Discovering Personal Genius™
Going Where the Career Makes Sense

Patty Cassidy, Senior Associate
Marsie Hartman, Senior Associate
Griffin-Hammis Associates
What We Have Learned

• History and Foundations of Employment
• Evolution to Customized Employment
• An Overview of Customized Employment Tools and Techniques
• Social Capital is critical to Customized Employment
• Team Approach to CE
The Phases of Customized Employment

I. Discovering Personal Genius

II. Cultivating Employment Opportunities

III. Engaging Employment Supports

IV. Ongoing Support and Career Development
Activity

What is your “dream job”? 

If you could have any job in the world what would it be and why?

Chat box, please type in your "dream job" and explain why.
Seinfeld: George Constanza Ponders Potential Jobs

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2LCggmsCXk4
Group Discussion

• How do you currently get to know job-seekers?
• What kind of information are you looking for?
• When do you determine that you know enough?
Discovering Personal Genius™

• Activity-based process
• Answers the question of what work should look like ... not if work is possible
• Foundational assumption that ALL can work!!
Discovery ...

• Answers the question “Who is this person?”

• Does NOT suggest what job would be best for this person.

• YOU CAN’T FAIL DISCOVERY!
DPG/Discovery

• Exploration to learn:
  • More about person, and
  • More about community

• Answers the questions:
  • Who is this person?
  • What are the ideal conditions for employment?
  • What themes will drive job development?
Discovery: What Is It?

Provides individuals the space to showcase:

- Who they really are
- What they can do in the environments that mean the most

Are you at your best when being tested or rather when you are exploring familiar and/or new places, people & things?
Keys to Discovery

• About the person, NOT the job

• Information learned during Discovery later helps determine if a particular job “fits”

• Biggest challenge is not jumping to the job!
How should I approach DPG?

It requires a different set of skills for the job developer or employment specialist.

It also requires a different attitude about the person and the future.

It begins with a Conversation
If we go through Discovery and don’t learn anything new about a person, we haven’t really discovered anything.
DPG Benchmarks

• 26-60 hours of Discovery
• Over a 2 to 6-week period
• Using 2 or more team members
I N T R O D U C T I O N:
Discovering Personal Genius Staging Record (DSR)

• Form used to guide process & record information

• On-going work in progress

• Goal: provide enough information so that the reader “sees” the same picture as you do

Discovering Personal Genius Staging Record

<table>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date Completed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Person(s) completing DPG Record</td>
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<tr>
<td>Additional Contact Information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team Members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consultants/Experts to Contact</td>
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<tr>
<td>Comments/Considerations</td>
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</tbody>
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Stage One: Home & Neighborhood Observation

Initial Interviews: Begin with the individual’s home and/or family home (if residing there)

Date
People interviewed & relationship to individual
Recap of information (attach field notes, pictures)
Observations of home, bedroom, property, belongings that seem relevant
DSR Tips

Stick to the form... at least the first few times

Use team to debrief each section and provide feedback

Aim for a “360°” view
Writing/Recording DSR Info

- Objectively state what was learned/observed
- Leave out personal interpretation/assessment/inferences
- State all relevant information completely... but do not bog down with unnecessary detail
- Stick to the positive
- Easy to say... tough to do!
Steps in Discovery

Stage 1: Home & Neighborhood Visit
Stage 2: Interviewing Others
Stage 3: Discovery Activities
Stage 4: Vocational Themes
Stage 5: Vocational Profile
Career Plan & List of 20
Transition to JD
Stage One: Home & Neighborhood Observation
Stage One: Key Components

- The Home Visit
- Observation of tasks and activities
- Neighborhood exploration
- Interviews with family, friends, staff... people who know the person well
- Financial review (for resource planning)
- Technology referral when appropriate
Getting to Know You: The Home Visit

• DPG starts at home
• Most familiar environment
• Introduce DPG and CE to family, support network, etc. prior to the home visit
• Initial opportunity to learn about person
The Home Visit

• Typically no more than 2 staff members
• Practice smooth listening
• Coordinate around individual/family schedule
• Plan on 1-2 hours for initial visit
• Evenings, weekends may be best
Things To Explore...

- Skills & talents
- Hobbies, sports, collections,
- interests
- Where person spends time & money
- Favorite pastimes, activities, people, places
- Typical daily schedule
- Routines & chores that detail skills/interests
Things To Explore ...

• Family employment & community connections
• Supports needed to perform routines & chores (and who assists)
• Methods used to teach new skills
• Activities, situations, locations to be avoided
Smooth Listening

Nancy and Smooth Listening

https://youtu.be/6elojDLbjtA
Smooth Listening Activity

Pair Up.

Find 2 Skills that each has. (A skill is something that improves thru practice)

No Questions Allowed!
Continued Exploration

• Schedule follow-up to come back and observe
• Follow-up conversations with family
• Identify other people to interview (stage 2)
• Goal: gather enough information to identify Discovery activities
Plan for Observations for Next Stage

- **Identify things the person currently does that showcase skills**
  - Activities, hobbies, chores, etc.

- **Observe & learn**
  - Fill in the details on the sketch
  - What does “he’s great with the computer” actually mean?
Stage One: Neighborhood Mapping

- Resources
- Employers
- Transportation options
- Neighbors of interest
- Activities
- Civic Engagement

Why is Neighborhood Mapping important?
Home Visit ... Things to Remember

• Everything is not learned on the first visit

• Amount of information varies from person to person

• Setting expectations and gathering clues for DPG activities is the goal

• Remember this is not an interrogation!
Interests

- Important in terms of linking to motivation
- Ultimately person must be “interested” and like what they do (other factors influence)
- Initial identification frequently general and somewhat universal: Pizza, animals, shopping, watching TV, video games
- May not involve underlying skill set
- What is the evidence of an interest??
- More than just an expression of interest!!
Skills

Overt ... **Covert**

Tasks, hobbies, chores: By choice vs. assigned/required/negotiated

Activities at home and in community
- Making models vs. watching tv
- Going to movies vs. helping out at Bingo

A skill is a skill! – Emergent vs. Expert
Remember
Don’t…
Jump…
To The Job!!!
Learning About the Job Seeker and Their Social Security Benefits

In Stage 1, learn about the job seeker’s current benefits.

Assist the job seeker to obtain a Benefits Planning Query (BPQY)

Get the assistance of a Benefits Specialist to understand and explain the Work Incentives available to the job seeker
Stage 1 of the DSR

By understanding the person’s SSA benefit status we are better able to address:

- Myths and fears of loss of benefits or a reduction of a check
- Identify and Address the Ideal Conditions of Employment (hours and pay)
- Understand how work incentives might support the employer (PASS – Business Within A Business)

We will continue to address this through Discovery!
Your Answer Can Be As Simple As:

- “It is not necessarily true that a person will lose cash or healthcare while working!”
- “It is understandable that this is a concern . . .”
- “That is not necessarily true . . .”
- “I know that there are work incentives . . .”
Why is it important that we ask about public benefits?

While in Discovery you need to get to know . . .

• Does the job seeker receive a check from SSI or SSDI?
• Healthcare through Medicaid and/or Medicare?
• What is the person’s status?

We’ll continue to talk about this . . .
Two Disability Cash Programs

**Supplemental Security Income (SSI)**
- **Strict income and resource limits**
- **No work history required**
- **$783 – 2020 Federal Benefit Rate**
- **$1,175 – 2020 SSI Amount for a couple**

**Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI)**
- **Based on work record**
- **No income or asset limits**
- **Amount depends on work record**
SSI Work Incentives

Student Earned Income Exclusion

PASS Plan

Earned Income Exclusion

Impairment Related Work Expenses

Report all Income to SSA & DHS!!!

1619
SSDI and/or Childhood Disability Beneficiary (DAC)

- **Trial Work Period (TWP)** $910 (2020)

- **Extended Period of Eligibility (EPE)**

- **Substantial Gainful Activity (non-blind SGA)** $1,260 (2020)
  - Blind SGA $2,110 (2020)

- **Grace Period**

- **Impairment Related Work Expense (IRWE)**

- **Subsidy**

- **Expedited Reinstatement of Benefits**
What does Working at Full Time Potential Look Like?

Who here wants to live on $783 a month?

What dreams do we have for a full life, how much $$$ is needed to achieve that?

Long gone are the days of working only 20 hours a week and making under $300.

The Job Development Process should reflect the amount of $$$ the job seeker envisions needing for a full life.
Poppin Joe’s Gourmet Kettle Corn
There are unlimited ways to make a living ...
Stage One: Group Discussion

• What is the goal of the home visit?
• What are we trying to learn?
• How would you rank the following in order of importance for DPG? Why?
  • Interests
  • Skills
  • Tasks
• How do these three interact in DPG?
Virtual 'Home' Visit

• We will now break-out in rooms of 2 people

• One person will offer to take the other on a 'virtual tour' of their office/living room which ever room offers comfort to the 'guide'. The observer will look for 'signs' that might 'tell' a little about 'who is this person?'

• Change places!

• NOTE: Your homework assignment will be to write a descriptive, non-judgmental page about what was observed and learned about 'who is this person.'
Stage Two: Interviewing Others
Additional Interviews

- Schedule interviews with other key people identified during Stage 1

- Nature of relationship less important than quality of relationship

- Teachers, extended family, neighbors, friends, co-workers, etc.

- People who know the job seeker well AND have positive insight to share
Additional Interviews

• Gain permission!

• In-person or via phone

• Establish rapport

• Know what you particularly want to find out more about... BUT

• Open-ended questions

• Try to steer in a positive direction
And Then? What Patterns Are Emerging?

• What do you and the team see that could lead to a possible developing theme in the person’s life?

• What skill, tasks, and interests seem to hold the most importance?

• What more do you want to know or to verify?
As you view the video, notice the types of activities that Jay engages in at home. What emerging patterns come to mind?

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pe6YG7-Hx0E&feature=youtu.be
Welcome Back!!

- Review of First Day
- De-Brief from 4 Scenarios
- Any Questions??
Stage Three: Discovery Activities
How to Begin

Look for Patterns:

• What does the job seeker do??
• Interests
• Hobbies
• Chores
• School work-based learning activities
• Community Involvement – church, clubs, associations
• Family
• Where she is at her best!
DPG Activities: “The Doing” – It’s Task Based!

Identify at least 4 to 6 places for DPG visits

• 2-3 Activities at home or familiar places that give context to interests and skills

• 2-3 Activities in unfamiliar community places that give context to interests and skills
DPG – Discovery Activities

Assistance VERSUS Assessment

Activity in Real Environments

DO NOT rely on data from Segregated Settings

One Place leads to Another; One Person Leads to Another (Social Capital)
CE Discovery Activities

- No pre-arranged sites
- Do not evaluate performance against standards
- Create opportunity and support when needed
- Create an opportunity, where none exists
- Helps you and the job seeker to know your community and to build social capital
Discovery
Activity
Exercises
Discovery Tasks and Your Observations

• As you complete the activities, record observations in the DPG Staging Record – Take Pictures!

• Describe:
  • What the activity was
  • The location
  • What tasks were performed/observed
  • What supports were required (and who provided and how)
Analyzing Discovery Activities

After all activities are complete

• Summarize supports needed during activities

• List environments to be avoided (and why)

• Identify places, activities, & skills that require more exploration

• Determine when/where these will be explored and who is responsible

• Complete follow-up activities & reports

Most effective as a team process
Stage Four: Vocational Themes and Informational Interviews
Themes & informational interviews are the bridge between Discovery and Job Development!
Vocational Themes

**Emerging** Vocational Themes at this point

- Use the job seeker’s Team!

Schedule informational interviews to test and explore further

Themes meld tasks, interests, talents, & skills
Themes Translate Discovery for Job Development

Final Vocational Themes Formulation
Informational Interviews...

Discovering Personal Genius

Formal Job Development

Work Trials
Unsolicited Employment Offers...
Griffin-Hammis Associates Elemental Chart for Determining Vocational Themes

- DPG Community Activities
- Personal Attributes/Personality
- Tasks Performed
- Interests
- Existing/Emerging Skills
- Preferred Work Conditions/Culture

Vocational Themes
Some Themes – but the Team should decide on those specific to your job seeker. Think of other unique words!

• Organization
• Agriculture
• Construction
• Mechanical
• Transportation
• Cleanliness
• Children
• Advocacy
• Outdoors/Nature
• Athletics/Recreation
• Culinary Art
• Entertainment
• Fashion
• Customer
• Service
• History
• Politics
• Logistics
• Religion/Spirituality
• Medicine/Health Care
• Technology/Computers
• Communications
Divining Vocational Themes

Themes are NOT Job Descriptions or simply interests!

Themes are words or phrases that are Big and Hold Many, Many Jobs

Themes Open up the Possibilities in even the Smallest Communities
USING EMERGING VOCATIONAL THEMES

For each theme, identify 3 places where individuals with similar themes work

Specific places of business, not general fields
• (Big Sea Design vs. “graphic designers”)

Select 2-3 for information interviews

Use connections & social capital to open doors
Informational Interviews:

- Brief interviews
- Opportunity to learn more about business, industry, environment (or business owners and jobs)
- Sometimes can provide hands-on experience with new tasks related to areas of interest
- Allow connections to emerge
Keys to Success

• Interview should happen with a manager, owner, or key person

• Avoid HR

• Don’t just ask for a Tour or that’s all you’ll get!

• Get Seat Time, and then a Tour
Smooth Listening & Being Naive

• Remember, we are not the experts on their business!
• We are merely looking for advice
• Don’t use personal stories or talk about yourself or what you do
• Ask open ended questions with an emphasis on the job seeker
• “What advice would you have for someone trying to start out in your field?”
Possible Questions to Start

• Tell me why you started your business. What lead you into this line of work?

• What other work might you have done if you didn’t go into this line of work or start this business?

• What do you like best about your job/ your work?

• What is the hardest part of your job?

• What is the best part of your day? What are you most proud of with your business?
Questions, cont.

- Who are your competitors?
- Do you suggest we talk to anyone in particular?
- Warm leads and name dropping are great ways into other businesses and/or to improve the list of 20

(Handout: Learning by Listening to a Small Business)
Informational Interview Homework Assignment

Due This Evening!

• Choose 1 of the 3 videos below of informational interviews with a business owner or employee of a small business.

• Select one video from this list:
  • Sheep Shearing https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PtNBqNMo3kU
  • Tug Life https://vimeo.com/188462195
  • Gym Owner https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UC8VwZ-hVxE

• Note: Assignment description is in downloads
Stage Five: Complete Vocational Profile
Vocational Profile Section

• Summarize findings from Discovery and record in the Staging Record

• Vocational Profile guides the customized job development process

• Must be team process... critical to brainstorm and not overlook any key details
Vocational Profile Section

• Ideal Conditions of Employment
• What off-the-job support will be needed and who will provide?
• How will person maintain contact with friends (and who will ensure it)?
• How will they get to/from work?
• Ideal work schedule
Vocational Profile Section

Describe:
• Interests, talents, skills, tasks as observed
• Best ecological fit
• Best learning mode/methodology
• Places/situations to avoid
• Personal resources
• Most endearing/engaging qualities
• Exploitable skills
## Ideal Conditions vs. Job Descriptions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ideal Conditions</th>
<th>NOT Job Descriptions</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Work in quiet environment</td>
<td>• Filing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Has specific tasks for each day</td>
<td>• Circuit board assembly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Tasks require precision</td>
<td>• Medical supply clerk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Consistent routine</td>
<td>• Data entry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• People understand idiosyncrasies</td>
<td>• Order Processor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Work with hands- tasks are manipulative &amp; visually clear</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Away from general public</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• No music</td>
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</table>
Stage Six: Job/Business Development Plan
Lists of 20

For each of the 3 vocational themes...

Identify 20 specific businesses where people with similar skills & interests work

Utilize Networks to get connected

Schedule appointments to observe, tour, conduct informational interviews

Consider Businesses and Feasibility in your Lists of 20 for Self-Employment Business Development
Group Activity

Themes:

• Health/Wellness
• Working with her hands
• Civic Engagement
• Legal
Debrief

Health/Wellness
Working with her hands
Civic Engagement
Legal
Completed DSR!

- All 6 stages are complete
- Discovery is complete
- Urgency of Job Development
- A hand off or a continuation?
Discovery

Is about DOING .....  

Is about capturing important information about CONTRIBUTIONS  

Is about understanding IDEAL CONDITIONS of EMPLOYMENT  

Is about the COMMUNITY AND the JOB SEEKER!
Next up ....

... Using Systematic Instruction as a step to Customized Job Development
Thank you

Marsie Hartman, Senior Associate
Griffin-Hammis Associates
mhartman@GriffinHammis.com

Patty Cassidy, Senior Associate
Griffin-Hammis Associates
pcassidy@griffinhammis.com