

Case Example for Interagency Collaboration

What does the research say?

Multiple studies in the scoping review indicated that vocational rehabilitation (VR) counselors should be working alongside family, schools, and other related stakeholders to achieve the best outcomes for students with disabilities.

What's an example of this research-informed practice?

One way to help students with disabilities achieve better employment outcomes is through more effective collaboration between VR counselors and other stakeholders. One study that exemplifies the research findings examined a best practice transition model called the Maryland Seamless Transition Model, which was influenced by a research-based framework, [The Guideposts for Success](#), for developing approaches for successful transition outcomes.

Although Maryland's Seamless Transition Model is multifaceted, one of its core components is focused on system linkages and collaboration. In the model, student participants are required to have transition support before, during, and after graduating from high school. To achieve this, the program uses a project management team tasked with bringing together key partners to collaboratively plan the supports needed for successful transition. The management teams in this model are typically composed of members from the school district, VR personnel, mental health services, postsecondary institutions, and more. Realizing that communication between VR counselors and teachers is particularly important, Maryland's Seamless Transition Model creates opportunities for both sides to collaborate. For example, in the model, VR counselors are invited to Individualized Education Plan (IEP) meetings to provide input and direction. Similarly, teachers are invited to contribute to related work experience and employment development activities.

How can this be adapted to VR settings?

Although the Maryland Seamless Transition Model may not be readily available to implement across all school districts, VR counselors could apply certain components immediately: (Note: Before VR counselors can attend a student's case conference, schools must first obtain written consent from parents or students of legal age.)

1. Talk to school district personnel to determine which key partners they have been collaborating with to ensure the successful transition of their students.
 - a. If the district has few key collaborators, suggest setting aside time with them to brainstorm the community entities that exist and can help support successful transition for youth with special needs. After these entities have been determined, connect with these entities to gauge their willingness to participate in a team effort similar to the one described in Maryland's Seamless Transition Model.
 - b. If the district has established collaborative partners, make sure the roles of each collaborator have been clearly defined in order to best leverage individual strengths.

2. Find out which teachers work with your VR clients and reach out to them individually to establish ways to contribute to each other's work in a manner that supports successful transitions for the VR client.
 - a. As in the Maryland Seamless Transition Model, VR counselors should ask teachers working with students with disabilities if counselors can help provide input as active members of the IEP meetings.
 - b. Equally important is thinking of ways teachers can support the work of VR counselors. This could include having teachers provide input in employment development activities and related work experiences.

Resources Related to Interagency Collaboration

Luecking, D. M., & Luecking, R. G. (2015). Translating research into a seamless transition model. *Career Development and Transition for Exceptional Individuals*, 38(1), 4–13. Retrieved from https://www.michigan.gov/documents/mdhhs/Lueckings_Seamless_Model_511755_7.pdf

National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability. (2012). *The guideposts for success: A framework for families preparing youth for adulthood*. *InfoBrief*, 36, 1–4. Washington, DC: Author. Retrieved from http://www.ncwd-youth.info/sites/default/files/infobrief_36.pdf#content