

SOAR Dialogue Highlights

9/15/20

Introductions

- Sarah Murray, Raleigh
- Melissa Zhiss, Charlotte
- Christina Heggins, Charlotte
- Jane Duralia, Hickory
- Rex Mercer, Chapel Hill
- Stacey Costner, Shelby
- Connie Ness, Raleigh
- Pamalia Davis, Durham
- Dazara Ware, PRA regional liaison
- Monica Greene, Greenville
- Natasha Posey, Raleigh

Announcements

- If anyone needs a SOAR process reminder, will put videos and slides in password protected pages, contact Sarah if you need help accessing pages
- PRA is looking for a SOAR claimant who has since gone on to do work for an upcoming panel, please let Sarah know if you know someone and she can connect you

Presentation from Vocational Rehab (Vickie Payne and intern Shaina)

Referral process:

Client can self-refer or SOAR caseworker can do it

Can find vocational rehab office closest to you for referral: <https://www.ncdhhs.gov/divisions/dvrs/vr-local-offices>

Should refer people ASAP, can take 60-90 days to get info and put client in plan (especially during COVID)

Client requirements:

Have to have significant disability that causes you to have significant impairments re work

Documentation of impairments has to be current

Client must give consent, must maintain regular contact with counselor, must tell VR when employment is accepted

Case can be closed if no contact from client, at least once/month

Usually if already receiving disability benefits, assumed eligible

VR process:

VR will mail or email application to client, then call them to go over application

Once an application is out, then assigned to a counselor

VR will need client's work history and to review medical notes then eligibility decision made

If eligible, IPE (Individual Plan for Employment) is developed and client can be placed with a job

VR will determine job based on vocational evaluation

VR also offers employment marketing skills classes, supportive employment, work adjustment training, physical restoration, and follow up once placed in job

Benefit counselor that can help them understand how much they can work

Some limitations/considerations:

VR may not be able to assign clients to specific jobs that they want, based in part on where State has contracts with different agencies that have job coaches

Client will need medical and mental health documentation of impairment

COVID-19 compounds delays re putting clients in IPE because VR cannot get information from doctor offices as quickly, SOAR caseworkers can be helpful in signing releases and sharing documentation

Most VR counselors are working from home during the pandemic which can cause delays

Testing:

If client has never received psychological testing, counselor can request it and VR may pay for it

TBI or neuropsych testing can also be requested but typically not as successful in getting it approved

For SOAR caseworkers:

Vocational assessment and other records can help support a disability application because it will clearly paint the picture that they can only work part time (not to SGA) and/or need significant supports

Even if clients are not successful or engaged in vocational rehab, that failure can be helpful to highlight in the MSR to provide impairment

Vocational rehab is open and willing to collaborate with SOAR caseworkers

Next SOAR Dialogue Call will be on October 20, 2020 at 10 AM. Please register for the call

here: <https://www.ncceh.org/events/1457/>