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## Employment Outcomes among People with Disabilities: Psychosocial Determinants

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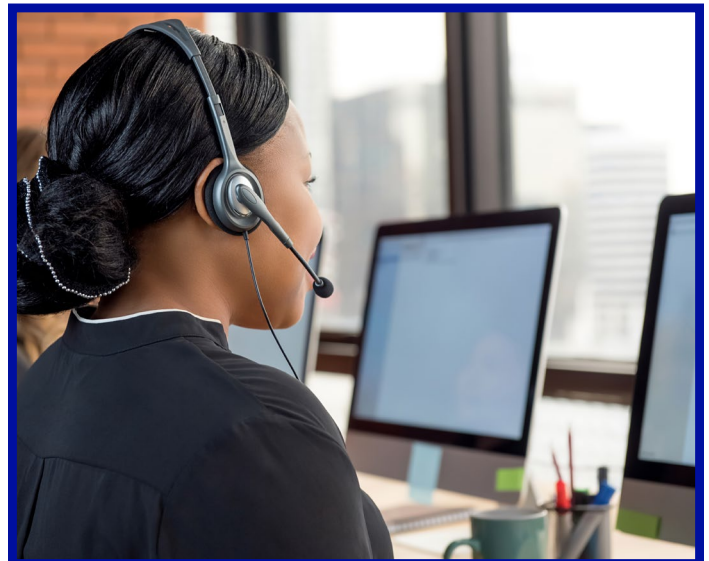
# Employment Outcomes among People with Disabilities: Psychosocial Determinants

## *Selected Findings from NIDILRR-funded Disability Employment Research in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*

A systematic scoping review of research published between 2000 and 2020 on employment of people with disabilities, that was funded by the National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research (NIDILRR), was conducted by CeKTER researchers. All papers comparing people with disabilities to those without were excluded from the systematic scoping review. Among over 100 publications reviewed there was a wide and very disparate array of findings with numerous variables used and varying research questions. This result belies summative findings. There are numerous ways of organizing the disparate findings. This brief is part of a series of findings from CeKTER's systematic scoping review. In this brief we report on findings about a range of psychosocial determinants that impact the employment of people with disabilities, including determinants related to individual-level psychological characteristics, interpersonal skills and social support. Please note that all comparisons are always about corresponding peers with disabilities.

## Individual-Level Psychological Determinants

- Fears of losing disability benefits have a negative impact on the employment of people with disabilities, including premature exit from Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) services.<sup>1,2,3</sup>
- Recipients of VR services who at the time of applying for services anticipated they would be working within 6 months were more likely to have a successful VR case closure compared to their peers who were less certain when they may be able to get a job.<sup>4</sup>
- Discouragement due to past unsuccessful attempts to work has been identified as a barrier to the employment of people with disabilities.<sup>1</sup>
- People with disabilities who experienced lower levels of loneliness and perceived rejection were more likely to be employed.<sup>5</sup>
- Being proactive, knowing one's rights and being able to self-advocate were identified as important facilitators to the employment of people with spinal cord injuries.<sup>6</sup>
- People with spinal cord injuries who were more hopeful were more likely to be employed full-time.<sup>7</sup>
- People with spinal cord injuries who had a secure attachment style were more likely to be employed full-time compared to their peers with an anxious attachment style.<sup>7</sup>



- People with spinal cord injuries who had a secure attachment style and higher self-efficacy were more likely to be employed compared to their peers with other attachment styles and lower levels of self-efficacy.<sup>8</sup>
- People with visual impairments who had higher levels of transportation self-efficacy were more likely to be employed.<sup>9</sup>
- Youth with visual impairments who had higher levels of independent travel skills and peer social skills were more likely to be employed.<sup>10</sup>
- Youth with visual impairments who had an internal locus of control and higher levels of self-determination were more likely to be employed.<sup>11</sup>
- Core self-evaluations defined as people's fundamental positive perceptions of their worth and capability were positively associated with the employment status of people with multiple sclerosis. Individuals who were either working full-time or part-time tended to have a higher sense of self-worth compared to their peers who were unemployed or were not working for other reasons.<sup>12</sup>
- People with psychiatric disabilities who attributed their vocational success to having learned how to manage their psychiatric condition were more likely to work full-time compared to their peers who were working part-time.<sup>13</sup>
- People with psychiatric disabilities who more frequently used problem-solving strategies to cope with work-related stress were more likely to have a job with a higher occupational status.<sup>13</sup>
- Successful management of mental health symptoms and the use of appropriate coping skills have a positive impact on the ability of people with psychiatric disabilities to maintain jobs for longer periods of time.<sup>14</sup>
- Being motivated to work and having the capacity to manage psychiatric symptoms contribute to the long-term employment of people with dual diagnosis of mental illness and substance use challenges.<sup>15</sup>
- People with psychiatric disabilities who had higher levels of proactive coping skills were more likely to terminate Social Security disability benefits due to gainful employment.<sup>16</sup>
- People with physical and sensory disabilities who had higher levels of work self-efficacy and perceived social functioning were more likely to engage in VR services.<sup>17</sup>



## Interpersonal Determinants

- Having support from family and friends contributes to
  - Greater employment rates<sup>12,5</sup>
  - Longer job tenure<sup>18,15</sup>
  - Greater number of work hours<sup>19</sup>
  - Engagement in VR services<sup>17</sup>
- Awareness of one's personal connections is an important facilitator to the employment of people with spinal cord injuries.<sup>6</sup>
- People with visual impairments, who had more sources of encouragement, were more likely to work after the onset of their disability.<sup>20</sup>
- Parental expectations for post-high school employment have a positive impact on the employment of youth with disabilities.<sup>21,22</sup>
- Discouragement from family and friends represents a barrier to the employment of people with disabilities.<sup>1,4</sup>
- Discouragement from family and friends had a negative impact on the earnings of people with disabilities.<sup>4</sup>

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