed as an opportunity for you to learn more about yourself from a vocational perspective. It also provides an opportunity for you to expand your occupational knowledge and learn about careers that might interest you and fits your particular needs, skills, abilities and interests. This process can be fun!!

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