



Application

The Initial Interview Report can be seen as a “SNAPSHOT” of the client’s current situation. The counselor & other rehab team members can review it throughout the rehab process for easy, one-page reference. For example, you can attach it to your referrals for vocational services to quickly familiarize providers with the client’s situation. Likewise, it’s important that you, the writer, accurately *tell the client’s story*.

INITIAL INTERVIEW

Lindy

06/23/05

Reason for Referral: Lindy is a 24 YO female self-referred to vocational rehabilitation. Lindy, who lives with a learning disability, works as a case manager for the local mental health program. She is requesting VR assistance toward assistive technology that would enable her to independently carry out the duties of her job.

Program Notifications: Prior to proceeding with the interview, Lindy was provided oral information regarding the purpose of Vocational Rehabilitation, the criteria for eligibility, her rights, responsibilities, and remedies. She was also provided written copies of such information for her later reference. However, given the nature of her disability, Lindy was encouraged to ask for assistance should she have any questions, now or later, regarding the information provided her.

Reported Disability: Lindy reports she lives live with Dyslexia and Attention Deficit Disorder, first diagnosed in grammar school. As a result of her disabilities, Lindy was placed in a resource class throughout her elementary and high school years, a placement she found very stigmatizing. In addition to her learning disabilities, Lindy appears to be experiencing depression. She is very concerned about losing her job and finds it difficult to sleep at night. Without proper rest, Lindy’s ability to concentrate, a task that is already difficult for her, is further compromised.

Functional Limitations/Impediments to Employment: Due to her dyslexia, Lindy has difficulty with reading comprehension and constantly questions if what she comprehends is accurate. She has poor spelling and her case notes are fraught with errors. Given her difficulties, it is very laborious for Lindy to complete her case notes and reports, which are often late. Consequently, she has received stern feedback from her supervisor that she must improve her organization and stay on top of her paperwork. Lindy often seeks out the assistance of her coworkers to compensate. Due to her disability, Lindy believes she is regarded as a “*mediocre*” employee and is concerned she will be let go before the end of her 6-month probation period, which ends on December 9, 2005.

Work History:

Lindy is currently working in her first professional job. While in high school, she worked 10 hours per week as a janitor at a local fitness center. In addition to wages, Lindy earned



Why is it that a person who can “see” the written word can’t comprehend it?

The more you understand about a particular disability, the more you can help your client understand. The more the client understands, the more he/she can explain the disability to others and advocate for oneself.

Knowledge increases understanding and reduces stigma.

Use your resources:
<http://www.dphhs.mt.gov/vocrehab/vrs/disabilityresourcecenter.shtml>

a free membership to the club. Given her difficulty with school, Lindy did not work while in college.

Educational History: After graduating from high school, Lindy enrolled in the local college to obtain her degree in social work. As a result of her learning difficulties, it took Lindy five years to graduate. Due to the stigmatization she experienced in high school, Lindy did not seek out any disability related assistance while in college. Rather, she often resorted to “charming” her friends into typing and proofreading her written work.

Social and Financial Considerations: Lindy lives alone in her own apartment. She describes her family and friends, who live nearby, as supportive, but perceives that they get “frustrated” with her. In addition to her living expenses, Lindy has outstanding school loans. She barely meets her expenses, leaving no discretionary income.

Client’s Reported Vocational Interests and Goals: Lindy desires to keep her job. She states, “*I really like my job and want to be able to do it without relying on others to help me!*” Lindy refuses to ask her employer to purchase technology that may assist her in carrying out her job duties. She states that her place of employment has a non-profit status and operates on a very thin budget.

Counselor Observation and Actions: Lindy was observed to be well groomed, and presented herself in a cordial manner. She was both articulate and expressive about her struggles and her aspirations. Likewise, it is easy to see how others, who do not know of or understand her disability, would grow “frustrated” with this young lady who *appears* to have no disabilities. It appears Lindy could benefit from some assistance with self-advocacy.

Lindy was observed to bounce her legs up and down throughout our meeting. Her eye contact was good, but she often appeared distracted; her eyes often darted to and from the window when somebody passed by. She often asked me to repeat information and would hold her hands on either side of her head appearing to block out other distractions.

Lindy has no current information regarding her disability; she was last tested in the eighth grade. Lack of current information coupled with Lindy’s symptoms of depression warrant a current evaluation. Lindy is open to an evaluation and has chosen to see Dr. Smith with whom she is familiar. **Lindy is scheduled to see Dr. Smith on July 7 at 9 AM.** A referral packet including release and authorization was completed on this date.

Once received, the psychological report will be reviewed to determine Lindy’s eligibility for services.

Clyde Caring, MS, CRC
Rehabilitation Counselor



A skilled counselor will effectively solicit information from clients through open-ended questions and then reflect the “client’s voice” in case notes with direct quotes.



What does the ADA say about this situation? Should Lindy’s employer pay for any or all of the equipment she requires to do her job? Would it be considered a “reasonable accommodation?” If so, how might Lindy or her VR counselor approach the employer? When might it be in the client’s best interest not to approach the employer?



Use your resources! Check out the Job Accommodation Network. <http://www.jan.wvu.edu/>

While you’re at it, check out the ADA too! <http://www.usdoj.gov/crt/ada/adahom1.htm>

LETTER OF REFERRAL

June 24, 2005

Dr. Smith
123 Any Street
Any Town, USA

RE: **Lindy**
02/17/84

Dear Dr. Smith:

This young lady is scheduled to meet with you on **July 7 at 9 AM**. She reports she was diagnosed with Dyslexia and Attention Deficit Disorder when she was in grammar school. She has not undergone any formalized testing since the 8th grade. We are in need of current evaluative information to confirm the presence of a disability and to determine eligibility for services.

Amy, who currently works as a case manager for a local mental health program, reports she is unable to independently perform her job duties. She reports she requires assistive technology to help her do so. What technology might you recommend to help her independently perform her job duties? Also, Lindy appears to be struggling with depression. Do you recommend counseling? I've enclosed a copy of my Initial Interview report for your review.

Thank you, Dr. Smith for seeing Lindy. I look forward to receiving your report.

Sincerely,

Clyde Caring, MS, CRC
Rehabilitation Counselor

Enc. Signed Release
Initial Interview Report
Authorization

NOTE

Clyde received and reviewed Dr. Smith's report, which confirmed Lindy's diagnosis of Dyslexia, ADD, and situational Depression. He recommended a medication consult, adjustment counseling, and assistive technology.



Eligibility Determination

The VR counselor determines eligibility by always asking a series of **KEY QUESTIONS**:

1. Is there evidence of a physical or mental disability?
2. Does the disability prove to be an impediment to employment? In other words, does the disability interfere with the individual's ability to prepare for, secure, and maintain suitable employment?
3. Does the individual *require* services to prepare for, secure, and maintain employment?

The Certificate of Eligibility is documented proof that the questions have been asked and answered.

CERTIFICATE OF ELIGIBILITY

Lindy
08/16/05

Lindy has a substantial impediment to employment in that the functional limitations resulting from her disabilities (Dyslexia; Attention Deficit Disorder; Depression, situational) significantly interfere with her ability to independently carry out the duties of her job as a case manager. Specifically, without assistance, Lindy does not get her paper work done on a timely basis. The written work she does complete appears unprofessional due to multiple spelling errors. Because Lindy's issues are unresolved, she is not sleeping at night, which only compounds her difficulties at work.

Lindy requires VR services, which will include one or more of the following:

1. **Medication Consult** with psychiatrist to determine if medications might help Lindy better manage her symptoms related to ADD.
2. **Adjustment Counseling** services geared to help Lindy develop her self-advocacy skills, improve her self-confidence, and reduce her symptoms of depression.
3. **Assistive Technology** to help Lindy independently and effectively carry out the duties of her job.

Clyde Caring, MS, CRC
Rehabilitation Counselor

LETTER OF ELIGIBILITY

August 16, 2005

Dear Lindy:

I'm writing to inform you that you are eligible for services to help you maintain your job. Our next step is to meet and begin the development of your rehabilitation plan. I've scheduled an appointment for us to meet on: **Monday, August 26 at 2 PM**. If this time is not convenient for you, please call the office (123-4567) to reschedule.

To familiarize you with the process, I've enclosed a copy of the format for the "Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE), and the introduction to the plan entitled, "VR and Client Understandings," which outlines the process to write an IPE, your responsibilities and your rights. You do not have to complete the plan prior to meeting with me. We can work on it together.

Lindy, I look forward to meeting with you.

Clyde Caring, MS, CRC
Rehabilitation Counselor



Certification reflects evidence that:

- The eligibility determination occurred within 60 days of application date.
- A physical or mental impairment proves to be substantial impediment to employment.
- At least one substantive service is required to overcome impediment to employment.



Assessment & Planning

In this phase, we help clients engage in exploration to help them discover their **DESTINATION** (vocational goal) and/or the **PROVISIONS** (services and supplies) they *require* to get there.

CASE NOTE

Lindy

08/26/05

Lindy and this counselor met today as scheduled. Together, we reviewed the results and recommendations of her recent evaluation with Dr. Smith. Lindy is willing to consider medication and adjustment counseling. She was provided the names of several physicians in town. She chose to meet with Dr. Kindcare. Lindy will schedule her own appointment.

To ensure that Lindy is provided with technology (hardware and software) that will best suit her needs, she has been referred to a local technology company that specializes in the customization of technology for people who live with disabilities.

Lindy is not yet eligible for medical/psychological services through her employment; she has no comparable benefits at this time.

Referral packets including signed releases and authorizations have been completed and forwarded to:

Dr. Kindcare
Tech Wizards

Next appointment: **September 10, 2005**

Clyde Caring, MS, CRC
Rehabilitation Counselor



How do you help a client avoid getting equipment (assistive technology) that is not necessary (too much), or getting equipment that is not adequate (too little)?

How do you discern between what the client wants and what he/she needs?

Who might you consult?

RATIONALE FOR GOAL AND SERVICES

Lindy

09/10/05

Status: Mental Restoration (16)

Lindy was in today as scheduled. An IPE outlining required services was completed on this date.

CLIENT PERSPECTIVE: Lindy has chosen case manager as her vocational goal. She supports her goal stating, *“I enjoy helping people. I want to help others like many have helped me. I want to give back. My supervisor says I have good intuition for my job. I just need to be able to do it independently.”*

GOAL COMAPTIBILITY: Given her stated interests, her perseverance and her demonstrated abilities to date (finishing a degree and getting a job), it appears, Lindy has selected a suitable vocational goal.

SERVICE RATIONALE: Lindy requires assistive technology, and psychotherapeutic services to help her independently and effectively carry out the duties of her job. Specifically, Lindy, who requires more time to finish her work, would benefit from the use of a laptop computer that would enable her to take her work home. She requires Dragon Dictate software, which will enable her to dictate her case notes and reports directly into her computer, which will expedite the completion of her work. She also requires WYNN software and a scanner that will read written print (interoffice memos, case notes, etc.) directly to her. When she is able to see and hear information, at the same time, her comprehension, concentration, and information retention is enhanced.

Lindy may benefit from medication to help her focus her attention; Lindy has agreed to try medication to determine its efficacy for her. Lindy requires counseling services to improve her confidence and reduce her depression. Without this assistance, Lindy will continue to isolate herself and suffer silently.

EMPLOYMENT OUTLOOK: Lindy is already employed and is receiving a wage considered commensurate with all others performing the same type of work in this locale.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATION: Lindy is not yet eligible for medical benefits through her employment, nor does she have any discretionary income enabling her to purchase necessary assistive technology. Given her tenuous employment situation, Lindy is reluctant to approach her employer regarding sharing the costs of these accommodations.

Clyde Caring, MS, CRC
Rehabilitation Counselor



The Rationale document demonstrates that the counselor has considered the feasibility of the IPE strategy to overcome impediments. It provides evidence that...

- the client's goal is compatible with his expressed interests, concerns, priorities, demonstrated strengths, abilities, and that...
- the client *requires* the identified services to achieve his goal, and that...
- the client was provided information enabling him to make an “informed choice” regarding the services and the vendors identified on the IPE



IPE Initiation & Follow Along

The IPE is the **ROAD MAP** to the client's goal or destination. It outlines the route (what the client and the VR program will do to the client achieve his goal) and the **ETA** (estimated time of arrival or goal end date). Clients and counselors can avoid getting lost with frequent referral to the map!

INDIVIDUALIZED PLAN FOR EMPLOYMENT

Name: *Lindy*

Plan Date: *09/10/05*

My work goal: *Case Manager*

Date to complete goal: *12/31/05*

We have agreed the following services are required:



An IPE that is accountable to the Rehab Act provides evidence that...

Service(s)	Responsible Party	Amount	Provider(s)	Dates of Service(s)
Medication Consult & Counseling	Voc Rehab	\$700	Dr. Kindcare	09/05-12/05
Prescribed Medication	Voc Rehab	\$100	Feelbetter Pharmacy	09/05-12/05
**Computer Hardware (laptop and Scanner)	Voc Rehab	\$2100	Tech R Us	09/05-10/05
**Computer Software (Dragon Dictate & WYNN)	Voc Rehab	\$650	Tech R Us	09/05-10/05

□ all services are prior authorized and provided within the timeframe specified by the service start dates and the *goal end date*...

□ comparable benefits and resources are explored...

□ client responsibilities (objectives) are written in clear and measurable terms...

□ Progress Review Schedule is clear, adherence to which will be reflected in subsequent Case Notes...

Additional community and financial resources I will use to help me achieve my work goal:

None at this time.

My responsibilities in showing progress toward my work goal:

- I will order and familiarize myself with all assistive technology by October 10, 2005.*
- I will take my medication as prescribed to determine if it will help me to manage my ADD symptoms. Effectiveness will be evaluated on the basis of improved functioning: better concentration, less distraction.*
- I will meet with my counselor once per week until my symptoms have decreased (better sleep, less isolation, feel happier and more confident at work).*

***I understand that all equipment and software will be loaned to me to help me effectively perform my job duties and achieve permanent status. Until such time, all hardware and software remains the property of Vocational Rehabilitation and is not to be used for any purpose beyond work. When I achieve permanent status, ownership of the equipment will be assigned to me. See notice below.*

Schedule for Reviewing Progress: *I will meet with Clyde once every 60 days to review my progress until I'm independently performing my job duties and feeling more confident in my work.*

First Review Appointment: *NOVEMBER 10, 2005 AT 3 PM*

INDIVIDUALIZED PLAN FOR EMPLOYMENT

-Page 2-

VR Counselor Considerations:

- 1. Are Post Employment Services needed? YES NO
- 2. Are Extended Employment Services needed? YES NO NA
 If Extended Employment Services are needed, please describe the required services and identify the extended services provider.
- 3. Have VR goals, objectives and services been coordinated with the student's Individualized Educational Plan (IEP)? YES NO NA

Methods for providing or procuring goods and services: The Vocational Rehabilitation program can provide vocational services directly. In addition, the agency can use purchase orders to procure goods and services from approved vendors. The bidding process is used when appropriate to purchase goods at the best available price. Comparable benefits, when available (resources from other programs or agencies), are utilized to meet rehabilitation needs. All services are provided in accordance with the Financial Need Standard specified by the Vocational Rehabilitation Program.

My comments about this plan:

"I want to continue in my work as a case manager because I'm passionate about social service work; I enjoy helping people."

By signing this document I understand and commit to the responsibilities in my Plan. I have been given the opportunity to make informed choices about my work goal, the vocational services needed to achieve it, providers of the goods and services, and the methods available for procuring the services. I received a copy of this Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) in a format that was understandable and appropriate for me.

If applicable, I was offered the opportunity to assign my **Ticket to Work** to Vocational Rehabilitation. YES NO NA

Client: Lindy
Counselor: Clyde Caring

Date: 091005
Date: 09/10/05

- the client was informed of the availability of Post Employment Services ...
- Extended Employment Services, if applicable, were addressed ...
- when applicable, VR coordinated services with school personnel to assist students who are transitioning from school to work & that there was opportunity to complete an IPE before graduation...
- the client was involved in the development of the IPE (see "My comments..") and that...
- the IPE was developed within 120 days of date of application, or the case record justifies an extension of plan development time.

PROGRESS REVIEW

Lindy

11/10/05

Status: Employed (22)

Lindy was in today as scheduled. After installing and “training” her computer with the new software, Lindy reports she is delighted with the technology stating, *“It is such a relief not having to ask somebody else to help me with my work!”* She adds, *“While I’m still getting used to it (the technology) I’m finally catching up with my paperwork.”*

She has been taking her medication and meeting with Dr. Kindcare. She believes the medication is helping her to focus her attention at work, and reports that she is beginning to feel better as well; she states she is sleeping better and feels less worried that she’ll lose her job. She reports, “I feel more hopeful now.”

Lindy and I agreed to meet following her 6-month employment review. We are scheduled to meet: **December 15, 2005 at 11:30 AM.**

Clyde Caring, MS, CRC
Rehabilitation Counselor



Rehabilitation Outcome

In a successful case closure (26), the client's achievement of her goal and VR's contributions to that accomplishment are documented. In this case, a congratulatory handshake is in order! Sometimes, however, despite our best efforts, successful outcomes don't always occur. Sometimes clients relocate & other times life circumstances interfere. Either way, a respectful and courteous exchange between client & counselor, wherein the client knows she is welcome to reapply, is always desirable.

CLOSURE SUMMARY

Lindy
12/15/05

Lindy was into today as scheduled. She reports that her employment review went very well. Lindy says that her supervisor noted her improvement and praised her work with some of her clients. Due to her improvement, Lindy has retained her job and has been granted permanent employee status.

Feeling more confident, Lindy revealed more information about her disability to her employer, who, in turn, invited Lindy to do an inservice on learning disabilities for the entire staff.

Regarding her job, Lindy states, *"I think it a great match for me."* Relative to the equipment she reports, *"I love it. I use it daily and am able to do things in a timely manner and do them independently."*

Lindy is working full time earning \$13/hour plus benefits, which she will now use to purchase her own medications. Given her success, and her need for no further services, Lindy and I agreed to close her case.

Permanent ownership of all computer technology was assigned to Lindy as of this date.

Clyde Caring, MS, CRC
Rehabilitation Counselor

CLOSURE LETTER

December 15, 2005

Lindy

Dear Lindy:

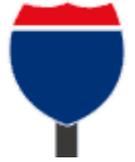
In enjoyed visiting with you today. Through your own hard work and the assistance provided you by this agency, you have experienced improved health and renewed confidence. Furthermore, you have maintained the job of your choosing. Once again, congratulations! Given your success, we agreed to close your case. However, as we discussed, should you experience any difficulties related to your disability and continued employment, you are welcome to contact us. Assistance may be provided through the Post Employment Services Program.

Lindy, it has been a pleasure working with you. I wish you continued success!

Sincerely,

Clyde Caring, MS, CRC
Rehabilitation Counselor

CC APPEAL RIGHTS



Case documents such as a [Closure Summary](#) and/or the [Closure Letter](#) must provide evidence that...

- the client achieved the goal outlined in the IPE and that the goal remains suitable...
- the client expressed satisfaction with the job in a direct consultation between the client and the counselor and both are in agreement with case closure...
- services made a substantive contribution to the achievement of the goal...
- the client has maintained the job for at least 90 days...
- the client is earning a customary wage that is at or above minimum wage, and that...
- the client has been informed of Post Employment services.