

SOAR Dialogue Highlights

2/15/18

Attendees: Emily Carmody, Kristyn Yelton, Diamond Jenkins-Nelson, Pamalia Davis, Renate Bender, Natasha Posey, Kathryn Coiner-Collier, Elizabeth Lewin, John Harris, Vinett Daley

Introductions

- Emily Carmody, NCCEH, Raleigh- Had a great training on Feb 1-2, State homeless conference is coming up on April 30 & May 1
- Kristyn Yelton, Lutheran Services, Chapel Hill- no updates
- Diamond Jenkins-Nelson, Southlight, Raleigh- 2 denials, 2 approvals
- Pamalia Davis, Housing for New Hope, Durham-2 cases at DDS
- Renate Bender, Easter Seals, Wake County- Had one case going but the applicant backed out
- Natasha Posey, Southlight, Raleigh- anticipating a lot of decisions
- Kathryn Coiner-Collier, Atrium, Charlotte- submitting first case in the next couple of weeks
- Elizabeth Lewin, Fifth Street Ministries, Statesville- have a lot of cases right now
- John Harris and Vinett Daley , WakeMed, Raleigh- challenge of balancing SOAR work with other duties

SOAR Applications and Work History

Background: Work history is a crucial piece of information when applying for disability benefits. Work history can provide information about eligibility for benefits and also show how the impairment prevents applicants from earning SGA. The way work history can be used depends on the nature of the impairment but common uses are:

- Show how the impairment has impacted the applicants ability to work throughout their entire work history
- Show how an emerging impairment or incident impacted the ability of someone to work who had a steady work history prior to the impairment
- Show a pattern of behavior where the applicant is able to hold a job for a period of time but is unable to sustain functioning levels to keep the job

The conversation through the call focused on two areas: gathering work history information and writing about work history in Medical Summary Reports. Below are highlights from the discussion.

Gathering Work History Information

For those applicants who can remember their work history, what are the questions you make sure to ask in interviews with them?

- Tell me about what you did: Have them tell the story and ask details as story comes up.
- If they have a hard time remembering when they worked:
 - What season was it?

- Do you remember if there was heat or air-conditioning
- Ask questions to make sure you get a picture of the complete skill set:
 - Training
 - Management
 - Supervision
 - Tasks/skills
- Did you ever get in a fight at work? How did you get along with the people you worked with? How did you get along with your supervisors?
- Give them an assignment to think about work history and bring it back.
- Make sure to go over it several times.
- Use their family and friends to get the complete picture.
- Use the interview at SSA to hear about other jobs and/or more details about work.
- What made you leave? What made you leave after a short period of time?
- What was challenging and why? Can balance with asking about strengths in the interview.

For those applicants who can't remember their work history, how do you get that information?

- Sometimes SSA can do a print out. Emily will check with SSA to see if this is something all field offices can do.
- DDS has some work information.
 - Jobs are listed under parent companies.
 - It lists the amount earned and when they had the job.
 - Not much information but can be used to jog the memory
- Division of Employment Security Commission
 - Can go in with the applicant who needs to have an ID
 - Will provide a print out of where, how long, and pay rate
 - Emily will verify that this can be done at all field offices

Is it important to document under the table work history?

- Yes- you can report on self-employment.
- Be sure to ask them why they needed to do under the table work. This could be a strategy to earn money despite functioning issues.
- Can use these jobs to show how functioning impacted this work too.

Writing about Work History

Work history is a section in the Medical Summary Report that should have a lot of information. If your work history is one paragraph for someone who has held several positions, then you may need to go back to provide more information.

What information do you need to provide for each position?

- What were the jobs and tasks in the position
- What the challenges were on the job and what made them a challenge

- Why did they leave the job

What do you do if your applicant has never worked?

- Go back to school and educational history:
 - Were they in special education classes or have a learning disability?
 - Highlight if they left school early
- How have you supported yourself over the years? Did you do any under the table work?
- Were you told that you could not work by someone?

Work history questions can also show delusions of grandeur:

- Reporting high-powered positions
- Stating they were an employee when they were a volunteer
- This is why having family, friends, or employers provide information is helpful

Next SOAR Dialogue Call will be on March 15th at 10 AM:

<http://www.ncceh.org/events/1249/>