Can I Return to Work?

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RTW Question: Varied Perspectives

- John (client): Do you think I am ready to return to work?
- Insurer: When will John be able to go back to work?
- Health/vocational professionals: How can we best evaluate John’s work abilities and potential?
Significance of RTW Question

One must work and dare if one really wants to live.

Vincent van Gogh

In order that people may be happy in their work, these three things are needed: they must be fit for it; they must not do too much of it; and they must have a sense of success in it.

John Ruskin

Workshop Objectives

What:
Examine how we evaluate work abilities and determine if clients are able to work/return to work

How:
• By exploring what we individually do (in practice)
• By exploring what we collectively know (we + literature)
In my current practice, the key processes I follow are…

- I define the purpose of my evaluation as…

- I collect the following information (e.g.) from the following persons (e.g.)…

- I assess the following areas (e.g.) because/to determine...

- I analyze my results by…

- I make recommendations related to…
## Factors Associated with Employment Outcomes Post-TBI

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Factor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Personal</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Injury</td>
<td>Age; Gender; Marital Status; Race; Education; Psychological Status</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Injury-Related</td>
<td>Injury Severity; Mechanism/Type of Injury; Acute Injury Recovery; Concurrent Symptoms/Disabilities; Length of Stay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-Injury</td>
<td>Physical Status; Neuropsych/Cognitive Status; Psychosocial Status; Functional Status &amp; Independence; Self-reported Status</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Occupational</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Injury</td>
<td>Occupational History/Occupational Category</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-Injury</td>
<td>Occupational Category/Complexity/Job Goal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Environmental</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic</td>
<td>Availability of Insurance Benefits; Funding; Litigation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workplace Supports</td>
<td>Workplace Culture; Accommodations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social/Instrumental Supports</td>
<td>Family &amp; Community Supports; Driving Independence/Transportation; Voc Rehab Services</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Factors Most Relevant To Vocational Evaluation

- **Small Group Exercise**
  - **Review factors**
  - **Identify top 10 factors most relevant to consider during vocational evaluation**
  - **List top 10 factors**
Review Purpose

- To provide the evidence base for a clinical practice guideline for vocational evaluation following TBI
- To make explicit the key process and factors relevant to vocational evaluation

Review Questions

What processes should evaluators follow when completing a vocational evaluation of clients’ work abilities post-tbi?

What factors should evaluators consider when completing a vocational evaluation...

What do clients who have experienced a TBI and attempted to return to work perceive to be relevant to the process of rtw and vocational evaluation?
**The Systematic Review**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Websites</th>
<th>Medline</th>
<th>PsychInfo</th>
<th>Embase</th>
<th>Cochrane Reviews</th>
<th>9 Guideline</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Inclusion**
- Assessment process
- PEO factors
- 18-65 years old

**Exclusion**
- Strokes & ABI (>50%)
- Treatment/intervention
- Theoretical papers

**79 ARTICLES/STUDIES + 4 GUIDELINES**
- 12 descriptive articles + 3 qualitative studies (process)
- 10 review articles + 43 quantitative studies (factors)
- 11 qualitative studies (clients’ perspectives on rtw)

**Quality Appraisal**
- Descriptive X 1
- Reviews X 2
- Qualitative X 2
- Quantitative X 2
- Guidelines X 2

**Appraisal Instruments**
- Clinical Relevance
- CASP Tool (Reviews)
- CASP Tool (Qualitative)
- Ownsworth & McKenna (quant)
- AGREE Tool (Guidelines)

**EVIDENCE REMAINING FOLLOWING APPRAISAL**
- 12 descriptive articles + 3 qualitative studies (process)
- 8 review articles + 30 quantitative studies (factors)
- 6 qualitative studies (clients’ perspectives on rtw)
- 3 guidelines (process + factors)
Second Reviewers

- Tanya Glenrose-Eimantas, MSc
- Lynn Rutledge MSc, Ph D. (student)
- Sara McEwan, Ph D
- Debbie Hebert, MSc, Ph D (candidate)
- Mandy Lowe, MSc

Data Extraction: Evidence Tables

- Study Purpose/Research Question
- Study Location/Context
- Participants/Population
- Study Design
- Methods
- Treatment Provided
- Outcomes Measured
- Themes Identified
- Findings/Results
- Key Factors Relevant to Work Evaluation
- Key Processes Relevant to Work Evaluation
Data Analysis & Synthesis

Directed content analysis to identify key process across descriptive evidence (process)

Constant comparative method to compare study findings re: each factor and relationship to employment (factors)

Thematic analysis to synthesize meanings clients ascribe to return to work following TBI (clients’ perspectives)

Process Synthesis 1: Elements of a Vocational Evaluation
### Factor Synthesis 2: Factors with the Greatest Support for a Relationship with Employment Outcomes

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Level of Support</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Personal</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Injury</td>
<td>Age; Educational Level (strong)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Injury-Related</td>
<td>Acute Injury/Recovery; Concurrent Symptoms; Length of Stay (some)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-Injury</td>
<td>Neuropsych/Cognitive Status; Functional Status; Psychosocial Status (strong)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Occupational</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Injury</td>
<td>Occupational History/Occupational Category (moderate)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-Injury</td>
<td>Occupational Category/Complexity (moderate)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Environmental</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic</td>
<td>Availability of Benefits (mixed)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workplace Supports</td>
<td>Culture; Accommodations (limited)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social &amp; Instrumental Supports</td>
<td>Family; Transportation; Voc Services</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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### Clients’ Perspectives & Roles In the Process

How do we incorporate clients into the vocational evaluation process?

How can their perspectives inform how vocational evaluations are completed?
Synthesis 3: Clients’ Experiences of RTW

Meaning of Work
- Determine new meanings and types of work meaningful

Reconciling New Identify
- Hearing clients voices & incorporating them into the evaluation
- Assess self-awareness & new self-identity

Opportunities to Try vs. Risk of Failure
- Assess opportunities to try & potential risks

Significance of Support
- Assess supports

Figure 1: Evidence-Based Framework For Vocational Evaluation Following TBI

Evaluation Purpose & Rationale
- Defining evaluation purpose
- Identifying areas to assess & assessment methods
- Identifying own & other stakeholders’ roles & positions
- Obtaining informed consent

Intake Process
- Demographics 
  & health history
- Educational 
  & work histories
- Social history
- Pre-injury job performance
- Success/failure post-injury job trials

Person Domains
- Individual’s Perspective
- Physical
- Neuropsych/Cognitive
- Psychosocial
- Communication
- Functional Imp.
- Behaviors (general 
  & work-related)

Environmental Elements
- Physical work environment
- Workplace culture
- Available supports 
  & opportunities

Occupational/Job Requirements
- Description & job demands: physical, cognitive, behav.
- Expectations & performance, social, responsibilities
- Safety requirements

Analysis & Synthesis
- Adequacy of information & inconsistencies
- Functioning at levels of impairments, functional abilities, capacity, worker role
- Environmental influences, supports, compensations, modifications

Evaluation Recommendations
- Drawing conclusions
- Making recommendations
- Providing feedback (verbal/written report) to individual evaluator & relevant stakeholders
Resulting Developments

Review + framework + inter-disciplinary panel

Clinical Practice Guideline For Vocational Evaluation Following Traumatic Brain Injury

Pilot Testing Guideline (OT’s)
- Implementation + Outcomes

Lessons Learned

- Clarifying purpose and linking this to assessment tools/process, synthesis & final evaluation recommendations
- Significance of changes in meaning of work post-TBI
- Significance of supports and opportunities to try for clients
- Significance of clear understanding of expectations at the workplace
Ph D Thesis Committee

- Dr. Susan Rappolt
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References
