

# VCU-RRTC-IDD

VCU-RRTC on Employment of Persons with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities

The Impact of Competency-based Training  
and Technical Assistance on the Competitive  
Integrated Employment Outcomes of  
Individuals with IDD: A Mixed Method Study

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VCU-RRTC-IDD



**VCU**

VIRGINIA COMMONWEALTH UNIVERSITY

## Why is this study important?

- I started this course with a nearly blank canvas.
- When I started this class I had just been on the job a couple of months. I was basically slung into doing supported employment without really having a good understanding of what it was all about.

## Background Information

- 1992 Ethical Guidelines for Professionals in Supported Employment
- 2001 Association of People Supporting Employment First (APSE) Supported Employment Competencies
- 2004 Association of Community Rehabilitation Educators (ACRE)
  - ACRE's Employment Services competencies
- 2010 APSE Certified Employment Support Professional™ (CESP)
  - <https://cesp.helpscoutdocs.com/>

## Association of Community Rehabilitation Educators (ACRE)

- ACRE's Employment Services Competencies
  - Last updated in 2021
  - Includes knowledge and skill competencies
- Curriculum Review
  - [https://www.acreducators.org/uploads/1/3/9/5/139535886/curriculum\\_review\\_form2022.pdf](https://www.acreducators.org/uploads/1/3/9/5/139535886/curriculum_review_form2022.pdf)
- 28 Approved Training Providers
  - <https://www.acreducators.org/view-all-training-providers.html>
- Training Formats
  - Online
  - Hybrid
  - Face-to-face

## More Background Information

- ACRE Certificates
  - Employment Services Basic: 16,702
  - Employment Services with an Emphasis on Customized Employment: 3,062
  - <https://www.acreducators.org/certificate-registry-summary.html>
- APSE Certified Employment Support Professional™ (CESP)
  - <https://cesp.helpscoutdocs.com/>

## **What did I learn from completing this course?**

I have been working in this field for more than 30 years. I now have a new way of looking at things. I always assumed I knew what skills or goals we were working on or towards. Now I can see so many other things that I have never even thought to look for before this class.

## Research Questions

- Knowledge Increase?
- Attitudes towards Competitive Integrated Employment?
- Differences in Knowledge Gains and Attitudes for Service Providers based on Service Characteristics?

## Online Recruitment and Consent

- VCU-RRTC Listserv
- Participation Criteria
  - reside in the United States,
  - be at least 18 years of age,
  - work as an employment specialist providing supports to individuals with IDD,
  - have not participated in an ACRE training nor received an ACRE certificate,
  - have not received the CESP designation from National APSE.
- Pre- Posttest online survey
  - Knowledge
  - Attitudes



## Participants

- 346 people enrolled to participate
- 98 people withdrew before beginning the course
- 248 people began the course
- 188 participants completed the course earning an ACRE Basic Certificate
  - 76% completion rate
- 130 participants completed the pre- and posttest

## Procedures / Intervention

- 12-week online course approved by ACRE
  - Six modules
  - Online discussion
  - Assignments
  - Quizzes
  - Final Assignment

## Participant Characteristics

- Nearly 75% of the sample was female
- Over 72% were White
- Over 66% had a college degree
- Approximately 28% had no degree
- Average age 43-44 years old
- Average salary \$41,000

## Results

- paired-sample t-tests / knowledge and attitude measures
- 130 individuals
- Overall, the group significantly increased both their knowledge and attitude scores after the intervention ( $t(129) = 9.92, p < .001$ ).

## Comparing Integrated vs. Facility- based Services Providers

- Both groups showed significantly different changes/increases in knowledge and attitude scores.
- The two groups did not show significantly different changes/increases in knowledge scores from baseline to post-intervention.
- The two groups did not show significantly/different changes in attitude scores from baseline to post-intervention.

## Limitations

- Volunteer sample
- Generalization to other training formats or training providers
- Quasi-experimental design
- Generalization to outcomes for people with disabilities

## Future Research

- Random control trial studies
- Skill evaluation in employment settings
- Evaluate the outcomes of individuals with disabilities in employment settings

## What do participants say?

I wish that I had access to this training earlier into my position. I feel like I am better able to serve my individuals now that I have a better understanding of supported employment and my role as an employment specialist.



## Final Comment

I think my biggest takeaway however is something that is hard to quantify. There is a very important value in being able to work, to be able to go into a business and spend a set amount of time to do a task and be able to complete that task and ultimately succeed. And there is a pride in being able to say I did that.

## Acknowledgement

The content in this presentation was developed under a grant from the National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research, grant number: 90RTEM0003.