

SOAR Dialogue Call 4/19/22

Special Guest: Chanda Armstrong from NC Vocational Rehabilitation

VR covers all 100 counties

Main task is to help people with disabilities to find employment

Also help people in facilities to live independently in community and to deinstitutionalize when possible

Eligibility: must have documented diagnosis by doctor, licensed psychologist, or area Mental Health Center

Want diagnostic info from a specialist, not just primary care doctor

If receive SSI or SSDI, you are presumed eligible

Have benefits specialist to help figure out how much a person can work to maintain benefits

60 days wait for medical records to determine eligibility- can file for extension if having trouble getting records

If eligible, then develop individualized plan for employment

Can do assessments re academic achievement and abilities, then can provide training to obtain degree or certificate

Can complete psychological and vocational evaluations

Don't have jobs on hand- VR goes out into community to network and identify opportunities, partner with client as well

VR can offer incentives to job sites to hire people with disabilities

Work with local nonprofits to provide supportive work services such as job coaches

Some services are only available to those under a certain income

Follow client for first 90 days on job

Clients can have in person appointment but also have option for virtual or by phone during COVID

VR works with students beginning at 14-22, once 22 can come over to adult side- no upper age limit

Can make referral while applying for SSI/SSDI

Voluntary and self-driven program

Charlotte is largest office in the state

Clients have the right to quit their jobs and receive assistance to find another job, VR will try to facilitate and mediate to prevent this if possible

Veterans have choice of state VR vs VA VR- if dishonorably discharged will come to state VR program