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Building Bridges

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Frameworks for early intervention VR: What works for whom and why?

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How I think about frameworks

- How does this framework for voc rehab map onto how we think about work in wider society?
- What opportunities does it open up?
- What risks does it introduce?

Frameworks for early intervention voc rehab

- Stay-at-work after injury
- Primary care integration
- Hospital-based VR services

Analysis: how different VR approaches understand and manipulate worker 'value'

SOCIOLOGY OF HEALTH & ILLNESS

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Re/creating entrepreneurs of the self: discourses of worker and employee 'value' and current vocational rehabilitation practices

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Stay-at-work after injury

- Primarily 'retaining worker value' approach

Primary care integration

- Primarily 'investing to create value' approach

Hospital-based VR services

- Primarily 're-envisaging value' approach

Retaining worker 'value'



- VR largely about **identifying what is preventing** an individual being able to work and **addressing this through interventions**
 - E.g. adaptation of workplace and/or job, employer and employee education, strategy use, rehabilitation.
- **Assessment** of work dis/ability may focus on:
 - physical function; cognitive skills; social functioning
 - issues that affect work functioning outside job - e.g. family, emotional

Retaining worker 'value'



- **Aim to minimise or eliminate the barriers** preventing the individual being able to perform a specified job
- **Value in relation to norms and expectations**, hindered by barriers
- **Evaluated** by how **efficiently and effectively** they help the individual overcome these barriers
 - E.g. time until return to work; work-ability for matched job

Investing to create worker 'value'



- Based getting individual **into work environment and role quickly** as possible and **'investing' in them on-the-job** to create a valuable worker
 - Worker not expected to be competent when they start employment.
- Coaching/ **support in addition to normal workplace structures** aid in balancing employer's needs to get job done and employee's need for learning, experience, adaptation, strategy development

Investing to create worker 'value'

- **Aim** to enable people who experience significant disability **access to mainstream jobs** / workplaces
- **Value** is in reference to **investment**
- **Evaluated** in relation to **adding productive workers** to the workforce



Re-envisaging 'value' and identifying and/or creating employment niches



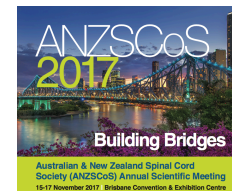
- Focused on re- envisaging the experience of disablement as a **shift in the 'value' that is offered in an employment market.**
 - Old skills and abilities may be left behind, but new ones and the 'value' they offer are identified.
- Process of 'empowerment': role of the vocational rehabilitation practitioner is to partner with or figuratively stand behind the individual to help them **re-envisage / re-create their worker selves**
 - Responsibility on the individual who is experiencing disability to 'lead' the re-envisaging process

Re-envisioning 'value' and identifying and/or creating employment niches



- **Aim:** envisage the individual as **enhanced in different ways**
 - offering value in a way that may be unique
 - rather that diminished with regard to previous or 'normalised' function
- **Value:** not strictly defined; can be discovered or created.
- **Evaluated** in terms of **employability** and **empowerment**

Example from services focused on 'barriers to work'



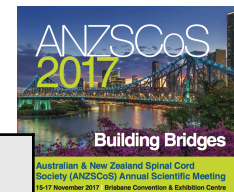
Practice	Some discourses that construct this practice	Some effects
Identifying barriers that are preventing a person being able to do a job and using rehab and/or environmental modification to minimize or eliminate them as part of a return-to-work plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Values independence and maintaining existing career capital - Draws on discourses that injuries should be as minimally disruptive to a person's life as possible – the more time spent out of 'normal' life, the greater the chance of long-term effects. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - High value placed on restoring capability and minimising disruption often do achieve these things - Small but significant number of people experience major disruption and/or considerable changes to abilities or capability to work as they were before. In these cases, value on independence and maintenance of existing career capital can further emphasise a feeling of failure or crisis. In SCI this number is likely to be a higher proportion.

Example from supported employment (investing)



Practice	Some discourses that construct the practice	Some effects
Practice of 'place and train' with long-term support. Employer engagement and employment support key activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Values mainstream employment over training or sheltered employment schemes - Draws on discourses that having disabled people in the workplace benefits an employer – 'value' as loyal, dedicated, used to facing challenges ... - Resists the value placed on <i>independence</i> in favour of <i>inter-dependence</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Access to a jobs (and social opportunities) that a person would not normally be considered for – a way of changing what's valuable and possible - The value on inter-dependence as opposed to independence risks positioning a person as different or 'other' in a workplace – service design needs to consider how this is managed.

Example: services focused on re-visioning 'value'



Practice	Some discourses that construct the practice	Some effects
Practice of 're-visioning' what a person's job and/or career contribution could be following change in abilities. Career guidance as main activity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Work is a core part of life; and that everyone faces challenges - Utilizes discourses of diversity to resist notion that disability is different to other challenges - only one of a whole raft of possible career-changing events (and 'normal', could happen to anyone) - Job market as flexible and able to be manipulated, and employment 'value' as co-constructed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Promotes and idea that services, employers, etc should see disability as one of life's challenges rather than something out of the ordinary – promoting the valuing of a person as a 'whole package'. - Positions work and career as central to life - Forward-thinking focus can obscure some of the negative, challenging or painful sides of this particular 'life change'. Service design must be very mindful of this.

SCI early-intervention services:
Where do they fit?

Why is this the dominant approach?

Specific opportunities / risks?