

**Vocational Model of Service Delivery for
Individuals with TBI**
Community Capacity Building Project 2006-2007
Executive Summary



*Connecting the TBI Family to a
Lifetime of Hope and Opportunity*





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of Florida, Inc.**

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Support is provided in part by the
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Brain & Spinal Cord Injury Program



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Introduction

In a recent survey (2004), individuals with traumatic brain injury identified employment as their number one need. Vocational rehabilitation not-for profit organizations in eight regions throughout the State of Florida were chosen through a competitive selection process to receive a grant award for one year. Individuals served under this project met the state definition of traumatic brain injury.

- Florida Statute 381 defines traumatic brain injury (TBI) as an “insult to the skull, brain or its covering, resulting from external trauma which produces an altered state of consciousness or anatomic, motor, sensory, cognitive or behavioral deficit.”

Purpose

The purpose of these grant funded pilot projects was to assist organizations to build their capacity to provide vocational guidance counseling and disability adjustment counseling for individuals with traumatic brain injuries (TBI). Vocational guidance counseling and disability adjustment counseling have been associated with improved return-to-work and community reintegration rates among individuals who have sustained a TBI. (Ezrachi, Ben-Yishay, Kay et al.(1991), Fraser & Clemmons (2000), Gamble & Moore (2003), Kendall (2003), McMahon & Shaw (1991), Nochi (2000), Prigatano (1984), Schonbrun & Kampfe(2004) Sherer, Bergloff et al.(1998), Ylvisaker, Jacobs & Feeney (2003)).

- This is the first time that Brain Injury Association of Florida, Inc. (BIAF) has partnered with vocational rehabilitation service providers throughout the State of Florida to assist and facilitate these organizations to build their capacity to provide these essential vocational rehabilitation services for individuals with TBI.

Project Description

Contractors who received the grant funds were responsible for developing methods/ curriculum specific to vocational guidance and disability adjustment counseling for individuals with traumatic brain injury (TBI) that are ongoing and sustainable. Each Contractor was required to develop materials and/or presentations to educate the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation on this new service available for individuals with TBI. Each Contractor was required to collaborate with Brain Injury Association of Florida’s Family/Community Support Specialists and the Brain and Spinal Cord Injury Program in their region to explore the use of other community resources to assist in obtaining entitlements and services for individuals with TBI.

- A total of 81 individuals received vocational guidance counseling services throughout the State of Florida. Counseling programs were established in the Pensacola, Gainesville, Jacksonville, Orlando, Tampa, Sarasota, Fort Lauderdale and Miami regions in the State of Florida from July 1, 2006 through June 30, 2007.

Program Evaluation

Program evaluation surveys were administered upon entrance and exit of the program. Satisfaction surveys were given to the participant upon exit of the program. Analysis of the program evaluation surveys indicates that individuals with TBI benefited from vocational guidance counseling and disability adjustment counseling services.

Individuals with TBI who received vocational guidance counseling and disability adjustment counseling *showed improvements* in:

- Their perceptions about work and returning to work
- Internal thoughts and beliefs
- Their ability to rely upon others
- Their coping strategies

A few examples of the results of the posttest indicate that after receiving disability adjustment counseling and vocational guidance counseling, individuals with TBI reported that they:

- Viewed their injury as less consequential on their lives than they had previously thought
- Were less likely to get depressed when they thought about their injury
- Were less likely become angry when they thought about their injury
- Felt that they were better equipped to approach and handle situations
- Were more likely to seek out assistance and advice
- Were able to choose realistic work goals which may need to be revised depending upon their return to work status.

Complete lists and descriptions of the program evaluation surveys results are included in the full report. These findings indicate and validate the need to support the implementation and delivery of vocational guidance counseling services and disability adjustment counseling services for individuals with TBI. It is important to note that there are several limitations associated with these findings which include a small sample size and participant attrition.

Program Satisfaction

Program Satisfaction Surveys were completed by clients who received vocational guidance counseling and disability adjustment counseling services. The mean response scores were all positive in regards to the vocational guidance counseling and disability adjustment counseling services that clients with TBI received from their regional organizations. A complete description is included in the full report.

Organizational Year-End Summary

Each organization was required to complete and submit a year-end summary report. A review of these reports indicated that organizations gained knowledge and expertise in the area of working with individuals with TBI. Organizations reported the barriers and strengths that were encountered while developing and implementing their vocational guidance and disability adjustment counseling programs.

Barriers, reported by several organizations, included but were not limited to the:

- astonishment of their lack of knowledge about TBI
- lack of coping strategies that individuals with TBI possessed upon referral into their programs.

Strengths, reported by several organizations, included but were not limited to the:

- ability to provide essential services that had been previously unavailable for individuals with TBI,
- new knowledge gained about TBI and its consequences,
- networking and capacity building performed within their organization and communities,
- observation of the development of client insight, coping, disability adjustment, as well as making appropriate vocational choices,
- realization of the benefit and success of the use of group counseling sessions with the TBI population.

Refer to pages 32-34 in the full report for a complete listing of barriers and strengths reported by pilot project grantees.

Conclusion

Ultimately, through this project, all eight organizations were able to build capacity to better serve their clients with TBI, and gained knowledge, skills, and expertise needed when working with this population. Through this project, individuals with TBI were provided with essential and necessary disability adjustment counseling and vocational guidance counseling that has assisted them with their preparations for return to work by providing them with counseling that has helped them to understand and adjust to their injury. These projects were well received by the organizations and clients with TBI. Recruitment of a larger and more representative TBI population may contribute to a more statistically significant analysis of these programs. The results of this pilot project indicate a definite need for the continuation of such services for this population throughout the State of Florida and possibly the Nation.

References are available upon request and are included in the full report.