

How to Provide Supportive Services for PLWHA Utilizing the Client–Focused Considering Work Model

A Hands-on Workshop for Peers and Providers

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National Working Positive Coalition (NWPC)

■ Who we are:

- Persons living with HIV/AIDS, service providers, educators and researchers in HIV and employment

■ Mission

- Promote research, development and implementation of effective practices in employment services
- Coordinate sharing and dissemination of this information
- Advocate for work options and opportunities for people living with HIV/AIDS.

Overview

- Discuss Considering Work Activity
- Provide snapshot of findings from a national survey regarding improved health and interest in work among many with HIV/AIDS
- Review a model for considering work and resources available to help assist with this process
- Complete case study to apply workshop content to practice

Considering Work Activity

I Think I...

Agree

Am Not Sure

Disagree

Considering Work Activity

I Think I...

Agree

Am Not Sure

Disagree

Being employed means working 40 hours a week.

Survey Research

- 12 page survey
 - Paper and Internet formats (English & Spanish)
 - Collaborated with ASO, PWN, AIDS Alliance
 - Major Sections of survey
 - Demographic information
 - Knowledge, use and satisfaction with VR services
 - Workplace issues (employed respondents)
 - Considering work issues (unemployed respondents)
 - Health status
- Funded by NIDRR Mary Switzer Fellowship
- Funded by NIDRR & NYS AIDS Institute

Demographics

	<u>Men</u>	<u>Women</u>
■ 2,538 respondents	65%	34%
■ Mean Age:	46	46
■ Race:		
■ Black	30%	54%
■ White	43%	24%
■ Latino	18%	24%
■ Sexual Orientation:		
■ Heterosexual	28%	88%
■ Gay	65%	4%
■ Bisexual	7%	8%



Demographics (continued)

Men Women

- Women Higher rates poverty lower education
 - Earn \$15,000 per year or less 49% 68%
 - High school/GED or less 32% 48%

- Employment Status:
 - Employed 33% 30%
 - Not working 67% 70%



Results for Employed Participants

	<u>Men</u>	<u>Women</u>
■ Employed	33%	30%
■ Work related to HIV/AIDS	34%	57%

Perceptions of work and health

- Being employed improved my outlook on the future 83%
- My health has interfered with my ability to work 31%
- Working negatively affected my health 16%
- Work interfered with my ability to take meds correctly 10%

Impact of Employment on Health

Since my current job, my... (if previously unemployed) ...

	Male	Female
■ Self-care increased	47%	56%
■ CD-4 count increased	16%	22%
■ Med Adherence increased	17%	30%
■ Alcohol use decreased	34%	33%
■ Drug use decreased	34%	32%
■ Unprotected sex decreased	31%	28%
■ # of sex partners decreased	35%	32%



Results for Unemployed Participants

	<u>Men</u>	<u>Women</u>
■ Not working	67%	70%
■ Within these group there were varied perceptions of one's ability to work		
■ Able to work	43%	40%
■ Not sure if could work	32%	28%
■ Not able to work	25%	35%



Considering Work: Important Factors

- Increase income 87%
- Feeling useful/productive 84%
- Access to benefits [life insurance/retirement] 76%
- Being around people 72%
- My identity as a worker 64%
- Being role model 64%

Positive Outcome Expectations

If I go to work... (Percent Agree)

	<u>Men</u>	<u>Women</u>
■ My outlook will improve	63%	61%
■ I'll be able to take meds correctly	49%	46%
■ My mental health will improve	50%	46%
■ I will not have health insurance	32%	32%

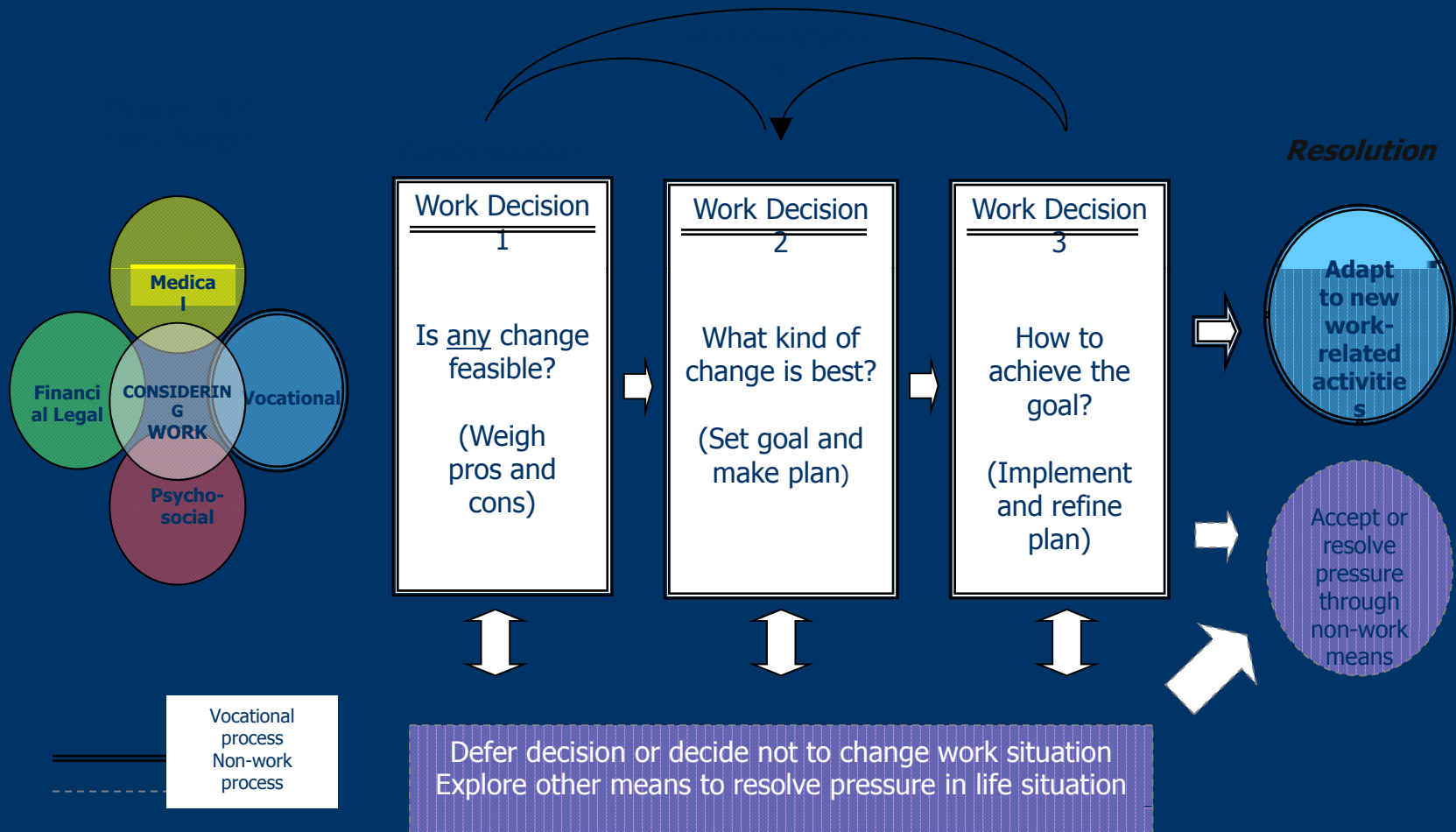
Summary

- HIV has had a dramatic impact on the employment and economic status of the respondents.
- Majority of the respondents reported perceived health benefits associated with work.
- About 25%-30% of the sample were not able to work, which suggests that work is not a healthy option for all.
- Peers and services providers need more information and training to be able to assist with considering work process help establish healthy outcomes for all.

Client-focused Considering Work Model

- Rights and responsibilities for making vocational choices rest solely with the individual
- Provides structure and clear guidelines to assess vocational needs and to make informed decisions
- Helps to identify the range of resources and professional assistance available to address employment barriers
- Does not presume work is beneficial for all

The Considering Work Model: The Phases of Change are Non-linear



Stages of Change

- Pressure for Life Change
 - Contemplation
 - Consider pros and cons
 - Preparation
 - Set a goal and make a plan
 - Action
 - Implement and refine plan
 - Resolution (either A or B)
 - A: Resolve pressure through non-work means
 - B: Adapt to new work-related activities

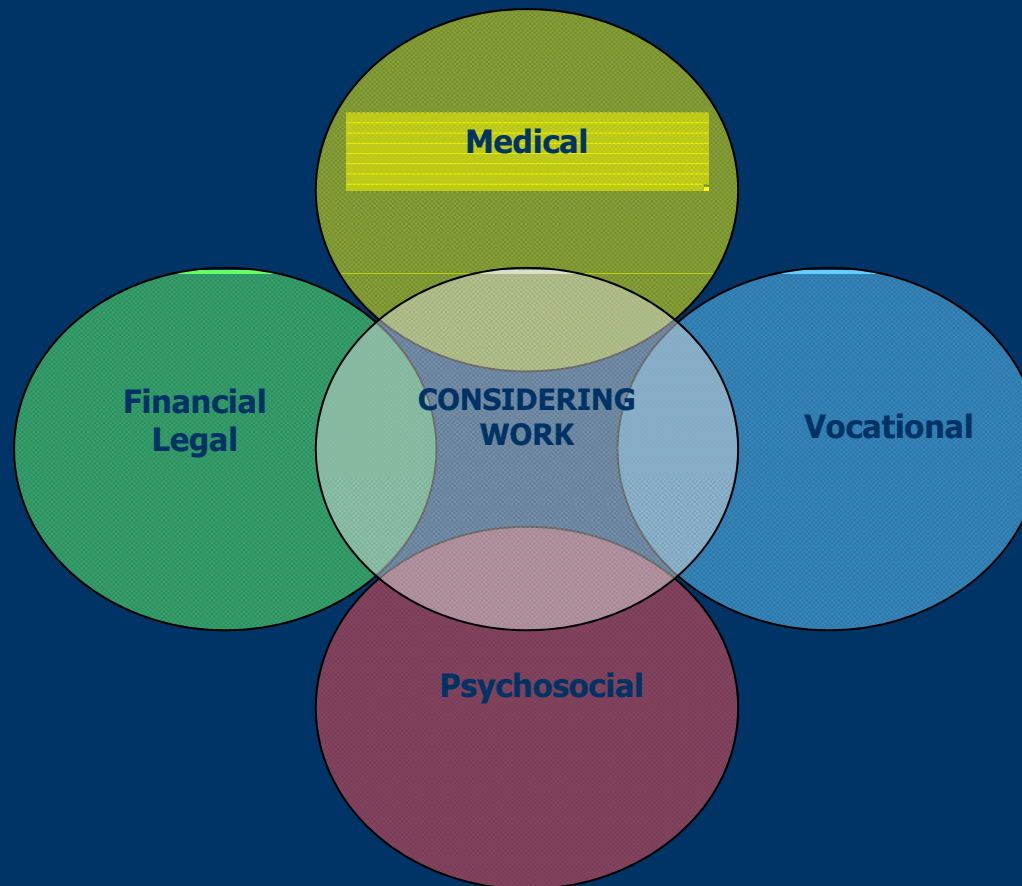
Obstacles to Making Decisions

- Decision is not defined
- Not having enough information
- Procrastination
- Fear, self-doubt, concern about mistakes
- External barriers
- Feeling overwhelmed by complexity of issues
- Pattern of deferring to others or letting things happen

Six helpful rules for decision-making

- Define the decision to be made
- ID obstacles and deal with them
- Get adequate information
- Compare at least two alternatives
- Know personal values
- Don't let others or events decide for you

Four Domains of Influence



Considering Work: Financial

I Think I...

Agree

Am Not Sure

Disagree

When people get a job they lose their benefits.

Financial/Legal Domain

- The financial/legal domain of influence address key economic & legal factors that can motivate or inhibit considering work
 - Income
 - Disability benefits
 - Insurance
 - Varied legal definitions of disability
 - Civil rights legislation



Financial Domain

- The lack of financial security is a major motivator for unemployed or underemployed people with HIV to consider work options
- The potential loss of government or private disability income and/or medical insurance benefits serves to inhibit many from moving forward on a vocational

You can work & continue benefits

- Need to know work incentives and connect with skilled benefits counselor
 - Different types of incentives for SSI & SSDI
- Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI)
 - Substantial gainful activity
 - Earned through prior work history
 - Trial Work Period
 - Extended period of eligibility for medicare
 - Plan to achieve self support
 - Expedited reinstatement



Supplemental Security Insurance

- Countable Earned Income
 - Amount cash benefit is reduced due to work
 - Must know calculation
 - Tells you how much you can earn before losing benefits
- Plan for Achieving Self Support
 - Allows individual to set aside income toward a vocational goal
 - Detailed application required
 - www.benefitsec.com

Skills to Address Financial

- Must also carefully assess all state and federal benefits that could be impacted by work
 - Housing, state public welfare resources
 - Each system has its unique rules and limits
- Be aware of specific legal/financial factors:
 - History of incarceration or convictions
 - Immigration status



Financial Domain Network/Partners

- Work Incentives Planning and Assistance (WIPA)
 - Community Work Incentives Coordinator
- There are local organizations in most of the 50 states, the U.S. territories and the District of Columbia

www.workworld.org/wwwwebhelp/wipa.htm

- Community Work Incentives Coordinator
 - Provide information regarding work incentives that help plan transition to work with knowledge on impact of work on financial and other benefits.
 - Help to make an informed decision & a Plan to Achieve Self-Support - www.workworld.org/wwwwebhelp/pass.htm

Key Online Resources

■ Works For Me

- Campaign funded by the social security administration and Medicaid Infrastructure Grants
- Personal success stories, Facebook connections, video clips
 - <http://www.worksforme-pa.org/>

■ Online benefits calculators

- <http://www.disabilitybenefits101.org/>
 - Should not replace in person consultation



Legal Domain

- Understanding the laws that impact employment options and address discrimination
- The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)
 - Civil rights legislation designed to protect people with disabilities from discrimination
 - PLWHA are covered by the ADA
 - Title III relates to employment issues
 - ADA Video Resource
 - http://www.ada.gov/videogallery.htm#10_employmentmyths_captioned

Skills to Address Legal Domain

- Understanding the range of legal definitions of “disability”
 - Federal
 - State
 - Local
 - Private insurance
- Understanding one’s legal rights under the American’s with Disabilities Act



Illegal Job Interview Questions

- Employer should not ask any general questions about your health
 - Questions need to be related to your ability to do the job tasks
- If asked if you have any health concerns, can reply:
 - No, I do not have any health problems that would interfere with my ability to do this job.
 - If need accommodation, you can request
 - Best to wait until after job offer, if possible

Job Accommodations

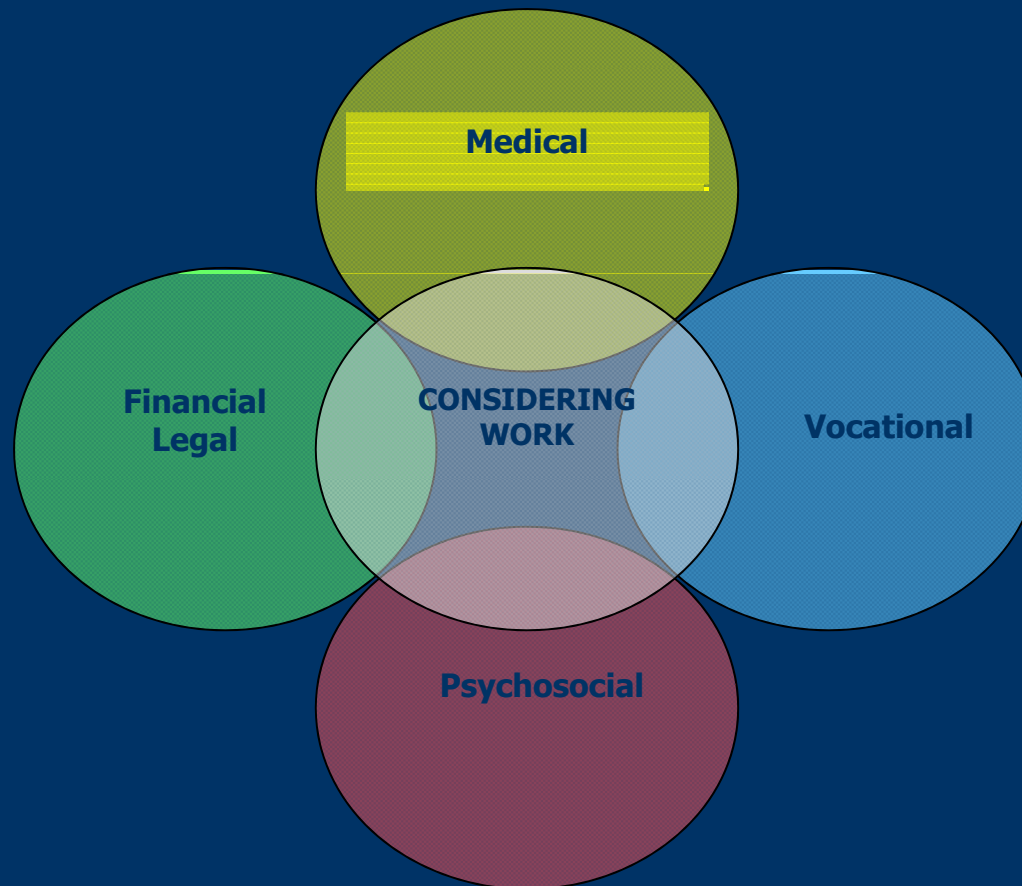
- Under the ADA, you can request that a reasonable change be made in your job if you are limited by your disability
- Job Accommodations Network - ASKJAN.ORG
- Online tool that allows to search for information about reasonable accommodations
- Resource packet
 - Kohlenberg article
 - “Asking for Accommodations Under the ADA”

Legal Domain Network Partners

- Department of Justice
- Legal AID
- Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC)
- Legal Action Network
- Job Accommodation Network (JAN)



Four Domains of Influence



Considering Work: Medical

I Think I...

Agree

Am Not Sure

Disagree

The risk to one's health outweighs the benefits of being employed.

Medical Domain of Influence

■ Level of Symptoms

- Direct effect of the virus on body system
- Opportunistic infections
- Medications treating the disease & their side effects
- Other related or coexisting illness/disability

■ Medication side effects

- Depression, anxiety, insomnia, neuropathy, headaches, fatigue, nausea, diarrhea, kidney stones
- Poor concentration
- Limitation in walking and standing
- Problems in work endurance, pace, and consistency



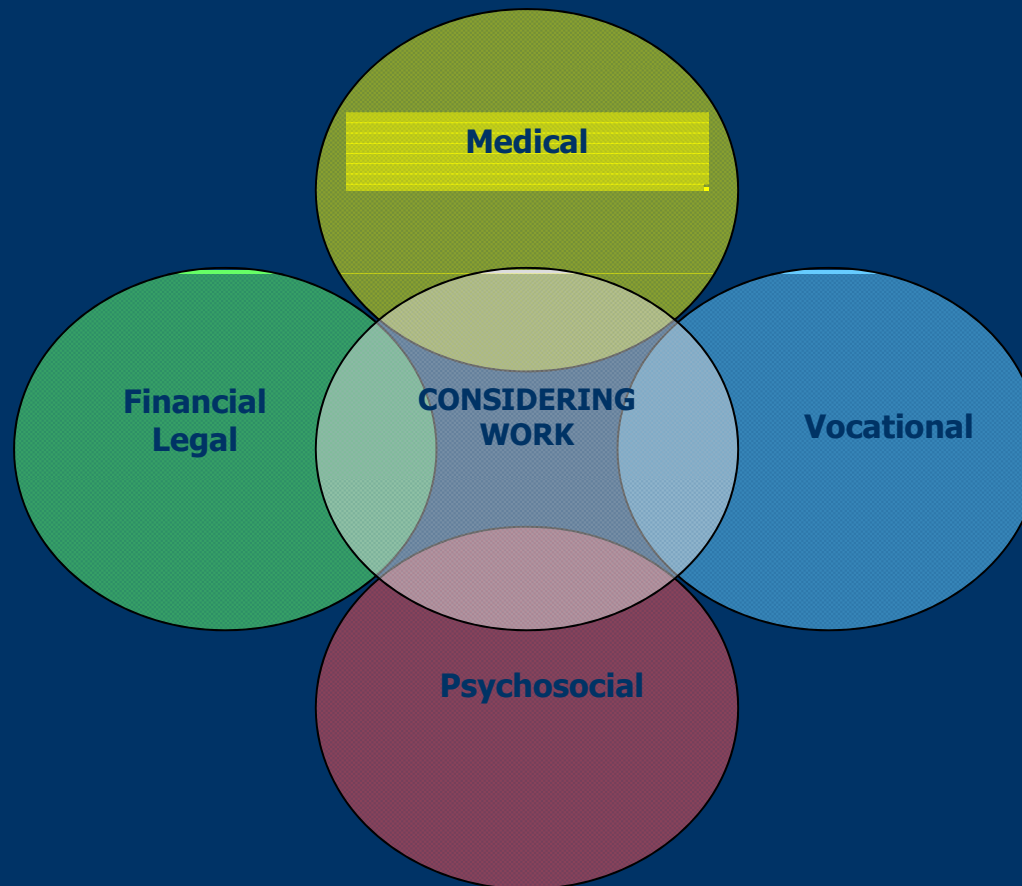
Skills to Address Medical Domain

- **Medical Assessment of Work Feasibility**
 - Required for some vocational rehabilitation services
 - Should include more than lab marker review
 - Need to consider individual differences related to work values, tolerance of risk, and willingness to work while ill
- **Medical examination and medical referral**
 - Knowing what to ask for from MD
 - Bringing a form
 - Documenting symptoms
 - Discussing accommodations

Skills to Address Medical Domain

- Medication Review
 - Can medications be simplified? Side-effects be reduced?
 - Has medication adherence been established?
 - Would change in work status require any adaptations to treatment?
 - Are there job accommodations that would allow work?
- Evaluation of work conditions relative to current health status
 - Are there any work conditions/environments should be avoided given current health status

Four Domains of Influence



Considering Work: Psychosocial

I Think I...

Agree

Am Not Sure

Disagree

Being employed would improve the self-esteem of people with HIV/AIDS.

Psychosocial Domain

- Overall psychological functioning
- Self-esteem
- Internal and external stigma & discrimination
- Level of social support and conflict
- Interpersonal skills
- Cognitive abilities and impairments
- Ability to manage stress
- Personality traits



Psychosocial Issues

- Age
 - Strikes many during key vocational development years
 - Many will lose long-term disability with retirement age
- Poverty
 - Social inequalities in health care
 - Lack of access to support
 - Unequal access to quality education
 - Unstable housing and homelessness
- Restricted opportunities
 - Employment discrimination
 - Lack of jobs in local communities
- Criminal justice – impact of incarceration



Skills to Address Psychosocial Domain

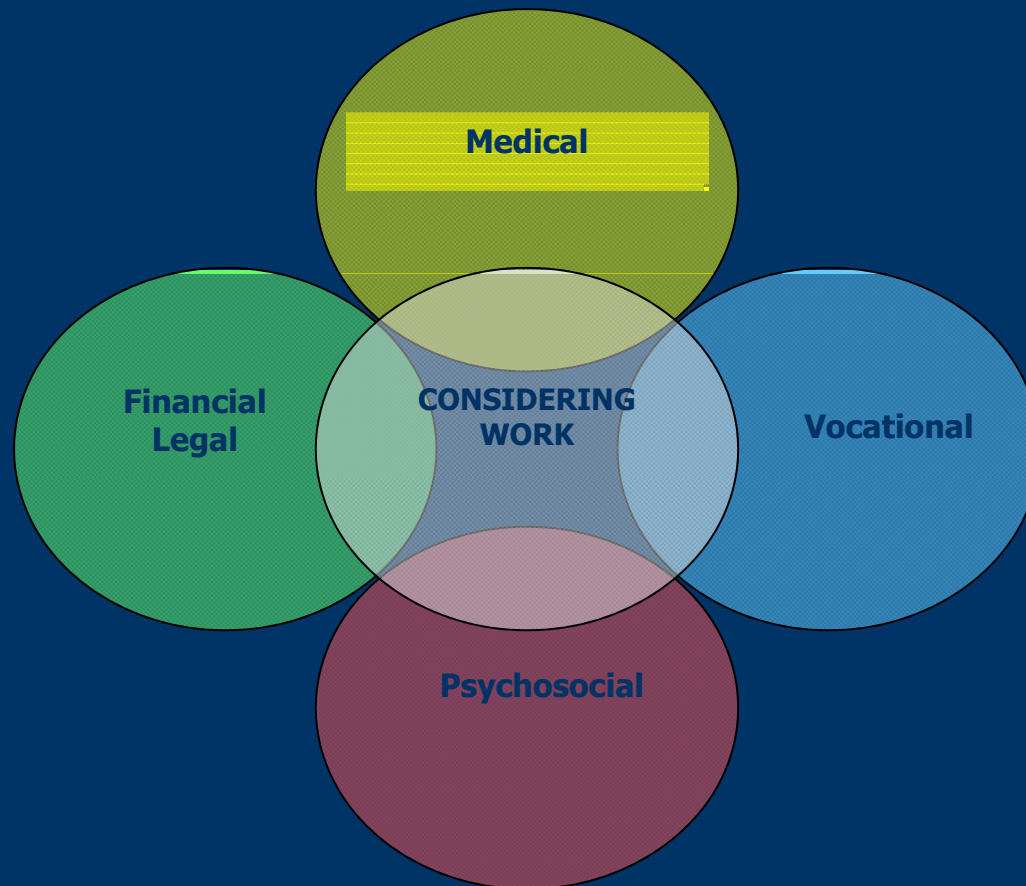
- Identify and monitor stress related symptoms and develop stress management programs.
- Assess for positive and negative sources of social support: personal involvement that will help or hinder making an informed decision and taking steps for successful work entry.
- Identifying sources of emotional and practical support, and persons who are encouraging (and discouraging) of work efforts.

Networks to Address Psychosocial Domain

- Case manager
- Vocational support groups & Job Clubs
- Community mental health professionals
- Friends and family members
- Community services and supports
- Religious and/or faith-based support



Four Domains of Influence



Considering Work: Vocational

I Think I...

...Agree

Am Not Sure

Disagree

I need to disclose my HIV status at work.

Vocational Domain

- This domain relates to all of the issues and factors associated with seeking employment
 - Individuals values and interests
 - Job skills and educational background
 - Access to career and vocational counseling
 - Job seeking skills
 - Job placement
 - Networking



Disclosure Guideline

- Does disclosure of my disability at this time and in this way support my objective of...
 - feeling comfortable at work
 - getting a needed accommodation
 - being true to myself and my identity
 - protecting my privacy
- Resource packet
 - “Asking for Accommodations Under the ADA”
 - Very personal decision

Disclosure and Work Environment

- Do not need to disclose your HIV status at work – private health issue
 - Unless you want to disclose
- If you need changes to your job, you can first ask without disclosing your disability
- If that does not work, can choose to disclose health status to be covered by ADA

Vocational Barriers

- Internal Factors
 - Lack of vocational skill
 - Poor vocational attitudes
- External Factors
 - Poor job market
 - Discrimination
 - Competition
- Disclosure of HIV status



Vocational Services

- Career/employment counseling
- Vocational training
- Job Seeking Skills (resume, job search)
- Work adjustment activities
 - Internships
 - Volunteer placements
 - Job placements
 - Job retention support

The State-Federal Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) System

- There are VR agencies in all 50 states, 6 U.S. territories and the District of Columbia
- Provides help with job searching (direct services and other resources including clothing, transportation, supplies, tools, etc.)
- Can provide funds for job specific training or education
- Can provide resources for/access to assistive technology
- VR subcontracts with other agencies to provide services to specialized populations (e.g. Mental Health, HIV/AIDS)

The Goal of VR Services = Employment

- A wide range of potentially transformative resources can be made available through VR services

But...

- Everything comes to a (screeching) halt when not tied directly to pursuit of a goal of eventual employment
- See packet for referral forms and sample application

Needed Skills: Vocational Domain

- Develop liaison with VR to bridge service delivery
- Know VR system and eligibility requirements
- All individuals receiving SSDI or SSI are presumed to be eligible for VR services. It is not necessary to be receiving SSDI or SSI to be determined eligible for VR services
- VR eligibility is based on interference with ability to work (or maintain employment) because of physical, mental or emotional disability
- In some state VR agencies, eligibility language may also



VR Doesn't Require Ending Benefits

- VR services can only be offered when tied to a plan to obtain employment, they CAN offer services for an employment goal that is structured NOT to interfere with maintaining benefits
- Individuals should work closely with benefits counselors in conjunction with their VR counselors for review of possible impacts of earned income and VR activity on financial benefits, health insurance and housing supports
- Encourage the development of vocational goals and plans that best meet the (changeable) individual needs of each consumer

One-Stop Career Centers (WIA)

- Do not have to disclose HIV status or have a disability
- Largely funded by the US Dept. of Labor – authorized in a law called the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (WIA). It replaced the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA)
- Nation-wide system developed to bring together local employment and training services that work with all people under one roof
- Resources provided include assessment, access to computers, employment databases, employers, job search training, support, and referrals

Disability Navigators/WIA One-Stops

- The Disability Navigators initiative promotes comprehensive services and work incentive information for SSA beneficiaries and other people with disabilities, through the One-Stop system
- Consumers utilizing One-Stop Career Centers can request individual assistance from Disability Navigators when they are located on-site

www.doleta.gov/disability/new_dpn_grants.cfm

www.workworld.org/wwwwebhelp/disability_program_navigator_dpn_.htm



Case Study Activity

Barriers

Skills

Networks

Domain

- Legal/Financial
- Medical
- Psycho-social
- Vocational



Case Study Activity

<u>Phase</u>	<u>Decisions/Activities</u>
1. Contemplation	Is any change feasible?
2. Preparation	What kind of change is best?
3. Action	How do I achieve the goal?
4: Resolution	Has pressure to change resolved?

*For technical assistance on topics related to HIV,
employment and vocational rehabilitation:*

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Acknowledgements

- AIDS Institute of New York State
- Jefferson Comprehensive Care System, Inc.
- National Institute of Disability & Rehabilitation Research (NIDRR)
- Maricela Carrera
- Paul Datti & PSU Research Team
- Eda Valero-Figueira
- Brendan Galivan
- Heather Homan
- Mark Misrok, NWPC