



Getting the Life I Want

Literature Review



Promoting the employment and participatory aspirations of disabled people:
Learning from the research and practice literature.

A review prepared for
CCS Disability Action
May 2017
P. Milner, B. Mirfin-Veitch
& S. Brown
Donald Beasley Institute
www.donaldbeasley.org



TE HUNGA HAUĀ MAURI MŌ NGĀ TĀNGATA KATOA



Address

Level 1, 55 Hanover Street
PO Box 6189
Dunedin, 9059
New Zealand



Phone

+64 3 479 2162

Integrative Literature Review

GETTING THE LIFE I WANT

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INTRODUCTION

The “*Getting the life I want*” Project origin and aims

Following their investigation of the human rights status of disabled people, the New Zealand Human Rights Commission (2010) concluded that disabled people were amongst New Zealand’s most marginalized citizens. The unequal access disabled people experience to the worlds of employment and community participation were identified by the Human Rights Commission as arenas of significant disadvantage.

In the past decade, CCS Disability Action has demonstrated a strong commitment to addressing the marginality experienced by many disabled people by commissioning evidence-based research that draws on the narrative of disabled people to inform and reshape disability support practice.

The “*Getting the life I want*” Project represents the third in a sequence of research collaborations between CCS Disability Action and the Donald Beasley Institute intended to assist disabled people transform New Zealand into a more inclusive society. Like the other two research collaborations that preceded it, the “*Getting the life I want*” Project applies a human rights framework to effect change in the key life domains of employment and participatory citizenship.

The catalyst to this scoping study was an invitation by Peter Wilson (National Manager of Partnerships and Projects: CCS Disability Action) to contribute to the development of research method that could inform on ongoing review of CCS Disability Action vocational service delivery.

The aim of the research was to provide a mix of empirical and best practice evidence that could inform the wider review goal:

“To consider the transformation of Vocational Service within all regions so that the way [CCS Disability Action] deliver support provides the options for people to get what they want.”
(Vocational Service Scoping Document, 2016)

Project design

To conduct the research, the Donald Beasley Institute (DBI) employed transformative methods. Transformative methods seek to learn more about the value people place on something and to draw conclusions about *"the effectiveness with which existing knowledge is used to inform and guide practical action"* (Clarke & Dawson, 1999).

The intention of transformative research is to engage research participants as an action-orientated learning community. By respecting and learning from each other, research participants are expected to collaborate in ways that reimagine or remake disabling social practices.

In the Project Development phase of the research, members of the National Management Team and researchers from the Donald Beasley Institute worked together to establish an overall framework for the project and to refine its methodological elements.

As originally conceived, the project intended to incorporate an Advisory Group of disabled leaders. Whilst time and budgetary constraints meant that it was not possible to set up the Advisory Group, the project did make space for the voices of disabled people in two important ways.



The process of providing all people who accessed vocational support (through CCS Disability Action's vocational contract) with the chance to inform the project was acknowledged as providing CCS Disability Action with an opportunity to access the diverse and often "unheard" voices of vocational support. To utilise this opportunity, a National Online Survey and Key Informant Interviews were included in the methodology in an attempt to better understand the experiences and aspirations of people who were sometimes at the margins of service delivery.

And secondly, during the Project Development phase of the study, the Project's role was also reconsidered and reframed as providing data that could inform subsequent cycles of service planning, innovation and transformative evaluation.



In this respect, the *"Getting the Life I want"* Project was (re)conceptualized as providing an empirical starting point from which disabled people, their families, CCS Disability Action staff and the wider disability community might respond by becoming increasingly engaged as stakeholders in the longer-term processes of ongoing organisational learning and service change.

A mixed method approach was employed as a way of blending information acquired through three core methodological elements. Adopting an flexible design also meant that emerging research findings could sequentially inform other methodological elements. The three methodological elements used to generate data in the order in which they were consecutively executed were:

- An integrated literature review of the research and practice literature with a particular focus on some of the more innovative ways disabled people have been supported to achieve aspirations subsumed within common understandings of vocational support.
- A National Online Survey offered to all people using CCS Disability Action vocational support intended to provide a "snapshot" of respondent's lived experiences, which provides an opportunity to: detect differences in the value identifiable populations placed on different vocational outcomes; capture any alternative visions disabled people had of effective vocational support; and provide feedback that could inform the review of vocational support currently being conducted by CCS Disability Action.
- Key Informant Interviews intended to reach a "thicker description" of disabled people's personal aspirations and the ways in which vocational support can either help or frustrate people's ability to transact their vision.

Defining what we mean by "vocational"

Within the disability and social policy discourses, no universal understanding of what is meant by "vocational activity" exists. Practitioners from different disciplines have not only adopted slightly different common understandings of what is meant by "vocational," those meanings have also themselves been subject to change over time. This is particularly the case with respect to the emphasis placed on employment as the intended outcome of vocational support or intervention.

Within this project we have adopted a wider definition that locates employment and other ways of providing a living wage as one of a range of possible outcomes that fall within a



broader interpretation of "vocational support" – that being a type of support that assists people to engage in:

meaningful, routine, sustained activity that enhances personal growth, is personally rewarding and productively connects people within a community.

(Adapted from Nicholas et al, 2014)

This report presents a synthesis of research intended to improve the access disabled have to paid employment. The papers were published in peer-reviewed journals between 2007 – 2016 and informed an integrated literature review completed during the initial phase of the "Getting the life I want" project.

In the sections that follow, we describe the method we used to conduct the literature review before contextualizing the issue of disabled people's un(der)employment by drawing on New Zealand research findings and analysis that fell beyond the inclusion criteria adopted for this systematic review.

In subsequent chapters, we present a summary of the peer reviewed papers that informed this analysis. Each chapter is organized and ordered in a way that follows the coding and categorization framework we employed to identify subthemes in research that interrogated two questions;

- *What are the employment related outcomes that disabled people value? and,*
- *What support and service practices are promoted as best practice in terms of achieving employment outcomes?*

METHOD

Conducting the integrated literature review

Like other forms of literature review, an integrated literature review summarises published research in order to contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of a particular phenomenon (Broome, 1993 in Whitemore & Knafl, 2005). Where they differ, is that an integrative literature review accommodates a broad range of empirical and theoretical literature within its sampling frame. To control for the greater complexity of incorporating different research methods, an integrated literature review employs a systematic, stepwise search and review strategy.

Integrated literature reviews have been used for a variety of purposes including informing; evidence based clinical or health and disability support practice, policy development and identifying future research priorities. For this review, we have adopted the five-stage review framework outlined by Whitemore & Knafl (2005).

Problem identification and search strategy

A PICO key-word search strategy was employed to interrogate two questions:

- 1. What are the vocational outcomes that disabled people value?**
- 2. What models or social practices are promoted as best practice in terms of achieving vocational outcomes?**

The PICO framework has been developed as a systematic way of answering, most often health related questions. PICO is an acronym for Population, Intervention, Comparison and Outcome. Searches were conducted on the five databases (SCOPUS, Social Science database, Ovid, EBSCOhost & Google Scholar) between July-August 2016 using the following search strategy: (disab* OR 'learning difficulty') AND (vocation* OR employment OR 'community participation' OR job OR 'meaningful activity' OR 'social inclusion') AND (value OR importance OR 'support model' OR outcome OR 'best practice' OR 'service delivery').

Journal articles were included in the first iteration of the review if they described the delivery of vocational support to disabled people and/or the subjective experiences, preferences or aspirations of disabled people receiving or not receiving vocational support. Papers published between 2007 - 2016 that focused on the vocational support needs of disabled people aged between 16 to 65 were included in the initial search, generating 189 peer

reviewed published articles. This pool of articles was further refined by a detailed peer relevance check using 16 comparison fields. The final selection process yielded 47 peer reviewed papers that employed a range of different methods (Table 1).

Table 1 The range of methods included in the review

Quantitative	Qualitative	Mixed	Literature review	Other
17	13	6	10	1
(36.2%)	(27.7%)	(12.8%)	(21.3%)	(2.1%)

Other attributes of the papers included in the final selection are described in the following section.

The range of papers included in the review and data evaluation

Three out of every ten articles included in the final selection sought to understand or address the vocational needs of "disabled people" as a cultural group (n=14; 30.0%). It was more common for research to focus on ways to improve the lives of disabled people with particular types of impairment. People with a learning disability (n=14; 30.0%) or a psychiatric disorder (n= 9; 19.1%) featured most prominently.

Despite making the largest contribution to disability theorising, people with a physical impairment were not well represented in the published research (n=2; 8.5%). This finding might partly be explained by differences in the access people with different types of impairment have to employment or other forms of community participation and/or the increased use of services for which readily available outcome data is available for people with a learning disability, mental health condition or an autistic spectrum disorder (Table 2).

Table 2 Study participants or population of interest by type of impairment

Disabled	Physical	Autistic Spectrum Disorder	Learning disability	Mental Health	Other
14	2	4	14	9	4
(30.0%)	(4.3%)	(8.5%)	(30.0%)	(19.1%)	(8.5%)

The papers were also strongly weighted towards understanding the North American experience. Two out of three papers described experiences or outcomes that affected disabled people in the USA or Canada (n=31; 67.4%). In the United States the state-federal rehabilitation service program (VR) plays a central role in supporting disabled people to obtain and retain employment. Dutta et al, (2008) described vocational rehabilitation providers in America as coming under increasing (funding) pressure to demonstrate the efficacy of vocational rehabilitation interventions through the use of evidence based research strategies. To facilitate empirical research, a range of archival data sets have been made available to researchers, in part explaining the proliferation of research originating from the United States.

Only one paper described the vocational experiences of disabled New Zealanders (Yeung & Towers, 2014).

Table 3 The study population or population of interest be geographic region

	New Zealand	Australia	Asia / Pacific	USA / Canada	UK	Europe
Narrative	1	2	0	11	2	5
Best practice	0	1	0	20	4	0
n (%)	1 (2.2%)	3 (6.5%)	0 (0.0%)	31 (67.4%)	6 (13.0%)	5 (10.9%)

Analysis

Data analysis in research reviews requires data from primary sources to be ordered, coded, categorized and summarized to enable conclusions to be made that answer the original research question(s), (Cooper, 1998, cited in Whitemore & Knafl (2005).

The final selection of papers was divided into clusters that examined (un)employment related experiences and/or outcomes, or alternatively, other forms of community participation/social inclusion, before being separated into papers that answered one of the two research questions described above.



A constant comparison method (Whittemore & Knafl, 2005) was used to categorize and group data into emergent research themes.

Four themes were detected in the employment related research that addressed the question: *What are the vocational outcomes that disabled people value?*

- the meaning and value of employment (9 papers),
- employment decision making (3 papers),
- employment experiences (2 papers) and
- people's experiences of supported employment (1 paper).

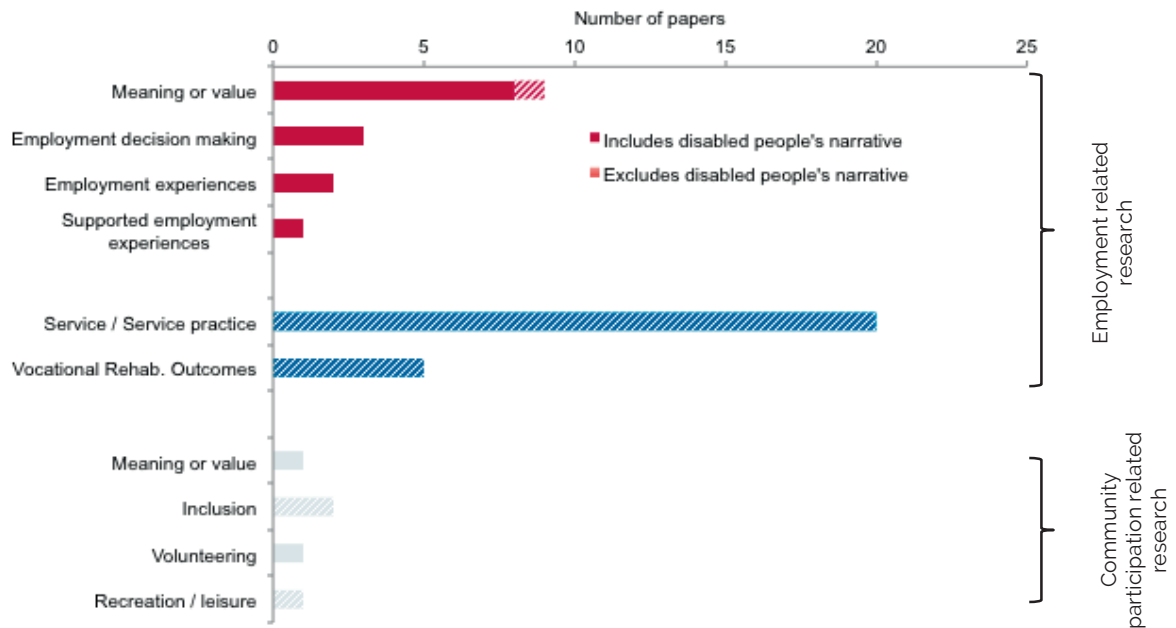
Within the employment related research that addressed the question: *What models or social practices are promoted as best practice in terms of achieving vocational outcomes*, three themes were detected;

- vocational rehabilitation outcomes (5 papers),
- vocational service practice (12 papers) and
- vocational support practices (8 papers).

Improving disabled people's access to paid employment emerged as the preeminent concern of studies that fell within the wider rubric of vocational research. Eight out of every ten papers captured by the search strategy presented findings that described either the value or work to disabled people or outcomes associated with a range of service interventions intended to improve people's access to the worlds of work (n=40; 85%).

The majority of papers that also included the narrative of disabled people were focused on the contribution paid employment made to the quality of people's lives (8 papers; 38.1%). Papers that sought to inform models of best practice, focused almost entirely on how best to support disabled people's entry into 'sustainable' open employment (19 papers, 73%). Disabled people's theorising and/or subjective experiences did not, therefore, inform published research seeking to advance "best practice" in employment related vocational support.

Figure 1 The number of papers included in the final selection by research theme



Only six papers included in the final selection addressed forms of community participation beyond employment. Those papers focused on;

- the meaning or value of community participation (1 paper),
- social inclusion as a vocational outcome (2 papers),
- participation through art (1 paper) or volunteering (1 paper) and
- participation in recreational or leisure activities (1 paper).

No papers included in the final selection sought to articulate or evaluate “best support practices” within the life domains of political, spiritual, creative, sporting, or other communities of interest and attachment or address the reimagining of human rights in terms of having a disabled people’s access to a sense of belonging to their community.

Prior to reporting on the employment status of disabled people in the New Zealand labour market, the chapter that follows begins by outlining New Zealand employment related legislation and the social policy context in which recent shifts in vocational service provision are set to occur.



THE INTRACTABILITY OF UN(DER)EMPLOYMENT FOR DISABLED NEW ZEALANDERS

Employment as a key indicator of a non-disabling society.

Within the New Zealand social policy discourse, disabled people's ability to access to paid employment has emerged as one of the most important barometers of whether progress is being made towards the vision of a non-disabling society (Milner & Paris, 2013).

For example, the second outcome of the ***New Zealand Disability Strategy 2016-2026***, identifies a vision for the future in which disabled people have "security in (their) economic situation and can achieve (their) full potential," (Minister for Disability Issues, 2016: p.26). Benchmarks identified in the strategy as indicative of progress towards a non-disabling society include that disabled people are proportionately represented at all levels of employment, including self-employment and business ownership, and that employers are confident and willing to employ disabled people in meaningful jobs that utilize their strengths and make best use of their skills and capacities. The directive provided by disabled to achieve this outcome is that;

- Disabled people are consulted on and actively involved in the development and implementation of legislation and policies concerning employment and income support.
- Access to mainstream employment and income support services is barrier-free and inclusive.
- Services that are specific to disabled people are high quality, available and accessible.
- All frontline workers, including case managers and employers, treat disabled people with dignity and respect.
- Decision-making on issues regarding employment and income support of disabled people is informed by robust data and evidence.

(Minister for Disability Issues, 2016: p27)

Similarly, within the social policy intended to direct vocational service provision, ***Pathways to Inclusion*** responds to the Disability Strategy by identifying "*increase(ing) the participation of people with disabilities in employment*" as the preeminent objective of vocational support (Minister of Disability Issues, 2001; p11). Following the consultation conducted prior to the



implementation of ***Pathways to Inclusion***, the Minister also made explicit that “*people with disabilities want(ed) to determine their own futures*” and “*want(ed) greater access to genuine employment assistance, regardless of the level of support they would require, or the number of hours they could work,*” (Minister of Disability Issues, 2001; p9).

Having equal access to employment also finds expression as a human right within New Zealand legislation. Prior to New Zealand's ratification of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with a Disability (UNCRPD), disabled people were said to enjoy the same legal safeguards available to other workers, with discrimination on the grounds of disability deemed unlawful under New Zealand employment (Employment Relations Act, 2000) and human rights legislation (Human Rights Act, 1993). Following ratification of the Convention, the New Zealand Government further codified disabled people's right to “*work on an equal basis with other people,*” by locating the state's obligation to ensure the New Zealand labour market became “*open, inclusive and accessible to disabled people*” within the auditable framework of international law (UN, 2017).

Funding for disability related vocational support, initially through the Department of Work and Income, and more recently, the Ministry of Social Development, has been central to the New Zealand government's attempts to meet its social policy and now human rights obligation to ensure that disabled people have equivalent access to open, inclusive and accessible employment.

The shift towards Outcomes Based Vocational Funding

In 2015, the New Zealand Ministry of Social Development released the discussion document, ***Employment, Participation and Inclusion Services: Draft Proposals for Change***, (Ministry of Social Development, 2015). The document foreshadowed a shift in the way future vocational support services would be funded, including a move towards an “Outcomes Based Funding Framework.” The change echoes social policy reform and welfare restructuring that has been occurring in the UK and throughout Europe from the 1990s onwards, including justifying the proposed changes in terms of helping to reduce material poverty and welfare dependence by promoting disabled people's participation in the New Zealand labour force (Barnes, 2000, Hyde, 2000, Milner et al, 2016). Rather than addressing the causes of disabled people's unemployment, the draft proposals focus instead on supply side initiatives intended to oblige and incentivize work within a largely unmodified labour market.

As a consequence, the outcome of paramount interest within the new funding model is vocational services ability to move disabled people into “*sustainable employment*” (defined as



crossing the benefit abatement threshold of more than 15 hours paid employment a week).

To accomplish this the Ministry of Social Development has proposed:

- Triaging disabled people into one of three mutually exclusive “outcome streams,” based on a functional assessment of the likelihood a person might achieve “sustainable employment” in an agreed time - undermining the social policy objective of *“disabled people being able to determine their own futures”* (Minister of Disability Issues, 2001), and by,
- Incentivising the outcome of “sustainable employment” through differential funding in a way likely to select out people perceived as offering a poor fit with the labour market - undermining the social policy objective of disabled people being able to *access to genuine employment assistance, regardless of the level of support they would require, or the number of hours they could work*, (Minister of Disability Issues, 2001).

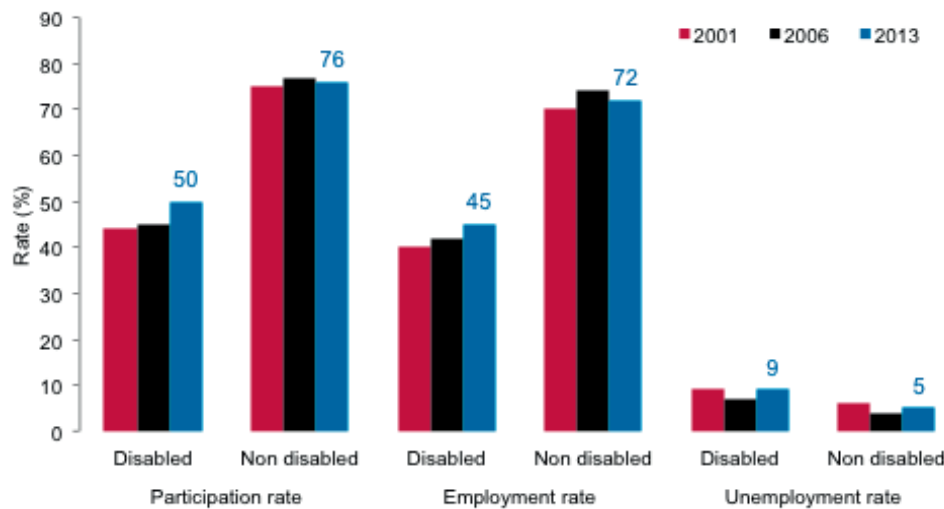
In addition to undermining principles that disabled people have identified as axiomatic to living in a non-disabling society, (Minister of Disability Issues, 2001; Milner et al 2016), feedback provided to the Ministry of Social Development by vocational service providers universally cautioned that prioritizing “sustainable” employment within the proposed framework, represented a transgression of the right to employment for those most likely to experience discrimination. In their submissions to the Ministry, providers further warned that the shift to an outcomes based funding model may therefore further marginalize a cohort of disabled people with the most to gain from the known benefits of paid employment (CCS Disability Action, 2015; Wellington After-Care Association Inc, 2015; Blind Citizens NZ, 2015; IHC, 2015; Inclusive New Zealand, 2015).

Employment as an extraordinary life experience

Despite its status as the key indicator of a non-disabling society, the proportion of disabled people living beyond employment in New Zealand has remained persistently high. In writing about the failure of social policy to improve disabled people’s access to paid work, Danieli & Wheeler (2006) characterized the continuing absence of disabled people from paid employment as a seemingly *“intractable problem.”* In New Zealand, the pattern of disabled people’s sustained un(der)employment mirrors the marginalization of disabled people that Danieli & Wheeler (2006) were describing.

In 2013, the New Zealand Disability Survey (Statistics New Zealand, 2014) estimated that half of all New Zealand adults who identified as having a long-term impairment (50%) were either employed for more than one hour a week or were unemployed but actively seeking employment (Figure 2). Whilst representing a slight increase in the participation rate of disabled people reported in the 2001 (45%) and 2006 (45%) Disability Surveys, the labour force participation of disabled people was considerably lower than for non-disabled New Zealanders (76%).

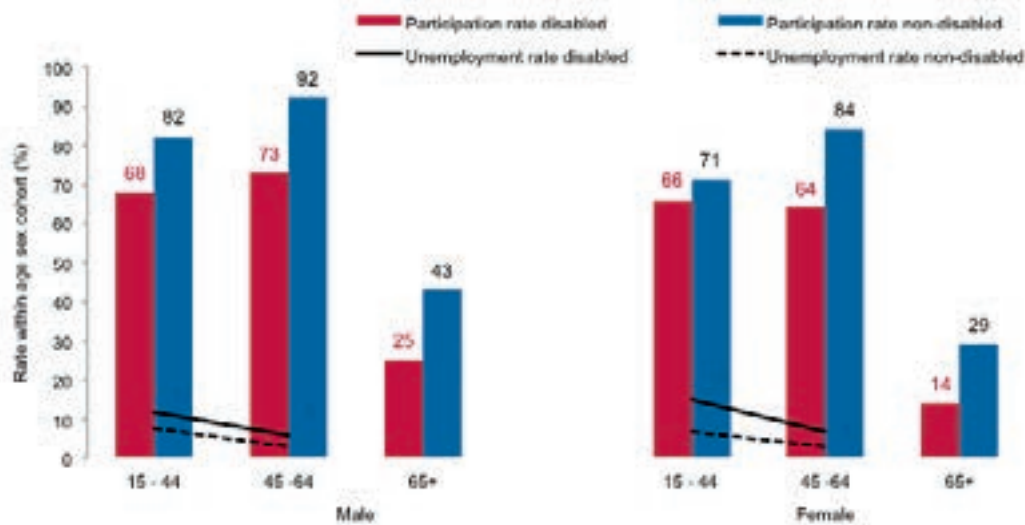
Figure 2 The labour force participation, employment & unemployment rates of disabled and non-disabled New Zealanders (Statistics New Zealand, 2014)



Statistics New Zealand (2014) did note, however, that the gap between the participation rates of disabled and non-disabled New Zealanders could in part be attributed to the older age profile of New Zealanders who identified as having a long-term impairment. Although the gap was smaller for people aged between 15 – 65 years (68% for disabled people, 80% for non-disabled people), disabled people were less likely to be participating in the New Zealand labour force in all of the major age categories sampled for (Figure 3).

In addition to being less likely than non-disabled people to participate in the labour force, disabled people who did participate were considerably more likely to be unemployed. In 2013, the unemployment rate for disabled people (9%) was approximately twice that for non-disabled New Zealanders (5%) and whereas the proportion of non-disabled New Zealanders identified as unemployed fell by 1% between 2001 and 2013, the unemployment rate for disabled people remained the same.

Figure 3 The labour force participation rates of disabled and non-disabled New Zealanders by age category and sex (Statistics New Zealand, 2014)

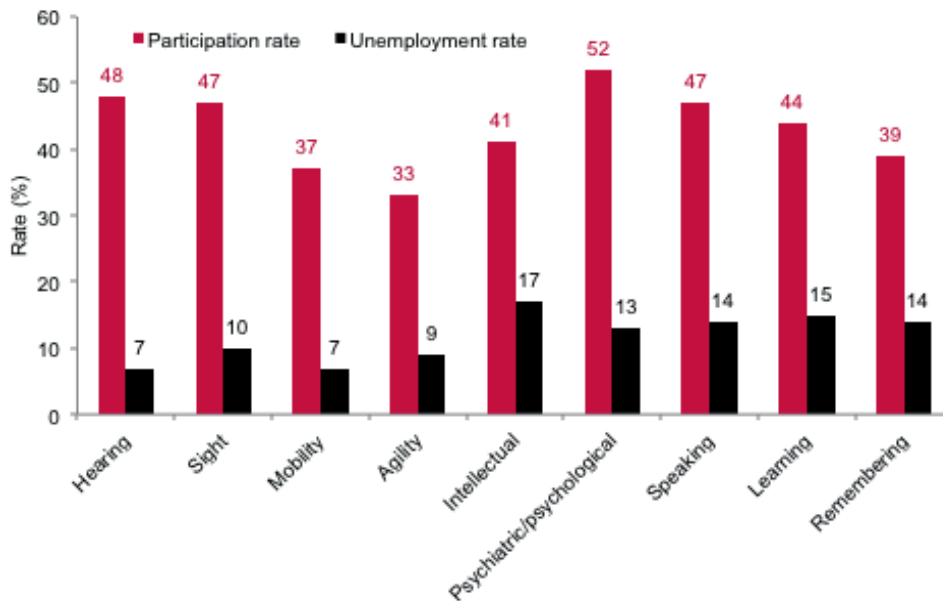


Disabled women were especially disadvantaged. Not only were disabled women less likely to participate in the New Zealand labour force than disabled men, they were also more likely to be unemployed. Statistics New Zealand (2014) also reported that the gap in the rate of unemployment between disabled and non-disabled New Zealand women was similarly greater than between disabled and non-disabled New Zealand men, especially for women aged between 15 – 44 years, of whom 15% of disabled women were unemployed compared to 7% non-disabled New Zealand women.

Participation in the labour force and rates of unemployed varied for people with different types of impairment too. People with the lowest rates of participation included those whose impairment related to diminished agility (33%) and mobility (37%). Statistics New Zealand (2014) noted, however, that lower rates of participation by people who self-identified as experiencing agility or mobility impairments may also have reflected the older age profile of people with these types of impairment and the absence of age adjusted statistics make it difficult to determine to what extent a failure to accommodate these types of impairment contributed to their absence from the New Zealand labour force.

Whilst still well below the participation rate of non-disabled New Zealanders (76%), people with psychiatric or psychological (52%) sensory (Hearing 48%; Sight 47%) or a speaking impairment (47%) were more likely than other disabled people to participate in the labour force. Least likely to be in paid employment, were people with an intellectual or learning impairment. Six out of every ten New Zealanders who reported having an intellectual disability were absent from the New Zealand labour force (59%) and of those in or actively seeking employment, almost half were unemployed (17%).

Figure 4 The labour force participation and unemployment rates of disabled New Zealanders by impairment type (Statistics New Zealand, 2014)

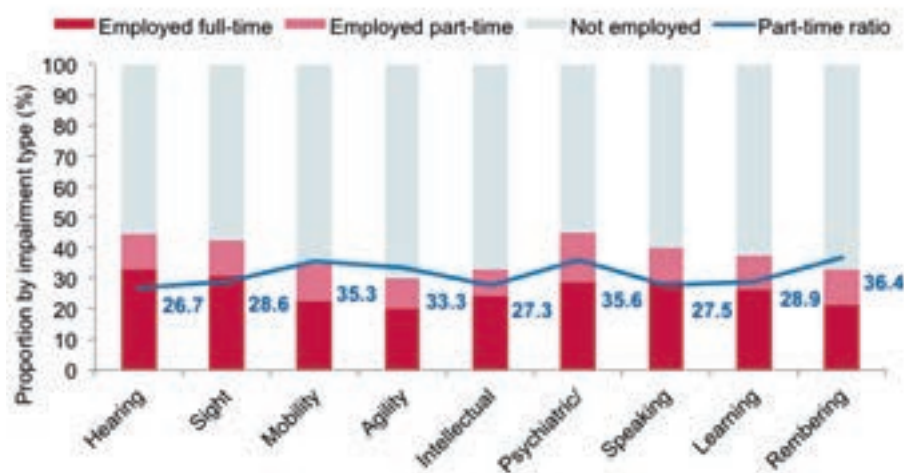


In 2013, 72% of non-disabled New Zealand adults were employed compared to only 45% of non-disabled New Zealanders. Disabled men were more likely to be employed than disabled women and the employment rate ranged from 30% for people with an agility related and 33% for people with an intellectual disability through to 45% of people with a hearing impairment or a psychiatric/psychological condition whose Disability Survey responses were known (Figure 5).

The other way that disabled people might be read as remaining on the margins of employment is that, in addition to being less likely to work, disabled people are also more likely to be in part-time employment. In the New Zealand Disability Survey, part-time employment was defined as working for fewer than 30 hours a week. In 2013, 30% of employed disabled people worked in part-time employment, compared to 22 percent of non-disabled New Zealanders.

As a group, people who had problems remembering (36.4% of employed) or had a psychiatric / psychological condition (35.6% of employed) were most likely to be in part-time employment and disabled women were much more likely to be in part-time employment than disabled men. Forty-two percent of employed disabled women reported working fewer than 30 hours compared to 34% of employed non-disabled women and 19 percent of employed disabled males.

Figure 5 The proportion of disabled people in full or part-time employment by type of impairment (Statistics New Zealand, 2014)



Evidence suggests, however, that the rate of employment and ratio of part to full-time employment reported in the Disability Survey fail to capture the extent to which some people with an impairment are ordinarily marginalized from the New Zealand labour market.

The definition of employment adopted by Statistics New Zealand is that a person “*work(s) for pay, profit, or income for an hour or more*” (Statistics New Zealand, 2014; p.28). In the absence of other empirical data, the lived experiences of forty disabled people who participated in two research projects commissioned by CCS Disability Action suggests that people who access vocational support and/or have high and complex support needs are not only less likely to be employed, but that part-employment typically meant working for as little as 1 – 3 hours per week (Milner & Bray, 2004; Milner & Mirfin-Veitch, 2014). Of the 28 people who accessed vocational support and chose to participate in the **Community Participation Project** (commissioned in 2003) only three people worked in very part-time employment (less than 4 hours per week). Similarly, of the twelve people who contributed their story to the **“I am Here; Article 19 Project**, only one person worked in casual part-time employment, ordinarily for less than three hours a week. Most co-authors described calibrating to lives in which they felt they were not likely to ever experience the ordinary adult trajectory into paid employment (Milner & Mirfin-Veitch, 2014).



Similar levels of marginalization were also discovered within elements of this project. Included within the "**Getting the life I want**" National Online Survey, was a question that asked respondents how many hours they were currently engaged in paid employment. More than seven out of every ten respondent's told us they were not in any form of paid employment (72%).

Moreover, of the people who did report having a job, 92% were employed below the 30 hours a week threshold used by Statistics New Zealand (2014) to define part-time employment (98% of all respondents) and 70% worked for fewer hours than the 15 hours per week threshold used by the Ministry of Social Development to define "sustainable" employment (92% of all respondents). Similarly, although the sample population may not have been representative of all disabled people, the average number of hours worked by people who accessed vocational support through CCS Disability Action and answered the National Online Survey was only 3.8 hours a week (Milner et al 2016).

Employment as an extraordinary life experience

In their second report to the United Nations on the progress New Zealand was making towards realizing human rights obligations codified in the UNCRPD, the New Zealand Convention Coalition identified disabled people's right to equal access to a labour market and work environment that were open, inclusive and accessible as an arena of particular importance (Convention Coalition Monitoring Group, 2012). In addition to noting the difficulty many disabled people had accessing the worlds of work, the Convention Coalition also asserted that work experiences of many disabled people were qualitatively different than their non-disabled co-workers. For example, in their report, the New Zealand Convention Coalition noted that disabled people were more likely to work in menial casualised and part-time occupations for lower wages and with fewer opportunities for career advancement than non-disabled New Zealand employees.

Across all three Disability Surveys, disabled people have consistently been under-represented in professional, skilled, scientific and managerial occupations whilst being over-represented in what former Human Rights Commissioner, Robyn Hunt (1994) described as the "*expendable fringe*," of the New Zealand labour market, clustering instead in low-paid, manual and service occupations (Statistics New Zealand, 2004, 2008, 2014).

One consequence of disabled worker's over-representation in lower-skilled occupations and part-time work is that disabled employees have lower average incomes than non-disabled workers. In 2013, approaching one in four disabled workers (38%) received an annual income



(from all income sources) of less than \$30 000 compared to 30% of non-disabled workers whereas conversely whilst 23% of non-disabled workers received an income over \$70 000, only 14% of disabled workers crossed this income threshold (Statistics New Zealand, 2014).

One of the other ways disabled worker's employment experiences have been found to differ from non-disabled workers is in the precariousness of their employment. Research has found that disabled workers are less likely than non-disabled workers to retain their jobs beyond the first year of their employment (Berthoud, 2002). Hall and Wilton (2011), for example, characterized the employment status of people with a learning disability as ordinarily being the "last hired but first fired," with both sets of findings most commonly explained by the poorer work experiences disabled people are often exposed to and/or the failure of workplaces to accommodate for bodily difference within the customs, conventions and physical configuration of workplaces designed for non-disabled bodies (Berthoud, 2002; Hall & Wilton, 2011; Pierce, McDermott & Butkus, 2003).

At first reading, therefore, Pierce, McDermott & Butkus (2003) finding that disabled people tend to be less transient in working environments like restaurants and cafes, disability support services, cleaning and other occupations might seem paradoxical, but is most likely explained by other research strands that have consistently reported that disabled employees typically exhibit higher levels of; company loyalty (EEO Trust, 2007, 2008) and/or intention to stay than non-disabled employees (EEO Trust, 2008; Mor Barak & Levin, 2002; Nishii & Mayer, 2009) and have lower rates of staff turnover within the kinds of occupations that might reasonably be located on Robyn Hunt's (1994) undervalued and "*expendable (employment) fringe.*"

In their report to the UN, the New Zealand Convention Coalition also noted that within employment settings, disabled people were frequently "*subject to (forms of) occupational segregation.*" It is not clear whether they meant the clustering of disabled people within particular types of low skilled occupations or more broadly that disabled people's work experiences placed them of the margins of workplace culture. Evidence that the work experiences of disabled people can be different has begun to accumulate, including that forms of occupational segregation within mainstream employment contexts can act in ways that fail to tap the social capital of disabled employees, frustrate promotion or cut short careers. The Convention Coalition's observation is also consistent with research that is emerging from within the disciplines of geography and organisational psychology that share a common interest in understanding more about the contexts in which people experience a sense of belonging.

Workplace belonging

Within their respective critiques of the social policy objective of social inclusion, Hall (2004, 2005) and Milner & Kelly (2009) argue that understanding inclusion in terms of the simple binaries of inclusion fails to capture the complex and entangled experiences of feeling in or out of place. In his work, geographer Ed Hall identified employment as a context in which our failure to articulate what being included really means represents a potentially oppressive blindness to everyday forms of exclusion disabled people can experience in mainstream (non-disabled) social settings.

When Hall (2004, 2005) spoke to disabled people about their experiences of feeling either in or out of place within communities across Scotland, work stories featured prominently in their narratives. Hall (2004) found the employment experiences of disabled people to be highly variable. For some, work was a positive and inclusive experience, but for many, a range of exclusory practices were at play including moments of verbal and non-verbal 'othering' by fellow employees, the assignment of limited and sometimes trivial work roles, fewer hours and poor pay than non-disabled colleagues and a pervasive exclusion from the ordinary processes of performance review and career advancement. As a consequence, Hall wrote, people with a learning disability in particular often find themselves at the very edges of workplace culture, stacking produce in the freezer or wheeling trolleys in the car park, dislocated from the social action elemental to the experience of "being" employed.

Hall's (2004, 2005) findings align with the observations of disabled people who accessed vocational support from CCS Disability Action in 2004. Disabled people who collaborated in the **Community Participation Project** told researchers to look to "how" people were in place rather than to "where" people were in place, identifying the attributes of relational participation as far more instructive of whether a person was included in a mainstream setting like employment than simply being present (Milner & Bray, 2004; Milner & Kelly, 2009).

Other disability writers have also argued that understanding vocational support as fitting people into a mainstream employment setting does little to trouble the disabling social attributes of workplace culture that account for the seeming intractability of disabled people's un(der)employment and people's exposure to exclusive workplace practices. Hall & Wilton (2011), Roulstone & Barnes (2005) and Yanchak, Lease & Strauser (2005), for example, all argue that in spite of being informed by the social model of disability, policy initiatives designed to improve employment outcomes for disabled people have continued to fund "individualized" models that aim to improve the skills or "work-readiness" of disabled people.



In addition to problematizing bodily difference, understanding the issue of unemployment in terms of disabled people's lack of fit with the labour market creates a further barrier to the types of conversations likely to lead to a reappraisal of the value (social capital) of disabled people to employers.

In a recent review of the employment related literature, Milner & Paris (2013) argue that reimagining the social capital of impairment represents a new way to contest the disabling assumptions that appear to contribute to the intractability of un(der)employment for disabled people. The central tenant to the argument is that, as a consequence of disabled people not being present in employment in ways that are likely to transform workplace culture, employers have unwittingly "locked out" different ways of thinking, acting and connecting they could access by including and valuing the unique contribution disabled people can make to business productivity and profitability.

Although the argument has been applied to other marginalized populations, it has yet to be debated within the disability community. Uncontested, however, is the almost universal aspiration that disabled people hold to contribute to their community through meaningful and productive employment.

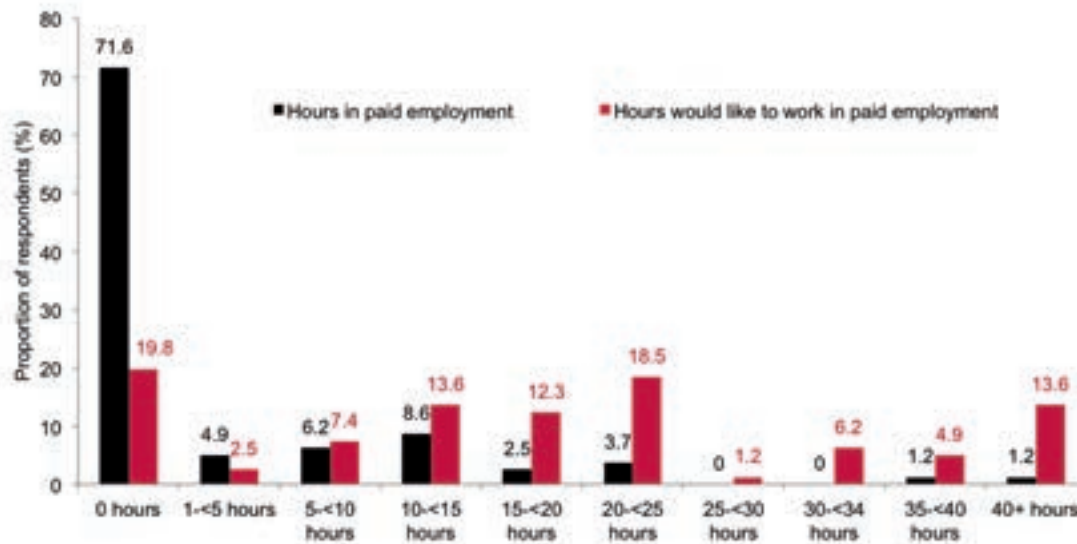
The aspiration to belong through meaningful employment

Following the collaboration between researchers and disabled people accessing vocational support commissioned by CCS Disability Action in 2003, Milner & Bray (2004) reported that wanting to work was an almost universal aspiration amongst participants. The people Milner & Bray (2004) spoke to identified employment as their most obvious gateway to participatory citizenship, with those most likely to be steered away from employment towards alternative forms of community participation appearing to be most sensitized to their exclusion.

More than ten years later we found the same unmet aspiration to work expressed by people who responded to the *"Getting the life I want"* National Online Survey. Despite 72% of respondents telling us they were not in any form of paid employment, 80% said they wanted to work (Milner et al, 2016). This finding is both remarkably similar to other international studies and consistent also with recent findings reported by Statistics New Zealand. Following the most recent Disability Survey, Statistics New Zealand (2014) found that most disabled people aged between 15–64 years who weren't in paid employment in 2013 also wanted to work. Three out of every four adult disabled New Zealanders said they would like to work if a job was available (74%), including 81% of 15–44 year olds and 66% of 45–64 year olds who weren't in employment.

Following our analysis of the National Online Survey we reported that 74% of people who accessed vocational support said that they worked fewer hours than they preferred and whereas the average number of hours respondents reported being in paid employment was 3.8 hours, the average number of hours they wanted to work was 18 hours (Figure 6).

Figure 6 The number of hours National Online Survey respondents said they were in & would like to be in paid employment



Regardless of their employment status, respondents also tended to rate the importance of employment highly. On a 100-point scale with "extremely unimportant" (0) and "extremely important" (100) as scale anchors, respondents, on average rated the importance of employment at 74.6 (SD= 29.6). Unlike the finding reported by Milner & Bray (2004) the National Online Survey revealed a positive association between respondent's rating of the importance of employment and the number of hours they worked.

Whilst the average rating of the importance of employment given by respondents who were unemployed was high (70.0 points), respondents who were employed for less than 15 hours a week, rated its importance higher (82.4 points) and respondents who worked for more than 15 hours a week rated its importance as significantly higher (99.6 points).

We suggested that one possible explanation for this finding was that people who were not and/or had not ever worked, had organised their lives in ways that responded to the distinct possibility of never realising paid employment. This argument is consistent with research that is emerging from within the Quality of Life paradigm that suggests that people tend to re-weight the importance of quality of life domains like "productivity" in order to maintain a sense of subjective wellbeing (Cummins et al, 2012). If correct, not having employment



represented as a viable outcome either by employers, sources of support or the proposed Vocational Outcomes Framework is likely to affect disabled people's perception of the personal importance of paid work.

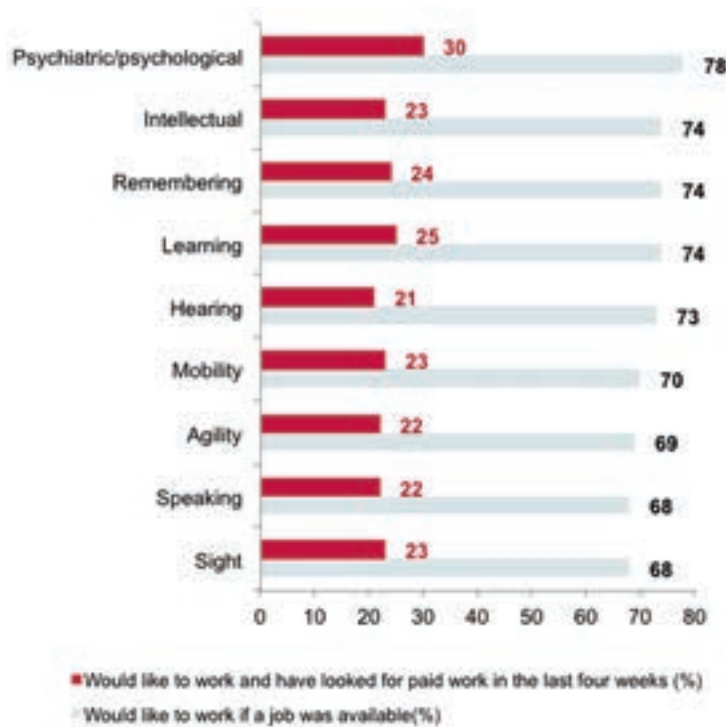
Moreover, not perceiving employment to a viable option, or alternatively, failing to recognize one's social capital is also likely to have had an impact on the job search behavior of respondents and their sources of vocational support.

Findings reported by Statistics New Zealand following their analysis of the 2013 Disability Survey would appear to support this assertion. Despite reporting that 74% of disabled people who weren't in paid employment would like to work if a job was available, Statistics New Zealand (2014) reported that only 27% of those who weren't employed had looked for work in the previous four weeks (Statistics New Zealand, 2014), with disabled people aged 45-64 years being least likely to engage in search behavior (20%).

People with psychiatric / psychological impairments were most likely to want work if a job was available (78%) and were also more likely to have looked for work in the previous four weeks (30%), perhaps as a consequence both of the episodic nature of many mental health conditions and the positive impact of public health campaigns designed to address forms of exclusion like "Like Minds."

New Zealanders with an intellectual (74%) or learning impairment (74%) were also more likely to report wanting to work than people with other types of impairment. These two groups, however, were also more likely to be unemployed (Figure 5) and in a way that does align with Milner and Bray's (2004) observation that those most marginalized from employment are often most sensitized to their absence, people with an intellectual disability, numbered amongst the populations who were least likely to have engaged in job search behavior in spite of their aspiration to work (23%).

Figure 7 The proportion of unemployed disabled people who would like to work and had looked for paid employment in the previous four weeks by disability type (Statistics New Zealand, 2014)



Although the National Online Survey did ask respondents about the range of job search strategies they had been supported to employ, the question was not time limited, and therefore it was not possible to determine the extent to which people were still actively engaged in the search for employment. When we spoke to respondents during the Key Informant Interviews, however, we noted that many had become dispirited by years of looking but not finding paid employment. Others spoke of the aspiration to work historically, as if it belonged to an alternative self or other time. We also suggested that support that was perceived to steer disabled people towards voluntary work as a more viable support outcome, may have unintentionally undermined people's sense of their value to employers and/or fit with the labour market (Milner et al, 2016). Sixty-one percent of National Online Survey Respondents were engaged in some form of voluntary work (Milner et al, 2016), twice the rate of volunteering reported for the New Zealand general population (Statistics New Zealand, 2016).

Some of the people we spoke to suggested that it was also difficult for support staff to remain motivated when they shared the rejections that often followed the search for employment, possibly explaining differences in the contact respondents reported receiving with CCS Disability Action staff most likely to assist them with their job search. Whereas 55%



of respondents said they had had contact with a support worker two or more times in the previous four weeks, 49% reported having no contact with a vocational support coordinator (and 64% had been contacted less than twice) and 96% of respondents said they had received no job coaching (Milner et al, 2016).

Given the aspiration so many disabled adults have to find paid employment, understanding why they might be disproportionately marginalised from the New Zealand workforce and relatedly, why so many would stop looking for work will require;

- Disentangling the narratives of disabled people, employers and support services to explore differences in their understanding of the value of employment and the contribution disabled people can make to New Zealand businesses, and
- Discovering which workplace and/or support practices are most effective at increasing the diversity of the New Zealand workforce in ways that also include disabled people.

In the following chapter we detail the range of employment related papers that informed this literature review that describe;

- The value of work to disabled people, or
- Outcomes associated with a range of service interventions intended to improve people's access to the worlds of work.



RESEARCH THAT ADDRESSED DISABLED PEOPLE'S ACCESS TO THE WORLDS OF EMPLOYMENT

Whilst the literature search strategy was constructed in a way that reflected Nicholas et al's (2014) broader understanding of vocational activity as being any *"meaningful, routine, sustained activity that enhances personal growth, is personally rewarding and productively connects people within a community,"* employment related research, and in particular, studies that used employment placement as the outcome of primary interest, dominated the vocational discourse. As noted previously, 40 of the 47 peer-reviewed papers that informed this literature review described either the value of work to disabled people (15 papers) or outcomes associated with a range of service and/or support interventions intended to improve people's access to the worlds of work (25 papers).

In the table below, we provide a brief overview of all 40 papers. The table is organized in a way that follows the coding and categorization framework we used to identify emergent research themes. Papers that throw light on the subjective experiences and/or personal meaning of employment disabled people hold are presented first within the four research themes we detected (coloured red) and papers that attempted to identify service or support best practice are presented next within the three research themes we detected (coloured blue). Papers included in literature review are also coloured blue in the Reference section of this report as a way of distinguishing them from other primary sources cited throughout the document.



Table 4 Employment related peer reviewed papers

Data framework	Author(s)	Year	Country	Participants	Method	Findings /Conclusions
The meaning or value of employment	Rosqvist H. & Keisu B.	2012	Sweden		Discourse analysis of magazine articles written by and for people with autism	A tension was found between dominant and alternative notions of real jobs. Having a job was construed as conferring independence, allowing one to live like other people, giving social status, leading to social contacts, contributing to structure in everyday life, making one feel involved and needed, and a way to develop one's social competence. "The meaning" of work was, however, to feel needed and to do something significant. Within a relational perspective, individual are urged to find what would be a meaningful daily occupation, and to discover how to make the best out of individual strengths and interests.
	Torres Stone, R. Sabella, K. Lidz, K. McKay, C. & Smith, L.	2016	USA	57 young adults diagnosed with a serious mental health conditions engaged in three different models of vocational support	Participatory Action Research that drew on thematic analysis of semi-structured participant interviews	Young adults with a serious mental health condition identified monetary income as a significant benefit of work. Achieving financial independence from one's families was highly valued as a marker of the typical transition to adulthood. Work was also seen as providing opportunities for social engagement and feelings of contributing to society. For some individuals work enhanced self-esteem and self-confidence, in part because they demonstrably meet a wider societal expectation that young adults should be transitioning to paid employment.
	Pack, T. Szirony, G., Kushner J. & Bellaw, J.	2014	USA	1310 members of 10 National Multiple Sclerosis Society chapters	Dunn-Sidak multiple comparison test to compare the mean Quality of Life ratings reported by participants employed full-time, part-time or unemployed	People with MS who were employed tended to rate their level of QOL nearly one third of a standard deviation above their unemployed counterparts, emphasizing the need for the provision of vocational rehabilitation (VR) services to Americans with MS. No difference in mean QOL rating was found between participants working full or part-time.
	Dunn, E., Wewiorski, N. & Rogers, E.	2008	USA	23 self-referred participants who had experienced psychosis but had been in recovery for two or more years.	A Grounded Theory strategy was used to inductively identify themes in semi-structured participant interview narratives	Two themes emerged from the analysis: work has personal meaning and work promotes recovery. Study participants all had substantial work histories and considered work to be an integral component of their lives and recovery process. They conveyed a sense of pride about their work histories and talked about the financial rewards of work and how work facilitated their emotional growth and helped to provide them with coping strategies for psychiatric symptoms and contributed to the process of recovery.
	Jahoda, A., Kemp, J., Riddell, S. & Banks, P.	2008	UK		Systematic Literature Review of case-controlled and longitudinal studies measuring outcomes for QOL, social life & autonomy for people with a learning disability.	Studies provide consistent findings of a higher reported QOL and wellbeing reported by those in employment. Findings concerning the impact of work on the social networks and interactions point to limited gain. Individual supported employment models offer greater opportunity for integration, and an increase in interactions with non-disabled work colleagues, however, there was little evidence of these friendships or interactions extending outside the workplace or being felt as reciprocal or supportive. Studies produced consistent evidence of positive change in the level of autonomy enjoyed by individuals with intellectual disabilities in competitive employment.
	Konrad, A., Moore, M., Doherty, A., Ng E. & Beward, K.	2012	Canada	22 513 Participation and Activity Limitation	OLS Regression analysis to test the strength of association between 5	Fully utilized permanent employees show the highest level of life satisfaction while unemployed persons searching for work have the lowest levels of life satisfaction and the highest levels of perceived workplace discrimination.



	<p>Survey (2006) respondents.</p>	<p>employment status categories and a subjective life satisfaction measure</p>	<p>Permanent workers who believed that their skills and education were greatly underutilized were significantly less satisfied and perceived significantly more discrimination than temporary workers. These findings suggest that the job insecurity associated with temporary status is less detrimental to well-being than the lack of growth and development associated with permanent underemployment.</p>
<p>Beyer, S., Brown, T. Akandi, R. & Rapley, M.</p>	<p>2010 UK</p> <p>37 people with a learning disability participating in Supported Employment (17), Enterprise (10) or Day service (10) program & 17 non-disabled co-workers</p>	<p>Non-parametric statistical tests were used to compare Objective and Subjective QoL (ComQoL-I & ComQoL-A) & Work Environment Index scores (Work Environment Scale) between participants receiving support across three vocational contexts and non-disabled co-workers.</p>	<p>Participants receiving Supported Employment assistance reported better health, higher productivity and better emotional wellbeing than people with a learning disability receiving support in Employment enterprises or Day services. Compared to people receiving support in Day services, Supported employees were found to have greater clarity about their work activity and conformity to policies and procedures. Non-disabled co-workers reported higher material wellbeing, productivity and job autonomy than disabled co-workers (in Supported Employment) but lower subjective wellbeing.</p>
<p>Barisin, A., Benjak, T & Vuleti, G.</p>	<p>2011 Croatia</p> <p>318 employed (160) and unemployed (158) disabled women recruited through disability organisations</p>	<p>T-tests compared the health related QoL of employed and unemployed and married and unmarried participants across four health domains & global QoL and health status measures (WHOOOL-BREF). Spearman's R was also used to test the correlation between WHOOOL-BREF) domains and educational level</p>	<p>Unemployed disabled women had a lower self-assessed health-related and significantly lower QoL across three health domains: (psychological health social relationships, environment). No significant difference was detected in participants self-reported physical health. Unemployed women also reported a significantly lower self-assessed overall QoL than employed women. The largest positive impact on life satisfaction identified by employed and unemployed women was family relationships. The authors conclude by stressing the importance of paid work and family as factors affecting quality of life women who are more likely to find themselves marginalized from paid employment.</p>
<p>Cramm, J., Finkenflügel, H., Kuijsten R. & van Exel, N.</p>	<p>2009 Netherlands</p> <p>18 people with a learning disability working at least three days a week supported by a Supported Employment Service.</p>	<p>22 statements representing five main aspects of supported employment were ranked in order of importance. Using a Q-methodology, rankings were factor-analysed to group respondents according to identify clusters of similar viewpoints augmented by qualitative analysis of participant narrative</p>	<p>Two views on the impact of supported employment on social integration were observed: 'work as participation' and 'work as structure'. People who expressed the general view that work was a way for them to participate in society placed greater value on participation, task variety, belonging, and feeling appreciated. People who were more likely to view work as structure placed greater value on working independently, clear working agreements, and friendly co-workers. Participants indicated that supported employment had contributed to their self-employment. They felt they had become less shy, more independent, socially engaged, and more capable of managing their finances and honouring agreements and appointments. However, their views indicate two distinct approaches to effecting a positive relationship between supported employment and social integration.</p>



<p>Ali, M., Schur, L. & Blanck, P.</p>	<p>2011</p>	<p>USA</p>	<p>2 273 people aged between 18-64 years who responded to the General Social Survey 2006 including 391 disabled people</p>	<p>Descriptive statistics, t-test comparisons of disabled and non-disabled responding and logistical regression modeling.</p>	<p>Relative to their non-disabled counterparts, non-employed disabled people are (a) as likely to want a job now or in the future (80%) but less likely to be actively searching, (b) as likely to have prior job experience, and (c) similar in their views of the importance of income, job security, and other valued job characteristics. Disabled people were also less likely to receive support or assistance from a spouse. Contrary to expectation, disabled people were not more likely to desire flexibility, high income, or job security, at least as compared to people without disabilities controlling for certain demographic factors. Disabled people were less likely to be engaged in search behavior and were less optimistic about finding a job attributed to disabled people, a finding the authors attributed to people's perception(s) that impairment, or lower education levels restricted the range of possible jobs and employer attitudes or culture—including prejudice, discrimination, and reluctance to make workplace accommodations decrease the chances of a job offer, promotion, or successful retention.</p>
<p>Timmons, J., Hall, A., Wolfe, J. & Winsor, J.</p>	<p>2011</p>	<p>USA</p>	<p>16 Adults with a learning disability who worked in sheltered (7) or competitive (9) employment settings, 13 family members & 15 employment-support staff</p>	<p>Semi-structured interview data was analysed using a general inductive approach aided by memo writings to support the identification of major themes</p>	<p>A collection of people and factors were influential in employment-related decision-making. The family and school-based staff and early employment experiences shaped employment expectation, whilst the culture of the Community Rehabilitation Providers (CRPs) and job developer emerged as most influential during the job search. 3/4 CRPs were partially committed to the idea of employment for all, holding preconceived notions persons with ID present a wider range of career interests and self-efficacy beliefs than expected, included in the social relationships of a workplace emerged as a central motivation for employment with a focus on supporting relationship development in worksites and maintaining friendships with others from the workshop also recommended.</p>
<p>Nota, L., Ginevra, M. & Carrieri, L.</p>	<p>2010</p>	<p>Italy</p>	<p>129 adults with a learning disability attending day centres (59) or cooperative or competitive (70) employment settings</p>	<p>The instrument <i>My Future Preferences</i> was used as an indicator of participant's career interests and self-efficacy. MANOVAs were employed to explore the impact sex and level of impairment on career interests, occupational preference & self-efficacy beliefs. Stepwise MLR to verify the predictive power of self-efficacy on career interest. And ANOVAs run to test whether differences in self-efficacy beliefs existed between people attending day bases and in cooperative or competitive employment</p>	<p>People with a learning disability presented a wider range of career interests and self-efficacy beliefs than expected, showing more interest in the conventional, realistic, artistic, and social areas than in the investigative and enterprising career areas. The occupations for which participants expressed highest self-efficacy beliefs coincided with their career preferences. The authors speculated that the development of self-efficacy beliefs in these occupational domains might be reflective of having more opportunity to perform these roles in service and support contexts. Contrary to expectations no sex or level of impairment differences emerged for either career interests or self-efficacy beliefs. No differences were found between the self-efficacy beliefs of working and non-working participants either except that participants who worked showed lower self-efficacy beliefs than participants in day centres in the "investigative" career domain, a finding the authors attributed to similar levels of feedback and reinforcement in the "realistic," "conventional," "social," "artistic" and "enterprising" areas between the two contexts.</p>



GETTING THE LIFE I WANT

<p>Employment experiences</p>	<p>Baldwin, S., Costley, D. & Warren, A. 2014 Australia 130 adults with an autism spectrum disorder in employment</p> <p>Descriptive statistics were used to present the findings of a survey that sampled for participant's occupation, tasks, skill level, hours of work, contract type, job related support & positive and negative experiences of employment</p> <p>The highest proportions of participants were found in the groups Clerical and Administrative Workers, Labourers, and Professionals and a comparison of with the general population suggesting adults with AD and HFA are overrepresented in casual positions and work fewer hours than other Australians. Fewer than half of participants received job search or workplace support.</p> <p>Participants expressed experiencing difficulty in the areas of social and collegial relationships and health and wellbeing at work. It is the view of many within this group that their workplaces are failing to provide accommodations and adjustments appropriate to these and other needs.</p>
<p>Employment experiences</p>	<p>Jahoda, A., Banks, P., Dagnan, D., Kemp, ., Kerr, D. & Williams, V. 2009 UK 35 people with a mild learning disability starting employment</p> <p>A longitudinal design was used. Participants were interviewed within the first month and between 9-12 months of starting employment. Content analysis of participant narrative within a pre-determined framework was conducted.</p> <p>Participants perceived continuing benefits from entering mainstream employment, including more purposeful lives, greater spending power and autonomy and increased social status. However, over the follow-up period participants reported few social opportunities that extended beyond the workplace, and an anxiety about their competence to meet employers' demands. An increased number of individuals believed their employers were failing to make adequate accommodations having previously been confident of their ability to meet work demands. A number of participants felt that there had not been a sufficient rise in their level of income to make a significant difference to their lives at follow-up. Short working hours, or the solitary nature of employment, were identified as reasons for the limited opportunities for socializing either within or outside the work place. At follow-up, the great majority of those who talked directly about the impact of employment on their sense of self-worth were still positive. For most of these participants this improved sense of self was again linked to a view that others gave more recognition to their adult status. Whilst moving into work was generally felt to be a positive experience, it could also be anxiety provoking including ongoing fears about the tenuousness of employment and in some instances, reinforcing the limits of people's competence and marginal social status.</p>
<p>Experiences of supported employment</p>	<p>Chouinard, V. 2010 Canada 80 disabled women.</p> <p>Descriptive statistics supplemented by participant narrative was used to describe the results of an online survey.</p> <p>Disabled women experienced a wide range of barriers to finding and keeping employment – pointing to the need for types of employment assistance geared to helping them overcome systemic barriers to employment rather than individualistic models aimed at "reforming the worker." The most frequently cited barriers to employment were negative employer attitudes and lack of accommodation in the workplace. For most women, employment assistance was regarded as being of limited effectiveness.</p> <p>The women who commented on how employment assistance programs could be improved suggested: developing programs promoting more inclusive and supportive workplaces and placing greater emphasis on pre-screening employers to ensure a commitment to an inclusive workplace and self-employment.</p>



<p>Del Valle, R., Leahy, M., Sherman, S., Anderson, C., Tansey T., & Schoen, B.</p>	<p>2014</p>	<p>USA</p>	<p>Interviews conducted within 4 high performing Vocational Rehabilitation agencies yielded 158 participants, including: Directors (4), VR leaders (25), mid-level managers (56) & VR counselors (73)</p>	<p>A modified consensual qualitative research methodology was used to analyse data within a multiple case study design. To identify innovative, emerging or promising best practice, data generated by participant interviews, focus groups and agency documents were organized into domains, core domain ideas and cross analysis.</p>	<p>Twenty-nine practices were identified as being supportive of the successful outcomes of persons with disabilities. The culture of an organization emerged as an important factor in the development and sustainability of innovative practices as best practices reconsidered the traditional rehabilitation counselor roles by "thinking outside the box" and offering new methods for delivering services. Examples of best practice included: incubator units to pilot new approaches, use of new communication technologies across an agency, an exclusive focus on employment, extensive Supported Employment training, active consumer engagement and "soft skill" employment training.</p>
<p>Hagner, D., May, J., Kurlz, A. & Cloutier, H.</p>	<p>2014</p>	<p>USA</p>	<p>47 school students aged over 16 diagnosed as having an Autistic Spectrum Disorder and their "circles of support"</p>	<p>Personal Planning Facilitator notation of member comments, meeting flip-charts and recording of accommodations and adaptations developed in planning groups to allow greater participation by the person with ASD, were analysed using an open-coding strategy.</p>	<p>A range of strategies were employed by person centred-planning groups using the McGill Action Planning System to affect the development of a meaningful career path, including: individualized preparation of meetings, informal rapport building, flexible meeting design, distance attendance, & supported participation. The authors concluded that person-centered planning can be implemented for youth across the autism spectrum as a tool for enhancing participation in transition planning and advancing employment outcomes for people with ASD. The authors recommend contracting out or developing facilitation skills as an effective way to foster the "flowering of diverse ways" of supporting people with ASD transition to employment.</p>
<p>Wehmeyer, M., Parent, W., Lattimore, J., Obremski, S., Poston, D. & Rousso, H.</p>	<p>2009</p>	<p>USA</p>		<p>An explanation of the Self-Determined Career Development Model (SDCDM) being trialed in 13 high schools as part of the Girls at Work Project.</p>	<p>The authors introduce the SDCD Model and its use in secondary education and rehabilitation, outlining the 8-steps goal-orientated process being used to assist young women with a learning disability to obtain nontraditional employment through self-regulated, customized employment planning. The model supports people to navigate through a variety of activities and resources that enable them to: identify their passions, explore employment options, lead their employment team meetings, and develop an action plan for employment. Initial data suggests the program is highly valued by participants and appears to facilitate positive vocational outcomes.</p>
<p>Kaehne, A. & Beyer, S.</p>	<p>2013</p>	<p>UK</p>	<p>Five young adults aged between 17-24, with a mild learning disability participating in a peer support employment</p>	<p>A mixed method approach was used to evaluate outcomes associated with the Youth Supported Employment (peer support) Programme (YSEP) including:</p>	<p>The aim of the YSEP is to encourage young disabled people to mirror the employment pathway of their non-disabled peers. Parents emphasized the positive impact peer supported employment had had and in particular improvements in confidence and maturity and valued the focus the project had on establishing a career pathway rather than the more common experience of young people being deflected towards an alternative life trajectory. Employers were unequivocally positive about the support they received from</p>



<p>Vocational service practice</p>	<p>programme, their families and employers</p>	<p>employing a content analysis to interrogate peer supporter activity records and data generated by semi-structured interviews with participant's parents and a questionnaire given to their employers.</p>	<p>YSEP (peer) and the support the young person received from YSEP in the workplace. Employers also gave positive assessments of participant's performance, attendance, attitude and work practices, consistent with existing research. The authors concluded the YSEP project demonstrated be benefits to all stakeholders. Employers made progress towards building a diverse workforce, whilst young people with a learning disability gained experience in the world of work an expanded opportunity for socializing. Parents also familiarised themselves with the possibility of employment for their young son or daughter and peer supporters gained an understanding of mentoring other people.</p>
<p></p>	<p>2015 USA Klodnick, V., Sabella, K., Brenner, C., Krzos, I., Ellison, M., Kaiser, S., Davis, M. & Fagan, M.</p> <p>35 young adults (aged 17-20 years) receiving residential and psychiatric care within a Young Adult (Vocational) Programme who chose to receive near age peer mentoring</p>	<p>Descriptive statics and inductive thematic analysis was used to detect themes within open-ended peer mentoring satisfaction survey responding and Mann-Whitney U tests employed to compare the Working Alliance Inventory (WAI-S) scores of participants who did and did not report positive peer mentoring experiences.</p>	<p>Six out of ten participants reported positive experiences from peer mentorship citing benefits that included: increased self-awareness and responsibility, job search and interview support, assistance in connecting with the vocational team, access to advice and concrete suggestions related to vocational goals and thinking about the future. Participants identified a range of positive peer mentor attributes, including: being strong, positive & trustworthy, having similar life experiences and a capacity to empathize and having "overcome" personal struggles. Valued relational processes include talking in the community, feeling understood, and forming a bond with peer mentors. Mentees with positive peer mentoring experiences reported strong working alliances.</p>
<p></p>	<p>2008 USA Citrona, T., Brooks-Lanea, N., Crandella, D., Brady, K., Coopera, M. & Revell, G.</p>	<p>Description of the organizational changes implemented to achieve braided support and customized employment within the <i>Project Exceed</i> Vocational Rehabilitation Programme and case studies of two programme participants.</p>	<p>The authors describe a seven-year systems change effort focused on developing customized employment opportunities through a community rehabilitation program "Project Exceed." The paper outlines a range of customized employment approaches including: job carving, job negotiation, job creation, job sharing, self-employment, including use of a micro enterprise and building community assemblages. Six key organizational change factors are discussed in detail and a range of "best-practices(s)" identified including: best practice staff training, person-centered and community-based vocational assessments, customer-directed personal budgets, flexible funding, focus on evidence-based customized employment outcomes as performance indicators, values-based human resource processes, CRP executive leadership involvement with staff and customers to break down barriers and achieve organizational momentum.</p>
<p></p>	<p>2014 USA / Canada Nicholas, D., Attridge, M., Zwaigenbaum, L. & Clarke, M.</p>	<p>A synthesis based analysis of 10 studies that examine employment support for young adults with an autistic spectrum disorder (ASD) identified in a systematic literature review of intervention</p>	<p>Two domains of vocational intervention were found: (i) supported employment which appeared to offer promise particular when accompanied by structured and individually supported work placements and job coaching emerged as a consistently important support element. (ii) media and technology-based tools which are reported to yield distinctive employment outcomes. Sheltered workshops environments were reported as yielding poorer community engagement outcomes than community-integrated supported employment approaches and notions of "fit," preparedness and support as needed appeared</p>



Arbesman, M. & Logsdon, D.	2011	USA	<p>to anticipate vocational success for young adults with ASD.</p> <p>Strong evidence was found for the effectiveness of supported employment using individualized placement and support, especially when combined with cognitive or social skills training. Comparisons revealed people engaged in a supported employment program earned significantly more and worked more hours per month than people who received prevocational training. Supported education programs emphasizing goal setting, skill development and cognitive training were reported to increase participation in educational pursuits.</p>	<p>studies in ASD.</p> <p>A systematic literature review evaluating the effectiveness of occupational therapy interventions focused on participation, employment and education for people with serious mental illnesses.</p>
Morris, A., Waghorn, G., Robson, E., Moore, L. & Edwards, E.	2014	Australia	<p>Ninety-five unemployed adults currently using a mental health service who participated in an programme that paired community mental health teams and employment services implementing the Individual Placement & Support (IPS) approach</p>	<p>A range of outcome measures were captured for a minimum of 12 months following receipt of employment assistance, including IPS fidelity (IPS Fidelity Scale), time to job search and job commencement, employment duration, hours worked, hourly wage, attrition and compared to national benchmarks (DEEWR, 2012) using logistical regression modeling.</p> <p>Two (of four) sites achieved good fidelity to IPS principles, and 2 sites achieved fair fidelity. IPS clients had 2.8 times greater odds of commencing competitive employment and 3.5 times greater odds of attaining 13 weeks' disability employment services. The mean period for commencing job seeking was 55 days and the first job was 90 days. Mean weeks worked and hours worked were similar to U.S. studies, however, hourly wages were higher than most international studies. Implementing IPS was described as challenging in the Australian context with factors other than programme fidelity appearing to contribute to excellent employment outcomes including employment specialist skills and clinical leadership.</p>
Suibhnea, O. & Finnerty, K.	2014	Ireland	<p>315 employers, 120 job coached and 50 people with a learning disability who participated in the Irish National Job Shadow initiative and completed a follow-up online survey</p>	<p>Descriptive statistics were used as part of a wider exposition of the outcomes of the 2013 Job Shadow Initiative.</p> <p>The Irish National Job Shadow Initiative provides disabled people with an opportunity to shadow an employee for one day to learn about their job. The event brings together job coaches, employers, disabled people state agencies and families to improve disabled people's participation in the workforce. In 2013, 429 employers participated, resulting in 446 job shadows and 19 secured jobs. Sixty-seven percent of employers stated they would employ a disabled person after the event and 98% said they would participate in the event the following year. A range of benefits were described including providing disabled people with an opportunity to learn about and secure employment, network, learn more about the range of employment opportunities and inform person-centred planning approaches. Employers gain an opportunity to discover the social capital of disabled people as well as access to a pool of potential employees.</p>
Reddington, T. & Fitzsimons, J.	2013	UK	<p>(An unspecified number) of people with a learning disability, support workers and social care professionals</p>	<p>Thematic analysis of key informant interviews supported by descriptive statistics drawn from a questionnaire exploring the outcomes for people</p> <p>Most micro-enterprises shared common attributes including a person-centred approach, parental support and the assistance from a business advisor or mentor. No correlation was found between taking a wage and the perceived success of an enterprise. Being busy, learning, doing something worthwhile and enhancing quality of life and social inclusion tended to be seen as more important outcomes. All entrepreneurs found the process to be positive and</p>



<p>and family members engaged in 13 micro-enterprises</p>	<p>with a learning disability who run micro-enterprises.</p>	<p>reported gaining confidence and improved engagement with the local community as associated benefits. Participants also described valuing the to engage people as equals and the authors concluded that running a microenterprise can lead to improved quality of life without additional cost, and are therefore a worthwhile alternative to regular employment, training, day-centre attendance and volunteering.</p>
<p>35 partners of 5 Regional Employment Collaboratives (REC) established in Massachusetts</p>	<p>Concept mapping, was used to brainstorm statements in response to the research question - <i>what does it take to build and sustain an employment collaborative?</i> Partners sorted statements thematically and rated statements in terms of importance and challenge. Sorting and rating data were analyzed using multidimensional scaling and hierarchical cluster analysis.</p>	<p>Six "clusters" reflecting critical elements in building and sustaining a collaborative emerged. Three elements, build trust and respect, do business differently and have effective structures and processes, are consistent with the literature on general collaborative building. The other three elements, address employer needs, engage job developers, and innovate strategically, reflect activities specific to an employment-focused collaborative. The authors concluded that whilst collaboration is a complex and time-consuming undertaking, RECs hold promise as a way to enhance employment outcomes for people with disabilities.</p>

<p>Riesena, T., Morgana, L. & Griffin, C.</p>	<p>2015</p>	<p>USA</p>	<p>A literature review to identify the underlying conceptual and empirical basis for customized employment (CE) that generated 25 non-data (15) and data based (10) peer-reviewed papers.</p>	<p>Findings indicated that CE was contributing to positive integrated employment outcomes for individuals with disabilities but that because the descriptive studies did not use group experimental/quasi-experimental or single-subject research designs it was not possible to determine the efficacy of CE approaches and therefore run the risk of adopting an under-defined model with poor fidelity of implementation.</p>
<p>Yamamoto, S., Unruh D. & Bullis, M.</p>	<p>2011</p>	<p>USA</p>	<p>A literature review conducted to explore the viability of self-employment (SE) for disabled people. The review was restricted to American empirical-based studies and yielded 12 peer reviewed papers, none of which used an experimental research design.</p>	<p>Four themes emerged within the literature, including, the reasons for SE, benefits and challenges of SE and support in SE. Disabled people described a range of possible financial motivations but most especially the desire for greater financial independence. Other, more intrinsic benefits disabled people identified included; having a decision-making role, sense of dignity, personal control, personal competence, work autonomy, self-worth, self-reliance, enjoyment of work, a way to meet personal expectations, and work toward changing societal attitudes about individuals with disabilities. For disabled people in the US, self-employment meant drawing on the support of a patchwork of resources including family, government and service sector loans and assistance from community organizations, as-well-as business development accounting and technology consultants. The authors suggested success in self-employment appeared to be influenced most by personal characteristics, level of supports, and effective accountability systems and t concluded disabled people can succeed in self-employment with the right</p>



<p>Vocational support practice</p>	<p>Gruman, C., Schimmel, J., Shugrue, n., Porter, A., Koppelman, J. & Robison, J.</p> <p>2014</p> <p>USA</p> <p>5675 disabled people who had been receiving benefit counseling only (1169), vocational rehabilitation only (3292) or benefit counseling and vocational rehabilitation (91214) for at least eight quarters.</p> <p>Binary logistical regression modeling was used to test the strength of association between the employment status and average earnings of participants and the three vocational intervention groups. Type of disability was also included amongst the range of possible predictors.</p> <p>The most positive outcomes were experienced by people who received benefit counseling (BC) and vocational rehabilitation support (VR). 36% of people receiving both services went from zero earnings to earnings after the intervention. In contrast, individuals who received only BC or VR only showed a consistent decline in average earnings over eight quarters. Five disability categories were also examined and three of the groups receiving BC/VR demonstrated earning increases over the study period with the largest effect size found for people with a learning disability.</p>
<p>Nord, D., Luecking, R., Mank, D., Kiernan, W. & Wray, C.</p> <p>2013</p> <p>USA</p> <p>A literature review interrogating the effectiveness of current employment support employment-specific interventions, and the economics of employment for people with a learning disability.</p> <p>The authors argue that individual employment outcomes have been improved by person-centered career planning processes that include the person with a learning disability working alongside a circle of family and friends in planning for employment based entirely on an individual's interests and abilities. Person-centered career paths are, they argue, most effectively realized when partnered with best practices in developing job placements and opportunities, connecting with employers, and facilitating ongoing supports after attaining employment. The authors identify customized employment that aims to design a job around the unique skills and talents of a job seeker by selecting job tasks that directly match personal skills and talents to the needs of the business as a particularly promising support practice.</p>	<p>The authors argue that individual employment outcomes have been improved by person-centered career planning processes that include the person with a learning disability working alongside a circle of family and friends in planning for employment based entirely on an individual's interests and abilities. Person-centered career paths are, they argue, most effectively realized when partnered with best practices in developing job placements and opportunities, connecting with employers, and facilitating ongoing supports after attaining employment. The authors identify customized employment that aims to design a job around the unique skills and talents of a job seeker by selecting job tasks that directly match personal skills and talents to the needs of the business as a particularly promising support practice.</p>
<p>Blessing, C.</p> <p>2014</p> <p>USA</p> <p>A synthesis of information presented at the 2013 National APSE (Association of People Supporting Employment First) Conference outlining the 6-steps to Employment and a Framework for Planning.</p> <p>The paper provides an overview of Working on Purpose: 6 Steps to Employment tasks intended to advance personal contribution through active citizenship by facilitating the gathering and utilization of information for taking action in a 6 Step process involving: developing a positive profile of the person, defining the purpose for seeking employment, exploring the field of opportunity based on the information learned during steps 1 and 2, identifying and selecting the best approach to supporting employment, identifying personal and professional networks, developing a plan and taking action. The framework marries person centred planning and customized approaches to supported employment.</p>	<p>The paper provides an overview of Working on Purpose: 6 Steps to Employment tasks intended to advance personal contribution through active citizenship by facilitating the gathering and utilization of information for taking action in a 6 Step process involving: developing a positive profile of the person, defining the purpose for seeking employment, exploring the field of opportunity based on the information learned during steps 1 and 2, identifying and selecting the best approach to supporting employment, identifying personal and professional networks, developing a plan and taking action. The framework marries person centred planning and customized approaches to supported employment.</p>
<p>Luecking, R., Cuzzo, L., Leedy M. & Seleznow, E.</p> <p>2008</p> <p>USA</p> <p>62 disabled adults enrolled in the Maryland Customized Employment Partnership Demonstration Project that used "braided" support and a customized</p> <p>Descriptive statistics and case-studies were used to describe the employment intervention.</p> <p>89% of participants achieved employment in integrated, direct hire jobs, customized to their individual circumstance and 80% of the project participants achieved job retention beyond three months. The average wage earned by employed participants also significantly exceeded the state minimum wage by over \$3.00 per hour. Given that the employment outcomes exceeded those reported for this populations the authors concluded the findings affirm the efficacy of customized employment strategies delivered through braided support for job seekers considered to have significant disabilities.</p>	<p>89% of participants achieved employment in integrated, direct hire jobs, customized to their individual circumstance and 80% of the project participants achieved job retention beyond three months. The average wage earned by employed participants also significantly exceeded the state minimum wage by over \$3.00 per hour. Given that the employment outcomes exceeded those reported for this populations the authors concluded the findings affirm the efficacy of customized employment strategies delivered through braided support for job seekers considered to have significant disabilities.</p>



	<p>employment approach to achieve individualized direct employment.</p>	<p>Wittenburg, D., Mann, D. & Thompkins, A. 2013 USA</p> <p>A literature review examining employment related initiatives within the US disability system, drawing on rigorous, large-scale evaluations of employment-focused interventions.</p> <p>The authors concluded that none of the demonstrations they reviewed had the potential to lead to substantial caseload reductions, but that some intensive interventions targeted at specific populations showed positive employment impacts. The interventions that demonstrated the most promising effects tended to provide customized supports to more narrowly targeted subgroups, particularly younger persons and those with psychiatric impairments. Conversely, broad employment initiatives were represented as limiting the effectiveness of planned interventions.</p>
	<p>Suarez-Balcazar, Y., Lukyanova, V., Balcazar, F., Ali, A., Morton, D. & Alvarado, F. 2013 USA</p> <p>Program Directors & Community Rehabilitation Provider (CRP) Specialists who responded to an online survey that sampled 32 CRPs.</p> <p>Descriptive statistics were used to present findings related to: the range of services provided, employment outcomes and challenges CRPs perceived in placing disabled people in permanent employment.</p> <p>The most common pre-employment services agencies provided were job readiness classes (80%), life-skills classes (50%), work orientation sessions (47%), and job search workshops (44%). From a total of 2,574 clients 7% were placed in fulltime jobs, while 25% were placed in part time jobs. On average, it took seven months to help a client find either a full-time or a part-time job and most clients were placed in the service sector or were hired by CRPs themselves. The most frequently mentioned barriers to employment were the declining economy, the fact that individuals with disabilities are often competing for the same jobs as recent college graduates, and the lack of funding for job coaching and supported employment.</p>	<p>Program Directors & Community Rehabilitation Provider (CRP) Specialists who responded to an online survey that sampled 32 CRPs.</p> <p>Descriptive statistics were used to present findings related to: the range of services provided, employment outcomes and challenges CRPs perceived in placing disabled people in permanent employment.</p> <p>Descriptive statistics were used to report on the 50 most frequently occurring job titles, median hourly wage and entry level wages for 20 types of impairment, and to make comparisons with the general labour force.</p> <p>Vocational Rehabilitation consumers were frequently placed in unskilled jobs with little opportunity for career development or advancement. The most commonly held occupations after VR closure were service-related jobs, such as janitor, housekeeper, and stock clerk. Rehabilitants reported hourly wages that were lower than the median wages of the GLF for each of the top 50 occupations. Rehabilitation counselors were encouraged to expand job and career opportunities for disabled people by careful analysis and understanding of consumers' functional limitations, using cost-effective reason able accommodation, computer/assistive technology, and consumer advocacy.</p>
<p>Vocational Rehabilitation Outcomes</p>	<p>Martin, F., Walls, R., Brodwin, M., Parker, R., Siu, F. & Kurata, E. 2012 USA</p> <p>Data collected on 196 311 disabled people who exited Vocational Rehabilitation with a competitive employment outcome in 2008</p> <p>Data collected on 1 489 disabled people from the RSA-911 case study report database for the year 2012.</p> <p>Descriptive statistics were used to determine the proportion of clients with a learning disability who obtained employment among a range of standard occupational codes (SOC) and to make comparisons with other disability types and the general population.</p> <p>People with a learning disability were placed in unskilled or low-skill entry-level positions. People with a learning disability were primarily closed in one of two SOCs: Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations (24.1%) and Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance Occupations (28.2%), with the range of occupations being relatively more restricted than for consumers with other disabilities. Despite considerable attention to self-determination and choice in the VR process, and to the development of person-based employment services, the authors concluded people with a learning disability remain where they were at the beginning of the century in terms of employment rates, range of vocational placements, and pay. It was not clear to the authors whether the restricted range of vocations reflected steered by employment specialist towards low-pay, entry-level occupations for people with a learning disability.</p>	



<p>Dowler, D. & Walls, R.</p>	<p>2014 USA</p>	<p>A systematic literature review was conducted to assess the impact of supported employment services were having on: competitive employment rates, weekly wages & cost of service provision, drawing on 27 peer reviewed papers that used an experimental, causal-comparative, correlational or descriptive method.</p>	<p>Across a range of outcome measures, supported employment services demonstrably improved competitive employment outcomes in all 23 studies, and especially those that adopted the Individual Placement and Support (IPS) model as vocational intervention. The employment rate for IPS ranged from 57%-97% compared to comparison group employment rates that ranged from 19%-34%. Seven studies included weekly income as a dependent variable and in all studies, receipt of supported employment contributed to higher weekly earnings and typically, more work hours, enhancing earning potential. A small number of studies also consistently found support provided through supported employment to cost less than sheltered employment.</p>
<p>Rosenthal, D., Dalton, J. & Gervey, R.</p>	<p>2007 USA</p>	<p>Exhaustive CHAID was used to build classification trees that measured the strength of association between a range of predictors and whether a person receiving vocational rehabilitation services was competitively employed.</p>	<p>People in the group most likely to be unemployed did not receive job placement services. Three of the four highest unemployed groups were receiving SSI or SSDI benefits, consistent with previous research suggesting receipt of benefits can disincentivise employment in the absence of proper financial planning and vocational support. People needing transportation assistance were also most likely to be unemployed. Conversely, receiving job placement services was the most significant predictor of employment. People in the highest employment group also received counseling services, but were not receiving benefits. The authors concluded by suggesting that the Individualised Placement and Support (IPS) model may be particularly useful in meeting the unique needs of people with a psychiatric disability by addressing difficulties generalizing skills, providing for ongoing off-site support, assistance navigating social relationships and emphasis on job matching based on client preference and choice rather than provider judgment.</p>



In the sections that follow, we describe the research in more detail, including the implications the research findings have for promoting service and support practices that assist disabled people to access their codified right to *"the same opportunities to gain freely chosen or accepted employment within work environments that are open, inclusive and accessible,"* (Article 27; UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability).



WHAT IS THE MEANING OR VALUE OF EMPLOYMENT TO DISABLED PEOPLE?

From its inception, the *“Getting the life I want” Project*, has been guided by a transformational ethic. Whilst conducting the integrated literature review did assist in the design of the two other research elements, it's more important purpose was to present published research that can inform subsequent cycles of organizational learning and changes in service and/or support practice that respond to a better understanding of the vocational needs and wants of disabled people.

Supporting people to *“get the lives they want”* obligates an interrogation of the kinds of lives and roles disabled people want for themselves. Given the centrality of paid employment to the cadence of ordinary adult (non-disabled) lives, this will necessarily require a deeper understanding of disabled people's employment experiences, their reflections about the personal meaning and value of paid work and a willingness to be guided by the alternative imaginings of purposeful and connected citizenship that disabled people may hold.

In the following section, we present findings from a cluster of studies that throw light on the impact that differences in people's ability to access the world of work can make within the lives of people with different types of impairment. Perhaps indicative of the more pervasive marginalization of disabled lives, we discovered very few published research papers drew on the narrative of disabled people themselves to answer the question, *“what (were) the vocational outcomes that disabled people value?”* It was, for example, much more common for researchers to seek to learn more about the subjectively experienced impact of un(der)employment via comparative studies that employed a range of commonly used research instruments.

The section begins by describing five studies that drew on the quality of life paradigm to assess the impact un(der)employment made within life domains subsumed within the construct. The primary aim of many of these studies was to reach evidence-based conclusions about the efficacy of different models of support in terms of promoting employment related improvements in life quality. The section concludes by presenting three papers that foreground a more nuanced and fractured understanding of the meaning of employment discovered by researchers attentive to the narrative of disabled people themselves.



The contribution employment makes to life quality

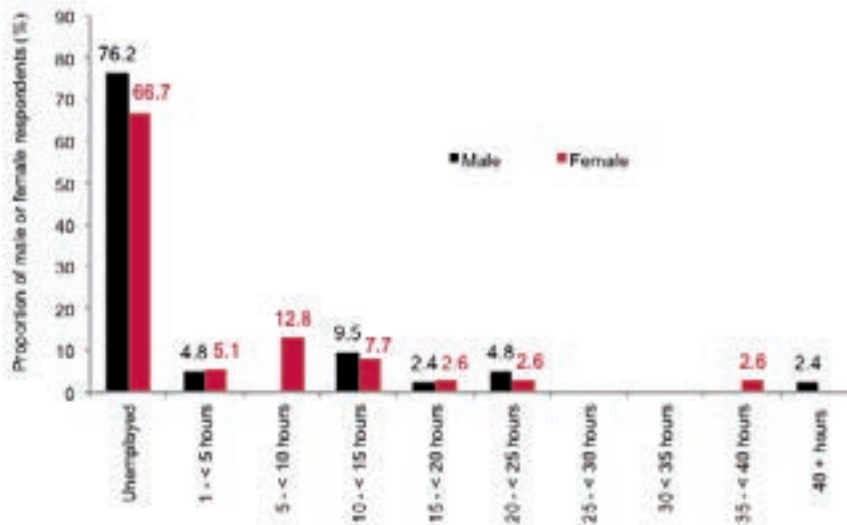
Following their analysis of employment related disability research published prior to 2012, Milner & Paris (2013) concluded that paid employment represented a possible conduit to improvements in life quality across all of the domains commonly included in quality of life taxonomies.

Milner & Parish (2012) also noted that exploring the association between unemployment and measures of health and wellbeing featured prominently in the research literature, including Dr Ewan McDonald's assertion that "worklessness" represented the most significant risk to public health and his, often cited estimation that the damage to health associated with unemployment may be the equivalent to smoking 200 cigarettes a day (cited in Alward, 2008).

Women with disabilities number amongst those most likely to be exposed to the risks of "worklessness." International research has consistently found that disabled women are more likely than others to be unemployed, to live in poverty, and if hired, to have temporary and part-time employment (Chouinard, 2010). The marginality of disabled women finds expression in the New Zealand labour market too. In 2013, Statistics New Zealand (2014) reported that disabled women were not only less likely to participate in the labour market, but were also more likely to be unemployed than disabled men. As reported previously, younger women (aged 15-44 years) were especially disadvantaged, being more than twice as likely to be unemployed (15%), than disabled men (7%). Similarly, the rate of part-time employment was high for disabled women, of whom 42 percent worked fewer than 30 hours, compared with 19 percent of disabled men.

Our finding that women who responded to the National Online Survey were less likely to report being unemployed (67%) than men (76%) appears contradictory (Milner et al, 2016). We speculated, however, that the higher rate of women's participation in part-time employment also reported by Statistics New Zealand, appeared to account for the difference. Consistent with the national trend for women to be over-represented in casual or part-time employment, 77% of female survey respondents who had a job worked less than 15 hours and 53% worked for less than 10 hours per week (Milner et al, 2016).

Figure 8 The proportion of male and female respondents who worked in part or full-time employment



In a paper that sought to explore the association between the employment status and health related quality of life of disabled women living in Croatia, [Barisin, Benjak & Vuletic, \(2011\)](#) administered a questionnaire that included the World Health Organisation Quality of Life Questionnaire (WHOQOL-BREF) and two-open-answer questions inviting respondents to tell the researchers why they were dis/satisfied with their lives. The study included 318 disabled women who were either employed (160) or unemployed (158).

The authors found that, when compared to disabled women who had a job, unemployed participants reported significantly lower health related quality of life within the domains of; psychological health, social relationships and environment. No association was found between the employment status of the study participants and their self-reported physical health. The study also reported finding that unemployed disabled women rated their overall quality of life lower than employed women.

The largest disparity between the health-related quality of life of women who had or did not have a job occurred within the domain of psychological health (10%). Included in this domain were questions intended to reflect respondent's self-esteem, personal beliefs, thinking, memory and concentration and negative and positive ideation. The significant difference in domain of psychological health reported by Barisin, Benjak & Vuletic, (2011), aligns with previous studies in which the, now well established association between working and self-esteem (Griffin et al, 1996; Jolly, 2000) and/or psychological wellbeing (Jiranek & Kirby, 1990; Petrovsky & Gleeson, 1997; Waddell & Burton; 2006) has universally been read as one of the many protective effects of employment for disabled people.

Milner & Parish (2013) point out that, in addition to any other benefits working has in terms of maintaining psychological health and self-esteem, employment also provides disabled people with one of the few ways they have to contest the damaging social construction of disabled people as 'unproductive.' The authors suggested their study added to a growing body of evidence suggesting that unemployment had a negative impact on disabled women's self-esteem and confidence.

Not having a job can also dislocate people from the social and economic life of their community (New Zealand Human Rights Commission, 2010). As a consequence, employment is often promoted as a way of answering the social isolation many disabled people report, by providing disabled employees with the opportunity to meet new people (Milner & Bray, 2004; Forester-Jones et al, 2004), or by locating them within relationships that can sometimes extend beyond the factory floor (Milner & Parish, 2013), or by assisting people to acquire social skills or assimilate the often 'unspoken' social conventions that seed and sustain friendship (Forester-Jones et al, 2004; Fillyard & Pernice, 2005).

As is discussed later in this review, the literature is ambivalent with respect to the impact of employment makes in terms of expanding the social networks of disabled people, but Barisin, Benjak & Vuletic's (2011) finding that disabled women who were employed rated their quality of life significantly higher in the social domain than participants who did not have a job was interpreted by the authors as evidence that employment contributes to more active social lives and greater levels of satisfaction with the quality of women's personal relationships, social support and sexuality.

Whilst no association was found between the employment status of people who responded to the National Online Survey and the likelihood they would report belonging to a community group, club or association, we did find that whether people were employed or not had a significant impact on the ratings they gave of the importance of belonging (Milner et al, 2016). The odds that a respondent who worked for more than 15 hours a week would rate the importance of belonging to a community group higher than 2/3 of the scale maximum were 13 times higher than respondents who were unemployed. We speculated that one possible explanation for the finding might be the way (un)employment intersects with both psychological and social wellbeing and in particular the way that respondents who worked appeared to feel both more able and confident to contribute within other participatory contexts, and conversely, were more likely to have their social capital recognized within "mainstream" community groups and associations.



An alternative explanation is that having a job made it easier for respondents to afford to get about and to join different community groups. Respondents repeatedly told us that material poverty restricted their mobility and it is possible, therefore, that the differences we observed in respondent's weighting of the importance of belonging to a community group reflected differences in the perceived accessibility of community spaces and activities held as a consequence of either having or not having paid employment. Within the WHOQOL-BREF the environment domain includes subjective ratings of a person's financial resources, the accessibility of health and social supports, opportunities for acquiring new information and skills, transport and participation in recreation and leisure activities and Barisin, Benjak & Vuletic's (2011) finding that disabled women who were employed rated their quality of life significantly higher in the environment domain appears supportive both of impact employment can make to the accessibility of other forms of participatory citizenship and the interconnectedness of quality of life domains (Conder et al, 2009).

Further evidence of the importance of employment to the women who participated in Barisin, Benjak & Vuletic's (2011) study might be inferred by their responses to the two open-answer questions. Family emerged as the most important factor contributing to the life quality for women who were employed as-well-as unemployed. For participants who worked, however, employment emerged as the second most frequently named factor contributing to life quality whereas for women who did not work, not having a job emerged as the most important factor undermining life quality.

Pack, Szirony, Kushner & Bellaw (2013) also employed (an unspecified) quality of life measure to explore the impact employment made to the satisfaction people with multiple sclerosis (MS) expressed in the life domains of social, family, hobbies, educational and intellectual development, work, romantic experiences and hopes for the future. When they compared the overall quality of life scores of 1171 members of 10 National Multiple Sclerosis Society chapters across the United States, who were either employed full-time (377), part-time (147), or unemployed, Pack et al (2013) found that people with MS who were employed rated their quality of life significantly higher than participants who were unemployed. Whether people were employed full or part-time made little or no difference to participant's assessments of their life quality. No significant difference in the quality of life ratings given by participants who were employed full or part-time emerged, with the authors concluding that the association between any kind of employment and life quality underscored the importance of effective vocational rehabilitation services and early intervention to people with multiple sclerosis.



Pack et al's (2013) findings also align with the observation Milner et al (2016) made, that sometimes the greatest enhancement to the life quality of people they spoke to during the "Getting the life I want" project was articulated by people who had found their way to very part-time employment. Both studies sound a cautionary note about the possible dangers of identifying and incentivising "sustainable" employment as the determinant disabled people's vocational pathway, including the real possibility of excluding those with the most to gain from paid work from the associated improvements to life quality that can follow.

Pack et al (2014) also point out that a reciprocal relationship is likely to exist between indicators that define the work experiences of employees (like interpersonal relationships, productivity, self-efficacy) and the experiences or resources that shape perceived life quality beyond employment (like physical or psychological wellbeing, social connectivity ability to engage in recreational or leisure activities). Although the authors note that impairment can confound the complex relationships between people's inside and outside of work lives, they failed to control for it and whilst their findings add to the body of research that report an association between employment and quality of life, it is not possible to exclude the possibility that the impaired mobility, pain, fatigue and spasticity that can affect life quality in other domains may also co-vary with people with MS's ability to sustain full or part-time employment.

The third of the five studies to administer a quality of life measure was **Beyer, Brown, Akandi & Rapley (2010)** who used the ComQoL-ID and Work Environment Index to compare the subjective and objective quality of life and quality of work environment for adults with a learning disability in supported employment (17), employment enterprise (10), and day service (10) settings. Beyer et al (2010) also compared findings for all three disabled cohorts to non-disabled workers in community employment (17). The authors noted that whilst public policy promoted community-based employment as a way of achieving greater social inclusion and enhanced life opportunities, little empirical evidence existed with which to assess the quality of life of people with a learning disability accessing alternative vocational support models.

Beyer, Brown, Akandi & Rapley (2010) found that, when compared to people with a learning disability in an employment enterprise or attending a day service setting, supported employees reported having a higher overall objective quality of life, contributed to by significant differences in the domains of health, productivity and emotional wellbeing. They also found that, compared to day service attendees, supported employees had greater clarity about their work activity and conformity to policies and procedures expected of them. The authors drew on these findings to suggest that supported employment represented the



preferred service model, aligning their research with previous studies that found supported employment performed better on other quality of life outcomes including wages (Hill et al, 1987) and social interaction (Chadsey & Bayer, 2001; Shearn et al, 2000).

Of the three comparison groups, supported employees also reported the highest overall subjective wellbeing. Moreover, despite reporting lower objective quality of life in the domains of material wellbeing, productivity and job autonomy than their non-disabled co-workers, supported employees were significantly more satisfied with their quality of lives than the non-disabled people they worked alongside.

Beyer, Brown, Akandi & Rapley (2010) explained their finding by suggesting that people with a learning disability assess their satisfaction against a different reference population (other people with a learning disability). Milner & Parish (2013) had previously argued that people with a learning disability also appear to use their own life trajectory as a referent, and most especially the interruption employment can provide people who had acculturated to the day-to-day realities of living beyond paid work. As is discussed in more detail later in this report, Milner & Parish (2013) also note that employers who hire people with a learning disability often report valuing the way their appreciation of the contribution work makes to their wellbeing and enthusiasm for the role leads others to reappraise the purpose of work and/or transform the social practices of workplace culture in more humanizing and inclusive ways.

Non-disabled co-workers did, however, score significantly higher objective quality of life than participants with a learning disability regardless of support contexts and most especially in the domains of material wellbeing, productivity, intimacy and a place in the community. Beyer, Brown, Akandi & Rapley (2010) argued that this gap between disabled and non-disabled employees represents a clear quality improvement agenda for vocational support services. They also found that non-disabled co-workers were more autonomous, self-sufficient and more able to make decisions at work, arguing that this finding suggests people with a learning disability have a different social experience of employment than their non-disabled colleagues. Differences in the work experiences of disabled people, including the impact less inclusive workplace social practices have on personal wellbeing as-well-as business innovation and profitability is a theme that continually surfaces in the literature and will, therefore, continue to thread its way through this review.

Examining the impact employment can make to the restoration of health and wellbeing represents an alternative way of assessing the contribution work can make to the life quality of disabled people. In separate studies, [Dunn, Wewiorski & Rogers \(2008\)](#) and [Torres-Stone](#)



et al (2016), spoke to people recovering their mental health to learn more about the subjective experiences of employment in the mental health recovery process.

Relative to the general population, people with a serious mental health condition experience higher rates of unemployment and underemployment (Dunn, Wewiorski & Rogers, 2008). In New Zealand, for example, people who self-reported having a psychiatric or psychological health condition in 2013 were less likely to be participating in the labour force (52%) than the New Zealand general population (76%) but more likely to be in part-time employment (36%) than people with almost any other type of impairment (Statistics New Zealand, 2014).

To investigate the role of work in the lives of people seeking to recover mental health, Dunn, Wewiorski & Rogers (2008) spoke to 23 adults who had previously experienced psychosis but had been in recovery for two or more years. Dunn, Wewiorski & Rogers (2008) used semi-structured interviews to collect their data and drew on the Quality of Life construct by inviting participants to speak about their recovery across nine life domains (cognitive, social, vocational, psychological, emotional, physical, spiritual, cultural and environmental). The people Dunn, Wewiorski & Rogers (2008) spoke to described a myriad of positive benefits associated with work that, whilst bridging all quality of life domains, conceptually divided across two narrative themes; "work as personal meaning" and "work promotes recovery."

Participants in the study considered work to be an integral component of their lives. Dunn, Wewiorski & Rogers (2008) described participants as having well established vocational identities, not just in terms of the contribution work roles played to self-identity but by having a positive sense of themselves as "*having a strong work ethic*" or of "*being a hard worker.*" Their results accord with empirical research that had previously reported that disabled people, on average, perform better on appropriate work related tasks than non-disabled employees (Perry, Hendricks & Broadbent, 2000) and that employers commonly report valuing the strong work ethic, trustworthiness and motivation of disabled employees, including often describing them as transforming staff morale and occasioning a re-evaluation of the importance of work amongst non-disabled co-workers (Bray, 2003; Riley, C, 2006; EEO Trust, 2008; Wilton et al, 1988). Such was the personal meaning of employment, Dunn, Wewiorski & Rogers (2008), re-told the stories of participants who described seeking and holding on to their employment through periods of being unwell or heavily medicated, homeless or with multiple other commitments. Again, Dunn, Wewiorski & Rogers' (2008) findings mirror empirical research that suggests that disabled people typically have lower rates of absenteeism (Brake, 2001; Graffam et al, 2002; Hall, 2002), turnover, (EEO Trust, 2007) and express higher company loyalty (EEO Trust, 2008) than non-disabled employees.



Of particular value to participants, was that employment was described as providing people recovering their mental health with the opportunity to “give back.” Dunn, Wewiorski & Rogers (2008) noted that this attribute of work had particular salience to people who were able to use their lived experiences to mentor and support others. Milner & Bray (2004), also identified the importance the feeling of “giving back” had to people who participated in the **Community Participation Project** in 2003, including valuing the opportunity employment provided to assist others in the community through greater social knowing or through the mentorship and support they provided to other disabled people. The disabled people Milner & Bray (2004) spoke to advanced “reciprocity” and the “expectation that people contribute to the wellbeing of others” as important relational antecedents to the experience of “belonging” within community contexts like employment.

Not surprisingly, therefore, the other theme to emerge from Dunn, Wewiorski & Rogers (2008) research was that work was seen as promoting participant’s recovery. The people Dunn, Wewiorski & Rogers (2008) interviewed described employment as enhancing their self-esteem. Performing a work role successfully and developing positive relationships with co-workers was acknowledged as contributing to a sense of competence. For some, their work had particular importance because the feelings of being needed, valued and affirmed were difficult to access in other life domains. “*Work is the only thing in my life that had any value,*” one participant told Dunn, Wewiorski & Rogers (2008). In this respect, participant’s narrative aligns with the studies described above that also evidence the protective effect of employment on people’s self-esteem.

The other ways Dunn, Wewiorski & Rogers (2008) noted that work was described as promoting their recovery was that having a daily routine had a stabilizing effect on their lives. People also said the financial benefits of employment had a range of benefits, including increasing independence from family or other relationships, lifting the burden of debt and improving the accessibility of their community. Despite the difficulty many described in sustaining their employment, Dunn, Wewiorski & Rogers (2008) concluded by asserting that the people they spoke to stayed in work because it yielded a net gain in terms of work’s intrinsic value.

In a paper that explored the subjective work experiences of 57 young people also diagnosed with a serious mental health condition, Torres-Stone et al (2016) reached a similar conclusion about the centrality of employment to people’s lives and in particular that it’s value to people recovering their mental health eclipsed the material benefits of employment.



Torres-Stone et al (2016), interviewed young people aged between 18-30 years around the central question of what work meant for them, identifying four major themes to their narrative; financial independence, psychological wellbeing, social functions and recovery.

As anticipated, participants emphasized that employment meant being able to afford the things they needed to live, but perhaps more importantly provided them with a degree of financial independence from their families. Torres-Stone et al (2016) noted that whilst participants were aware that greater financial independence was a hallmark of the typical transition to adulthood, they appeared particularly sensitized to not relying on family benevolence and beyond that, to developing more equitable social relationships.

Within the domain of psychological wellbeing, Torres-Stone et al (2016) noted that employment was also seen as a way of answering the pervasive and discriminatory belief that they would be unable to work the young people they spoke to said they routinely encountered. Following the ordinary adult trajectory into paid employment was seen by many as a way of transcending their diagnosis, with their sense of wellbeing, in part, tethered to an ability to *“prove that some of the naysayers out there are wrong,”* or that they were *“capable of living my own life.”* Participants also told Torres-Stone et al (2016) that the opportunity employment offered to stay active and purposefully engaged stood in stark contrast to the alternative of *“giving up”* and the *“boredom and isolation of just suiting at home,”* Themes that echoed the people who spoke to Milner et al (2016) during the *“Getting the life I want”* project.

And finally, employment was described as providing participants with an opportunity to expand their network of social relationships. Torres-Stone et al (2016) noted that some participants appeared to experience a loss of social connectivity and that work provided an opportunity for people to interrupt the social isolation many experienced in the transition from school to adult lives. Consistent with Dunn, Wewiorski & Rogers' (2008) findings, Torres-Stone et al (2016) also reflected back that the young people they spoke to, valued being able to *“give back”* and that work provided them with the opportunity to stay connected to people and society through workplace relationships.

Torres-Stone et al (2016) concluded by asserting that our understanding of the role employment plays in people's lives needs to go beyond instrumental vocational measures (like the number of hours that people work or whether employment is occurring in a mainstream setting or not). They suggest broadening the focus to incorporate outcomes that include people's subjective experiences of the social and psychological benefits of employment.



In the paper Milner & Kelly (2009) wrote following the CCS Disability Action **Community Participation Project**, they argued that the failure to include qualitative (relational) makers of inclusion represented a potentially oppressive denial of the social realities faced by disabled people in employment and other participatory contexts. Torres-Stone et al (2016) reiterate this concern by suggesting that a single focus on the kind of outcome measures privileged by the Social Investment Approach fail to recognize employment's intrinsic value to disabled people. For example, whilst the Individual Placement model of vocational support has the strongest evidence base in terms of linking people with a mental health condition to competitive employment (Bond, Drake & Campbell, 2012) the jobs are often part-time, low wage jobs on the more expendable fringe of workplace culture. Where "placement" is the variable of interest, other attributes of the work experience can be missed like how included people feel within the work environment, whether their employment is improving life quality in ways that are meaningful to the person. Torres-Stone et al (2016) end by suggesting that, *"assessment tools that capture the meaningfulness of work need to be developed (p.6)."*

Two studies that also adopted the Quality of Life paradigm as an organisational framework have recently highlighted the importance of being more attentive to the way disabled people experience their employment.

In 2007, **Jahoda, Kemp, Riddell & Banks (2007)** published the results of systematic literature review, conducted to consider the impact of supported employment on the socio-emotional wellbeing of people with a learning disability. In the preamble to the paper Jahoda et al (2007) note that supported employment is underscored by ideologies that make positive assumptions about the meaning of employment to people with a learning disability but that absence of research exploring the human experiences of work make it difficult to test whether the realities of employment fit the assumptions that underpin vocational service delivery. Jahoda et al (2007) sought to draw together empirical research evidence that examined the impact of employment on three kinds of different human experiences, using case-controlled and longitudinal studies that measured; overall quality of life and psychological wellbeing, social relationships and autonomy as outcomes.

All six case control studies that examined overall quality of life reported an association between higher quality of life outcomes for people with a learning disability in employment. Results indicated people with a learning disability that had a job typically experienced higher levels of psychological wellbeing in terms of enhanced locus of control and self-esteem and lower levels of depression. Johoda et al (2007) did acknowledge, however, that it was not possible to exclude the possibility that psychological wellbeing and employment co-varied, as having a positive disposition may also have increased the likelihood of a successful



supported employment outcome. They also drew attention to Szivos's (1990) observation that, because people tend to view themselves in relationship to others, workplaces could be spaces in which people with a learning disability made the kind of negative social comparisons that could undermine self-esteem. Szivos's (1990) findings are consistent with other research that has reported employment can also be contexts in which disabled people experience social exclusion and other forms of social and bodily exclusion (Hall, 2004, 2005, Milner & Bray, 2004), but that employment continues to be valued because disabled people use the trajectory of their own lives and in particular previous experiences of unemployment or the lives as their disabled peers as social referents (Beyer, Brown, Akandi & Rapley, 2010; Milner et al, 2016).

One of the main benefits promoted for supported employment is the opportunity work provides for interaction with co-workers and in particular the chance to expand the size of disabled people's social networks and interaction with non-disabled colleagues in and beyond employment. In the six papers included in Johoda et al's (2007) literature review, little evidence of improvement in this domain of human experience was found. Jahoda et al (2007) reported that evidence suggested that social interactions with work peers did not seem to translate into a sense of belonging and little evidence emerged of workplace friendships or interactions continuing beyond employment or that those relationships were felt to be particularly reciprocal or supportive. They concluded that there was a considerable range of individual work experiences described by the research but that the findings were generally consistent with research within the quality of life paradigm that similarly point to low levels of satisfaction expressed with the impact of work on the social life of people with a learning disability.

The conclusions Johoda et al (2007) drew about the impact of employment on autonomy were more encouraging. They reported the four papers they reviewed evidenced positive change in the level of autonomy experienced by people with a learning disability in competitive employment. They also suggested that the association between employment and higher levels of internal control may have contributed to the more positive dispositional outcomes highlighted by research exploring the impact of employment on disabled people's psychological wellbeing described previously. They also noted, however, that a number of overlapping environmental factors might be linked to the improvements in autonomy, including that earning a wage affords disabled people the ability to make choices in other domains of their lives, and that enhanced social status and self-determination might be explained by the contribution that employment makes to addressing the deprivations of material poverty rather than attributes of the work environment. A similar expectation of

enhanced autonomy was expressed by the people who spoke to researchers from the Donald Beasley Institute as part of the *“Getting the life I want”* project.

In this respect Jahoda et al (2007) suggest that treating “work” as a homogeneous independent variable may have been one of the major failings of research seeking to get a clearer picture of the impact of employment. More specifically that research has generally failed to take account of workplace attributes that may predict positive (and negative) outcomes, and the different ways that disabled people come to value employment, given their, sometimes divergent paths, to paid work. The authors conclude by suggesting there remains a great deal still to learn about what makes a welcoming and inclusive workplace, and, like Torres-Stone et al (2016), that it is important to view employment outcomes in the wider context of people’s lives and relationships.

Exploring the link between employment and subjective wellbeing was also the focus of a study conducted by **Konrad, Moore, Doherty, Ng & Breward (2012)**. Konrad et al (2012) analysed data provided by 7 189 disabled people of working age who completed the Canadian Participation and Activity Limitation Survey (PALS) between 2006-2007. The purpose of the study was to examine the impact of unemployment, temporary employment underemployment and non-participation in the labour force on the perceived wellbeing disabled people. Two variables drawn from the PALS survey were used as measures of subjective wellbeing. Participant’s average rating of their satisfaction with five domains of life quality (satisfaction with life) and the extent to which they had experienced any of eight different kinds of workplace discrimination over the previous five years.

Ordinal linear regression modeling that included survey respondent’s; employment status and perception of the extent to which their job provided an opportunity for them to use all of their education, skills or work experiences amongst potential predictor variables revealed that unemployment represented the least desirable employment status. Disabled people who were unemployed but actively seeking work were found to have the lowest levels life satisfaction and reported the highest levels of perceived workplace discrimination.

In 2013, the unemployment rate for disabled people in New Zealand (9%) was approximately twice that for non-disabled New Zealanders (5%) with some disabled populations experiencing much higher rates of unemployment. The same year, for example, six out of every ten New Zealanders who reported having an intellectual disability were absent from the New Zealand labour force (59%) and of those in or actively seeking employment, almost half were unemployed (17%). The results of Konrad et al’s (2012) study, therefore, have



troubling implications for the subjective wellbeing of disabled people at greatest risk unemployment.

Conversely, Konrad et al (2012) found substantial evidence that permanent employment that fully utilizes the skills and abilities of disabled employees has a positive impact on subjective wellbeing. Respondents who reported being in permanent employment that allowed them to develop and utilize their knowledge, skills and abilities exhibited significantly higher levels of life satisfaction than other employment statuses. They were also significantly less likely to report experiencing forms of workplace discrimination.

Perhaps most interesting, however, was that permanent employees who believed their skills and education were greatly underutilized were significantly less satisfied with their lives and perceived significantly more workplace discrimination than temporary workers. Permanent employees who felt their skills were underutilized reported the second lowest level of life satisfaction and felt a level of discrimination equivalent to unemployed respondents. Milner et al (2016) would report a similar finding for the disabled people who participated in the *"Getting the life I want"* project, many of whom expressed open resentment at placements that failed to acknowledge their education, work history or capacities, or alternatively, steered towards volunteer work that failed to match their skills or educational qualifications. On the basis of their findings, Konrad et al (2012) asserted that the job insecurity associated with temporary employment may be less detrimental to a disabled person's wellbeing than the lack of growth, education and responsibility associated with permanent underemployment. Moreover, they also suggested that non-participation in the labour force appeared to buffer respondents from the negative impacts of perceived workplace discrimination as disabled people who had ceased seeking employment expressed similar levels of life satisfaction to temporary employees or moderately underutilized permanent workers. Again the parallels with participant narrative from the *"Getting the life I want"* project are striking. with many key informants speaking with a degree of regret about the aspiration to work belonging to another time or alternate self as a way of protecting their subjective wellbeing from the assault of continual rejection (Milner et al 2016).

One of the clear implications of Konrad et al's (2012) findings is that quality of a disabled person's employment experience is likely to be the most important determinant of worker outcomes, and not a person's employment status per se. Like Jahoda et al (2007), Konrad et al's (2012) research cautions against thinking of employment as a homogeneous variable, by requiring vocational providers to be attentive to the inclusiveness of workplace settings and employers to create the kind of workplace social practices that permit disabled people to realize the universal aspiration to reach a person's full potential.

Rosqvist & Keisu (2012) took a different approach to exploring the meaning of employment to disabled people by conducting a discourse analysis of articles published in the Swedish magazine "*Empowerment*," produced by and aimed at self-advocates with autism. Thirty issues of the magazine published between 2002-2009 were analysed.

In their study Rosqvist & Keisu (2012) identified two competing storylines within the discourses of autism related to employment. Within the narrative of the magazine, the dominant discourse continued to represent autism as making it difficult for people to find and keep a job in the open labour market and to do so therefore required external employment support to acculturate people to the demands of neurotypically constructed work-spaces. Within this discourse "real jobs" were represented as providing a source of economic sustenance, the status of being an adult member of (non-disabled) society, having the means to greater self-determination and the enjoyment of one's leisure time, enhanced social contact and of contributing to the structure of everyday life in ways that crossed the moral divide between those that did and did not work. Within this understanding of "work" the role of the person with autism and their support was to "normalize" their presence to "succeed" in their working lives.

The second, destabilizing storyline Rosqvist & Keisu (2012) identified, challenged the idea of "real jobs" in the open labour market as the only meaningful employment. Within this discourse, autism was more likely to be constructed as a strength or capacity that was typically unacknowledged within workplaces in which structural and attitudinal barriers precluded the expression of a person's gifts and capacities. Within this discourse, "meaning" was said to reside in finding (sometimes alternative) vocations within which one felt at home, were personally rewarding and fostered self-development, including the flourishing of capacities that could be further developed by vocational activity. Within this understanding of the meaning of 'work," feelings of being needed and of doing something significant were emphasized and the "*worst thing (people with autism) could do was to take a job you do not enjoy.*"

Both storylines were detectable in the narrative of the people who participated in the "*Getting the life I want*" project, with the dominant discourse reflected in participant's expectation that employment would address the material, social, aspirational and productive poverty they experienced, juxtaposed with a counter narrative that spoke of volunteering and other forms of vocational activity sometimes being more "meaningful' than the kinds of employment key informants described being steered towards. "*I have more important things to do than work,*" one person told us.



The other study to explore the meaning of employment by talking directly to disabled people was conducted by **Cramm, Finkenflugel, Kuijsten & Exel (2009)**. Cramm et al (2009) observed that the literature had largely failed to include disabled people's perspective on the social practices of supported employment they felt contributed to social integration within the workplace. To do this, Cramm et al (2009) employed a Q-methodology that invited 17 people with a mild learning disability who had been supported to work three days a week in the same workplace for at least half a year, to rank order statements that answered the question, *"What is important for you to enjoy your work?"* Participants in Cramm et al's (2009) study were also invited to discuss their ratings of the most (un)important statements and individual respondents were mapped to clusters of viewpoints using factor analysis and varimax rotation.

Cramm et al (2009) identified two major views emerging about the impact supported employment could have on promoting successful workplace integration. The first they themed "work as participation" and included participants that expressed the general view that work represented a way for them to participate in society. In a way that incorporated elements of the counter narrative Rosqvist & Keisu (2012) described, having opportunities to grow and develop, social equity and feeling valued emerged as factors that contributed most to making employment enjoyable for people who shared this viewpoint. Study participants who viewed work as a way to participate, tended to express the view that they, *"wanted to learn new things,"* or *"needed a challenge."* They were also sensitized to being treated the same as co-workers and expressed a strong motivation to belong and to be valued. *"It was important that their work was useful,"* participants who clustered into this viewpoint told Cramm et al (2009). *because (they) liked to be meaningful to society and to do work that mattered."*

A second viewpoint cluster was articulated by participants who tended to see "work as structure." Within this understanding of what made work enjoyable, participants valued a work environment with a clear and fixed working process. Again, similar to the dominant storyline identified by Rosqvist & Keisu (2012), people who held this viewpoint valued working independently and having control and mastery over tasks was seen as central to successful integration. Study participants who viewed work as structure *"liked working alone,"* and *"learning things that increased their independence,"* and *"knowing what (was) going to happen"* or *"deciding how to handle things."* Role clarity was emphasised and support from the job coach was highly valued. *"The job coach is very important to me,"* Cramm et al (2009) were told, *"because we can talk about everything and I can turn to him when there are problems."* Unlike participants who viewed work as participation, task variation, interaction with co-



workers and being appreciated were considered least important for enjoying work to participants who shared this viewpoint.

Cramm et al (2009) concluded by noting that the post-sort interviews revealed that all participants believed supported employment had contributed to their self-development and that they spoke to consensually reported feeling less shy and more independent, social engaged and organized, as a consequence of the employment support they had received. Cramm et al (2009) didn't, however, enumerate how many participants clustered into each viewpoint, making it impossible to determine whether the dominant (or alternative) discourses of employment that Rosqvist & Keisu (2012) identified were widely shared by people with a learning disability who received vocational support. Cramm et al (2009) also acknowledged that it was not possible to determine which of a range of possible factors may have shaped participant's divergent views about what would make work enjoyable, including the interplay between personal attributes like participants aspirations or cognitive learning styles, historical experiences of work, the kinds of work related roles they had or their relationship that people had with their job coach or co-workers, but observed that the social practices of supported employment needed to respond flexibly to the heterogeneity disabled people vocational needs and preferences.

Disabled people's employment decisions

Research seeking to explain disabled people's marginalization from employment has focused on a range of factors including; skill gaps and disabled people's perceived lack of market fit, the efficacy of different models of vocational support and to a much lesser extent employer beliefs and exclusive workplace culture. Only a small number of studies have, engaged directly with disabled people to better understand both the meaning(s) they attach to employment and the decisions they subsequently make about seeking (or not seeking) different kinds of work.

One such study, conducted by [Ali, Schur & Blank \(2011\)](#), drew on data from the 2006 American General Social Survey to answer the questions, "*do non-employed disabled people want to work?*" and if so "*what types of jobs do they want?*" In the first published paper to explore the work-related attitudes of non-employed disabled people, Ali, Schur & Blank (2011) compared the survey responses of 191 working age but non-employed disabled people to 421 non-disabled but similarly non-employed Americans, reasoning that if the attitudes and expectations of disabled people were similar to non-disabled people, we could eliminate disabled people's disposition towards work as contributing to their seemingly intractable un(der)employment.



What Ali, Schur & Blank (2011), found was that no difference existed in disabled people's desire for paid work. Four out of every five (80%) non-employed disabled people reported wanting a job now or in the future compared to 78% of non-disabled respondents and their desire to spend "much more" time in paid work (42%) was significantly higher than for non-disabled people.

Their findings are remarkably similar to others reported in the New Zealand context. As noted previously, in 2014, Statistics New Zealand reported that 74% of disabled people who weren't in paid employment said they would like to work if a job was available (Statistics New Zealand, 2014) and in the Online Survey conducted as part of the "*Getting the life I want*" project, 80% of respondents said they wanted to work and 74% reported wanting to work more hours than they currently did (Milner et al, 2016).

Despite expressing a similar desire to work, Ali, Schur & Blank (2011) found disabled people were much less optimistic about gaining employment. Only one in four (25%) disabled respondents felt that getting a job was "very likely" compared to 51% of non-disabled respondents and disabled people were less likely to report currently searching for a job (20%) compared to non-disabled respondents (33%). Again, the parallel with New Zealand data is remarkably similar as, although 74% of disabled New Zealanders who completed the 2013 Disability Survey reported wanting paid employment, only 27% who were not employed reported looking for work in the previous four weeks (Statistics New Zealand, 2014).

Both sets of findings both reflect and contribute to the low levels of optimism disabled people express in finding work. Not perceiving employment as a viable option, anticipating employer discrimination and failing to recognize the social capital of impairment to employers are all possible explanations for low rates of engagement in job search behavior and after talking to people who received vocational support from CCS Disability Action, Milner et al (2016) observed that many informants appeared to have organised their lives in ways that responded to a perception that never finding employment was a distinct possibility.

Interestingly, Ali, Schur & Blank (2011) found that non-employed disabled respondents (87%) were as likely as non-disabled respondents (83%) to have had jobs in the past, but that the average number of years since their last job ended (8.3 years) was significantly higher than for non-disabled respondents (4.7 years). In the "*Getting the life I want*" project, Milner et al (2016) described key informants as especially sensitised to the length of time they had been unemployed, including expressing great concern about the currency of their job skills and the leaching of confidence that had occurred over time. Ali, Schur & Blank (2011) also noted



that the occupations of the most recent jobs that disabled and non-disabled respondents had were similar, arguing that the differences in job search behavior and optimism they found could not, therefore be explained by differences in occupational experience.

Similarly, Ali, Schur & Blank (2011) found no significant differences in the job preferences expressed by disabled and non-disabled respondents and that, contrary to popular belief, disabled people were not more likely to desire greater flexibility, wages or salaries or job security than non-disabled respondents. They concluded, therefore, that the evidence they found strongly indicated that disabled people's marginalization from employment could not be explained by their reluctance to work, nor to atypical job preferences and that the answer to the question, "*what types of jobs do disabled people want?*" was, "*the same as everyone else.*"

The implications of Ali, Schur & Blank (2011) study for vocational service provision are that barriers on the supply side of employment are strongly suggested in terms of contributing to low rates of employment and historical experiences that explain disabled peoples lack of optimism and/or reluctance to engage in search behavior despite their near universal aspiration to work. The authors note that employer uncertainty, lack of information, employer concerns about the cost of workplace accommodation and disabling workplace practices and discrimination all undermine disabled people's right to open and equitable employment.

In practical terms, vocational support might profitably extend to answering the misplaced concerns of employers, including with evidence-based research. In another literature review prepared for a New Zealand vocational service provider, Milner & Parish (2013) detailed published research that responded to six employer attitudes commonly cited as barriers to employment for disabled people (Table 5). They might also assist disabled people to re-engage with more effective search processes, including changing the narrative of employing disabled people in ways that alert employers to the social capital of impairment. In the same literature review, Milner & Parish (2013) also detail the business advantages of workforce diversity also including disabled people.

Table 5 The beliefs and realities of employing disabled people (Milner & Parish, 2013)

Belief	Reality	Peer reviewed paper or report
Disabled people are less productive than other employees.	Disabled people, on average, perform as well or better on work related tasks than their non-disabled co-workers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Perry, E., Hendricks, W. & Broadbent, E. (2000). An exploration of access and treatment discrimination and job satisfaction among college graduates with and without physical disabilities. <i>Human Relations</i>, 53: 923-955
Disabled people are sick more often and have higher rates of absenteeism.	Disabled people have, on average, lower rates of absenteeism than their non-disabled co-workers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rhodes, L. and Valenta, L. (1985). Industry-based supported employment: an enclave approach. <i>Journal of the Association for Persons with Severe Handicaps</i>, 10: 12-20. Brake, K. (2001). Employing disabled workers. <i>Employment Today</i>, July, 19-20. Graffam, J., et al. (2002). Employer benefits and costs of employing someone with a disability. <i>Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation</i>, 17: 251-263. Hall, E. (2002). Why it is good to employ people with disabilities? <i>Spinal Network News</i>, 2002, 5: 6-7
Disabled people are more likely to leave their job.	Disabled people have lower rates of turnover and express higher company loyalty than their non-disabled co-workers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EEO Trust (2007). <i>Diversity Survey Report 2007</i>. EEO Trust: Auckland. EEO Trust (2008). <i>Employing Disabled People: The only true disability is a bad attitude</i>. EEO Trust: Auckland.
Including disabled people in the workforce requires expensive accommodations to be made.	In 2006, 90% of disabled workers required no workplace accommodation, technical or personal assistance and when required, accommodations are usually either cost neutral or improve the productivity and/or safety of the entire workforce.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Statistics New Zealand (2008). <i>Disability and the Labour Market in New Zealand in 2006</i>. Statistics New Zealand: Wellington. Riley, C. (2006). <i>Disability and Business: Best practices and strategies for inclusion</i>. Lebanon (USA): University Press of New England. Graffam, J., et al. (2002). Employer benefits and costs of employing someone with a disability. <i>Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation</i>, 17: 251-263. Hall, E. (2002). Why it is good to employ people with disabilities? <i>Spinal Network News</i>, 2002, 5: 6-7. Woodley, A. & Metzger, N. (2012). <i>Employer attitudes towards employing disabled people</i>. Wellington. Ministry of Social Development.
Employing disabled people carries additional occupational health and safety risk.	Disabled people have significantly lower accidents or occupational health and safety incidents than their non-disabled co-workers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Perry, E., Hendricks, W. & Broadbent, E. (2000). An exploration of access and treatment discrimination and job satisfaction among college graduates with and without physical disabilities. <i>Human Relations</i>, 53: 923-955 Rhodes, L. and Valenta, L. (1985). Industry-based supported employment: an enclave approach. <i>Journal of the Association for Persons with Severe Handicaps</i>, 10: 12-20. Brake, K. (2001). Employing disabled workers. <i>Employment Today</i>, July, 19-20. Graffam, J., et al. (2002). Employer benefits and costs of employing someone with a disability. <i>Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation</i>, 17: 251-263.
People with learning disability will disrupt the culture of the workplace.	Employers report valuing the strong work ethic, trustworthiness and motivation of disabled employees, often describing them as transforming staff morale and non-disabled co-workers job satisfaction.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reid, P. & Bray, A. (1998). Real jobs: the perspectives of workers with learning difficulties. <i>Disability & Society</i>, 22: 87-96. Bray, A. (2003). <i>Work for Adults with an Intellectual Disability: Review of the literature prepared for the NHC</i>. Wellington. NHC Riley, C. (2006). <i>Disability and Business: Best Practices and Strategies for Inclusion</i>. Lebanon (USA): University Press of New England. EEO Trust (2008). <i>Employing Disabled People: The only true disability is a bad attitude</i>. EEO Trust: Auckland. Wilton, K., et al. (1988). Employment and adjustment of school leavers with mild retardation in New Zealand. <i>Australia and New Zealand Journal of Developmental Disabilities</i>, 14: 235-244.

Table 6 The business advantages of employing disabled people (Milner & Parish, 2013)

Outcomes of increased workforce diversity	Peer reviewed paper or report
Increased access to a wider range of skills / experience / talent.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Riley II, C. (2006). <i>Disability and Business: Best practices and strategies for inclusion</i>. Lebanon, USA: University Press of New England. EEO Trust (2007). <i>Diversity Survey Report 2007</i>. Auckland. EEO Trust.
The potential for greater workforce creativity and innovation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EEO Trust (2007). <i>Diversity Survey Report 2007</i>. Auckland. EEO Trust. Lepak, D. & Snell, S. (1999). The human resource architecture: Toward a theory of human capital allocation and development. <i>Academy of Management Review</i>, 24: 31-48. Leung, A., Maddux, W., Galinsky, A. & Chiu, C. (2008). Multicultural experience enhances creativity: The when and how. <i>American Psychologist</i>, 63: 189-181.
More effective recruitment via access to a wider array of communities of talent and peer referents.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EEO Trust (2007). <i>Diversity Survey Report 2007</i>. Auckland. EEO Trust.
Lower staff turnover and increased staff intention to stay.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EEO Trust (2007). <i>Diversity Survey Report 2007</i>. Auckland. EEO Trust. Mor Barak M. & Levin, A. (2002). Outside of the corporate mainstream and excluded from the work community: A study of diversity, job satisfaction and well-being. <i>Community, Work and Family</i>, 5: 133-157. Nishii L. & Mayer, D. (2009). Do inclusive leaders help to reduce turnover in diverse groups? The moderating role of leader-member exchange in the diversity to turnover relationship. <i>Journal of Applied Psychology</i>, 94: 1412-1426.
Improved product and service match with customers and clients.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Riley II, C. (2006). <i>Disability and Business: Best practices and strategies for inclusion</i>. Lebanon, USA: University Press of New England. EEO Trust (2007). <i>Diversity Survey Report 2007</i>. Auckland. EEO Trust.
Improved company image in and outside of the workforce, including the benefits of being perceived as a fair and socially just employer.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EEO Trust (2007). <i>Diversity Survey Report 2007</i>. Auckland. EEO Trust. Ese E. (2005). 2005 Workplace Diversity Practices. A study by the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM). www.shrm.org/research/surveyfindings/articles/documents/05-0509wplcdivprsr_final_rev.pdf
Enhanced analysis and problem solving, diversity of thought and improved work group performance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Homan, A. et al. (2008). Facing differences with an open mind: Openness to experience, salience of intragroup differences and performance of diverse work groups. <i>Academy of Management Journal</i>, 51: 1204-1222. Ely, R & Thomas, D. (2001). Cultural diversity at work: The effects of diversity perspectives on work group processes and outcomes. <i>Administrative Science Quarterly</i>, 46: 229-273.
More effective cross-organizational collaboration.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ely, R & Thomas, D. (2001). Cultural diversity at work: The effects of diversity perspectives on work group processes and outcomes. <i>Administrative Science Quarterly</i>, 46: 229-273. Janssens, M. & Zanoni, P. (2007) in Shore et al. (2011). Inclusion and Diversity in Work Groups: A Review and Model for Future Research. <i>Journal of Management</i>, 37: 1262-1289.
Career opportunities for diverse groups, including the ability to challenge discriminatory cultural scripts and disabling stereotypes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wayne, S., Shore, L. & Linden, R. (1997). Perceived organizational support and leader-member exchange: A social exchange perspective. <i>Academy of Management Journal</i>, 40: 82-111. Yap, M. & Konrad, A. (2009). Gender and racial differentials in promotions: Is there a sticky floor, mid-level bottle-neck or a glass ceiling? <i>Industrial Relations</i>, 64: 593-619.

In the paper they wrote, **Timmons, Hall, Wolfe & Winsor (2011)** highlighted the critical role vocational support can play in shaping the employment related decision making of disabled people. In order to explore the range of factors that appeared to influence the employment related decision making of people with a learning disability, Timmons, Hall, Wolfe & Winsor (2011) interviewed 16 adults with a learning disability who accessed support from four, Massachusetts-based Community Rehabilitation Providers (CRPs), members of their families (13 interviews) and employment staff who worked at the each of the CRPs (15 interviews).



Following thematic analysis of participant narrative, Timmons, Hall, Wolfe & Winsor (2011) reported that different actors and experiences emerged as exerting a consequential influence over the decisions the people with a learning disability made about their employment at different moments during the course of their employment history.

When asked, the disabled people Timmons, Hall, Wolfe & Winsor (2011) spoke to typically identified a family member as most influential. In their formative years, the extent to which families modeled employment and/or instilled the belief that work was an expectation appeared to be an important determinant of participant's subsequent decision making. Over time, Timmons, Hall, Wolfe & Winsor (2011) characterized the family's role as waning as the social practices of school-based vocational staff and then vocational service provision displaced family members as an additional source of support. At the point at which their son or daughter were receiving assistance from a CRP, families described themselves as being "minimally engaged" because of the lack of communication or of having to suppress their continuing interest to avoid transgressing the culture of service provision and/or need to respect their son or daughter's increasing independence. Milner et al (2016) made a similar observation following their analysis of key informant interviews conducted in the "*Getting the life I want*" project, noting that rather than practicing as a community assemblage, vocational support tended to be transacted in a way that severed disabled people from the creativity, connectivity, material resources and motivation of the communities within which they are relationally embedded. As is discussed later in this literature review, some of the more effective vocational models are addressing this culturally imposed separation. Beginning early, supporting families to stay involved and providing an opportunity for disabled people to shape their own support networks were advanced by Timmons, Hall, Wolfe & Winsor (2011) as ways that vocational providers might consider as interventions to improve employment outcomes for disabled people.

By often providing people with a learning disability with their first exposure to work, school-based staff were found to have an impact on the employment decisions of study participants. Timmons, Hall, Wolfe & Winsor (2011) found that early employment experiences shaped the way people thought about employment, their job preferences, career planning and employment related self-confidence. Whilst school-based staff were identified as crucial in providing confidence, participants reported being steered towards a limited range of jobs, including housecleaning, dishwashing, grocery packing and retrieving shopping trolleys. For many participants, their first work experiences strongly influenced the job preferences they expressed and possibly their future employment aspirations. Although Timmons, Hall, Wolfe & Winsor (2011) do not state it explicitly, a clear implication of their findings is that the more limited horizons of disabled people's initial employment



experiences is likely to contribute to their continuing over-representation within low paid, low skilled jobs on the fringes of the labour market. Timmons, Hall, Wolfe & Winsor (2011) also found evidence of poor initial work experiences having a negative impact on people's self-confidence and employment related decision making, suggesting that poor work experiences could, in part, be attributable to the emphasis school-based staff placed on obtaining an employment experience rather than attempting to achieve a good job match. Assisting school-based staff to expand the horizons of their thinking about the range of ways disabled people can contribute within the labour market and adopting placement strategies that begin by identifying people's unique capacities and interest represents an alternative way that vocational support might improve employment outcomes for disabled people transitioning from school to adult employment.

Beyond school, the culture of CRPs, and in particular, the way vocational staff perceived and offered employment options, was found to have a major impact on the employment related decision-making of participants. The way support was delivered in three of the four CRP included in Timmons, Hall, Wolfe & Winsor's (2011) study, assumed that disabled people needed pre-requisite skills to be job ready and that holding this assumption affected the job searches they did (or did not) conduct, client career planning and "training," and the range of employment options offered. Compared to other CRPs that had adopted the supported employment principle that, *"everyone is job ready and able to work"* the process of identifying career goals and opportunities began much slower. The search process was also moderated by the job developer. Many of the disabled people included in Timmons, Hall, Wolfe & Winsor (2011) expressed the view that they had little choice about accepting placements and/or felt coerced into accepting jobs they did not want because of the metering of job offers by job developers. *"It was the only paying job they could offer me right now"* one participant told Timmons, Hall, Wolfe & Winsor (2011). A number of key informants interviewed during the *"Getting the life I want"* project told similar stories of feeling obliged to accept jobs they did not like, felt undersold their skills and capacities or failed to match their interests and almost all informants described job search activity being largely conducted by their vocational coordinator (Milner et al, 2016).

Timmons, Hall, Wolfe & Winsor (2011) also reported finding that the nature of co-worker relationships was a critical determinant of participant's employment decisions. Friendship, acts of reciprocity that communicated membership, having a responsible role and experiencing a sense of inclusion were identified as factors explaining the gravitational hold of "sheltered" vocational settings. Conversely, in ways that echoed the attributes participants who expressed the view that employment was a way to participate in society prioritized in Cramm et al's (2009) study, participants who described loving their jobs expressed a sense



of social connectedness and of being included in workplace culture. Being equivalently attentive to the social relationships of workplace culture and assisting employers to access the benefits of employing disabled people by developing more inclusive workplace practices represent additional ways that vocational service providers can assist the decision making of disabled people. However, after talking to people who accessed vocational support in the “*Getting the life I want*” project, Milner et al (2016) cautioned that a tension was emerging between the assumptions that underpinned a vocational culture in which it was assumed that with appropriate support, job matching and inclusive workplace practices, all disabled people could participate meaningfully in employment and those that underpinned the way the “Outcomes Based Framework” was being operationalized in New Zealand.

Given the impact early vocational experiences appeared to have on participant decision-making, one of the recommendations made by Timmons, Hall, Wolfe & Winsor (2011) was for disabled people to have the opportunity to try and to develop confidence in a wide array of employment contexts. In a study in which they set out to explore whether people with a learning disability present interests and self-efficacy beliefs in less complex occupations and whether self-efficacy beliefs predict career interests Nota, Ginevra & Carriere (2010) would reach a similar conclusion.

Nota, Ginevra & Carriere (2010) used the *My Future Preferences* structured interview to examine the career interests and occupational self-efficacy beliefs of 129 adults with a learning disability receiving vocational support in Italy. The instrument invites participants to indicate their level of and interest in 42 different kinds of employment that fall into seven occupation domains, ranging in complexity from realistic and conventional (low), social, artistic and enterprising (medium) and investigative (high) occupations as well as their self-efficacy beliefs (whether participants thought they would be able to learn to be a ...) for the same 42 types of employment.

Nota, Ginevra & Carriere (2010) hypothesized that people with a learning disability would show more interest and self-efficacy beliefs in the realistic and conventional occupations and that an association between participant's level of impairment and the complexity of preferred roles and self-efficacy beliefs would emerge. What they found was that participants presented a much wider range of career interests and self-efficacy beliefs that expected, including also expressing a preference for occupations in the social and artistic domains. They also discovered that participants expressed higher levels of self-efficacy than expected in the same four domains and that self-efficacy beliefs also predicted participant's vocational interests. More simply, participants expressed liking for the vocations they believed they could perform. Nota, Ginevra & Carriere's (2010) explanation for the range of



occupational domains that people expressed high levels of interest and self-efficacy belief in was that they tended to be the kinds of activities that people with a learning disability tend universally steered towards as part of their school and vocational experiences. Previous research by Nota & Soresi (2009) found that when asked to describe the career future of a person with a learning disability, they were almost universally imagined as working at jobs within the realistic, conventional and social occupational domains. Moreover, Nota, Ginevra & Carriere (2010) noted that people participating in vocational day centres or work cooperatives also tended to perform roles that fell within the realistic, conventional, artistic and social occupational domains and reasoned that the attention and feedback provided by significant others, as-well-as opportunity to acquire a sense of mastery, was likely to have influenced the development of self-efficacy beliefs and career preferences. This assertion fits with the study finding that, within the largely undifferentiated activity patterns of people with a learning disability, none of the expected associations between level of impairment and occupational complexity or sex related differences in the job interests or self-efficacy beliefs of participants emerged.

Nota, Ginevra & Carriere (2010) also found no difference between the career interests and self-efficacy beliefs of people who were working in competitive employment or in sheltered workshops, except that participants who were working in competitive employment expressed lower self-efficacy beliefs in the investigative occupational domain. The authors reasoned that opportunities to receive feedback, gratification reinforcement and develop mastery may have been very similar in "sheltered" and competitive employment contexts for people with a learning disability and that in both settings, people were excluded from the processes of introspection, self-evaluation and performance appraisal that might lead to career development.

The clear implication of Nota, Ginevra & Carriere's (2010) study is that we cannot exclude the possibility that the career interests, self-efficacy beliefs and our understanding of the social capital of disabled people are not principally defined by the expectations or limited imagination of the educational, vocational, and employment contexts that shape their day-to-day experiences. People with a learning disability are typically exposed to fewer work role models and given fewer opportunities to participate in effective career exploration or planning activities than non-disabled people (Szymanski, 1999). As a consequence, they are also more likely to express a hope to change their jobs and to find employment that matches their career interests than non-disabled employees (Neumayer & Bleasdale, 1996). Nota, Ginevra & Carriere (2010) concluded, therefore, that actively involving people with a learning disability in career planning at an early age, planning processes that incorporate a person's

career interests and self-efficacy beliefs was an important way that vocational providers could improve their employment outcomes.

Employment experiences

In a study that replicated previous research conducted by Test et al (2000), **Jahoda, Banks, Dagnan, Kemp, Kerr & Williams (2009)** employed a longitudinal design to talk to 35 people with a learning disability in Scotland about their employment experiences in the first month of start a new job and 9-12 months later. The aim of the research was to determine if people's perceptions of employment shifted as they became more established in the workplace.

Six key themes emerged following analysis of participant's initial interviews and these were subsequently used as an organising framework for comparing the follow-up interviews. The themes identified by the authors included; something to do, sense of competence, financial reward, fears and worries, social opportunities and self-worth.

Consistent with the aspiration that key informants to the *"Getting the life I want"* project expressed, that employment might interrupt the isolation and boredom of "workless" lives, Jahoda et al (2009) reported that, initially, the prospect that employment offered routine activity that *"helped them get out of their houses and lead more purposeful and active lives"* emerged as a key theme. Whilst most participants continued to express positive views about leading more purposeful lives at follow-up, 9 – 12 months after starting their jobs, a number of participants felt they needed more work to make the difference they were hoping for. Jahoda et al (2009) argued this perceptual shift was attributable to the limited number of hours that participants continued to work and the contrast they expressed between their in and out of work lives. Jahoda et al (2009) findings are also consistent with the narrative of the self-advocates working in Scotland who told Hall (2004, 2005) about the limited opportunities they had for expanding their role as a consequence of working beyond the ordinary workplace practices of performance review and career development.

On entering employment, Jahoda et al (2009) described a small number of participants as feeling concerned that they didn't have the skills or support they needed to meet the demands of their job. The majority of participants, however, were described as entered employment feeling confident they could meet workplace demands and welcoming the opportunities employment provided. *"It was,"* one participant told Jahoda et al (2009), *"my chance to shine."* At follow-up, the main change Jahoda et al (2009) noted was that an increased number of participants believed their employers were failing to make adequate

workplace accommodations and feelings of being able to meet work demands had become more prevalent, highlighting the need for ongoing vocational support for employers and employees with a learning disability.

Preeminent amongst the concerns of people entering employment were fears about meeting and getting on with people in the workplace. In this sense, Jahoda et al's (2009) study aligns with Cramm et al (2009) finding that the social context to employment was of central importance to disabled people who view employment as a form of civic participation. Whilst this fear did not feature prominently in participant narrative 9 -12 months later, people's initial concerns about the permanence of their employment had not dissipated at follow-up. Concerns about the permanence of their employment expressed by the people who spoke to Jahoda et al (2009) aligns with a now large body of research describing disabled people's employment as more tenuous. Similarly, Jahoda et al (2009) finding that one-quarter of the study participants had lost their original jobs at follow-up is consistent with Hall and Wilton (2011) characterization of disabled people as last hired, first fired.

Most participants in Jahoda et al (2009) study regarded the opportunity employment provided to meet people to be its most important attribute. At follow-up participants' responses were described as continuing to be largely positive about their social relationships with co-workers. Jahoda et al (2009) did note, however, that a very small number of participants reported socializing with co-workers beyond work, and that at follow-up, an increased number of participants had stated that short work-hours and the more solitary nature of their employment placed them on the margins of workplace culture, limiting opportunities for socializing either in or outside of the workplace.

In a way that resonates with findings reported for the *"Getting the life I want"* project (Milner et al, 2016) and described previously in this literature review, the other key reason participants identified for valuing employment was the extra income it provided, including assisting, enhance personal autonomy, make choices and participate in social and community events. Whilst most participants continued to be positive about the impact having more money had made, an increasing number of participants expressed the view that there had not been a sufficient increase to their income to make a significant difference to their lives.

Almost all participants in Jahoda et al's (2009) study spoke positively about the impact their employment had made to their sense of self-worth, both at the beginning and 9 – 12 months after starting their jobs. Increased confidence and independence emerged as important motifs and at follow-up a number of participants attributed their employment to a dispositional shift in others towards acknowledging their adult status.

In a recent Australian study, **Baldwin, Costly & Warren (2014)**, also embedded questions about the best and worst things about the work and employment experiences of adults with autism spectrum disorder with non-concurring learning disability. The aim of the research was to provide a detailed overview of the occupational activities and experiences of adults with higher functioning autism by drawing on survey data provided by a subset of 130 self-selecting adult participants of the larger “We Belong” research project who were employed at the time of the survey.

As with the other research described previously in this review, Baldwin, Costly & Warren (2014), study painted a picture of labour force marginalization and under and malemployment, but in this case for a disabled population with higher educational qualifications than the general population. In Baldwin, Costly & Warren (2014) study population, 86% of respondents were found to hold a post-school qualification compared to 57% of the Australian general population. In spite of participant's willingness to work and a seeming favourable point of entry into the labour market, the authors described participants as typically experiencing poorer employment outcomes than other Australian citizens.

In their study, close to half of the adults surveyed (46%) were classified as working in jobs for which they were overqualified according to the Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations (ANZSCO). This compared to a rate of 21% for the Australian workforce. Survey respondents were also overrepresented in casual positions of employment (33%) compared to other Australians (21%), and as a consequence were more likely to be working in lower skilled jobs and/or experience reduced hours of employment. For example, 29% of participants who responded to Baldwin, Costly & Warren's (2014) survey reported working 15 hours or less per week compared to 11% of Australian employees and 51% reported working 31 hours or more compared to 69% of Australian employees.

Despite 66% of participants indicating they would like to receive more support at work related to their ASD, fewer than half reported receiving any kind of assistance to get their job and 72% of participants stated they were not currently receiving any specific support at work for difficulties associated with their ASD. Baldwin, Costly & Warren (2014), noted that, what participant's comments conveyed, was a strong desire for greater recognition, understanding and respect of their needs by employers and co-workers. Moreover, analysis of the “three worst things” questions indicated that the assistance or accommodations that respondents were seeking, were in relation to the difficulties they experienced in the areas of social and collegial relationships and health and wellbeing. Baldwin, Costly & Warren (2014), argued that the view of many participants that Australian workplaces tended not to provide accommodations and adjustments appropriate to their needs contributed to many of



the poorer employment outcomes this population experienced, including their failure to seek management positions or career advancement, over-representation in part-time and casual positions with the commensurate risk of broken career histories or more limited opportunities for training and career development, and greater exposure to the detrimental impacts of under and malemployment.

Equally importantly, however, that Baldwin, Costly & Warren (2014) felt their study emphasized the great personal importance of employment to people with autism spectrum disorder, as responses to the "three best things" question indicated that participants tended to primarily view work as an opportunity to apply their knowledge skills and interests in ways allowed them to *"truly come into their own"* or *"express myself through my strengths."* Baldwin, Costly & Warren (2014) ended their paper by drawing attention to the diversity of occupations sought by adults with autistic spectrum disorder revealed by their research and the way that many "non-stereotypical" occupations were valued by the people they spoke to because they stretched the boundaries of knowledge or comfort in ways that were good for people with autistic spectrum disorder - as-well-as their non-disabled co-workers.

Experiences of supported employment.

Of all of the papers reviewed, only one sought to learn more about the supported employment experiences of disabled people by asking them directly. In her study, **Chouinard (2010)** surveyed 80 disabled women about their experiences of government employment assistance in Canada, as a way of assessing whether it was effective in helping to secure employment and to learn what disabled women thought would be useful ways of improving employment assistance programs.

Chouinard (2010) noted that, as is the case in New Zealand, disabled women have a more marginal status in the Canadian labour market. In 2013, disabled women were less likely to participate in the New Zealand labour force but were more likely to be unemployed than disabled men. Statistics New Zealand (2014) also reported that the gap in the rate of unemployment between disabled and non-disabled New Zealand women was greater than between disabled and non-disabled New Zealand men, and particularly for women aged between 15 – 44 years.

Somewhat surprisingly, therefore, Milner et al (2016) reported finding no significant gender related difference in the employment rate of male or female respondents who completed the *"Getting the life I want"* National Online Survey. Women who received vocational support from CCS Disability Action were, in fact, more likely to have a job (33%) than men (24%), but



the finding appeared to be explained by social practices and placement decisions that contributed to women's higher rates of participation in part-time employment (29%) than male survey respondents (20%).

When asked about their experiences of finding and keeping work, the women who responded to Chouinard's (2010) survey identified forms of employment assistance that assisted them to overcome systemic barriers to employment as being most useful. The most frequently cited barriers to employment were negative employer attitudes and insufficient accommodation in the workplace. This failure of vocational support to also address systemic barriers to inclusion in places of paid work - rather than what women perceived to be provider's preoccupation with improving the skills and attitudes of a disabled job seeker was the overarching theme to the feedback provided by survey respondents. What the women were challenging, therefore, was the assumption that disabled people necessarily represented a poor fit to the (nondisabled) labour market

Sixty percent of the women who responded to Chouinard's (2010) survey regarded the employment assistance they received as of very little importance or only somewhat important. A small number of women felt that employment subsidies had made an important contribution to their employment, stressing that by encouraging employers to hire them the incentive provided them with the chance to prove they could do a job. The majority of women whose employers had received a wage subsidy, however, regarded the incentive as of limited importance, citing experiences of employer abuses of subsidy assistance leading to a "revolving door" of employment for disabled people as the reason.

Chouinard (2010) described finding respondents evenly split about whether assistance with basic skills like resume writing had been useful. Of those who did find it useful, it tended to be the attributes of the instructor, and in particular, their (incidental) modeling of ways to deconstruct systemic barriers to employment that respondents valued. These women described, for example, their tutor as giving disabled people a language for identifying and articulating barriers in the work environment, including strategies for bringing 'impairment' into discussions with employers in ways that made a clear distinction between impairment and disability. Others described valuing the contacts they made through the program and the moral support peers could provide while seeking employment. Women who spoke directly about the content of vocational training, however, typically expressed concern about the failure of courses to respond in meaningful ways to client's age, skills and work experience. The prevailing assumption was, women said, was that unemployed disabled women were poorly educated and their skills only suited to menial occupations.



Rather than focusing on individual need or employee responsibility, most of the suggestions women made about how to improve government assistance programs focused on addressing the disabling barriers they faced in seeking and retaining employment. Developing programs that promoted more inclusive and supportive workplaces was an important theme and a number of the suggested made by the disabled women who spoke to Chouinard (2010) are detailed below.

Rather than compensating employers for the potential loss of productivity they perceive as likely, one respondent suggested funding would be better spent developing innovative ways to encourage businesses to eliminate ableism in the workplace. Providing employer support to access the benefits of workforce diversity and publicizing inclusive worksites and workplace practices would be one of the ways vocational support services might work alongside disabled people to transform their work experiences.

Assisting workplaces to provide effective workplace mentoring, including disabled workers and managers collaborating in ways that inform each other of ways of improving the inclusivity of the workplace was another suggestion.

The women who responded to Chouinard's (2010) survey also wondered whether providing funding directly to employers seeking to become more inclusive might improve uptake and transformational change within workplaces. Pre-screening employers to ensure a commitment to an inclusive workplace was another suggestion that disabled women felt would improve the work experiences of disabled people. Creating ways to audit and enhance workplace inclusivity might, therefore, be an effective way that vocational support services could help to create more supportive work environments.

Chouinard (2010) also described respondents as identifying; increased access to job portals able to match disabled women and employers and attaching wage subsidies to the worker (rather than the role) as improving disabled people's ability to leverage the kind e workplace accommodations that can benefit employers and disabled employees. Many women also felt the poor quality of the support they received, including slow and ineffective search and support strategies, high caseloads and steerage towards menial and entry levels jobs could be included within the more systemic barriers to employment disabled women face.

The general consensus of the only group of disabled people who appear in the research literature as having something to say about their experiences of supported employment was that employment assistance programs need to shift from locating the problem of pervasive un(der)employment within disabled people to;



- greater emphasis on addressing the more systemic barriers to employment disabled people face.
- Providing incentives to employers who demonstrate a commitment to making workplaces more inclusive.
- Contesting discriminatory organizational social practices, and
- Legislating against the introduction of technologies and other structural impediments likely to lead to disabled people not having equal access to meaningful employment.

In the following chapter, we detail findings from a range of studies that share in common an intention to discover through evidence based research, which models of vocational practice appear to offer disabled people the best chance of achieving a range of positive employment outcomes.



WHAT MODELS OR SOCIAL PRACTICES ARE PROMOTED AS BEST PRACTICE IN TERMS OF ACHIEVING VOCATIONAL OUTCOMES?

The key objective of this integrated literature review was to provide a mix of empirical and best practice evidence that could inform the wider review project goal of considering how to transform vocational service provision. In the previous chapter, we learnt more about the subjective meaning of employment to disabled people, including the experiences of work and supported employment that disabled people felt took them closer to, or further from, *“the (vocational) lives they wanted.”*

In the second half of the literature review, we examine the support approaches, technologies and organizational attributes that studies suggest may represent “best-practice” in terms of achieving a range of commonly cited vocational outcomes. Within the sections that follow, we detail findings from the 24 journal articles that remain, as a way of alerting CCS Disability Action to something of the range of social and support practices the research indicates align with the employment aspirations of disabled people. We begin with 12 papers that focus on specific vocational models or designed interventions intended to assist people into meaningful employment before presenting findings reported for 12 studies that explore best vocational support practices.

Best vocational service practice models

Assisting disabled people to find and keep employment typically involves a range of steps, including;

- Assisting a person to gain a sense of their own interests, skills and attributes.
- Planning for a future in employment.
- Developing a network of formal and informal supports.
- Engaging in the job search processes.
- Unambiguously communicating the social capital of the disabled person seeking employment to potential employers



- Supporting the employer and disabled employee to exploit the advantages of a more diverse workforce by assisting them to navigate the accommodations each may have to make to achieve a more inclusive and productive workplace.
- Providing appropriate and ongoing job support.

Researchers have begun to explore what supported employment approaches might be most effective for each step of the journey towards meaningful employment and what organizational attributes might be necessary for services to respond to the new models of support practice suggested by that research. In this section, we describe research that follows the same trajectory, moving from describing studies that set out to assess the effectiveness of different approaches to employment planning, personalized and peer support models, initiatives to introduce employers and disabled people to each other before detailing research that has attempted to identify the organizational attributes that are associated with the development of effective and innovative inter and intra service collaboration.

Transition planning for people moving from high school to adult lives can be a critical determinant of the life course of young adults with disabilities. Research evidence suggests that person-centred planning approaches to transition have a range of advantages to disabled young people seeking post-school employment. In their paper, [Hagner, Kurtz, May & Cloutier \(2014\)](#) argue that; the active involvement of the disabled person and their wider support network, emphasis on self-determination and the articulation of a person's capacities and aspirations, intrinsic to person-centred approaches to supported employment are likely to contribute to better vocational outcomes for disabled young people. Other research has found person-centred planning to be effective at producing change at both the individual and systems levels (Walker, 2012) and that rehabilitation counselors who participate in the process develop significantly higher assessments of a person's vocational potential when presented with the results of more 'ecological assessments' compared to more standardized assessment approaches (Jitengra, Browder & Harper, 2004).

Person-centred planning may, however, be more complex for people who have difficulty communicating or who experience higher levels of social anxiety, and in their study Hagner, Kurtz, May & Cloutier (2014) employed a mixed method approach to provide a descriptive summary of the participatory experiences of 47 young people with autistic spectrum disorder (ASD) who voluntarily agreed to enroll in a person-centred transition planning program. Trained facilitators drew on the model originally known as the McGill Action Planning System, conventionally used to provide a foundation for the job search process



intended to initiate a meaningful career path. Topics for a typical 6-meeting sequence include;

- Introduction and personal history
- Career profile: Skills, accomplishments & personal qualities
- Career profile; Preferences and aspirations
- Vision for the future; Resources and barriers
- Transition and career goals
- Career exploration and work experience action steps.

Meeting flip chart and facilitator progress notes were analysed using open-coding, with a particular focus on the adaptations and accommodations that allowed young people with ASD to participate in the process. Six out of every ten person-centred planning groups used accommodation strategies to engage the young person with ASD in the planning process, including; facilitators meeting with the young person and their family to discuss the topics and provide an opportunity for the young person to plan for their own participation, facilitators building rapport and trust prior to the process by being navigated to a persons interest through shared activities, using flexible meeting designs with built in breaks, debriefing interludes or question and answer time, opportunities for the young person to determine their "distance" from the group including using alternative forms of communication (like 'Skype' and 'PowerPoint') and supported communication strategies involving forms of non-verbal communication, written notes "posted" to flip charts and social interpreting.

Hagner, Kurtz, May & Cloutier (2014) suggested that, rather than being a prescriptive planning method, person-centred approaches created a space for young people with ASD to direct their own planning through the flowering of diverse forms of accommodation and that these variations allowed individuals who experienced difficulties with communication and social anxiety to actively participate in shaping their own employment trajectory.

Unlike the people who contributed their narrative to the *"Getting the life I want"* project and who reported that the employment planning and job search processes typically occurred in isolation to their wider support networks, having an opportunity to clarify employment aspirations, describe competences and engage the material and human resources of a motivated network of friends, family and support services was represented by Hagner, Kurtz, May & Cloutier (2014) as offering real advantages to young people with ASD embarking on their adult lives.



They did note, however, that skilled facilitation required an investment of facilitator time, suggesting that rehabilitation counselors might be best placed to refer disabled people to an independent agency specializing in person-centred facilitation. An alternative approach, however, might be for CCS Disability Action to anticipate changes in the disability funding landscape foreshadowed the new DSS funding model, by developing the capacity to offer trained person-centred planning facilitation alongside an array of different tools and resources that disabled people might choose in the course of designing their own support.

Wehmeyer, Parent, Lattimore, Obremski, Poston & Rousso (2009) also incorporated elements of person-centred planning into their design of a planning framework intended to improve employment outcomes for young disabled women making their transition from school to adult lives. In their paper, Wehmeyer et al (2009) highlighted previous research demonstrating that young disabled people who experience an enhanced sense of self-determination are more likely to participate in their own career planning than students with a lower sense of self-determination (German et al, 2000) and typically experienced better employment outcomes, including the likelihood of achieving paid employment (Wehmeyer & Schwartz, 1997; Wehmeyer & Palmer, 2003).

To place young disabled people at the centre of their own employment planning process Wehmeyer et al (2009) modified the Self-Determined Learning Model of Instruction. The Self-Determined Career Development Model (SDCDM) inverts the power relationships of conventional service delivery by assisting disabled people to progress through a three-phase planning process that invites them to answer four questions. The questions are intended to help people to describe their individual career interests as well as define and respond to any barriers they identify. Within the three-step framework, facilitators assist people to address a problem that can be resolved by answering four key questions (Table 7). At each phase of the planning process, a person is supported to develop their own action plan and to self-monitor and adjust their plan as they take self-determined steps towards realizing their own vocational goals.


Table 7 The Self-Determined Career Development Model (Wehmeyer et al (2009))

What are my career & job goals	What is my plan?	What have I achieved
What career & job do I want?	What actions can I take to reach my career & employment goals?	What actions have I taken?
What do I know about it now?	What could keep me from taking action?	What barriers have been removed
What must change for me to get the job & career I want?	What can I do to remove these barriers?	What has changed to enable me to get the job & career I want?
What can I do to make it happen?	When will I take action?	Have I achieved what I want to achieve?

The paper concludes by describing a project that melded the SDCDM with a customized employment planning process to assist young women with a learning disability transitioning from school to design and transact their own vocational support. The *"Girls at Work Project"* was an intervention designed to address the lower expectations and employment outcomes experienced by young women with a learning disability in America. Through the use of a "Blackboard" website, young women at high school were able to navigate through an eight-step curriculum that exposed them to activities (exercises) and resources designed to assist them to identify their passions, explore employment options, lead their own team meetings and develop their own, individualized action-plan for employment.

Like the SDCDM, each of the eight steps engaged students in a problem-solving process defined by an overarching question. Unlike the SDCDM, the program required students to complete a range of elements by drawing on resources like; user guides that contained graphic organisers detailing tasks to be completed, tools for activities including activity forms and downloadable resources, employment links related to videos, organization websites and profiles and interviews with women working in non-traditional vocations. Scope was also provided for novel and creative responses to the problem-solving tasks embedded within curriculum, including direct approaches to businesses and organisations people were interested in knowing more about, setting up visits and job-shadowing experiences, disabled women leading their own employment team meetings or facilitating brainstorming intended to explore a range of customized employment options (Table 8).



Table 8 "Girls at Work" steps and goals (Wehmeyer et al (2009))

Step 1: What are my interests or passions that might lead me to a job career that I enjoy?

- Figure out who you are and what makes you special
- Learn what you get really excited about
- Explore some jobs that match your interests

Step 2: What do I know about the job or career I am interested in now?

- Identify a few specific jobs that related to your interests
- Learn more about jobs that match your interests
- Explore or map opportunities that exist in your community that related to your interests

Step 3: What are some of the job opportunities that I can explore?

- Create a vision for your employment to share with your team
- Put together all of the information you have gathered in steps 1 & 2
- Prepare for and hold your employment exploration meeting
- Learn about unusual careers

Step 4: What is my road map to explore potential jobs?

- Decide which employment exploration activities you want to do
- Put these activities and opportunities together in a plan ("road-map")
- Follow your road map and learn from your experiences

Step 5: What is my employment niche or education goal?

- Create a portfolio of the types of things that are important to you using the information gathered from steps 1-4
- Target a specific job or course
- Talk to your family and wider support network about your employment goals & ideas

Step 6: What customized employment options will get me where I want to be?

- Prepare for & hold your employment team meeting
- Brainstorm possible job opportunities
- Explore creative ways of working like job carving, job creation, resource ownership and self-employment (micro-enterprise)
- Problem solve with your team about what option might be best for you

Step 7: What supports are available to overcome potential employment barriers?

- Identify possible barriers to achieving your goal
- Determine the supports you need
- Identify potential resources
- Contact local agencies & organisations
- Learn how to advocate for yourself and communicate your value to an employer

Step 8: What is my action plan?

- Identify all the specific actions that team members will take and assign due dates
- Decide on how your team will follow up on actions
- Return to steps 6 & 7 if new barriers arise
- Start actioning the specific steps you identified

Central to the design of the intervention was an expectation that it was the disabled person who was primarily responsible for the articulation of their own career, including the design and implementation of a planning "road map". It is probable, however, that having a structured and stepwise framework, peer support, skilled facilitation and an array of resources to help guide and stimulate thinking made the task much less daunting to a population frequently carried along by the decision-making or support practices of others. By intentionally supporting project participants to draw in and make use of the collective human and material resources of a wider network of family, friends and local agencies, the "Girls at Work" project stepped beyond traditional work-experience and vocational support models.



According to Wehmeyer et al (2009), feedback provided by the young women and others engaged in the “*Girls and Work*” initiative was “*overwhelmingly positive*.” Eighty-three percent of women who completed high school after participating in the project found employment or were enrolled in post-secondary education. Wehmeyer et al (2009) concluded by suggesting that reimagining vocational support as helping to facilitate self-directed planning, (using models like the SDCDM or “*Girls and Work*,”) represents a more practical as well as effective way of achieving people’s career aspirations, given the time and resource constraints under which many vocational providers operate.

Improving employment outcomes for young disabled people making the transition to adult lives was also the focus of two papers that investigated whether peer support could assist people to follow the ordinary adult trajectory into paid employment.

In their study, **Kaehne & Beyer (2013)**, interviewed the family members of five young adults with a learning disability who were paired with a non-disabled age peer during an employment placement intended to mirror the normal employment pathway of young people in England. They also conducted a post-placement survey of the employers that had employed the young person as an additional way of reflecting on the effectiveness of the peer support model. Kaehne & Beyer’s (2013) study was embedded within a larger project (the *Getting a Life Program*) that involved a range of stakeholders collaborating to improve transition planning in the UK and involved recruiting and training non-disabled peers to assist a young person with a learning disability to take up (time-limited) part-time evening and weekend paid jobs in their local community whilst still at school.

The rationale for the intervention was that researchers have speculated that the atypical employment pathway of disabled people might contribute to the poorer post-school employment outcomes they experience by; denying disabled people the same (part-time) work experiences that normalize employment as an expectation for the disabled person, their family and wider supports, failing to expose disabled people to the ordinary roles and responsibilities of employment as well as the kind of job skills that employers might be looking for. Similar by not working whilst at school disabled people miss an opportunity to alert employers to the benefits of including disabled people within the labour force. Exposing disabled people to the views and aspirations of their non-disabled peers and creating an opportunity for friendships to develop at a critical point in the transition process were promoted by Kaehne & Beyer (2013) as additional benefits a peer support program.



As part of the intervention, peers were recruited by a supported employment officer from local schools, matched with a young disabled person and orientated to the aims of the project and the peer support role. Once the placement had started, peers collected the young person from their family home, provided on the job support and accompanied them back home. Their key role was to monitor the placement and mentor the disabled young person where appropriate.

Kaehne & Beyer (2013) reported that families expressed ambivalence about the placement. Parents were positive about the impact the job had had, including identifying increased confidence, a growing sense of independence, an increased willingness to compare themselves favorably with other family members who worked and the emergence of social skills amongst the changes they had observed following the intervention. The authors reached no conclusion, however about whether these benefits could be attributed to the experience of participating in paid part-time employment, or whether being supported by an age peer made their expression more likely. Similarly, it was not clear whether peers were more effective workplace instructors than conventional support or whether their presence facilitated or suppressed social inclusion. Moreover, no evidence was found that the young people with a learning disability and their peer mentor engaged in social activity beyond the project. Some parents also expressed concern that employment during the weekend and after school could disrupt family life and may not have prepared their son or daughter for full-time employment by embedding ordinary work patterns and expectations.

Kaehne & Beyer (2013) reported employers, on the other hand, were unequivocally positive about the support they received and three out of four employers were happy with the on-the-job support provided by peer mentors. Employers were also positive about the job-related performance, attendance, attitude and work-practices of the young disabled young people they employed, in line with growing body of research that has begun to articulate the business advantages of employing disabled people described previously. Employers also felt their participation in the program enhanced the company's image. Three of the four employers said they would hire another young person with a learning disability.

Peer support has been feature of the community mental health rehabilitation landscape for decades, but whilst research has consistently found it to be associated with a range of positive clinical outcomes for adults with a mental health condition (Sledge et al, 2011) peer support represents a new approach to support for young adults with a serious mental health condition. In the introduction to their study, **Klodnick, Sabella, Brenner, Krzos, Ellison, Kaiser, Davis & Fagan (2015)** point out that a range of factors suggest that integrating peer mentoring within vocational support provided to young people with an emerging mental



health condition may hold promise for a population who; experience poorer employment and educational enrollment outcomes than the general population, and who are least likely to engage with mental health or vocational services. In addition to having very few vocational role models young people with a serious mental health condition often have an interrupted educational and employment path and face major, simultaneous life transitions. For young people with a serious mental health condition, leaving school can also mean moving from child to adult welfare systems, exiting residential care, entering the labour market as well as their ongoing migrations between multiple service settings.

Klodnick et al (2015) wanted to explore whether including near-age mentoring within vocational support could provide young people with a serious mental health condition (SMHC) with relational validation and an opportunity to learn from someone with shared life experiences at a critical moment in their vocational life journey. Their paper reports on one facet (peer mentorship) of a three-year feasibility study of the adaptations to the Individualised Placement and Support (IPS) model of supported employment that might benefit young adults with an emerging SMHC.

Within the intervention, 35 young adults receiving residential, psychiatric and vocational support provided through a Young Adult Program in Chicago were matched with peer mentors who shared common interests and experiences, including mental health service use and recovery. Peer mentors were required to have been employed for a period of at least six months and were given 40 hours of training, completed courses aimed at improving active listening, IPS knowledge and the ability to share vocational experiences effectively. Peer mentor duties included providing work-related emotional and informational support and encouragement to engage with vocational services. During the pilot, however, the role expanded to also include; direct involvement in job search processes or exploring educational opportunities as well as advice and modeling ways to maintain healthy relationships at work or school.

Klodnick et al (2015) reported that their analysis of an open-ended peer mentoring satisfaction survey completed by 21 participants revealed 76% of respondents said they valued peer mentoring. Benefits named by project participants included; feeling an increased self-awareness and sense of responsibility, an appreciation of job search, interview support and the assistance peer mentors provided to connect with their vocational team. Participants also described valuing the advice and concrete suggestions they received related to vocational goal setting and beyond that, thinking constructively about the future. Some participants described their peer mentor as giving them, *"a new perspective on how to look at (their) life from people that have been where I am now"* Participants also reported that



their peer mentor had provided guidance in life domains beyond employment but which were elemental to the transition they were making, including that mentors helped them to navigate romantic and peer relationships, housing options and the discovery of community resources.

Through the survey, participants also identified a range attributes they felt were important to peer mentorship. Being strong, positive & trustworthy, having similar life experiences, empathy and having "overcome" their own personal struggles were named as positive peer mentor qualities. The "authentic" way that peer mentors acted and reacted to participant experiences was also described as valuable. Klodnick et al (2015) suggested that participants who connected with peer mentors in a way they perceived to be reciprocally "real," offered a kind of interpersonal respite within a sea of professional relationships and multiple stigmas young people with a SMHC can experience in transition. What was important, one respondent was reported as saying, was that their peer mentor *"understands where I am coming from and I understand where she is coming from."*

For participants who had positive experiences of peer mentorship, comparative analysis of the Satisfaction Survey and Working Alliance Inventory – Short Form (WAI-S) indicated that strong working alliances had developed within the mentorship dyad. Not all participants, however, experienced peer mentorship positively. Thirty-eight percent of respondents were reported as not finding peer mentorship useful, five young people chose not to participate from the program's inception and a small number of participants never met with their peer mentor. Moreover, Klodnick et al (2015) found no significant difference between the amount of contact participants who reported having positive or negative peer mentoring experiences had with their vocational specialist, nor did positive peer mentoring experiences appear to be linked to differences in vocational outcomes during the trial. As a consequence, Klodnick et al (2015) concluded that whilst peer mentors may be valuable in terms of helping to bridge the service and support gaps that open up in the transition to adult lives, vocational services should consider a potentially useful adjunct to Individualised Placement and Support, until future research can demonstrate whether it makes a difference to young people with a SMHC's ability to find and maintain paid employment.

Two papers included in the literature review described specific service interventions intended to address disabled people's marginalization from the workforce. One that connected disabled people to potential employers and another that explored the benefits of self-employment to disabled people.



The Irish National Job Shadow Initiative provides disabled people with an opportunity to shadow an employee to learn about their job. The (day or week long) event brings together job coaches, employers, disabled people, state agencies and families in an attempt to improve disabled people's participation in the workforce. The purpose of a paper published by **Suibhne & Finnerty (2014)** was to describe the Irish Job Shadow Initiative, including the results of an evaluation of the 2013 event, in sufficient detail that supported employment services could successfully replicate the initiative in their country.

The Job Shadow initiative began in Ireland in 2008. In the beginning the principle aim of initiative was to raise awareness of the purpose and principles of supported employment to a cluster of key stakeholders and to provide disabled people with a unique opportunity to get a close look at the world of work. The hope, however, is that a job shadow can lead to placement and paid work in a career area of interest and Suibhne & Finnerty (2014) report that since its inception, the Job Shadow Initiative in Ireland had generated 2165 job shadows and 78 paid jobs. Other countries, including America (Disability Mentoring Day), Canada (The Face-to-Face Project), Belgium and Sweden have adopted similar initiatives, with the American equivalent connecting over 16 000 disabled students and job seekers to thousands of employers Suibhne & Finnerty (2014).

In their paper, Suibhne & Finnerty (2014) detail how the Job Shadow Initiative is implemented in Ireland, including providing advice about how to publicize the event and maintain contact with the cluster of stakeholders it engages. The authors also emphasize the importance of conducting and disseminating an evaluation.

Within the initiative, job coaches are described as playing a critical role job, most especially by demonstrating supported employment best practice. In the Irish initiative, job coaches mirror the 5-stage European Union of Supported Employment best practice model by;

- Working with the disabled person prior to the Job Shadow to identify their skills, competences and preferences in relation to job type (*Skills assessment*).
- Support the disabled person and employer in identifying a suitable job shadow placement (*Job matching*).
- Support the disabled person to secure an appropriate job shadow placement having consulted with both the individual and employer (*Job seeking*)
- Where necessary, identify and support the individual and employer to participate in the job shadow placement (*Continuing support*)



In 2013, 429 employers participated in the Irish Job Shadow Initiative, resulting in 446 successful job shadows. Following the initiative an online survey was distributed to the employers, job coaches and disabled people who participated in the event. Suibhne & Finnerty (2014) reported that 88% of job coaches indicated that the initiative was either highly relevant (39%) or relevant (49%) to their role and that 67% of employers indicated they would employ a disabled person in the future as a consequence of their participation. Ninety-eight percent of employers surveyed stated they would participate in next year's Job Shadow Initiative.

The feedback provided by stakeholders led Suibhne & Finnerty (2014) to conclude that the Job Shadow Initiative benefited all stakeholders.

For job-seekers, the event assisted disabled people to make more informed career choices by providing them with an insight into aspects of a job they might have been interested in and a close-up look at how skills already learnt might be utilized in the workplace. Suibhne & Finnerty (2014) noted the initiative also provided job-seekers with

- An introduction to job requirements and employer expectations.
- An opportunity to network and meet new people.
- The chance to learn more about the businesses and employers in their community.

Suibhne & Finnerty (2014) also speculated that working for a day or a week was likely to have occasioned a reimagining of the personal futures of some disabled people and/or the life trajectory members of their families had previously imagined.

For employers, the Job Shadow Initiative provided a "safe" way to gain insight into the positive contribution disabled people can make to their workplace. Ninety-four percent of employers surveyed stated that it was beneficial that the initiative did not involve any long-term commitment and 91% stated that having access to a job coach made the decision easier. From a recruitment perspective, Suibhne & Finnerty (2014) suggested the event provided employers with access to a much wider pool of employees, whilst simultaneously allowing them to develop a greater understanding of the more benign realities of employing disabled people motivated to work. Feedback provided by employers indicated that employers also valued the opportunity the Job Shadow Initiative provided them to demonstrate positive leadership by promoting and encouraging the diffusion of more inclusive workplace practices. Eighty-seven percent of employers surveyed reported having an equal opportunities policy in place.

And finally, Suibhne & Finnerty (2014) argued the initiative provided supported employment services with an opportunity to raise awareness of the potential contribution disabled people can make to their community and the support available to assist them realize that potential. From a practical perspective, the Job Shadow Initiative allowed job coaches to learn more about a particular workplace's needs and the range of client's skills and strengths that might improve an employer's productivity. The event also draws job coaches into a working relationship with a much wider network of employers who, as a result of their participation, may be increasingly open to the opportunities that follow including disabled people in their workforce. *"Job shadow was a good idea,"* one job coach was reported by Suibhne & Finnerty (2014) as saying, *"because it creates an opportunity to get speaking to employers about supported employment."*

For those most marginalized from employment, individualized funding and person-centred planning approaches have opened self-employment as a possible vocational alternative to worklessness. In a study commissioned by the Lancashire County Council (England), **Reddington & Fitzsimmons (2013)** sought to learn more about the role microenterprise might play in helping people with a learning disability to be included in the world of work by speaking to people engaged in the support or operation of 13 microenterprises. The purpose of the research was to determine what the positive and negative experiences of establishing and running a micro-enterprise were and how best to support their viability.

Reddington & Fitzsimmons (2013) discovered participant's stories contained a number of common elements, including that few entrepreneurs had experiences of previous paid employment. For all but one case, the only choice available was either to remain excluded from employment or to try to develop a business idea. The other commonalities were that parental support was evident in most cases. For most:

- Families had been the primary driver of the enterprise.
- The cluster of supports that had coalesced about a microenterprise had used person centred planning approaches to support the entrepreneur to define their interests, develop the idea, exercise ownership over the enterprise.
- The disabled person had remained central to the decision-making process throughout the establishment and running of the microenterprise.
- Family members and others about the entrepreneur were characterized as being universally enthusiastic and positive about what could be achieved.

Reddington & Fitzsimmons (2013) also noted that most entrepreneurs received support from a business advisor. Moreover, given that even the smallest of microenterprises were treated



in law and for tax purposes the same as any other business, professional business advice was strongly recommended.

Perhaps most significantly, Reddington & Fitzsimmons (2013) found no correlation between taking a wage from an enterprise and its perceived success. Some entrepreneurs generated enough income to become fully independent. Others, however, fell short of generating a wage. Typically, being busy and doing something worthwhile were perceived as more important than deriving an income. All of the entrepreneurs Reddington & Fitzsimmons (2013) spoke to found the process of establishing and running their business a very positive experience. All entrepreneurs also reported gaining in confidence, ability and engagement with the local community. Of particular value was the way running their business had allowed entrepreneurs to engage others in their community from a position of relative social equity. *"What they were proud of,"* Reddington & Fitzsimmons (2013) noted one participant said, was that *"we work on the market, we pay the market fee, we do exactly the same as every other trader. We have good weeks and we have bad weeks and everybody has to do that."*

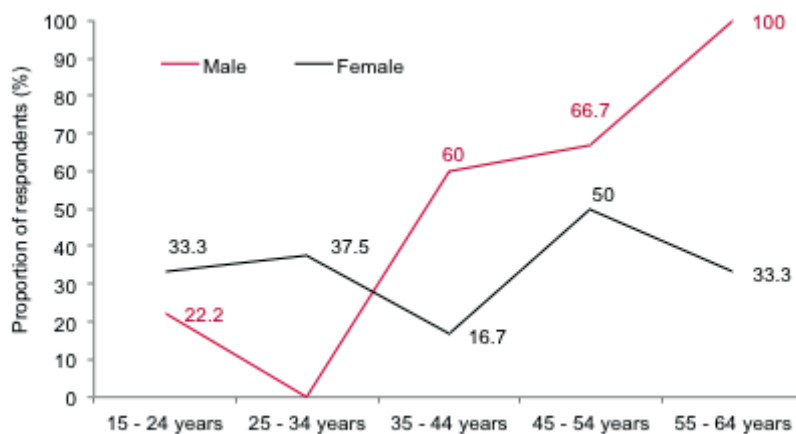
Start-up costs for some microenterprises were typically met either by small amounts of grant funding or the entrepreneur investing in the enterprise directly. Uncertainty about the ability of most microenterprises to service a loan meant that loan funding was not available and government enterprise funding's focus on economic rather than social outcomes meant that it was not possible for entrepreneurs to access government or disability funding. When microenterprises were viewed as a social investment intended to improve life quality and social inclusion, the decision of entrepreneurs and their families to invest their own savings was to the people who spoke to Reddington & Fitzsimmons (2013) represented as good value for money.

Despite the obvious alignment of entrepreneur's motivation for developing their micro-enterprise and the social policy outcomes purchased through vocational funding in New Zealand and the UK, Reddington & Fitzsimmons (2013) found no evidence of self-employment being suggested by disability support services advising disabled people about their future. Moreover, in the wider consultation Reddington & Fitzsimmons (2013) conducted as part of the study, few support services or employment advisors were found to have direct experience or knowledge of individuals or groups involved in running their own microenterprise.

Similarly, almost all of the examples of microenterprises that appear in the research and popular literature have been constructed by and with people with a learning disability frustrated by their exclusion from meaningful employment and/or the range of vocational

options that are offered as an alternative. Little is known about the value self-employment holds to disabled people who do not have a learning disability, although the responses of people who completed the CCS Disability Action National Online Survey suggests that the microenterprise model may have more general appeal. In the survey, respondents were asked to rate how useful support that helped them to access a range of alternative vocational support models would be on a Likert scale that ranged from "extremely unhelpful" (0 points) – extremely helpful (100 points) as anchor points. Respondents, on average, rated the usefulness of support that helped them to set up their own microenterprise slightly below the scale midpoint (47 points). More than a third of the people who answered the question (n=23; 35%), however, rated the helpfulness of vocational support intended to develop a microenterprise above two-thirds of the scale maximum with self-employment appearing particularly attractive as a vocational option to older male and female respondents with a long history of being excluded from the workforce.

Figure 9 The proportion of respondents who rated the helpfulness of support to develop a microenterprise above 2/3 of the scale maximum by age and gender



Micro-enterprises also appeared to be an attractive vocational support model to the two respondents who self-identified as Pacifica, both of whom rated the helpfulness of support to become self-employed above two-thirds of the scale maximum (Average = 94 points).

Reddington & Fitzsimmons (2013) concluded by suggesting there may be real value in vocational support services developing both expertise and a model for microenterprise development that can assist disabled people to;

- Identify possible business opportunities.
- identify and control for risk,
- estimate costs



- forecast outcomes
- and provide a conduit to the human and material assistance they might require to establish and run their business.

CCS Disability Action is well placed to offer support to disabled people interested in exploring self-employment given its linkages to the community, (including to a possible pool of business mentors through Rotary), administrative infrastructure and commitment to flexible person directed support. CCS Disability Action might also want to contemplate establishing a seed fund modeled on microfinance institutions designed to promote the entrepreneurship of other marginalized populations and to explore creative ways that vocational funding and personal support budgets might be used to promote self-employment for disabled people.

In a literature review conducted before Reddington & Fitzsimmons' (2013) study, [Yamamoto, Unruh & Bullis \(2011\)](#), drew on empirical research to explore the question of how viable self-employment was for disabled people in the United States. The authors noted that, in the US, disabled people were nearly twice as likely to be self-employed as the general population. They attributed disabled people's greater participation in self-employment to a reorientation of the labour market away from manufacturing and towards information and service industries and a parallel shift in support towards more self-determined vocational futures that acknowledge disabled people's aspiration to move towards less stigmatising forms of employment and less atypical lives.

Twelve studies were included in the review, all of which were descriptive. In their synthesis of the available research literature, Yamamoto, Unruh & Bullis (2011), identified a cluster of complex and interrelated motivations that disabled people said underscored their self-employment and a range of factors that influenced the viability of their businesses. Preeminent amongst the reasons disabled people volunteered for starting a business was that their self-employment represented a response to discrimination in the labour market, most commonly experienced by not being able to get or sustain personally meaningful employment. Whilst studies indicated that, for some people, beginning a business was a way to improve financial independence or to address other consequences of material poverty, it was more common for people to identify more intrinsic benefits, like; having a decision-making role or that the business allowed people to express personal competence or engage in more personally rewarding vocational activity by being constructed around their interests and competences. Others volunteered that self-employment was more stimulating or provided more opportunities to learn than other employment or service options. For many, self-employment had an additional political dimension, in that it was perceived as allowing

them to directly contest some of the more disabling social constructions of impairment, including that disabled people are less productive members of their community.

The authors also identified a range of factors that, from the research evidence, appeared to influence the viability of self-employment for disabled people. In their evaluation of a self-employment project in Iowa, Blanck et al (2000) found the personal characteristics of the entrepreneur predicted successful Vocational Rehabilitation case closure, with white, male clients who had a post-school education and a less severe impairment most likely to achieve successful case closure. Yamamoto, Unruh & Bullis (2011) recommended, therefore, that resources be tailored in a way that permit all disabled people to access the intrinsic benefits and quality of life improvements people identified as following self-determined, self-employment.

Like Reddington & Fitzsimmons's (2013) findings, being able to access adequate start-up capital emerged as one of the principle challenges facing disabled people interested in self-employment. In the US, research suggests that disabled people rely on a patchwork of funding streams beyond their family, including some vocational rehabilitation providers, grant programs and community small business development organisations, leading Yamamoto, Unruh & Bullis (2011) to conclude that establishing transparent and supportive systems for micro-lending would improve disabled people's access to self-employment. Similarly, Yamamoto, Unruh & Bullis (2011) found that the perception that self-employment might compromise disabled people's welfare entitlements was also found to represent a significant barrier to self-employment.

One of the major themes within Yamamoto, Unruh & Bullis (2011) analysis of the research literature was that how familiar vocational rehabilitation counsellors were with self-employment was an important determinant of the viability of a micro-enterprise or other forms of self-employment. Research included in the literature review identified vocational rehabilitation counsellor concern about their ability to provide appropriate information or to adequately support disabled people thinking of starting and maintaining a business - coupled with low expectations and/or fears that a business venture may fail, strongly influenced counsellor's enthusiasm for self-employment. Yamamoto, Unruh & Bullis (2011) also noted, that vocational contracts that prioritized competitive employment or other performance indicators tended to suppress the acquisition of expertise within disability or vocational support services. Conversely, two papers also included in Yamamoto, Unruh & Bullis's (2011) literature review reported that a more positive attitude towards self-employment by rehabilitation providers was associated with higher case-closures of clients in self-employment. Despite this finding, Yamamoto, Unruh & Bullis (2011) ended their paper



by concluding that vocational counsellors tended neither to be adequately trained in business development, nor equipped to provide the resources and supports clients would benefit from in self-employment. The authors did, however, highlight the emergence of training and assistance programs to assist vocational providers to familiarize themselves with the benefits of self-employment and key components of support like market analysis, business planning, and finding and drawing in additional resources.

The other determinant of the viability of self-employment Yamamoto, Unruh & Bullis's (2011) identified was people's ability to access business support. Evidence suggests that most micro-enterprises in the US co-opt business, information technology and legal assistance by mining people's informal social networks. Yamamoto, Unruh & Bullis (2011) final recommendation was that vocational support services act as a conduit to the effective coordination of community resources, including delivering training in supported employment best practice(s) and preparing disabled people for entrepreneurship across all potential stakeholders in the cluster of supports about a potential micro-enterprise.

Two other papers included in this literature review approached the question of which models or support practices appear to offer disabled people the best vocational outcomes by conducting a systematic literature review, but by narrowing the scope of the search to focus on outcomes for two identifiable populations.

The purpose of the systematic review conducted by **Nicholas, Attridge, Zwaigenbaum & Clarke (2014)** was to identify studies that addressed employment support provided to people with an autistic spectrum disorder (ASD). They noted that whilst previous research had highlighted barriers to acquiring and retaining employment specific to people with ASD, (like difficulty interpreting social cues or generalizing employment related tasks or the lack of accommodation within workplaces that can often represent a challenging physical and sensory environment for people with ASD), identifying and evaluating supported employment interventions tailored to vocational support needs of this cohort remained understudied.

Nicholas et al (2014) used a critical interpretive synthesis approach to describe findings reported in ten studies that had examined employment support provided to people with ASD. The authors represented the research as falling within two domains of vocational intervention.

Six of the 10 papers reviewed assessed elements of supported employment intended to improve vocational outcomes for people with ASD. Within those studies, job coaching emerged as a common and consistently important component of employment support for



people with ASD, and in particular, providing ongoing, onsite job support. Comparison studies revealed that support from a job coach and a performance program was associated with a range of positive outcomes including; improved employment stability, work performance, higher wages and wage increases over time. Nicholas et al (2014) also noted that the research evidence pointed to the quality of the relationship between a job coach and employer being an important determinant of the job-related outcomes. Employment assistance that included providing support and training to employers and co-workers was associated with better outcomes, especially as participants in one study identified the social context of employment, including communicating with supervisors and colleagues as one of the more challenging aspects of their employment.

Most of the studies included in Nicholas et al (2014) review focused on the acquisition of vocational tasks required to maintain employment. One, longitudinal study reported finding evidence of the benefits of vocational skill development programs beginning in childhood for people with ASD, however the majority of studies concentrated on task-related job training. Nicholas et al (2014) identified this body of research as falling within a second domain of vocational intervention that focused on application of media and technological supports.

Two studies, for example, reported positive outcomes for the use of video-taped modeling, the first as support for conducting job interviews and a second as a way of demonstrating the skills necessary to conduct work related tasks. In another study, off-site simulation-based training was also found to improve the acquisition of new job skills compared to employees who didn't receive stimulation training. Nicholas et al (2014) also reported promising results for a study that investigated the use of a performance cue system that allowed employees to learn specific work related behaviours by using a personal digital assistant (an adapted iPhone application). In the study, participants were required to learn 63 scripted behaviours which five of the six participants accomplished, only after the introduction of the performance cue system. Findings from this study led Nicholas et al (2014) to suggest that technology based cueing of deconstructed tasks might be a useful way support complex task learning.



Taken together, the studies included in Nicholas et al's (2014) literature review argue for adopting a much broader understanding of vocational intervention for people with ASD, by including support elements that encompass;

- Effective job preparation.
- Tailored job matching.
- Ongoing job monitoring and job coaching including task analysis and cueing.
- Support to navigate the social complexities of employment.
- Job and career planning.
- Support and training for co-workers.
- An attentiveness to an employee with ASD's inclusion within workplace culture.
- A close liaison between employer and job coach including monitoring the satisfaction of the employer and employee.

In their systematic literature review, [Arbesban & Logsdon \(2011\)](#) sought to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions focused on improving the participation of people with a serious mental health condition in employment and education that fell within occupational therapy's scope of practice.

Recognition of the value of productive forms of activity, including employment, in terms of maintaining a person's health and wellbeing have been central to the philosophical basis for occupational therapy since its inception, and Arbesban & Logsdon (2011) noted that empirical evidence provided by studies conducted within the occupational therapy paradigm affirm an association between productive occupation and the strengthening of a person's sense of responsibility, identity, self-esteem and the perception of building a positive future.

Forty-six peer reviewed journal papers were included in Arbesban & Logsdon (2011) final analysis and the results were reported as providing strong evidence for the efficacy of supported employment and specifically for the Individual Placements and Support Model (IPS). Meta-analyses included within the literature consistently reported better employment outcomes were experienced by people with a serious mental health condition supported by the IPS model of supported employment compared to conventional vocational rehabilitation support models, including job related social skills training and incentive therapy. Other systematic reviews that compared supported employment with pre-vocational training found that people with a serious mental health condition who participated in supported employment programs earned significantly more and worked more hours than clients in pre-vocational training. Supported employment programs with high fidelity to the IPS model were also associated with more positive outcomes when compared to other supported



employment programs, including people with a serious mental health condition experiencing higher rates of employment, shorter lengths of time to find a job and longer periods of employment.

Four studies included in Arbesban & Logsdon's (2011) review examined the effectiveness of supported education programs at the tertiary level. Those studies found programs that incorporated goal setting, skill development and the management of resources improved enrollment. Research also indicated that students level of participation was related to their motivation, satisfaction, enjoyment and learning. Interestingly Arbesban & Logsdon (2011) reported that enrollment was highest when programs were delivered in the "group condition" and empowerment and school efficacy in the "classroom condition" and poorest for both enrollment and efficacy when delivered in the "individual condition."

On the basis of their review, Arbesban & Logsdon (2011) also asserted that results for the IPS model were stronger when paired with social skills training or cognitive skills training programs, like the *"Thinking Skills for Work"* program. The evidence suggested to them that when compared to people receiving supported employment alone, people with a serious mental health condition who also received cognitive skills or social skills training tailored to their work environment were likely to experience better outcomes in terms of employment rates, hours of employment, job tenure and income. Conversely, the efficacy of social skills training alone was mixed, with research evidence suggesting that it was more effective when coupled with employment and follow-up support.

Arbesban & Logsdon (2011) suggested that given occupational therapy's traditional focus on designing compensatory strategies and breaking activity into constituent parts to assist task mastery, the discipline represents a useful ally to support services seeking to increase the participation of people with a serious mental health condition in productive occupations.

Almost all of the research that has explored the efficacy of the Individual Placement and Support (IPS) model has occurred in the American context. In their study, **Morris, Waghorn, Robson, Moore & Edwards (2014)**, sought to determine whether the model could be replicable elsewhere by evaluating the impact of implementing the IPS approach to supported employment in the Australian disability support context. Four IPS programs were established through formal partnerships between adult mental health services and disability employment services at four locations in regional New South Wales. Education, training and support was provided to the partnered services by the paper's authors, with a range of vocational outcomes experienced by 95 unemployed mental health service clients tracked



over 12 months and compared to national results for a similar cohort receiving conventional vocational support.

Following external, on-site assessments, two of the four sites were reported by Morris et al (2014) as achieved good fidelity with IPS principles (Scored over 100/125) suggesting that the model could be effectively employed in other disability support contexts.

Over the 12 months that the intervention ran, 57% of participants commenced competitive employment. Over 9 months, 47% of participants commenced competitive employment, a significantly higher rate of placement than the national benchmark of 26% for the same period. The odds that a participant supported by a site that had adopted the IPS approach would commence employment within 9 months were 2.8 times higher than the national average. Similarly, 45% of participants achieved continuous employment for 13 weeks or more within 12 months and 36% achieved the same milestone in 9 months. The Australian national benchmark for mental health service clients achieving continuous employment for 13 weeks in 9 months was 14% and the odds that a participant supported by a site that had adopted the IPS approach would achieve this milestone were 3.5 times higher than for a similar population supported by a conventional supported employment service. Morris et al (2014) also reported the average duration from referral to commencing job seeking was 55 days and becoming employed was 149 days. They also noted that job diversity was good at all sites, with the number of different job types (48) approached the total number of job placements (54).

In Morris et al's study (2014), they melded support provided by mental health services and disability employment services to implement the IPS supported employment approach. Research evidence is beginning to demonstrate that, rather than vocational services working in isolation, "braided" service delivery may offer disabled people seeking employment a better chance of getting and keeping a job.

Henry, Laszlo & Nicholson (2015) begin their paper by detailing the rationale for establishing five Regional Employment Collectives (RECs) established with the assistance of funding grants provided by the "*Work with Limits*" initiative in Massachusetts (USA). The key aim for the project was to establish networks of engaged employers and innovative, provider partners in order to develop a coordinated strategy to increase the labour force participation of disabled people. The longer-term vision of "*Work Without Limits*" is for Massachusetts to be the first state where the employment rate of people with disabilities is equal to people without disabilities.



The five RECs brought together cross-disability employment service providers, employers and employer groups like the chamber of commerce, disabled people, schools, tertiary education providers and training institutes who had different funding streams and who had never previously aligned their employer engagement or job development efforts. The aim of the initiative was to develop innovative solutions to the problem of the unequal access disabled people have to employment that no one organization could achieve by itself.

Including employers within the collectives was critical for, as Henry, Laszlo & Nicholson (2015) noted, vocational service providers traditional "supply side" focus on individualized service delivery, tailored job creation and skill development has deflected attention from "demand side" issues, including addressing business needs, concerns and the challenges related to hiring and retaining disabled employees. Henry, Laszlo & Nicholson (2015) also drew attention to research that suggests employers can find the myriad of providers and programs confusing when what they are looking for are relationships with job developers that respond to employer need and present the business case for hiring a disabled employee.

In the second half of their paper, Henry, Laszlo & Nicholson (2015) described the results of their study. The purpose of Henry, Laszlo & Nicholson's (2015) research was to identify what members of the RECs felt were the elements that were needed to build and sustain an effective employment collaboration. To do this they employed a participatory research approach known as concept mapping to address the question, *'What does it take to build and sustain an employment collaborative for individuals with disabilities?'* The method involves participants generating statements in response to the research question, which in a subsequent phase are sorted in terms of perceived thematic similarity and rated in terms of each statements importance and level of challenge. In the final phase, multidimensional scaling and hierarchical cluster analysis is used to generate concept maps that visually group the statements thematic clusters. A six-cluster solution was found to match the data and Henry, Laszlo & Nicholson (2015) were then able to rank the clusters in terms of their average perceived importance and level of challenge.

The cluster of statements REC members assessed as most important and most challenging (in terms of building and sustaining an employment collective) were those that addressed employer need. Statements in this cluster all related to the need for RECs to develop effective working relationships with employers. The two clusters assessed as being the second and third most important elements (to building an effective collaboration) were engaging job developers and innovating strategically. Statements included in the engaging job developers cluster addressed the need to expand opportunities for constructing



networks of job developers with good working relationships and coordinating outreach strategies. And statements included in the innovating strategically cluster addressed the need to develop new strategic approaches to providing and funding employment services.

Henry, Laszlo & Nicholson (2015) noted that all of the clusters with higher importance and challenge scores included statements that were specific to building a collaborative that focused on employment, whereas clusters with lower average scores included more general statements, reflecting actions needed to build a collaborative regardless of its intended purpose. Statements seen as critical but rated as less important, related to the need for partners to adopt collaborative rather than competitive approaches, to develop a shared vision and plan as well as having clear roles responsibilities and effective communication between collective partners.

Braiding support and building organizational and individual networks feature amongst a number of systems changes **Citrona, Brooks-Lanea, Crandella, Brady, Coopera & Revell (2008)** identify as critical to the transition one community rehabilitation provider made from traditional vocational practice to providing customized employment opportunities for disabled people in Georgia (USA) too.

Citrona et al (2008) begin their descriptive study by suggesting that the social practices and assumptions of traditional service delivery may represent one of the more significant barriers disabled people face in living authentically self-determined lives. Enfranchised employment and community participation can, they suggest, be at the frontline of solutions for addressing the disempowerment of disabled people, including developing ways of supporting people that disrupt the well-worn path to stereotypical employment options, unemployment and disabled people's participation in "sheltered" work environments. In their paper, Citrona et al (2008) detail systemic changes that the Cobb and Douglas Counties Community Services Boards made to develop customized employment opportunities for disabled people.

Customized employment is a flexible process designed to personalize the employment relationship between a job candidate and an employer in a way that meets the needs of both. It is based on identifying the strengths, conditions, and interests of a job candidate as well as the specific needs of the employer through a process of discovery. Methodologies used as part of the process of customizing employment include:



- Creating a job from one or more, but not all, of the tasks of an existing job (**Job carving**)
- Creating a new job by combining elements of several jobs (**Job negotiation**)
- Creating a new job based on unmet workplace needs (**Job creation**)
- Two or more people sharing the same job (**Job sharing**)
- Self-employment, including the use of micro-enterprise (**Self employment**)

In 2001 the Cobb and Douglas Counties Community Services Board (the Agency) received a funding grant intended to foster system change across all disability services included in a "community assemblage" to deliver customized employment to disabled people (Project Exceed). Of the 198 disabled people who entered the five year project, 141 achieved employment outcomes including a negotiated job in the competitive labour market (73), self-employment (59) and competitive employment that didn't need job negotiation (9).

Citrona et al (2008) reported that the shift to providing customized employment support had acted as the catalyst to systematic organizational changes that appeared to underscore the positive vocational outcomes project participants experienced, and through their analysis of participant case-study, described six key transformations (staff development, community partnerships and diversified funding, sustainability, Shift in managerial approaches and supervision, changes in human resource processes and expanding customized employment to diverse populations).

To promote staff development, the Agency purchased best-practice books with key departmental leaders conducting facilitated book club discussion to alert staff to baseline skills and social practices before moving deeper into customized employment support. The Agency also searched for, and invested in an Online Job Coach Certification course offered by the University of Georgia. Staff development was also included as a key area in the Agency's strategic plan to further foster a culture of reading and critical reflection.

Community partnerships were also developed, including the creation of local business networks that focused on identifying and meeting the needs of businesses as well as job seekers. The business owner network acted as a conduit to other community employers and provided staff with a place they could go to identify potential job leads. Partnerships were also forged with the local micro-enterprise centre and One Stop Career Centre to provide disabled people with access to micro-loans and the cluster of supports that can assist the establishment and running of small client owned businesses. Staff also became proficient at identifying grant and funding streams to create "braided funding packages," that responded to the unique goals and challenges people brought. The Agency also developed the



capacity to provide short term "start-up loans" from a funding pool generated by donated funds, flexible dollars and endowments and foundations.

In Citrona et al's (2008) paper, the authors detailed a range of significant changes the Agency made to its organizational structure. Consistent with the emphasis of staff development, the Agency was described as moving to a flatter organizational structure. Staff were invited to assume different roles based on their interests and skill by using the same strength-based customized employment approach. Self-directed work teams were formed and person-centred planning adopted, including using customized outcomes established through the planning process as a metric of team performance rather than stereotypical employment outcome measures. Providing key stakeholders to opportunities to experience the success of customized employment was identified as an important determinant of the success of the organizational changes. Press releases, presentations, feature stories in trade journals, newspapers and on public radio were described as helping to change the communities and staff's view of the mission, vision and values of the Agency. Regular "Customized Employment Team Meetings" were also held and any staff person could invite employers, family members and other community stakeholders to "open invitation forums" designed to problem solve around people achieving their customized employment goals. Scope was also provided for staff to work more flexible work hours.

The Agency felt it was important to populate the organisation with staff who had the enthusiasm and creativity for system change. Three areas of improvement were identified to achieve this aim. Tapping a non-traditional pool of applicants through the placement of advertisements in, for example, arts magazines, inviting staff or families to recommend candidates and building relationships with potential feeder organisations like the university or local businesses that had shown a commitment to promoting customized employment.

Citrona et al (2008) concluded their paper by presenting two case studies of people who had achieved customized employment outcomes. The also cautioned that the social policy drift towards entrenched and incentivized outcome thresholds would have prevented most of the people they supported from achieving their self-determined employment aspirations. It would also, they suggested, have suppressed the flux, creativity and outcomes-based chaos that characterized the system changes needed for disabled people to get the jobs they wanted for themselves.



In the final section, the focus shifts from service models to specific support practices as we present findings for a further seven studies that investigated the relationship between the social practices of support and a range of outcomes indicative of disabled people being assisted to get the jobs they really wanted for themselves.

Vocational support practice

Whereas most of the papers outlined in the previous section focused on organizational attributes that underscored vocational service delivery, in this section we turn our attention to research conducted to explore the efficacy of specific models of support.

All four of the first papers detailed are literature reviews, the first two of which seek to compare the efficacy of different employment related interventions and the remaining two explore in more detail, outcomes associated with customized employment approaches like those Citrona et al (2008) outlined as being adopted by the Cobb and Douglas Counties Community Services Board.

In their review of the literature, [Nord, Luecking, Mank, Kiernan, & Wray \(2013\)](#) began by pointing out that, even though employment represents a presumptive right (and expectation) within social policy and/or vocational rehabilitation legislation in countries like New Zealand and America, having a job has remained the exception rather than the norm for disabled people. Following their analysis of research published in the American context, Nord et al (2013) identified six attributes of the overarching employment support system and five employment specific interventions that empirical evidence suggested might assist people with a learning disability to address this disabling inequality.

An examination of employment related research describes outcomes at the system and state level, led Nord et al (2013) to identify five attributes as associated with higher performing state systems.

- The use of flexible employment service policies that identify employment as the preferred outcome of all people with a learning disability and which provide latitude for vocational providers to innovate.
- The use of flexible funding to accommodate the changing employment support needs of each person.
- An effective braiding of multiple funding sources.
- The use of incentives to guide the service delivery system to implement integrated employment services and networks.



- The use of data to monitor and evaluate progress and goal attainment.

In addition to systemic change, Nord et al (2013) also highlighted the need for investment in the employment support workforce. Like those changes to the social practices of staff that Citrona et al (2008) identified as central to the implementation of customized employment, Nord et al (2013) argued that providing staff with knowledge and skills attuned to best-practice was necessary if people with a learning disability were to access the higher rates of job placement, wages and work-hours.

Nord et al (2013) also pointed out that research in the area of employment for people with a learning disability has a lengthy history and, over the course of that time, the practice developments that have resulted in positive vocational outcomes all share a common presumption of employability. Spanning from the more instructional interventions of the 1970s, Nord et al (2013) identified five support interventions they felt research had consistently resulted in improved vocational outcomes,

- Interventions that built on instructional methods that employed detailed task analysis and instructional techniques to create models rooted in behavioural chaining and practice. In particular, Nord et al (2013) identified the emerge of technology based interventions that, for example, used personal devices like smartphones to provide cues and sequence prompts as holding great promise. The authors also suggested that these interventions are especially effective when paired with the use of natural workplace supports. Interventions that assist a disabled employee to recognize and draw on the cues and supports that occur naturally in the workplace and/or assisting co-workers to provide appropriate instruction or supervision, consistently improve employment outcomes for employees with a learning disability.
- The adoption of person-centred planning approaches that similarly drew on the creativity and energy of natural support networks. Nord et al (2013) also asserted that the exclusive focus on an individual's interests and abilities was as central to the success of the personal planning approaches as the ability of the disabled person's family and friends to assist in finding or developing employment opportunities that are likely to succeed.
- Evidence suggests that person-centred career planning is most effective when partnered with best practices in developing job placements and facilitating ongoing job support. Nord et al (2013) identified customized employment as one of the most promising service interventions. Recent research suggests that the process of designing a job around the unique skills and talents of a job seeker by selecting the various job tasks that directly match the needs of an employer are associated with



better outcomes for people with a learning disability, including higher wages, more work hours and greater job retention.

- Studies that have examined the employment trajectory of young disabled people transitioning to adult lives has demonstrated that hands on work experiences and parental expectation are strongly correlated with post-school employment. Interventions that involved school and vocational providers collaborating or the implementation of innovative work experience placements like internships and job shadowing were identified as improving the employment outcomes for young people with a learning disability beginning their adult lives.
- Nord et al (2013) also noted that benefit abatement policies and the loss of allowances was often identified as a barrier to employment and they noted that programs that also included benefit planning also appeared to improve employment outcomes for disabled people.

Wittenburg, Mann & Tompkins (2013) reached similar conclusions about the benefits of customized employment, the value of targeting younger disabled people and the negative impacts of benefit abatement and thresholds for accessing income support, in their review of available large-scale evaluations of employment-focused interventions in the US disability system.

As a way of contextualising their study, Wittenburg, Mann & Tompkins (2013) noted that the United States has a complex and highly fragmented network of disability support programs that can act as a barrier to program participation by disabled people seeking employment and impede the development of coherent and comprehensive interventions to improve employment outcomes. They also observed that, despite the imperative to reduce welfare dependency being a primary driver of employment related social policy, employment and rehabilitation supports were not as well funded as income and health supports, accounting for approximately 1% of state and federal expenditure in 2008.

In their literature review, Wittenburg, Mann & Tompkins (2013) reviewed evaluation data for 10 state or federally funded demonstration programs that were conducted both prior to and after the implementation of the Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Improvement Act 1999 (Ticket Act),

The results of four major demonstrations implemented prior to the Ticket Act were detailed, including; the *Structured Training and Employment Transitional Services* (STETS) which provided an introductory work experience, employment with on the job training and post-employment follow up and job supports to young people with a learning disability,



Transitional Employment Training Demonstration (TETD) which provided job placement, on the job training and job retention services to adults with a learning disability aged between 18-40 years, *Project Network*, that provided employment related case-management services to check the efficacy of four different service models in moving people with a significant impairment into full-time employment, and the *State Partnership Initiative* (SPI).

Wittenburg, Mann & Tompkins (2013) found that, although some interventions had success at promoting employment outcomes like improved employment rates (TETD, Project Network & SPI) and earning (TETD) none of the demonstrations succeeded in lowering benefit amounts or caseloads. The authors concluded that the TETD demonstration established the effectiveness of transitional employment support for young people with a learning disability and that in general, the interventions that had the largest employment and earnings impacts provided customized and more intensive support to narrower target population.

They also noted that, particularly for the TETD demonstration, the interventions were typically cost effective with most of the demonstration effects met by transitioning people away from more expensive sheltered employment settings. What the evaluations did not quantify, however, was the multiplier effect of savings in other forms of health and disability service use because of the known association between employment, greater independence and health and other quality of life improvements.

Similar findings were reported by three evaluations of employment related demonstration projects conducted after the Ticket Act that Wittenburg, Mann & Tompkins (2013) also included in their review.

The *Ticket to Work* (TTW) program was phased in in America between 2002 & 2004, with the aim of providing disabled people greater choice regarding employment support by assigning "tickets" that could be used to purchase support from an array of approved public and private vocational providers. Under the program, an outcomes-based funding framework was also established, similar to that foreshadowed by the Draft Proposals for Change to Employment Participation and Inclusion Services released by the New Zealand Ministry of Social Development (Ministry of Social Development, 2015). An evaluation conducted by Stapleton et al (2008) reported by Wittenburg, Mann & Tompkins (2013) measured the programs efficacy of the Ticket to Ride program by comparing employment outcomes for states where it had and had not been implemented. Impact estimates from Stapleton et al's (2008) study showed the employment benefits were too small to differentiate from historical trends and that an increase in service utilization had not

produced a corresponding increase in disabled people's earnings or a reduction in benefit payments.

The three demonstrations Wittenburg, Mann & Tompkins (2013) included in their review that occurred after the Ticket Act were the *Benefit Offset Pilot Demonstration* (BOPD) which decreased the rate of abatement above the existing income threshold, *Mental Health Treatment Strategy* (MHTS) that braided supported employment support and medication management for young people with a serious mental health condition and the *Youth Transition Demonstration* (YTD) that melded job coaching, employment support and benefit counselling for young people at risk of receiving benefits after leaving school.

Wittenburg, Mann & Tompkins (2013) reported mixed results for the BOPD, depending on whether disabled people entered the program earning above or below the income threshold. Positive impacts were typically experienced by people earning below the income threshold, suggesting that people's increased participation in the labour force was explained by current legislation exposing disabled people to the risk of material poverty. Decreases in income, however, were observed for people earning above the income threshold, suggesting that the changes to the abatement rate allowed people to balance maintaining their income whilst managing the impacts of impairment by working fewer hours.

For people with a serious mental health condition, the effect of braiding mental health and vocational support within the MHTS program was to improve employment, earnings and health outcomes. Program participants achieved an employment rate of 60% compared to 40% of participants who didn't receive MHTS services and Wittenburg, Mann & Tompkins (2013) noted that program participation was associated with other cost saving benefits including reduced hospitalizations. More intensive supports were also found to have a positive on the young people who accessed the YTD program who experienced significantly higher rates of employment and annual earnings compared to services that engaged with the program but provided fewer hours support.

In general terms, therefore, evaluation findings for demonstrations that began after the Ticket Act mirrored those that preceded it, in so far as interventions that delivered customized supports within more narrowly targeted interventions (MHTS & YTD) had much stronger impact programs than more generalised interventions (TTW & BOPD).

Wittenburg, Mann & Tompkins (2013) also singled out the Individualised Placement and Support Model (IPS) as a promising approach that had the additional advantages of being documented in a practice manual (Becker & Drake, 2003), an evolving support infrastructure



including fidelity measures and research evidence that has found the employment impacts of IPS translate into other disability support contexts.

The passing of the Workforce Investment Act (1998) in America made provision for disabled people to gain universal access to the nation's generic employment and training service system through One-Stop Career Centres. In a largely descriptive study, **Luecking, Cuozzo, Leedy & Seleznow (2008)** detailed the range of adaptations and interventions made within Maryland to meet the employment aspirations as well as the results of an intervention that included braiding support provision and adopting a customized approach to supported employment.

Sixty-two people with a range of impairments, including people with a learning disability (27%), mental health condition (18%), mobility impairment (15%), autism (6%) or multiple impairments (6%) enrolled for the demonstration project, 89% of whom achieved customized, integrated employment during the four-year demonstration. Luecking et al (2008) also reported that, of those employed, 80% remained employed for at least three months and almost half achieving continuous employment for at least 12 months. Moreover, the average wage earned by employed participants (\$9.31/hour [US]) exceeded the state minimum by over \$3.00 [US] and the average number of hours that participants were employed (22 hours/week) and average time to placement (5.25 months) were better than that achieved by conventional vocational service delivery.

Luecking et al (2008) attributed the results to two key project elements. Firstly, that the organisations partnered through the project adopted a consistent customized employment strategy. This attribute of the intervention was described by Luecking et al (2008) as having four, stepwise elements:

- The facilitation of a planning and job exploration (discovery) process intended to build a positive personal profile that identifies the skills, interests and accommodation needs of an individual, with information gathered presented at a person-centred planning meeting to key individuals who assist the job seeker to develop their job search plan. Within this stage, a task list that details the possible contribution a person can make to an employer is developed.
- An Individualised job search plan that identifies a list of employers to contact and visit is developed, with the express purpose of learning whether an employer has the need for the performance of tasks identified in the profile



- Negotiation with prospective employers for the assignment of tasks within an employment context drawing on the job carving, negotiation and sharing techniques described above in the paper by Citrioni et al (2008).
- Identifying and implementing individualized post-placement supports and accommodations that may include job coaching, assistive technology, or other interventions that might assist the employee in their employment role.

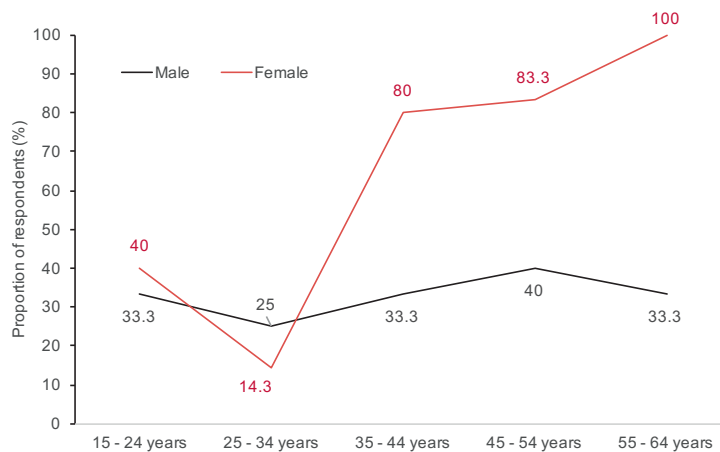
The other intervention element Luecking et al (2008) felt instrumental to the success of the demonstration was the way the generic employment and training service provider (One-Stop Career Centre) created a space for the “braiding” of formally disconnected services and support funding. They felt that collectively pooling resources and developing an integrated and coordinated response to each disabled person’s unique employment aspirations contributed to the achievement of outcomes that were beyond the scope of a single provider (or narrower categorical funding).

In New Zealand, disabled people seeking vocational support tend to be steered towards specialist employment providers that have continued to work in isolation from mainstream employment services or more generic employment supports. For disabled people, collaborating with mainstream providers has a range of possible advantages, including exposing job seekers to a greater pool of job vacancies, pre-existing employer networks and perhaps a more effective way of changing the narrative of employment towards promoting an increased understanding of the social capital and business advantages of greater workforce diversity. In the National Online Survey conducted as part of the “*Getting the life I want*” project, New Zealander’s accessing vocational support from CCS Disability Action appeared to recognize the potential value of disability support services collaborating with mainstream providers. Survey respondents asked to rate the personal usefulness of a support approach that included accessing mainstream employment networks on the 100-point Likert scale described previously, rated the strategy second amongst an array of 10 other employment approaches (average= 60 points). Approaching seven out of every ten respondents rated the approach above the scale midpoint and 40% of respondents rated its usefulness higher than two-thirds of the scale maximum (Milner et al, 2016).

Interestingly, the model appeared to be valued most highly by women and older respondents who had, perhaps, either been employed previously or been marginalized from employment for longer periods (Figure 9). Milner et al (2016) also reported that in the interviews they conducted, some key informants expressed reservation about how well their Vocational Coordinator was able to represent their skill-set or recognize an appropriate business opportunity. This appeared to Milner et al (2016) to be especially true for people

who had previously worked in professional occupations and who were aware of the “cultural cues” and language that coded for a person’s value to potential employers. For this cohort, disability providers working alongside mainstream employers appeared to be perceived as providing a better conduit to the skilled occupations that disabled people are disproportionately absent from.

Figure 10 The proportion of respondents who rated using mainstream employment networks above 2/3 of the scale maximum by age and gender



To facilitate universal access by disabled people to One-Stop Career Centres in America, the federal government installed *Disability Program Navigators*. The primary role of navigators is to ensure that disabled people have equivalent physical and programmatic access and that staff, vocational partner organisations and collaborating business supports, “braided” through One-Stop Career Centres, offer welcoming and accessible assistance. In addition to expressing an expectation that disability providers work towards disabled people’s increased use of generic community services, current New Zealand vocational contracts include a similar expectation that funded services play a role in building “*inclusive and welcoming mainstream services*,” (Ministry of Social Development, 2016). In line with this vision, bringing best-practice supported employment principles to mainstream vocational services and collaborating with them in ways that open up previously dislocated networks, expertise, training and resources would, on the strength of the empirical evidence described in the previous three studies, appear to offer disabled New Zealanders with fresh approach to contesting their un(der)employment. CCS Disability Action would also be well positioned to trial *Disability Program Navigation* in the New Zealand context.



Luecking et al's (2008) study was included alongside 15 non-data based papers and 9 other data-based research papers in a literature review conducted by **Riesen, Morgana & Griffin (2015)**. The purpose of the literature was to identify the conceptual and empirical basis for customized employment by examining peer reviewed papers published between 2001–2015.

After reviewing the papers, Riesen, Morgan & Griffin (2015) affirmed previous research cited in this review by concluding that customized employment was contributing to positive integrated employment outcomes in the United States for disabled people. Moreover, in addition to evidence that customized employment practices improved vocational outcomes, (like; integrated employment placement rates, average wage and hours worked and measures of quality of life), the accumulation of non-data journal articles has, Riesen, Morgana & Griffin (2015) suggested, helped to establish a common conceptual framework for customized employment.

A number of common themes emerged from the more practically orientated non-data papers they reviewed, that can be drawn on by New Zealand supported employment providers thinking of adopting a customized employment model, including that;

- Customized employment appeared to be particularly successful in supporting young people transitioning from school to competitive employment. The model was described as achieving the best outcomes when vocational and school employment supports blended resources and began the planning process early.
- Projects that trained stakeholder in customized employment principles and practices were represented as achieving better vocational outcomes. A number of case-studies described training and engaging special education teachers, occupational therapists, vocational rehabilitation professionals and employers as part of the “braided” support offered within a customized employment approach.
- Two of the five non-data papers included in Riesen, Morgana & Griffin's (2015) review described the benefits of incorporating job development practices into small business, suggesting that employers could benefited from applying the model at the same time as the vocational “assemblage” gained the benefit of an expanding network of inclusive worksites. All employers who hired a disabled person into customized employment included in a telephone survey conducted by Luecking, Cuzzo & Buchanan (2006) said they would recommend customized employment to other employers.
- In the American context, evidence suggests that using One-Stop Career Centres as a “hub” for service collaboration tended to foster interagency cooperation and the



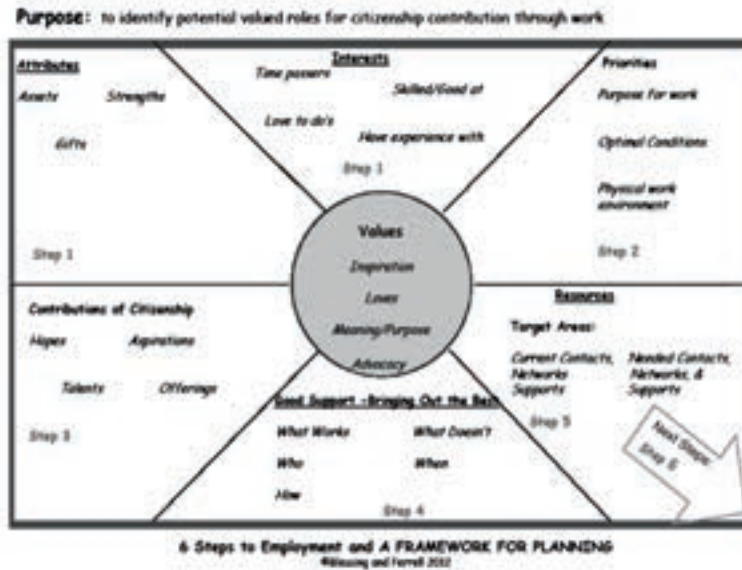
development of innovative customized employment practices. Interventions seeded by the use of One-Stop Career Centres this way included career club curricula, mentoring programs and internships.

- Preliminary work has also been done to develop a customized employment competency model. In a paper by Harvey, Szoc, Rosa, Pohl & Jenkins (2013), cited in Riesen, Morgan & Griffin's (2015) review, the authors outline a competency model that clusters 83 core knowledge, skills, activities and other characteristics of customized employment into step-wise components (discovery, job search planning, job development and negotiation and post-employment support). Such a model would be useful both as a guide (and fidelity measure) to vocational services seeking to adopt customized employment and as a way of determining which components of the approach are key determinants of successful outcomes for people with differing kinds of impairment.

Riesen, Morgan & Griffin's (2015) conclude, however, that the absence of research that had adopted an experimental or single subject design meant that it is difficult, as yet, to determine the relative efficacy of customized employment. Without systematic comparisons between a control condition or other models of support, it is difficult to know which components of a support model that includes a wide range of different support strategies (discovery, negotiation, job carving, informational interviewing, self-employment, systematic instruction) might account for successful placements and which elements might be most productively emphasized in different support contexts. Without more validation research, Riesen, Morgan & Griffin's (2015) cautioned that vocational services were exposed to the risk of adopting an under-defined model with mixed fidelity of implementation.

"Working on purpose" is one example of a planning framework developed to provide a practical resource to vocational practitioners that mirrors steps identified as embedded in the customized employment approach. In a paper published in 2014, co-designer of the *"Working on purpose,"* 6-step model and *Framework for Planning*, **Carol Blessing (2014)**, described the aim of the model as being to engage disabled people in an intentional person-centred process of discovery of their potential and purpose and to realize this potential through coordinated planning and action. The model is supported by a 6-step *"Framework for Planning."* The top half of the framework details prompts intended to elicit information that captures a person's positive attributes, strengths, gifts skills and experiences, and the lower half of the framework, steps intended to mobilise a person's support network. (Figure 11).

Figure 11 A framework for planning template (Blessing & Ferrell; 2012)



The six steps described by the model and presented sequentially in the framework are:

- Develop a *positive profile* of the person by telling stories and sharing insight that build a picture of a person's attributes, assets, interests and capacity.
- Define the *purpose* for seeking employment by arriving at a clear understanding of the reason a person may be *seeking employment*.
- *Exploring the field* of opportunity based on the information learnt in steps 1 & 2. Blessing (2014) recommended "asset mapping" or developing an inventory of community locations where the contribution a person might make through their gifts and capacities might be accepted and welcomed.
- Identify and select the best approach to *supporting employment*, including drawing on best practice supported employment models to assist a person to obtain, learn and sustain employment.
- Identify personal and professional *networks* and leverage them in the search for employment or to provide points of introduction and connectivity. Blessing (2014) also recommended relationship mapping as a potentially useful tool.
- Develop a plan and *take action* including defining the steps network members will take.

One of the more recurrent themes to emerge within the research included in this literature review was of the impact that benefit abatement and/or people's fear of losing welfare benefits had on employment outcomes. Similar findings have been reported in the New Zealand context, including for people who accessed vocational support from CCS Disability Action. Following the conversations Milner et al (2016) had with key informants in the *"Getting the life I want"* project, the research team described participants as sharing a common fear of the uncertainties of benefit abatement. Moreover, although eight out of every ten National Online Survey respondents said they wanted paid employment (80%), 42% expressed a preference for working less than the incentivized 15-hour threshold the New Zealand Ministry of Social Development has established as representing a good social investment and more than half wanted to work for between 10-25 hours rather than achieving full-time employment. For some, the preference was economically rational. Working beyond the abatement threshold was perceived to be the equivalent of working for less. *"Basically every dollar I earn they take off me."* we were told. For others, part-time work responded to the embodied realities of impairment, including to fatigue, discomfort and other health-related reasons. A number of key informants also expressed concern about their ability to continue to claim the Supported Living Payment and associated benefits following employment or should they experience episodic periods of ill health.

In the last paper included in this review [Gruman, Schimmel, Shugrue, Porter, Koppelman & Robison \(2014\)](#), noted that disabled Americans experience similar limits on work hours to maintain disability related benefits and that many entitlements make disabling assumptions about a person's (in)capacity to work. Unlike disabled New Zealanders, however, people in America can access trained benefit counselors whose role it is to explain the rules governing their entry into employment including the impact it will have on a range of entitlements. Benefit counselors also assist disabled people to know of, understand and navigate the range of planning support, work incentives and potential funding streams that are available to them. In New Zealand, equivalent opportunities might include Ministry of Social Development programs and initiatives (like the Mainstream Employment Programme or internships), WINZ employment incentives, Be Accessible internships and an array of other charitable grants.

In their study, Gruman et al (2014), used longitudinal data to explore whether receiving benefit and or vocational rehabilitation was associated with improvements in the employment status and average earnings of 5 675 disabled people receiving benefit counseling only (1 169), vocational rehabilitation only (3 292) and benefit counseling and vocational rehabilitation combined (1 214).



After comparing employment outcomes for the three groups over eight quarters, Gruman et al (2014) found that people not employed before the intervention and who received benefit counseling and vocational intervention combined were significantly more likely to be employed. Half of the study participants who received both services gained employment after the intervention (49%) compared to 37% of participants who received benefit counseling alone and only 30% of participants who received vocational rehabilitation alone. Moreover, in addition to the likelihood of employment increasing, the quarterly earnings of participants who received benefit counseling and vocational rehabilitation combined rose steadily for five quarters following the intervention. Conversely, a steady and consistent decline in average earnings in each post-intervention quarter was observed for participants who received only benefit counseling and only vocational rehabilitation.

Gruman et al's (2014) findings are consistent with most of the empirical evidence presented in this literature review that support the premise that whilst a single intervention might enhance the prospect of a positive employment outcome, by themselves they may be insufficient to address disabled people's longer term marginalization from the worlds of work. Gruman et al (2014) concluded by arguing vocational providers should ensure that disabled people have access to a combination of vocational support and benefit counseling, including considering ways for people to access continuing support after more immediate employment outcomes have been achieved.

DRAWING THE STRANDS OF THE PROJECT TOGETHER

The "Getting the life I want" Project represents the third in a sequence of research collaborations between CCS Disability Action and the Donald Beasley Institute intended to assist disabled people to transform New Zealand into a more inclusive society. The aim of the research was to meld best practice evidence with the narrative of disabled New Zealanders to inform the wider project goal of;

"Consider(ing) the transformation of Vocational Service within all regions so that the way [CCS Disability Action] deliver support provides the options for people to get what they want."

To conduct the project, researchers from the Donald Beasley Institute (DBI) employed a transformative research method. Transformative methods seek to learn more about value people place on something as the necessary prelude to informing and guiding practical action. The overall project design mirrored these two discrete but interlaced research phases.

In the first phase of the project, researchers from the Donald Beasley Institute sought to learn more about the experiences and aspirations of people who accessed vocational support from CCS Disability Action, and in particular, the social practices of support that people felt took them closer to or further from the lives they wanted for themselves. People who received vocational support informed the project by contributing to, the National Online Survey and/or a Key Informant Interview. In this report, we presented the findings of an Integrated Literature review conducted to throw light on some of the more effective and innovative ways that disabled people were being assisted to achieve the kinds of aspirations we discovered by speaking to people. Together the three research elements provide an empirical starting point for the second phase of the project.





The aim of transformative research is to engage research participants as an action-orientated learning community. By respecting and learning from each other, stakeholders are expected to collaborate in ways that reimagine or remake the disabling social practices that stand between people and *"the lives they want for themselves."* As the project moves into its second phase, it is hoped that by drawing the three research strands together, disabled people, their families, CCS Disability Action staff and the wider disability community can begin the longer longer-term processes of organizational learning and service change from a shared and more well informed starting point.

Getting a job was an almost universal aspiration amongst the people we spoke to and interrogating how to improve the access disabled people have to paid employment was the primary focus of this literature review. This report concludes by illustrating something of the range of interventions peer reviewed studies suggest might improve vocational outcomes for disabled people seeking employment. Rather than providing a blueprint for change, this distillation of the research included in this review is intended to further stimulate conversations that have already begun as the project moves into its action orientated phase. The list is neither prescriptive not exhaustive but serves as a good illustration of the myriad of different ways that stakeholders can respond to the narrative of the disabled people who informed this project within the cycles of planning, intervention and transformative evaluation that will take people closer to *"Getting the life they want."*

Before that, we provide a quick summary of the key findings from the other two reports as a way of reminding ourselves of the importance of improving disabled people's access to paid employment

Improving peoples access to paid employment

Codified within the cluster of rights the New Zealand government is obliged to advance as a consequence of ratifying the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities is disabled people's right to *"the same opportunities to gain freely chosen or accepted employment within work environments that are open, inclusive and accessible,"* (UNCRPD; Article 27. Realising that right by following the ordinary adult transition into paid employment emerged as one of the near universal aspirations held by the people who contributed to the *"Getting the life I want"* Project.

Of the participants who named a vocational goal in the National Online Survey, finding paid employment eclipsed all other vocational goals. Consistent with Statistics New Zealand's (2014) estimate that 74% of unemployed disabled New Zealanders of working age want to

work, 80% of survey respondents similarly described wanting some form of paid employment and 57% of respondents expressed a preference to work for more than the 15-hour threshold defined by the Ministry of Social Development as “sustainable” employment.

The people we spoke to described a range of different ways they thought paid employment would take them closer to “*getting the lives they wanted*,” including:

- Answering the deprivations of material poverty.
- Providing the resources needed to exercise greater agency over one's life / Tino rangatiratanga
- Enhancing people's ability to participate in the community in self-defined ways.
- Expanding the network of people who populated people's lives.
- Providing purpose and structure to “wasted” days.
- Exposing respondents to new ideas and expanding their repertoire of skills.
- Restoring confidence undermined by discrimination and people's inability to follow the ordinary adult life trajectory.
- Providing an opportunity to express skills, capacities and creativity.
- Alerting non-disabled people (and employers) to the social capital of impairment
- Providing an opportunity to contest the disabling social construction of disabled people as less productive citizens.



When we spoke to people, however, many described having acculturated to lives in which paid employment was an unlikely outcome. Seven out of ten respondents were not in any form of paid employment (72%) and only 8% of respondents worked for more than the 15-hour threshold defined by the Ministry of Social Development as “sustainable” employment. People also told us that, as a consequence of either long periods of unemployment and/or



of being steered towards alternatives to employment or to placements that “undersold” their skills and capacities, people’s confidence in themselves as valuable employees had ebbed.

In a way that was also anticipated by published research, the 20% of respondents who had a job tended to be located on the expendable fringes of the labour market, working in (very) part-time, low-skilled and poorly paid occupations. Whilst the average number of hours that the people who responded to the National Online Survey said they wanted to work was 18 hours, when taken together, the average number of hours that respondents actually worked was 3.8 hours and 70% of people who did have a job worked less than the 15-hours a week.

Transforming the social practices of vocational support in ways that demonstrably arrest the seeming intractability of disabled people’s un(der)employment represents a critical way that CCS Disability Action can assist people to *“Get the lives (they) want.”* In the table that follows, we outline a range of possible interventions that CCS Disability might collaborate with other stakeholders to implement, evaluate and refine as part of their continuing commitment to promoting the right of all people to have *“the same opportunities to gain freely chosen or accepted employment within work environments that are open, inclusive and accessible,”* (UNCRPD, Article 27)



Possible vocational interventions

Intervention	Rationale
Evidence based service practice	The shift towards "social investment" funding will require services to demonstrate the efficacy of the support they provide. Research evidence has also identified that disability services whose culture is orientated towards evidence-based support practice achieve better vocational outcomes and are more likely to develop innovative support practices. Engaging stakeholders in the process of defining, capturing and reflecting on "outcomes that count" also promotes consumer driven service delivery and reflective and responsive service practice. Being able to identify what support practices are associated with successful job creation and/or placement, for example, can inform the process of continual service development.
Incubator hubs	Incubator units located within service organisations have been identified as a promising organizational practice within the US Vocational Rehabilitation Program. Incubator units extend evidence based support practice by piloting and sharing the results of new approaches to service development that may have agency wide application. Evidence suggests that the morale of the agency and preparedness to innovate is enhanced and CCS Disability Action's regional structure mean it is well placed to trial new and innovative vocational support initiatives. Incubator hubs may also provide a conduit to form community assemblages or provide "braided support" by drawing in other community agencies.
Develop and offer Individual Placement and Support (IPS) as a support option	Individual Placement and Support (IPS) is an evidenced based approach to supported employment developed as a response to the employment aspirations of people with a serious mental illness. The model has 8 core principles emerges in the research literature as the support model associated with the most positive vocational outcomes. The IPS model is supported by a range of tools that might be adapted for disabled people our used internally to promote and/or monitor best practice, including a Fidelity Scale and field tools like the Field Mentoring Checklist for Job Development Attention to worker preferences and supply side job creation are core principles of the model.
Customized Support and Person Centred Planning	Customized employment support aims to design a paid job (either in or outside of mainstream employment) around the unique skills, talents and interests of a job seeker by matching job tasks and roles that directly match personal skills and talents to the (un)recognized needs of businesses. This approach to supported employment draws on the central elements of person-centred planning, including revealing a person's gifts and capacities, network of natural supports and an exploration of supply side (business) needs. Customized support incorporates a range of different person-centred frameworks including PATH planning, McGill Action Planning System (MAPS), the Self-Determined Career Development Model and Working on Purpose: 6 Steps to Employment that could be adapted and offered to disabled people and their support networks.
Self-employment including micro-enterprise	Micro enterprises are very small (often single person) businesses owned and co-created by a disabled person to align with their particular interests and talents. Disabled people have described a range of benefits as following self-employment through a micro-enterprise, including; being flexible in ways that accommodate impairment, building and extending pre-existing



	<p>interests, connecting and building relationships from a position of social equity and the possibility of generating income. Whilst micro-enterprises are now common and appear promising as a model of support Evidence suggests micro-enterprises are most likely to succeed will skilled assistance and coaching and a cluster of supports committed to the success of the business. Disability services may therefore play an important role co-ordinating and connecting the elements of support that anticipate successful micro-enterprises including a pool of business mentors, natural supports and accessible tools and resources for disabled business developers. Resources for establishing frameworks are being developed including the ākina micro-enterprise framework.</p>
Start-up microfinance and strategic assistance	<p>Start-up costs represent a significant barrier for disabled people seeking self- employment. Whilst microfinance institutions are part of the landscape of support offered to other marginalized populations, no equivalent institutions currently provide disabled people with individualized small scale lending and/or technical assistance, market research and marketing advice or business planning support. An opportunity therefore assists to establish a seed fund that disabled people would apply to by submitting a sound business plan and contribute to through loan repayment (and possibly support funding).</p>
Braided support	<p>Research, has consistently demonstrated that vocational outcomes are improved when agencies providing different elements of support collaborate with a disabled person to achieve their vocational goals. In New Zealand, vocational service provision has tended to occur in isolation from both the array of different community agencies and the energy, aspiration, resources and connectivity that disabled people bring to the support relationship through their natural support networks. Working with a person to construct "braided" support arrangements builds community and expands the resources disabled people and their support partners have to achieve self-defined aspirations. Collaborations between benefit counselors, small business or employer networks, secondary school and work experience providers, mental health services and mainstream employment services all appear in the research literature as improving vocational</p>
Including mainstream employment agencies within personal support assemblages.	<p>Current vocational contracts express an expectation that agencies will work towards disabled peoples increased use of generic community services. Within the employment space, however, disabled people are typically steered towards specialist placement services. Partnering with "mainstream" recruitment services has the potential to build community capacity within a "mainstream" community provider, whilst also providing disabled people access to; an expanded network of employers, existing pool of vacancies, an opportunity to reframe the social capital of disabled people and advocates best placed to promote the business advantages of greater workforce diversity.</p>
Peer support	<p>Disabled people report that one of consequences of moving towards a more individualized support model has been to limit the access they have to the fellowship and support of other disabled people. Peer mentorship has been used successfully to improve employment outcomes for people with a mental illness as well as providing everyday practical, emotional and collective support through models like the KeyRing Network. Alternatively, in the Youth Supported Employment Program, non-disabled young adults provided peer support as a way of encouraging young people with a learning disability to imagine and mirror the employment pathway of their age peers.</p>
Employer Education (to address	<p>In 2008, EEO New Zealand concluded that the most significant barrier to employment disabled people face was the</p>



<p>attitudinal barriers to employment)</p>	<p>(mis)perceptions employers held about hiring disabled people. In a recent literature review Milner & Parish (2013) juxtaposed reasons employers commonly cite for not employing disabled people with the available research evidence. CCS Disability Action is well placed to assist disabled people to deconstruct the attitudinal barriers that have historically undermined their right to <i>"the same opportunities to gain freely chosen or accepted employment within work environments that are open, inclusive and accessible"</i> through targeted employer education and support. Detailed below is one of a range of possible initiatives.</p>
<p>The "Breakfast Club" employers Network</p>	<p>The "Breakfast club" was a community development initiative employed by the Sydney University Centre for Disability Research and Policy to promote greater social inclusion. The Breakfast Club invited community and civic leaders to a seminar series that engaged civic and community leaders in transformational conversations over breakfast. A similar initiative could be trialed as a way of addressing employer misperceptions as well as developing and supporting business/employer networks through "supply-side" support. It might also act as a catalyst for reframing the narrative of employing disabled people.</p>
<p>Changing the narrative of employment in ways that acknowledge the business advantages of greater workforce diversity</p>	<p>Addressing employment inequality has tended to be promoted as a rights-based issue, with employment framed as an act of social conscience rather than as a prudent business decision that reimagines and taps the social capital of impairment. Disabled people represent the world's largest minority market and, according to some business writers, allow employers to access the same paradigm shifts in thinking and organizational structure that followed including other previously marginalized populations within the workforce. In a recent literature review, Milner & Paris (2013) outlined a range of ways that employing disabled people have been found to elevate the profitability of businesses and yet to date, supported employment models have continued to draw on the rights or benevolence discourses rather than the standard business ethic of exploring mutual advantage.</p>
<p>"Supply-side" business support</p>	<p>Traditionally, vocational support has concentrated on improving disabled people's "fit" with an unchanged labour market. An alternative approach that research suggests may have promise is to focus on identifying and resolving employer need. Working alongside employers to improve their productivity has led to more innovative vocational practices like "job carving" (identifying elements of a specific job that might be done by a disabled person in ways that elevate workplace productivity), "job creation" (negotiating a new role based on the unmet needs of an employer) and job sharing (allowing employers to benefit from advantages of two or more people sharing a role).</p>
<p>Community Development</p>	<p>Community Development involves community members coming together to share resources and to address common problems as a collective. The New Zealand government and territorial local authorities have a long history of funding community development projects that seek to identify and address issues of inequality and injustice but the disability community has been slow to use community development as a framework for social action. Listed below two examples of employment initiatives that draw on a community development approach.</p>
<p><i>Having a job like anyone else</i></p>	<p>The <i>"Having a job like anyone else"</i> project sought to mobilize a community response to the day-to-day realities of disabled people not being able to find meaningful employment. The project opened up a communication space within which disabled people worked alongside community leaders, schools and major employers to build strategic alliances and develop collective actions intended to remove barriers to employment</p>



<p><i>The Irish National Job Shadow</i></p>	<p>for disabled people. <i>The Irish National Job Shadow</i> provides disabled people with an opportunity to shadow an employee for a day and is an event intended to bring together job coaches, employers, community providers and disabled people and their families to improve workforce participation. Whilst the event helps disabled people to (re)imagine their employment trajectory it also exposes employers to the social capital of disabled people and the range of supports available to them and job coaches to an otherwise invisible pool of potential employers. CCS Disability Action is well placed to trial the initiative regionally.</p>
<p>Starting vocational planning early</p>	<p>Studies seeking to identify the factors that predict good vocational outcomes consistently identify beginning to develop career expectations and the transition to paid employment prior to disabled people leaving school. In the US a range of different interventions have been trialed by Vocational Rehabilitation providers including the peer support programs described above and the 8-step Self-Determined Career Development Model. In New Zealand scope exists for vocational support to incorporate such initiatives as part of the "braided" support offered to disabled young people making the transition to adult lives.</p>
<p>Exploiting new communication modalities</p>	<p>Feedback provided by "<i>Getting the life I want</i>" project participants suggested that disabled people often feel dislocated from the job search process. They also said a very limited number of sites were available to them to explore potential job vacancies. Research evidence also suggests that improving connectivity via the effective use of new communication technologies are associated with improved vocational outcomes. Making use of new modalities opens a space for different approaches to employment creation, including: job bulletin boards, a portal for employers to identify workforce needs and job opportunities or for disabled people to define and broadcast their unique skills/competences in more creative ways, circulate stories that change the narrative of disability employment or inspire or alert others to best practice and service innovation, inform people of training and funding opportunities and connect disabled people in ways that allow them to assist each other find employment. New technologies, including personal digital assists (PDAs) are being used for task sequencing and prompts as a component of post-employment support with promising results.</p>
<p>Benefit counseling</p>	<p>Many of the people we spoke to during the "<i>Getting the life I want</i>" Project reported experiencing difficulty navigating the, sometimes dehumanizing bureaucracies of Work and Income. Concerns expressed about benefit abatement rates and the impact of broken employment emerged as a significant disincentive to "sustainable employment. International studies report better employment outcomes occur when vocational rehabilitation is combined with benefit counseling.</p>
<p>Volunteer collectives</p>	<p>Sixty-one percent of National Online Survey respondents were engaged in some form of voluntary work. People also said they valued their voluntary roles for a range of reasons including expanding their experiential horizon, meeting new people from a position of social equity, interrupting the isolation and boredom of less purposeful days and weeks and as an expression of their motivation to contribute within their community. Closer examination revealed that respondents tended to be on the margins of volunteering and that volunteering appeared to be perceived as a vocational outcome rather than a stepping stone towards paid employment. Declining rates of volunteering in New Zealand creates an opportunity for disabled people to form strategic alliances and link "like-minded" community groups and organisations that include and draw on the strengths and lived experiences of</p>



Monitoring the employment experiences of disabled employees

disabled people as a way of having a more active role in the voluntary sector and transitioning into paid employment.

Seeking to better understand the experience of workplace inclusion has become a dominant theme within the management and organizational psychology literature because research evidence suggests that the benefits of workforce diversity can only be accessed by business that develop inclusive workplace practices. At the same time, research foregrounding the narrative of disabled people who often report feeling excluded and on the margins of workplace culture in mainstream employment context. Failure to attend to the workplace experiences of disabled people represents a potentially oppressive blindness to discrimination and other forms of social othering that can follow vocational placement whilst also deny employers access to the social capital of their disabled employees. Previous research collaborations between CCS Disability Action, disabled people and the Donald Beasley Institute have identified relational markers of inclusion that can be used to monitor social practices and improve the inclusiveness of participatory contexts including employment

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