Vocational rehabilitation: specific needs and interventions

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Common vocational difficulties – Early 1

• Premature/unsupported return to previous job
  ➢ fatigue, anxiety, confidence
  ➢ off sick / ? loss of job

• Environmental barriers (travel, access, equipment)
  ➢ affecting ability to get to work and/or
  ➢ complete duties at work

• Common difficulties (e.g. motor skills, concentration, memory, speed), often exacerbated by fatigue
  ➢ unable to do job effectively at required speed
… cont. Vocational difficulties – Early 2

• **Other specific effects** (e.g. seizures/dizziness, visual field deficits, communication, etc.)
  - may preclude return to specific jobs (eg. driving, assembly work, teaching etc.)

• **Executive difficulties** (e.g. awareness, planning, problem solving, judgement, self-monitoring)
  - reduced capacity for organising work, decision-making, self-direction etc.
  - poor management of other ABI difficulties
… cont. Vocational difficulties – Early 3

• Emotional difficulties (low mood, mood swings / emotional vulnerability etc.)
  - difficulty coping with pressure (e.g. stress, change, deadlines, staff management issues)

• Behavioural difficulties (e.g. irritability, frustration, aggression, disinhibition etc.)
  - prone to errors and/or difficulties in relationships with colleagues / supervisors
  - ? disciplinary action
Common vocational difficulties – Late 1

• **Build up fatigue/anxiety/loss of confidence** eg due to:
  - the need for prolonged compensatory effort
  - attempts to increase hours/duties to pre-injury levels
• **Cognitive overload** due to, for example
  - the accumulation of new information and/or
  - introduction of new duties, policies or procedures
• **Difficulties in adapting coping strategies**
  - in response to change in job role / duties / practices
• **Career progression**
  - higher demands/responsibilities (eg management)

…. cont.
...cont. Vocational difficulties – Late 2

- Employers’/colleagues' expectations
  - typically of unrealistically rapid and/or full recovery.
- Departure of key staff (i.e. colleague, supervisor / manager)
  - loss of vital understanding and support
- Redundancy or redeployment (unrelated to ABI)
  - difficulty in securing / coping with new job
- External issues (personal / family / social changes and/or difficulties in long-term adjustment)
  - Impinging upon performance in the workplace
Executive difficulties & return to work

- General poor performance at work in spite of appearing to have the required knowledge & skills.
- Lack of awareness of effects of ABI and/or difficulties in recognising vocational implications
- Difficulties in accepting the need for and/or in implementing an agreed plan for return to work
- Unreliable time-keeping due to difficulty in making / implementing effective travel plans

.......... cont.
Executive difficulties & return to work cont.

- Poor monitoring / management of work performance and work-related difficulties
- Difficulties in applying coping strategies developed in brain injury rehabilitation within the workplace
- Difficulties in planning, prioritising & organising work to achieve objectives and meet deadlines
- Lack of awareness of impact of own work performance & behaviour on colleagues

...... cont.
Executive difficulties & return to work cont.:

- Poor judgment / control of social behaviour in workplace
- Difficulties in work relationships with supervisors, colleagues and/or customers
- Inflexibility with regards to changes in job role / duties or work practices
- Disputes with managers (e.g. about the existence or cause of difficulties at work)

……. cont.
Executive difficulties and work … cont.

For those seeking alternative work:

• Inappropriate job selection - not taking into account or underestimating restrictions
• Poor structuring and poor judgment about the content of job applications
• Inappropriate job interview behaviour
• Difficulties in adapting coping strategies to the new job

➢ Repeating pattern of unsuccessful jobs
Inter-Agency Advisory Group on Vocational Rehabilitation after Brain Injury

Vocational Assessment & Rehabilitation after Acquired Brain Injury: Inter-Agency Guidelines
(eds. Tyerman & Meehan)

(British Society of Rehabilitation Medicine / Jobcentre Plus / Royal College of Physicians, 2004)
Key UK Jobcentre Plus services

• Disability Employment Advisors (DEAs)
• Work (Occupational) Psychologist (WPs)
• Key Government funded programmes e.g.:
  – Access to Work provision
  – Work Preparation (incl. specialist ABI programmes)
  – Job Introduction Scheme
  – WORKSTEP (supported employment programme)
  – Permitted work

• Incapacity Benefit Personal Advisors

(IAAGVRBI, 2004)
ABI: Vocational Service Guidelines

- **Guidance / support on return** to previous employment, education or training.
- **Vocational / employment assessment** to determine alternative avenues of employment or training.
- **Vocational rehabilitation** to prepare for return to alternative employment, education or training.
- **Supported employment** for those requiring ongoing support and/or additional training.
- **Alternative occupation** - permitted work, voluntary work or other occupational / educational provision.

(BSRM/JobcentrePlus/RCP, 2004)
ABI: Vocational Service Needs

1. Guidance and support in returning to previous employment, education or training.
   - Vocational/employment assessment to determine alternative avenues of employment or training.
   - Vocational rehabilitation to prepare for return to alternative employment, education or training.
   - Supported employment for those requiring ongoing support and/or additional training.
   - Permitted work, voluntary work or alternative occupational / educational provision.
ABI: Rehabilitation for return to work

- Education about work-related difficulties
- Development of skills/behaviour necessary for work
- Work-related routines (time-keeping, travel etc.)
- Build up attention, work tolerance & stamina
- Extend coping strategies for the workplace
- Work on material relevant to or drawn from work
- Explicit advice to client/family + GP (& OH)
- Liaison with DEA (& OH) re. workplace support ….
ABI: Managed return to previous work

• Written information to employer (& OH / DEA)
  – with consent & agreed in advance with client

• Joint plan with client + employer (& OH / DEA):
  – graded return (supervised build up of duties/hours)
  – informal return / voluntary trial basis initially
  – short-term restrictions to duties / hours / days
  – short-term flexibility (e.g. frequent breaks, days off)

….cont.
....cont. ABI Managed return to previous work

- advice/support on implementing strategies in workplace
- additional support in workplace (colleagues/job coach)
- off-site support (e.g. brain injury rehabilitation service)

• Ongoing (& joint) monitoring, review & follow-up
  - Feedback from client, employer and also relative.
ABI: Ongoing support in the workplace

- Assistance in returning to employment: e.g.
  - physical adaptations to the workplace
  - specialist equipment or aids
  - assistance with travel to/from work
  - significant changes to work duties
  - ongoing support or training

Discuss (with client’s consent) with DEA with a view to joint evaluation & referral to specialist provision (i.e. Access to Work or Workstep).
ABI: Managed return to education/training

- Verbal & written information for school/college with consent & agreed in advance with client (& relative)
- Joint plan with client + tutor / learning support
  - graded return to studies (supervised gradual build up)
  - adjustment to course (e.g. deferment of modules)
  - learning support + equipment (e.g. computer, tape)
  - additional support from personal tutor / job coach
  - examination support (extra time, prompt notes, room)
- Joint review & follow-up with school/college

(BSRM/JobcentrePlus/RCP, 2004)
Return to previous employment

Principal strategies

• Informal return to work initially - unpaid capacity
• Work trial – to test readiness & ability to return
• Part-time work (e.g. due to fatigue)
• Easier or lower level of work (temporary/permanent)
• Support from colleagues – help / monitoring / feedback
• Skills training programme (e.g. compensatory strategies)
• Jobcentre Plus schemes (e.g. Access to Work provision)

(Johnson & Stoten, 2008)
Job retention – interventions

Evaluation of the job
- Job profiling – client (job description/person specification)
- Worksite visit with supervisor/manager and/or
- Consultation with other employers/careers/trainers etc.

Evaluation of the person in the job
- Perceptions of client & relative
- Review of performance against duties in job description
- Feedback from work supervisor/manager & colleagues
- Direct observation / co-working (performance/behaviour)
- Vocational assessments (formal tests / practical)
Job retention interventions

- Support + Information on other support (e.g. legal, Union etc.)
- Feedback to client (& relative) / identification of key issues
- Problem solving with client on potential work adjustments
- Feedback to employer (incl. HR) + recommended adjustments e.g.:
  - Changes to hours and/or work duties / practices
  - Aids, adaptations & coping strategies
  - Additional training / supervision / support (e.g. colleague / mentor)
  - Education / support of supervisors, managers & colleagues
- If agreed: assist in implementing work adjustments / strategies
- Ongoing guidance, monitoring & support
- Review with client (& relative), supervisor / manager + HR
ABI: Vocational Service Needs

• Guidance and support in returning to previous employment, education or training.

2. Vocational/employment assessment to determine alternative avenues of employment or training.

• Vocational rehabilitation to prepare for return to alternative employment, education or training.

• Supported employment for those requiring ongoing support and/or additional training.

• Permitted work, voluntary work or alternative occupational / educational provision.

(BSRM/JobcentrePlus/RCP, 2004)
ABI vocational assessment

Vocational assessment by a suitably qualified professional with both brain injury and vocational rehabilitation expertise:

- For those with potential of employment but unable to return to previous employment or training to determine alternative avenues of employment or training.
- For children with ABI on leaving school or college to assist them in making informed vocational choices and/or to identify any vocational rehabilitation and support needs.
ABI vocational assessment – core components

• **Vocational interview** - educational / occupational, social, family & clinical history + current needs & aspirations

• **Interview with relative** to assist with detailed history, in describing needs and personal/family circumstances.

• **Formal testing** (NP, OT or Work Psychology) of work-related skills (cognitive, sensory, motor etc.)

• **Vocational ratings** (from observation) / other feedback (from employer) of work attitude, skills and behaviour.

• **Psychological adjustment** (emotional state/behaviour) in workplace or work-related activities.

(BSRM/JobcentrePlus/RCP, 2004)
Working Out: Vocational assessment 1

- **Initial assessment** (client & relative)
  - Personal, family & social history
  - Clinical history & rehabilitation
  - Current problems (self & relative)
  - Self-concept, anxiety / depression

- **Formal assessments**
  - Neuropsychological Assessment
  - Occupational Therapy Assessment
  - Other assessment (i.e. medical, physiotherapy & speech & language), as required
Working Out: vocational assessment 2

- Practical assessments
  - Work preparation group
  - Community vocational rehabilitation activities
  - Individual project work and/or
  - Feedback from previous jobs / placements

- Vocational rating scales (e.g.):
  - Functional Assessment Inventory
  - Work Personality Profile

- Vocational guidance assessment
Functional Assessment Inventory (FAI)

- 30 items of vocational strengths & weaknesses rated on 4-point scale (item specific definitions):
  0 - normal or average functioning
  1 - mild impairment
  2 - moderate impairment
  3 - severe impairment

- standardised on 1716 persons with disability attending vocational counsellors in the USA

(Crewe & Athelstan, 1984)
Functional Assessment Inventory

Factor structure:

- Adaptive Behaviour
- Motor Functioning
- Cognition
- Physical Condition
- Communication
- Vocational Qualifications
- Vision

(Crewe & Athelstan, 1984)
Work Personality Profile (WPP)

- 58 items - 'work attitudes, values, habits & behaviours' rated on 4-point scale with specific reference to work:
  - 4 - a definite strength, an employability asset
  - 3 - adequate performance, not a particular strength
  - 2 - inconsistent, potential employability problem
  - 1 - problem area, will definitely limit ... employment

- standardised on 243 persons with disability attending for vocational rehabilitation in the USA.

(Bolton & Roessler, 1986)
Work Personality Profile

Factor structure:

- Task Orientation
- Social Skills
- Work Motivation
- Work Conformance
- Personal Presentation

(Bolton & Roessler, 1986)
Vocational guidance assessment

- Educational history
- Vocational qualifications
- Pre-injury employment history
- Post-injury employment history
- Specific duties - profiling key jobs
- Current vocational interests/aspirations
- Leisure / social interests
- Visiting recent / current jobs / placements
- Evaluating on-site assessments
ABI: Vocational Service Needs

• Guidance and support in returning to previous employment, education or training.
• Vocational/employment assessment to determine alternative avenues of employment or training.

3. Vocational rehabilitation to prepare for return to alternative employment, education or training.
• Supported employment for those requiring ongoing support and/or additional training.
• Permitted work, voluntary work or alternative occupational / educational provision.
ABI: Vocational rehabilitation

Specialist ABI VR programmes should include:

- education / discussion about ABI and work
- strategies to manage difficulties in workplace
- graded work-related activities
- vocational counselling to identify suitable job
- assisted job selection, search, application, interview
- provision for voluntary work trials
- provision for supported work placements

(BSRM/JobcentrePlus/RCP, 2004)
ABI: voluntary work trial / supported placement

• In setting up trials / placements providers need to ensure that:
  – the requirements of the job match the skills of the client.
  – the needs of the client are communicated to the employer.
  – H&S, training & insurance cover is provided by employer.
  – there is provision for on-site job coaching, when required.
  – client guided/supported in adapting strategies to workplace.
  – placement monitored closely – client, employer & relative.
  – the trial does not impact negatively on person or the family.

+ Long-term placements monitored for at least 6 mons with F/U
Work Preparation Group

• To help people to re-evaluate their strengths and weaknesses after brain injury.
• To consider the implications of brain injury for re-employment (and re-training).
• To explore issues relating to brain injury and interpersonal skills in the workplace.

- Information provision, small group discussion, job matching, practical exercises (CVs, job applications), role plays, videotaped feedback (e.g. mock interviews)
Vocational rehabilitation activities

- Group activities with voluntary agencies
- Individual projects (mainly in workplace)

Objectives:
- To facilitate further recovery & adjustment
- To develop & evaluate coping strategies for work
- To assess work potential.
- To promote more accurate self-appraisal.
- To foster positive work attitudes & behaviours.
Vocational counselling

• Help clients to develop a clear understanding of:
  - vocational interests, aptitudes & resources
  - vocational limitations arising from brain injury
  - current vocational opportunities & prospects

• Explore realistic future vocational direction:
  - careers guidance
  - job matching
  - discussing voluntary work trials (& job tasters)
Voluntary Work Trials

Provide:

• Independent assessment of work potential.
• Identification of difficulties in workplace.
• Development/evaluation of coping strategies.
• Re-establishment of work routine / behaviours.
• Graded increase in work stamina / tolerance.
• Supervised re-building of confidence.
• Independent reference for job applications.
Supported Placement

- Job selection, set up & induction
- Education for employers / employees
- Work adjustments – duties / hours
- Coping strategies in the workplace
- Task analysis / job coaching, as required
- Monitoring – client / family / employer
- Individual off-site support / therapy
- Placement support group
- Regular placement reviews
- Trouble shooting, as required
Placement Support Group - Aims

• To provide a personnel / welfare function for clients in work trials / supported placements.

• To help clients to understand and cope with the complexities of world of work after brain injury.

• To facilitate adjustments required to maximise & maintain work trials and supported placements.
Rehab. UK - BI Vocational Centres:
(Birmingham, London & Newcastle)

A. Pre vocational rehab. phase:
- compensatory cognitive remediation techniques
- improve work-related social skills
- numeracy, literacy & IT
- self-awareness & knowledge of brain injury
- start to identify realistic vocational goals

B. In-situ vocational trial phase:
- work placements in real work settings - sourced, overseen and monitored by job coaches
Rehab. UK - BI Vocational Centres:
(Birmingham, London & Newcastle)

Final placement stage
- Supported job search
- Support with job applications / interviews
- Job coaching to assist settling into new role
- ABI awareness training for supervisors/colleagues
- Follow-up support
Supported employment - new placement

- Source placement or job opportunity
- Conduct task analysis of job
- Set goals for placement duration
- Undertake work placements with host company
- Explore possibility of employment
- Agree job specification and conditions
- Assess client in position
- Modify job in agreement with employer

(Carew & Collumb, 2008)
Supported employment – job coaching

• Review outcome neuropsychological & other tests
• Understanding the implications of the brain injury
• Vocational profiling of occupational interests
• Systematic review of tasks involved in a job
• Conduct pre-/post-injury skills assessment using work samples / placements skills
• Undertake work placement
• Job coaching into employment position
• Follow-through support, as required

(Carew & Collumb, 2008)
ABI: Vocational Service Needs

- Guidance and support in returning to previous employment, education or training.
- Vocational/employment assessment to determine alternative avenues of employment or training.
- Vocational rehabilitation to prepare for return to alternative employment, education or training.

4. Supported employment for those requiring ongoing support and/or additional training.
- Permitted work, voluntary work or alternative occupational / educational provision.

(BSRM/JobcentrePlus, 2004)
WORKSTEP - Supported Placement

For ABI should include:

- Regular on-site placement support for the client and employer, in consultation with DEA.
- Access to advice/support from work psychologist and/or brain injury work preparation provider.
- Effective links with local brain injury services.
- Training for support staff in nature/effects of ABI.
ABI: Vocational Service Needs

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- Vocational/employment assessment to determine alternative avenues of employment or training.
- Vocational rehabilitation to prepare for return to alternative employment, education or training.
- Supported employment for those requiring ongoing support and/or additional training.

5. Permitted work, voluntary work or alternative occupational / educational provision.
ABI: Occupational / Educational Provision

• OTs liaise with Social Services, Further Education colleges & voluntary agencies to identify/set up appropriate opportunity.
• Ongoing monitoring / review: provision may be time limited; clients’ needs often change over time.
• Occupational/educational providers need access to training and ongoing guidance/support from ABI services about the needs of individual clients.
Brain injury vocational rehabilitation provision

- Care Manager
- Adult Educ.
- ABI Team: NP/OT
- DEA
- Work Prep.
- Work Psychol.
- Access To Work
- Occup. Health

- Day Activity
- Shelt. w/shop
- Vol. Work
- Permit. Work
- WORK STEP
- Voc. Train.
- New Job
- Old Job
Joint Framework/Guidelines: Implementation

• Development of local inter-agency protocols –
  – NHS, JCP, SSD, vocational/educational providers

• Key staff to establish ongoing service links
  – (e.g. NP/OT regular consultation with WP/DEA)

• Development of ABI vocational training
  – awareness vocational needs + specialist skills training

• Need to review future provision for vocational assessment and rehabilitation after ABI
  – need joint strategic framework & funding

(BSRM/JobcentrePlus/RCP,2004)
UK vocational rehabilitation references:


14. Return to previous employment (Johnson & Stoten)
15. Vocational rehab. programmes (Tyerman, Tyerman & Viney)
16. Supported employment & job coaching (Carew & Collumb)
Illustrative VR videotape examples

• A: cognitive & emotional difficulties
  – early return to work at 7 mons.

• B: behavioural & emotional difficulties
  – transition from school to employment at 4 yrs.

• C: memory/executive problems & bi-polar disorder
  – ongoing difficulties at work 17 yrs. post-injury