

What's Customized About It?

Customized Employment (CE) represents a specific set of techniques and strategies that differentiate it from other forms of community employment. CE is based on the fundamental elements of Supported Employment, but differs in

important ways. CE is not "better" than other approaches, but there are circumstances when CE is a preferred option, especially when an individual faces multiple and/or complex barriers to attaining meaningful work. In order to identify

correctly where Customized Employment is used, one or more of the following indicators in the CE column below is essential. In the Not CE column are some familiar approaches, but they are not necessarily CE.

CUSTOMIZED

A Vocational Profile, Career Plan, and Job Development all stem from the Findings of Discovery or Discovering Personal Genius (DPG). Care is taken not to jump to employment solutions.

Discovery/DPG begins in the person's home and neighborhood. Specific activities are conducted that reveal Vocational Themes, tasks/skills and interests; interviews with family, friends, and business people refine potential contributions.

Skills and Tasks preferred by the person substantially inform job development. Skills and tasks that can be taught/learned correspond to the interests of the employment seeker. Self-Employment is an option.

Job Development circumvents traditional approaches. Use connections, networking, creative research and employer engagement, to establish the value of the individual's work and their fit with the company to create a job.

Informational Interviewing and job analyses contribute to the development of strategies for the new employee to address a company's unmet needs. Interest-based negotiation brings the employer & employee together.

NOT CUSTOMIZED

Discovery is not conducted correctly or involves shortcuts; Vocational Themes or Best Conditions of Employment are not identified; there is an immediate impulse to start job development or brainstorm types/places of employment.

Testing, Interest Inventories, Observation in a sheltered environment or non-individualized volunteer placements. Available jobs and/or stereotypical placements predominate. Focus is on entry-level & low skill jobs.

Job Coaching overcrowds natural support and is used to mitigate poor job match. "Job Finding" is common vs. the CE economic rationale for hiring.

Sub-minimum wages; Group placements; Pairing people of similar disabilities together as employees or business partners.

"Retail" job development is overused: going to the traditional box stores, requesting an application, etc. Not getting into the backroom operations where a skilled and often small, cohesive workforce creates new or value-added products.

Little attention to career/skill growth, or creation of unique jobs. Job descriptions are followed; hours & pay are based on deficits not potential contributions. Many people work typical jobs (fast food; janitorial) for few hours and minimal pay.