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Abstract: The employment of people with disabilities has been and remains a top priority for Virgin Islands University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (VIUCEDD). Members of VIUCEDD partnered with disability employment experts and behavioral support experts at Kennedy Krieger Institute to develop a pilot program that would merge best practices in disability employment supports, best practices in behavioral supports, and best practices in transition planning for people with disabilities to develop a comprehensive plan to support the employment needs of people with disabilities. The data presented below indicate a mean increase in knowledge of employers and job coaches in relation to disability knowledge and initial favorable trends in relation to decreases in maladaptive behaviors for one candidate associated with this study.

Materials and Methods

- Study participants include 8 young adults with disabilities who are registered with Vocational Rehabilitation Services, 8 employers and 8 job coaches residing in the U.S. Virgin Islands on the Islands of St. Thomas, St. John, and St. Croix.
- Assessment from multiple sources and multiple settings implied in a behavior analytic intervention, combined with the focus on socially-significant behavior change, makes this type of intervention a natural fit and companion for a person-centered approach to disability services.
- Each employee candidate will undergo a person-centered planning process at the beginning of this intervention. Additionally, characteristics of the person-centered approach to disability planning are inherent in the science of Applied Behavior Analysis.
- A pre/post-test assessment of 15-item multiple choice items about disability knowledge was administered among employers and job coaches prior to a two-hour training on disabilities and again immediately afterwards.
- Job coaches also engaged in a two-hour training on Applied Behavior Analytic methodologies and data collection techniques. They were trained on individual protocols and data collection techniques in relation to their individual candidate.

Results

- Among employers, there was a net gain in knowledge between pre and post-test assessments related to disability knowledge. The total correct answers on pretest responses was 60 versus 54 on posttest assessments for employers.
- Among job coaches, there was a net gain in correct responses as well with their pretest data totaling 29 correct responses versus 39 at post-test follow up.
- All 8 disability employment candidates demonstrated severe deficits in adaptive behaviors, based on the results of the Vineland Adaptive Behavior Inventories.
- Preliminary single subject data indicates reductions in problem behaviors.

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