The Rehabilitation Counselor Mentoring Program

Guiding Rehabilitation Counselors to Professional Excellence
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INTRODUCTION

Congratulations, you are one of the few selected as a Counselor Mentor. You were chosen because of your outstanding counseling skills and superior casework. You are the type of counselor the Agency wants new counselors to emulate. In addition, you have been identified as having the interpersonal skills and interest needed to be an effective mentor.

You have agreed to take on a task that will be both challenging and rewarding. Although it will take a great deal of time and effort, your success will positively impact the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation and Kentuckians with disabilities for years to come.

This guide outlines the basic competencies a new counselor is expected to master prior to independently managing a caseload. Each section includes suggestions for assisting the new counselor develop the skills as well as resources you might find helpful in conveying the information. However, you can, and should, use any method that you and the new counselor find most beneficial.

There is no set time frame for completing the guide. Individuals learn in different ways and at different rates. It is our intention that the mentor assists the new counselor to independently complete the more routine aspects of the position (i.e. conduct interviews, make eligibility decisions, write IPE’s, etc.) within the first three weeks of employment. The Branch Manager is an integral component of this learning process. However, the timeframe should be determined by the needs of the new counselor. The goal is to assist the new counselor in mastering the competencies, not in completing the outline within a predetermined timeframe.

This guide includes the “New Counselor Competency Checklist” which is to be utilized throughout the initial mentoring process. Once the new counselor acquires and demonstrates to the mentor the ability to independently perform tasks related to the competency, the mentor is to record the accomplishment on the form. Once all the competencies have been mastered, the mentor is to sign and date the checklist and submit to the new counselor’s Branch Manager. The Branch Manager will review the competencies with the new counselor and make recommendations for additional training, if necessary.

This guide may also be used to assist staff who are supervising vocational rehabilitation practicum or internship students. However, all new counselors are required to have a mentor if available in their district and complete the “New Counselor Competency Checklist” even if they went through the process as a student.
MENTOR PHILOSOPHY AND RESPONSIBILITY

The word mentor derived from Greek mythology. It was used to describe a person who was in charge and who was teaching the young individuals in their community. Today it is defined as an adviser, supporter, and teacher. Although thousands of years have passed between Greek time and the present, the understanding of a Mentor has remained the same.

As a mentor with the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, you will not only assist a new counselor in learning the competencies required to succeed on the job but you will develop a relationship with the new employee that will involve trust, dedication, and friendship. Such as in Greek mythology, you will be an adviser, supporter and teacher.

When you begin mentoring a new counselor, remember your first day as a counselor. It is very stressful to meet new people and to know the unspoken office rules. New employees often feel left out during office discussion, lunch or breaks. As a mentor, assist the new employee to feel comfortable during those first few days of employment and to develop co-worker relationships. Mentors often play a major role in making new employees feel wanted and comfortable during the first few months of employment. This hopefully will ensure that the employee will become committed to maintaining their position as a VR counselor.
PURPOSE OF VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

Vocational Rehabilitation’s primary goal is employment for persons with disabilities. This goal can benefit other entities as well through the following means:

- Assisting **individuals with disabilities** in obtaining and maintaining employment that reaches their highest interest, abilities and ambitions.
- Assisting **employers** in fulfilling their on-going needs for qualified employees. This includes helping employers maintain excellent employees who have an injury or an illness that jeopardize job security and matching the unique skills of individuals with disabilities to employer labor needs.
- Decreasing the **taxes paid** to support Social Security and other social agencies. When individuals work, they become taxpayers and their social service benefits are reduced. This decreases the amount of money taxpayers must pay to maintain these programs.

KEY POINTS

- Values, mission, and purpose of VR
- Emphasis on serving individuals with the most significant disabilities
- Emphasis on abilities, choice, and inclusion
- Employment as a right
- Appropriate Employment to the individual’s potential

TEACHING METHODS

- Review the philosophy, mission and values statements of the Agency.
- Review the preamble to the 1992 Amendment of the Rehabilitation Act.
- Share personal experiences regarding how each of these identified areas has been applied in a caseload.

SUGGESTED RESOURCES

- Internet: [http://ovr.ky.gov](http://ovr.ky.gov)
- Journal of Applied Rehabilitation Counseling
- OVR Consumer Guide
- Vocational Rehabilitation Staff
- The Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended
- Skills Enhancement Training (SET)
CONFIDENTIALITY, ETHICS, AND HIPAA

All professionals need to maintain confidentiality with the consumers they are working with at all times. Vocational Rehabilitation is responsible for safeguarding the personal information obtained throughout the rehabilitation process. Personal information can only be released under very strict guidelines. The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) is the law that dictates the national standards for the release of medical records. This law represents a uniform national method of confidentiality that is over and above the state laws of confidentiality. There are specific ways to disclose information:

- Informed written consent for release of personal information.
- Disclosure to prevent clear and imminent danger to self and/or others.
- Disclosure to a third party of a contagious and fatal disease (differences may vary among state laws).
- Court ordered disclosure.
- Limited disclosure to assistants and other professionals working with the individuals.

The confidentiality laws must be explained to consumers when the relationship is initiated and throughout the rehabilitation process. All confidential information obtained is to be used for professional purposes only and accessed only by Agency personnel who require the information to perform specific job duties.

Ethics are the guiding principals and standards that govern how professionals conduct themselves in their job responsibilities and with consumers. Ethics governs such areas as confidentiality, roles and relationships between counselors and consumers, and referral and termination of relationship with consumers. Mentors need to ensure the new counselors are highly aware and sensitive to the guidelines of ethics.

KEY POINTS

- The principles of ethical behavior
- Procedures and guidelines for obtaining and sharing personal information
- Release of information to entities involved in carrying out the rehabilitation program (CRPs, colleges, etc).
- Protecting confidentiality within the office
- Use of e-mail
- Services to family members and friends
- Gifts
- Boundaries of the counselor relationship
- HIPAA Guidelines

SUGGESTED TEACHING TECHNIQUES

- Review the CRCC Code of Ethics with the new employee [http://www.crccertification.com](http://www.crccertification.com)
- Give sample scenarios regarding confidentiality issues, allow new employee to state what their actions would be and discuss for accuracy of choice.
- Provide examples of how ethics and confidentiality should be reflected in case files.
- Review the Release of Information forms utilized by the Office.
SUGGESTED RESOURCES

- Commission on Rehabilitation Counselor Certification [http://www.crccertification.com](http://www.crccertification.com)
- Professional Organizations (NRA, KRA, ACA, etc.)
- Vocational Rehabilitation Staff
- Skills Enhancement Training (Segment on Confidentiality and Ethics)
- Release Form (15B)
CASELOAD DOCUMENTATION

The purpose of documentation is to show the progress of a case and should make case reviews easier. Documentation should be done so that a third party, totally unfamiliar with the case, can promptly and easily see what is happening with the case and can understand why the counselor made a particular decision. Generally, the progress notes are considered as this documentation. However, the entire case record serves as documentation and information contained elsewhere does not have to be duplicated in the progress notes.

KEY POINTS

- Signature or initials required on all progress notes
- Format of progress note is based on individual preference
- Consumer name, counselor name, and date should be included on progress note
- Notes should be objective and factual
- Progress notes should be written for specific steps in the rehabilitation process i.e. initial interview, eligibility, IPE, annual review, case closure

SUGGESTED TEACHING TECHNIQUES

- Share different examples of progress notes.
- Review new counselor progress notes and provide feedback.
- Participate in TRACKS.

SUGGESTED RESOURCES

- OVR Policies and Procedures Manual (Counselor Manual), Documentation Section
- Vocational Rehabilitation Staff
- TRACKS involvement
- Skills Enhancement Trainings
REFERRAL AND APPLICATION

Obtaining appropriate referrals and conducting successful initial interviews are vital to the success of the rehabilitation process.

KEY POINTS

- Referral sources
- Joint intake through One-stop Centers
- Completion of the application
- Releases of information
- Voter registration
- Documentation
- Obtaining and utilizing existing information
- 60 day requirement to determine eligibility
- Referral to other resources
- Disability Coding
- Appropriate referrals
- Explanation of services
- Consumer Guide
- Appeal rights
- Emphasis on positive employment outcome
- Informed Choice
- Retrieving information from previous cases or CMS
- When to refer to specialty caseloads or DFB
- Developing Rapport

SUGGESTED TEACHING TECHNIQUES

- Have the new counselor discuss referral and application with branch manager.
- Have the new counselor observe the mentor and other counselors during the referral and application process.
- Role-play a referral and application process. Provide the new counselor with the opportunity to play the role of a counselor as well as a consumer in order to give them both perspectives.
- Video or audio tape role-play sessions as a learning tool.
- Encourage the new counselor create a personal journal regarding ideas and concepts that they observed which they would to like utilize or replicate.
- New counselor may create a script in order to role-play the "explanation of services" to a consumer.
- Provide a sample of completed forms that may be utilized in the referral and application process. For example, stress the importance of completing the OVR-8 form prior to IPE development. This should be retained in the case file along with the IPE.
- Have the new counselor work with assistant on data input into CMS.

SUGGESTED RESOURCES

- Skills Enhancement Training (SET)
- Vocational Rehabilitation staff
- OVR-8 Form
ASSESSMENTS

A thorough assessment to determine eligibility and vocational rehabilitation needs is the key to developing an appropriate rehabilitation program. The assessment process uncovers the consumer’s unique strengths, interests, abilities, limitations and life circumstances which establish the foundation of the counseling process.

KEY POINTS

- Use of existing information (medical/psychological/school reports)
- Vocational assessments (when & where)
- Appropriate procurement of formal assessments
- Assessment for eligibility versus assessment of rehabilitation need
- Assessment of need for rehabilitation technology
- Assessment resources (CRPs, manuals, on-line resources, etc.)
- Ongoing assessment
- Informed choice
- Documentation of assessment
- Person Centered Planning
- Accommodation for Assessment

SUGGESTED TEACHING TECHNIQUES

- Emphasize the importance of assessment as a continuous process through case examples.
- Reinforce the use of vocational guidance and counseling through shadowing and observation of counselors that are strong in these skills.
- Provide examples of medical documents that might be found in case files and have new employee review and interpret.
- Assist the new employee in creating or obtaining a list of acceptable diagnostic resources from outside resources.
- Establish a list of community resources for vocational assessment and evaluation purposes that the new employee can utilize for a reference in their geographical location.
- Review acceptable practices for outsourcing the formal assessment and provide a list of services and service providers for the geographical location of the new employee.
- Provide a mock case with basic information and have new employee outline process for assessment.

SUGGESTED RESOURCES

- Rehabilitation Technology Consumer Guide
- “Common Sense Approach to Assessment Manual”
- Supported Employment Branch
- Standard Occupational Classification/ONET – go to www.online.onetcenter.org
GUIDANCE AND COUNSELING

Vocational rehabilitation guidance and counseling is a helping process in the rehabilitation program to assist eligible individuals in analyzing, understanding, and using their assets (e.g., capacities and abilities) to overcome their social, emotional, educational, vocational, and/or physical limitations. Counseling includes the use of interpersonal contact and specialized professional functions such as assessment, adjustment counseling, coordination of services, identification and mobilization of resources, placement, and follow-up. These elements are not separate steps in a sequence but they are interrelated parts of a whole.

KEY POINTS

- Career Exploration
- Disability awareness
- Acceptance of disability and development of coping skills
- VR role vs. therapist role (when to refer to another professional)
- Strengths and abilities
- Realistic goals (with or without accommodations)
- Empowerment
- Self-advocacy
- Family education
- ADA
- Informed choice
- Documentation of guidance and counseling
- Intensive Guidance & Counseling

SUGGESTED TEACHING TECHNIQUES

- Observation of mentor in counseling session.
- Observation of other counselors in counseling sessions.
- Role-playing.
- Mentor observation and guidance of new counselor.
- Video-taping counseling session for review.
- Reinforce the use of vocational guidance and counseling through shadowing and observation of counselors that are strong in these skills.

SUGGESTED RESOURCES

- ONET Online www.online.onetcenter.org
- “Common Sense Approach to Assessment” manual
- Handbook of Severe Disability
- Merck Manual
- DSM-IV
- CDPVT
- Local resources such as Comprehensive Care Centers, Community Rehabilitation programs, One-Stop Centers, Assessment Centers
ELIGIBILITY

An individual is eligible for vocational rehabilitation services if he/she:

1) has a disability. That is, has a physical or mental impairment, which for that individual constitutes a substantial impediment to employment and can benefit from vocational rehabilitation services in terms of an employment outcome and
2) requires vocational rehabilitation services to prepare for, secure, retain, or regain employment.

KEY POINTS

• Definition of disability
• Substantial limitations of functional capacities
• Expanded definitions
• Requires VR services
• Attendant factors
• Agreement of Understanding
• Disability does not equal eligibility (coding/priority codes/order of selection)
• Ineligibility decisions/referral and information
• Presumptive eligibility
• Trial work experience
• No single service
• Informed choice
• Documentation of eligibility in case record

SUGGESTED TEACHING TECHNIQUES

• Work through an eligibility which needs to be processed (explaining worksheet, CMS process, and progress notes).
• Give examples of cases which are ineligible if none are available on new counselor's caseload.
• Work through example of Trial Work Experience case.
• Review eligibility through SSI/SSDI and what is needed before IPE.
• Review authority/regulations.

SUGGESTED RESOURCES

• 781 KAR 1:030 OVR Internet http://ovr.ky.gov/policiesregs/statefedregs.htm
• CITE: 34CFR361.42
• DSM IV http://www.psychologynet.org/dsm.html
• Disability Handbook published by the University of Arkansas
• Disability Handbook published by the Nebraska Department of Education
APPEAL RIGHTS AND MEDIATION

Every individual applying for or receiving services from the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation must be informed of the appeals opportunities available. The Client Assistance Program and the mediation process as well as other, more formal, appeal processes play an important role in protecting the rights of consumers. Most disagreements are the result of miscommunication or a misunderstanding and are handled informally; however, most counselors will experience this process sometime in their career.

KEY POINTS

- Informed Choice
- It is okay to say no
- Appeal rights and time frames
- Client Assistance Program
- Mediation
- Informal/Formal Reviews
- Hearings
- Documentation of appeal rights and mediation

SUGGESTED TEACHING TECHNIQUES

- The Mentor may provide personal examples of situations that required a "no" answer, CAP involvement, informal/formal reviews, hearings and informed choice.
- Have other counselors share experiences with the above listed items.
- Utilize role-play regarding instances that might involve saying "no", CAP interaction, etc.
- Contact CAP representative for additional information.
- Reinforce documentation through examples.

SUGGESTED RESOURCES

- CAP Representative
- 781 KAR 1:010
- Skills Enhancement Training
- KRS 13B
- Rehabilitation Act, as amended
OVR SERVICES

Services provided by Vocational Rehabilitation will enable an individual with a disability to obtain and maintain employment. The services provided are based upon the individual’s needs, informed choice, capability, resources, strengths, and abilities. These services to be provided are a joint decision between the counselor and consumer.

KEY POINTS

- Local Services
- CRP’s
- Supported Employment
- Rehabilitation Technology
- Driver Evaluation
- CDPVTC
- Comparable Benefits (private insurance, medication, loans, grants, etc.)
- Job Placement Professionals & PACE Program
- Post Employment
- Core vs. Ancillary Services
- Attendant Care
- Employment Follow-Up
- CBWTP/Transition
- Comprehensive Care
- Mental and Physical Restoration
- Assessment
- Guidance and Counseling
- Documentation
- Informed Choice

SUGGESTED TEACHING TECHNIQUES

- Make appointments to visit local service providers
- Create a "Hotlist" of contact names and numbers
- Shadow other Agency staff to learn specific job duties (ERS, Rehab Tech, etc.)
- Show examples of cases where a particular service was provided

SUGGESTED RESOURCES

- Consumer Guide
- Internet
- Resource material available in your district
- Forms (i.e. a referral form for a particular service)
- CDPVTC Catalog
- Skills Enhancement Training (SET)
SELF-EMPLOYMENT

For many OVR consumers, self-employment is a viable option. The OVR counselor need not be an expert in small business development or in the intricacies of business administration. What is crucial to success, however, is willingness on the part of the counselor to coordinate closely with the consumer and all available resources.

KEY POINTS

- Self-Employment Definition
- Home-Based Business Definition
- Telecommuting Definition
- Business Plan
- Consumer Success Indicators
- Small Business Development Center
- Service Corps of Retired Executives
- Small Business Administration
- Self-Employment District Specialist
- Case Follow-Up and Closure

SUGGESTED TEACHING TECHNIQUES

- Review key points in OVR Policies and Procedures Manual (Counselor Manual)
- Review OVR policy and guidelines
- Provide information on self-employment from Small Business Administration
- Review a consumer’s case who was successful in self-employment if available

SUGGESTED RESOURCES

- Small Business Administration http://www.sba.gov
- Small Business Development Centers
IPE/PLAN DEVELOPMENT

The Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) is a pathway for the individual with a disability to reach the desired vocational goal.

KEY POINTS

• Negotiation
• Needs vs. wants related to Vocational Goal
• Informed choice
• Developing an appropriate vocational goal and time frame
• Eligibility and expanded definition as related to the IPE
• Non purchases services
• Amendments
• Documentation
• Reviews
• Use of IPE for supported employment, trial work experience, and post employment

SUGGESTED TEACHING TECHNIQUES

• Introduce IPE and accompanying instructions.
• Work through IPE's which need to be processed (explaining IPE, CMS process, and progress notes).
• Review key points in Counselor's Manual.
• Give examples of different plans which may not be available on new counselor's caseload.
• Review authority/regulations.
• Review local services and comparable benefits.
• Observe counselor interview.

SUGGESTED RESOURCES

• The Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended (found on OVR Internet)
• Forms Link: \dvrfr\OVRInfo\OVR Forms
• IPE Instructions
FISCAL MANAGEMENT

Managing a caseload budget can be one of the many challenges of the rehabilitation counselor role. Understanding available resources, method of payment, and budgetary constraints is a key to fiscal management.

KEY POINTS

- Comparable benefits
- Services fees
- Caseload budget units—how to manage
- Reports
- Sign off list
- Economic need
- Imprest cash
- Catastrophic fund
- Fiscal year—state and federal
- Authorizations
- Non-pay authorizations
- OVR-10

SUGGESTED TEACHING TECHNIQUES

- Meet with branch manager.
- Gather information from assistant, central office personnel, CMS.
- Reinforce the use of vocational guidance and counseling through shadowing and observation of counselors that are strong in these skills.
- Compile community resources for consultation, assistance and guidance.

SUGGESTED RESOURCES

- Local resource directories
- CMS
- Skills Enhancement Training
- OVR Hotlist
- State Plan 6.9(c)(2)
- Internet
- IHDI Resource
Managing a caseload can be overwhelming at times. Utilizing resources and developing organizational skills can assist in this task. VR counselors need to know how to prioritize their job responsibilities. Although VR is not an emergency program, there are times when the importance of job activity must prevail. Mentors need to educate new counselors on management of caseloads and to identify what creates a priority.

Keeping an accurate appointment book and schedule will assist new counselors as they develop their caseload. This keeps VR counselors on track with what they should be doing at various times and eliminates double scheduling appointments. Scheduled times for mentoring and for bookwork is very important. This will keep new counselors better organized. The use of the district and statewide calendars will help new counselors know where their mentors and branch managers are as well.

**KEY POINTS**

- “Statuses” (Applicant status, eligible status, plan status, etc.)
- Prioritizing, organizing, flexibility, scheduling
- CMS Reports
- Delegating and utilizing Rehabilitation Assistant
- Manage the caseload, not just the case

**SUGGESTED TEACHING TECHNIQUES**

- Show examples of good casework.
- Make outline of what a good case may include.
- Shadow different counselors to get ideas of casework strategies and styles.
- Give helpful hints to assist with developing individual style.
- Time management class.
- Use mentor’s appointment book as an example.
- Educate what is considered as case priority.

**SUGGESTED RESOURCES**

- GSC Classes
- OVR Internet
- Vocational Rehabilitation Staff
JOB DEVELOPMENT/PLACEMENT/RETENTION/FOLLOW-UP

Placement is a joint effort between consumer, counselor, OVR support staff, family and other representatives that are involved in the individual’s rehabilitation. Employment must be consistent with their capacities, abilities, and informed choice.

KEY POINTS

- This is our job
- Choice/Documentation
- Accommodations
- ERS/PACE/other help
- Marketing to employers
- Confidentiality
- Lost customer skills

SUGGESTED TEACHING TECHNIQUES

- Provide sample documentation and forms as a guide.
- Have the new employee present dialogue explaining each area in a role-play setting.
- Role-play marketing to an employer.
- Meet with or ask for input and assistance from the Marketing Director.
- Develop written scenarios involving issues of confidentiality and have new employee explain what he/she would do and provide feedback.
- Confer with rehabilitation technology staff for ideas, input and suggestions on accommodations.
- Provide resource contacts for ERS/PACE and other community assistance.

SUGGESTED RESOURCES

- Skills Enhancement Training
- Job placement or PACE staff
- CRP
CASE CLOSURE/POST EMPLOYMENT

Closing an individual’s case at the appropriate time can affect the successful outcome of the individual in employment. Communicating with the individual during closure and offering support through resources can assist in maintaining employment.

KEY POINTS

- Forms/Procedures
- Documentation
- 90 days does not equal success always
- Unsuccessful closures
- Closing SE cases
- Informing about post-employment
- Job hopping
- Informed choice

SUGGESTED TEACHING TECHNIQUES

- Provide examples of completed forms and documentation for case closures, post employment, etc.
- Have new employee observe case closures.
- Role-play case closure/post employment scenarios.
- Provide examples of potential unsuccessful closures made successful to spur creative thinking.
- Assist the new employee in developing a systematic method of assuring that all processes have been completed prior to closing case.

SUGGESTED RESOURCES

- Supported Employment Manual
SPECIALITY CASELOADS

To better meet the needs of individuals with specific disabilities, some counselors are assigned a caseload that requires extensive knowledge in the specific disability. Although training is received through Vocational Rehabilitation, guidance during the first month prior to receiving any training is crucial.

KEY POINTS

- Transition
- Mental Health
- Communication Specialist
- Rehabilitation Counselor for the Deaf
- Most Significant Disabilities
- School
- Traumatic Brain Injury
- Spinal Cord

SUGGESTED TEACHING TECHNIQUES

- Observation of other counselors in counseling sessions as they work with consumers of specialty cases.
- Interview counselors working with consumers of specialty caseloads.
- Provide sample copies of any required forms or documentation suggestions.
- Meet with Program Administrator for Transition Services.
- Talk with Director of Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services.
- Shadow an RCD.
- Gather data from Director of the Human Development Institute at University of Kentucky.

SUGGESTED RESOURCES

- Policies and Procedures Manual (Counselor Manual), specifically section on disability types, transition, CDPVTC
- Handbook of Severe Disability
- Merck Manual
- Internet Resources:
  - http://www.nmha.org (National Mental Health Association)
  - http://www.mhsourcing.com (Mental Health InfoSource)
  - http://www.handspeak.com (Sign Language)
  - http://www.biausa.org (Brain Injury Association)
- DSM-IV
- CDPVTC
- Transition Manual
- Communication Specialist Manual
**RELATIONSHIP WITH ASSISTANTS**

The assistant provides a great amount of support for the consumers and counselors. A positive relationship that includes open communication between a counselor and their assistant is vital to the successful rehabilitation of consumers. Together the assistant and counselor ensure that the necessary elements are included in the case records and services provided in a timely manner.

**KEY POINTS**

- Understanding the role of the assistant
- Identifying areas of excellence
- Communication

**ASSISTANTS’ DUTIES MAY INCLUDE**

- Maintenance of records on Case Management System (CMS)
- Authorizations and budget awareness
- General Office Duties
- Consumer Services
- Communication with consumers, vendors, etc. to coordinate services

**SUGGESTED TEACHING TECHNIQUES**

- Have the new counselor talk with another counselor working with their assistant about particular job duties between themselves and their assistant.
- Have the new counselor discuss particular job duties and responsibilities with their assistant to help promote communication.
- Have the new counselor attend Managers’ Personnel Training.
- Have the new counselor talk with their branch manager about management techniques when needed.
- Encourage your assistant to attend and succeed in Professional Rehabilitation Assistant’s training.

**SUGGESTED RESOURCES**

- Vocational Rehabilitation Staff
- Kentucky Personnel Cabinet website [http://personnel.ky.gov/default.htm](http://personnel.ky.gov/default.htm)
ONGOING RESPONSIBILITIES OF MENTORS

Although the first few weeks of mentoring will be the most intensive, mentoring is an ongoing process. After the basic competencies have been mastered, the new counselor will continue to need months of guidance and support to development into a capable and confident counselor.

The following are suggestions for making long term mentoring successful.

1) Make the new counselor feel that you welcome questions and opportunities to discuss issues.

2) Have regularly scheduled, one-on-one, mentoring sessions. Encourage the new counselor to collect cases or make lists of questions to be discussed. As the new counselor becomes more confident, gradually extend the time between sessions from once a week to every two weeks, then a month, and eventually as needed.

3) Recruit other sources of support at the new counselor's worksite. Help the new counselor develop meaningful, supportive relationships with his/her coworkers, supervisor and assistant.

4) Assist the new counselor in establishing professional relationships with other service providers, employers, etc. in the area.

The most important aspect of the mentoring process is the relationship. Hopefully, you will establish a relationship with the new counselor that will last throughout your professional careers. You might be surprised how soon you will be asking the counselor for advice on your difficult cases!
RESIGNING FROM MENTORSHIP DUTIES:

When applying for the position of RC Mentor you are agreeing to accept a new professional responsibility. Once you have been approved and you accept this position, you are making a commitment to your branch manager and to your district.

Although being a Mentor for your district is an awesome professional opportunity, there may be times when you have conflicts with your professional and/or personal life and you need to decrease your workload, including that of mentoring. When this occurs, it is imperative that you discuss this concern with your branch manager. You have made a commitment to your branch manager and you need to keep your manager informed of any concerns you have with your job responsibilities. You and your manager can decide what your options are and what best suits your specific needs. Considerations may include: share mentor duties with other mentors in your district, reassign mentee to another mentor in your district or for you to take a formal Leave of Absence from mentoring. Leave of Absence should not last more than six months and you should continue attending Mentor Trainings throughout this time.

Resigning from the Mentoring Team should be a last resort. This resignation needs to be in writing to the Mentoring Leadership Team. The current chair person for this team is Alan Gullett. Members who resign from this team can not reapply for two years and must complete the application process again.
APPENDIX
# COMPETENCY CHECKLIST

Counselor Name ___________________________ District ___________________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competency</th>
<th>Date Completed</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>□ Purpose of Vocational Rehabilitation</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>□ Confidentiality, Ethics and HIPAA</td>
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<tr>
<td>□ Caseload Documentation</td>
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<td>□ Referral and Application</td>
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<td>□ Assessment</td>
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<td>□ Guidance and Counseling</td>
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<td>□ Eligibility</td>
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<td>□ Appeals &amp; Mediation</td>
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<td>□ Services</td>
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<td>□ Self-Employment</td>
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<td>□ Cost Participation</td>
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<td>□ Plan Development</td>
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<td>□ Fiscal/Budget Responsibility</td>
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<tr>
<td>□ Case Management and Organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>□ Job Development/Placement/Retention/Follow-up</td>
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<tr>
<td>□ Case closure/Post employment</td>
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<tr>
<td>□ Specialty Caseloads</td>
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</table>

_____________________________________________  _______________________________________
Mentor Signature                              Branch Manager Signature

Date  Date