Realistic Expectations

We all have expectations, but sometimes those expectations are not realistic. The thought of winning a million dollars inspires us to buy that lottery ticket, but we seldom consider the odds in our buying the winning ticket. We apply for programs to help us in various areas of life without fully understanding how those programs work and how we can make them work for us.

People with disabilities who are interested in going to work apply for Vocational Rehabilitation Services, and sometimes they have little idea of how that program will really work for them. If they have an idea, that idea may not be realistic given the way the program is structured.

Many people go into Vocational Rehabilitation Services thinking that the program is going to find a job for them. They become angry and disappointed when that program does not fulfill their expectations.

Some people apply for Vocational Rehabilitation Services because they do not have health insurance, and they hope to get specific medical needs addressed through their VR case. When their VR counselor tells them that the program does not provide ongoing medical services, again the reaction is one of anger and disappointment.

Some people have a specific idea of what they want to do vocationally. Let's say they want to start their own business. VR has accepted this employment outcome, and the client now shares the equipment and supplies they want to open their business. The client wants the “Cadillac” model of equipment, but VR is only willing to pay for a Chevrolet. Problems arise in the case.

It is important to have realistic expectations at the very beginning when accessing Vocational Rehabilitation Services. Let's talk about how we can fit our expectations into a program which has a host of policies on the way those services will be administered.

Ask questions, ask questions, ask questions. Why aren't you going to get me a job? What is my responsibility in deciding what I want to do for the rest of my life? For any program that you apply for, there will be responsibilities for you as a client as well as responsibilities for the agency. Finding out your own part will go a long way in letting you know what to expect. Without asking questions, our expectations are generally set way too high.

Know what you want, and share that with your VR counselor. You do need medical treatment for chronic diabetes complications, but you do not have medical insurance. It is true that VR cannot provide ongoing medical services, but your counselor will be familiar with other resources to meet that need and can make a referral.

You have your heart set on a particular piece of equipment, but your VR counselor suggests something which will meet your basic needs but is much less expensive. You may ask your VR counselor for the agency policy which supports their decision to purchase the less expensive model. You may also point out that the less expensive model does not meet your needs and document why this is the case.

There is nothing magical about social service agencies, and VR services are certainly no different than other agencies. It is not a fix-all, cure-all for all life's problems. Your VR counselor does not have a magic wand, but that does not mean that the program cannot be of real benefit to you.

If you need schooling to do what you want to do, VR may assist with this. If you need a one-time medical procedure which will make you employable, VR may assist with this. If you do not know what you want to do, VR can send you for a Vocational Assessment which will help you make a decision.

Learn about social service programs, and make them work for you. If the program you are applying for cannot meet a need you have, ask for a referral to another program which can meet your need. Realistic expectations can make a real difference in customer satisfaction.