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**Homework #1**

**9/24/2012**

**Homework**

Select a strategy or tool from our class discussions today to try out with a job seeker customer. Use the tool/strategy and then write a journal entry that addresses the following:

* Brief background on customer

The customer used for this exercise is a 19 year old male high school student with a specific learning disability in the area of written expression. In addition to his learning challenges in writing, this individual also exhibits impaired executive functioning difficulties. Specifically, he presents as very distracted unless the situation is highly structured and has supervision. He also has difficulty with sequencing and following directions involving 3 or more steps. This individual is currently enrolled in a high school program that teaches employment skills to students with disabilities. The customer has strengths in oral communication and social skills.

* What strategy/tool did you use? Why did you select it to use with this customer?

I used the one-sentence journal for this customer. Although this individual struggles with writing I felt that an exercise such as this was important to strengthen that area as well as address his attentional/organizational deficiencies. First, it is typical for this individual to avoid the task of writing altogether. The idea behind the one-sentence journal that I liked was that the task demands were not very high and, if he implemented the act of journaling on his own (it was assigned as homework), he should be able to meet with success and feel good about himself in that area. The point behind this is that he will be facing many situations in the future involving the task of writing and I do not want this to be more of a hindrance to him looking forward. In addition, I felt that this exercise would have a secondary benefit with respect to addressing his executive functioning needs. While this may not aid all of his issues with attention span in certain situations, I felt it was a reasonable assumption that journaling his experiences will give him the opportunity to consolidate his daily experiences and perhaps help him focus better from one day to the next. At the least it will begin to help him create a narrative to his experiences and give him a vehicle to better reflect and fine tune his actions in the future.

* What happened when you used it? Describe the experience.

This was done as a class homework assignment two times last week. Despite minimal demands, when his homework was checked he had not completed the assignment.

* What would you do the same/differently if you used the tool/strategy again?

Since this assignment was not completed at home I provided an opportunity for him to complete it in the classroom. I understand and am sympathetic to his disability, but I also do not want to create a condition where I am enabling him (rendering him dependent on me prompting him) while also forgiving the responsibility of homework. I want to help him become as independent as possible.

In the future if I aim to place importance on the completion of this assignment I could possibly implement a reward system at first then fade or lessen the frequency of the rewards as he meets with success. This would work if there was any deliberate resistance to completing the assignment initially, with hopes that the value of completing the assignment will soon/ultimately become intrinsically motivating for this individual and will not require prompting. However, since executive functioning challenges are a known variable, I acknowledge that I will have to help/empower him to develop some sort of prompt or cue to complete the assignment (for instance, I can help him write down the assignment, but then what will prompt him to remember to look at where it was written down once he arrives at home?).

* Will you try it again? Why or why not?

Yes. It will be a course requirement to get it done. While I will do all that I can to help this individual to maximize his strengths/limit his challenges, I am the employer in this context and he will need to regularly complete this assignment. While this approach is not person-centered or person-driven per se, a structure like this could help improve his deficits which would make a positive change for when he is ready for full time employment. If he responds well to this tool and it becomes intrinsically motivating (ultimate goal), the tool then can become person-centered.