

6th Annual Retreat Report

Vermont State Rehabilitation Council

Thursday, October 10, 2013

9:30 am – 3:30 pm

Seyon Lodge State Park - 2967 Seyon Pond Road

Groton Vermont 05046

This year's Retreat highlighted three distinct focus topics: The VR 2013 Customer Satisfaction Survey results, 2013 Committee Accomplishments, Goals and Opportunities with a look to the Top 3 Priorities and Next Steps for 2014, and New Member Orientation. It was an enjoyable and productive day.

Retreat Goals:

- Customer Satisfaction Survey
 - Review of Results
 - Discussion
 - Recommendations/Suggestions for Next Steps
- Committee Accomplishments, Goals and Opportunities
 - 2013 Reports
 - Identification of Top 3 Priorities for Each Committee
 - 2014 Next Steps
- New Member Orientation
 - Overview of SRC Role, Responsibility and Function
 - "How to Hit the Ground Running as a New Member"

Retreat Participants:

- Diane Dalmasse, DVR Director
- Sarah Launderville, Chair AOE
- Adam Leonard, Chair PR
- Sam Liss, exiting SRC Chair
- Whitney Nichols, SRC member
- William Pendlebury, exiting SRC member
- Patti Shane, SRC member
- James Smith, Liaison DVR
- Rebekah Stephens, SRC coordinator
- Ellen Vaut, SRC member (pending)
- Susan Wells, DVR guest
- Kerry White, P&P Co-Chair
- Samantha Brennan, DVR guest
- Barb Walker, Interpreter
- Cory Brunner, Interpreter
- Leo Schiff, DVR Supervisor
- Hib Doe, DVR Supervisor

- Carol Leech, DVR Supervisor
- Stephanie Jackson, DVR Supervisor
- Brian Robertson, Ph.D., Market Decisions, Presenter

Retreat Facilitator:

- **Terri O’Shea** – O’Shea Training and Consulting: Seventeen years of experience in training, facilitation, and organizational development. Member of the Vermont Society of Training and Development. B.A. in Speech Communication and Anthropology from State University of New York at Buffalo. M.S. in Industrial Psychology from California State University at Long Beach.

Customer Satisfaction Survey:

DVR contracted with Market Decisions to conduct the 2013 Customer Satisfaction Survey. The goal of the survey is to provide feedback to DVR regarding customer satisfaction which will allow DVR to make quality improvement steps where necessary. Customers taking the survey were presented with 37 “core survey items” (27 general core and 10 VR specific areas of questions). 735 VT DVR customers completed the survey. The overall 2013 survey results show a decline in customer satisfaction compared to prior years. Overall, 83% of customers are satisfied with the DVR program, as compared with 91% in 2011. The satisfaction percentage is still very high; however, customers are less satisfied than in prior years. Identified areas of focus that may benefit from quality improvement include:

- “Communication – Customers felt they had difficulty in communicating with the staff, their counselor did not return calls or was not available, their counselor did not follow-up, time lags in getting services and appointments.”¹
- “Employment – The customer did not find employment and needed more assistance in finding a job, job search help or more job options.”²
- “Effectiveness – The program did not meet expectations, no clear purpose or solutions offered, speed up the process of getting services, had to fight to get services.”³
- “Staff Issues – Their counselor would not listen or dismissed concerns, their counselor did not understand their needs or abilities, their counselor was too busy – the customer was pushed aside, staff needed to be more understanding of their needs and situation, staff is overworked, their counselor left and/or they were switched to another counselor.”⁴
- “Support – The customer felt that no services were provided or that the services provided were of little help, the customer needed more support and guidance.”⁵
- “Forms or Other Paperwork = Customers felt that the forms they were required to complete were either too complicated or that they needed assistance from Division staff to complete them properly.”⁶

“A large majority of customers are still satisfied with the Division, its staff, and the services it provides. However, there has be(en) a decline in satisfaction levels observed in 2011: For the Division as a whole,

¹ Vocational Rehabilitation 2013 Customer Satisfaction Survey, Vermont Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, Brian Robertson, PhD, Market Decisions Presentation, “Areas of Focus for Quality Improvement Based on Client Comments”.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

within each of the six service regions, (and) among satisfied customers the level of satisfaction has also declined. The number of customers reporting problems has also increased since 2011.”⁷

Is a deeper dive and/or a focus group on these issues needed? DVR is committed to addressing this decline. DVR does not want this to become a trend and is getting in front of these issues to halt the decline. The SRC members and visiting DVR supervisors discussed the survey results and made the following suggestions for potential next steps:

1. Additional qualitative research within the unsatisfied group of customers – it is suggested that Diane Dalmasse contact Curt Mildner, Market Decisions supervisor to discuss this additional research
2. Speak to a sample of “super” satisfied group about what makes them “super” satisfied
3. Ask DVR counselors about their communication struggles and supports that would be helpful; i.e.: desk phones vs. I Phones
4. Find out how consumers are communicating with DVR – text, email, phone etc...
5. Identify strategies to measure effectiveness sooner instead of waiting for survey every two years
6. Determine the effect that temporary DVR workers are having on offices
7. Design survey for districts, not regions
8. Maybe expand survey to include counselor level every so many years
9. Determine how to improve way to deal with counselor vacancies i.e.: floater
10. Break down data into population group
11. Analysis of what makes people satisfied
12. CAP (Client Assistance Program – Legal Aid) outreach to DVR staff due partially to staff turnover. Have CAP participate in new counselor orientation – Kerry White is to contact Alicia Wein about presenting at New Counselor training
13. Maybe have additional survey questions regarding DVR partners
14. Possible area for data error: Confusion between VABIR and DVR. Solution may be to go over roles of VABIR and VR with consumers. Consistent language regarding whose role is whose
15. Reliance on SRC point person with I-Team to provide communication between SRC and DVR
16. Add question on survey regarding customer orientation process
17. Take a deeper look into customer orientation process
18. Want a plan for office, district, and state and a way to measure and reward
19. Roll up data for counselors, district and statewide and use it to monitor progress

Committee Accomplishments, Goals and Opportunities:

2013 Committee Reports were presented to the Council by Adam Leonard - Chair Performance Review Committee, Sam Liss – exiting SRC and Steering Committee Chair, Sarah Launderville – Chair Advocacy, Outreach and Education and James Smith – DVR Budget and Policy Manager on behalf of Policy and Procedures Committee. Each report provided a brief summary of the committee’s 2013 accomplishments. The Committee members then broke apart to discuss the 2013 accomplishments and identify the 2014 Top 3 priorities for each of their individual committees. The following lists out each Committee’s 2013 Accomplishments and/or Goals and each Committee’s 2014 Top Priorities.

▪ **Policy and Procedures:**

⁷ Vocational Rehabilitation 2013 Customer Satisfaction Survey, Vermont Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, Brian Robertson, PhD, Market Decisions Presentation, “In Summary”

2013 Accomplishments and/or Goals:

- Coming to an end of full cycle of review of the DVR Policy and Procedures manual (2-3 year cycle)
- Will condense the changes and then make updates all at once then schedule a public meeting
- Worked with transition counselors on how to handle post secondary education and developed a structure on how and when to provide DVR support and make employment a part of it
- Initiated a survey of counselors of spending guidelines – found most counselors find guidelines appropriate.

2014 Top Priorities:

- Continue review of DVR Policy and Procedure Manual
- Complete review of Assistive Technology chapter
- Create chapter on Progressive Employment
- Look at chapters around referral and eligibility – add response time and maybe add a chapter on “Casework Practices”
- Committee will be more disciplined about sending out written comments on chapters being reviewed prior to meetings
- Take a quick look at SRC bylaws
- Integrate Alicia Wein into P&P meetings

▪ **Steering:**

2013 Accomplishments and/or Goals:

- Set Agendas for SRC meetings
- Reviewed SRC participation in Baldrige Survey
- Reviewed and approved suggestion for SRC participants in DVR New Counselor training
- Reviewed SRC Membership
- Scheduled Officer Elections
- Discussed if and how SRC would have/take position on S1356

2014 Top Priorities:

- Continue to oversee the functioning of the SRC

▪ **Advocacy, Outreach and Education:**

2013 Accomplishments and/or Goals:

- Continued work around CRT program – Improving successful employment outcomes for people with mental health disabilities
- Progress with MWPD – program was lagging behind however the threshold has now increased from \$4000 to \$5000. Work continues around eliminating the work disincentives
- Access is a new program set to target younger individuals (less than 30 years of age) on SSI. It is a 12 year pilot program aimed at removing financial disincentives
- S.1356 is moving forward in Washington

2014 Top Priorities:

- Work at veteran’s issue – invite Hib Doe, Neil Meier and Robert Kline to an AOE meeting
 - Continue CRT testimony in front of House Human Services
 - Continue to advocate for MWPD elimination of disincentives
 - Advocate for Ticket to Ride
 - Catch up with Workforce solutions
 - Advocate for GAP Groups
- **Performance Review:**
- 2013 Accomplishments and/or Goals:**
- Reviewed data on unsuccessful closures related to mental health disability consumers
 - Reviewed State Plan target and goals for 2013
 - Reviewed responsibilities of DVR transition counselors and examined impact RSA Audit recommendations may have on transition counselor goals
 - Observed DVR new hire trainings and submitted a list of strengths and suggestions for change to DVR
 - Reviewed the Consumer Satisfaction Survey, Employer Satisfaction Survey, RSA Standards and Indicators, Baldrige Survey and the Employer Satisfaction Survey in preparation for upcoming Needs Assessment
- 2014 Top Priorities:**
- Continue to work on Needs Assessment with DVR
 - Examine Reports on Surveys and how results will impact recommendations for Needs Assessment
 - Take a deeper look at DVR Staff Training
 - Look at results of the GROW (Gaining Recovery Outcomes through Work) committee
 - Determine whether or not an additional SRC rep is needed on GROW Committee – Whitney Nichols has volunteered

New Member Orientation:

- **Review of SRC Mission and Structure:**
Sam Liss, exiting SRC Chair presented on this topic. Sam included in his presentation a breakdown summary of each committee’s function as mandated by Title 1, Sec. 105. State Rehabilitation Council (7) (C) Functions of the Council. He also included an informative description of the relationship between RSA, DVR, the Consumer, and the SRC. You may find Sam’s presentation at www.VTSRC.org under the Library/Presentations tab. Thank you, Sam, for a wonderful presentation.
- **How to Hit the Ground Running**
Adam Leonard, Chair Performance Review Committee presented on this topic. Adam’s presentation provided a highlight of “What is the SRC”, “What’s the Big Picture”, helpful “Resources” for members, some commonly used acronyms, and “Skills of an effective member”. The presentation was concise and informative; an excellent overview for

new and seasoned SRC members. You may find Adam's presentation at www.VTSRC.org under the Library/Presentations tab. Thank you, Adam.

Round Table and Interesting SRC Member Tidbits:

- Sam Liss - confident that the AOE Committee is in great hands. I had a lot of fun on the SRC.
- Patti Shane - Terri is an excellent facilitator. I will miss Sam. This group works very well together.
- Adam Leonard – Thank you, Sam for chairing the AOE Committee and the SRC and for offering future assistance to the SRC. I am excited that I “grabbed” Sam Brennan for the PR Committee before she chose another one.
- Kerry White – I enjoyed the analytical discussion of the survey and everyone looking at it as an opportunity to improve.
- Diane Dalmasse – Thanks to Adam and Sam for the two great presentations. Glad that the managers could join the SRC today to hear the survey discussion. Wonderful input.
- Sarah Launderville – Thank you, Sam. I am sorry to see you go. Sam has done so much for employment in Vermont.
- Sam Brennan – Incredibly thankful to be here today. Truly humbled and excited to be a part of this Council.
- William Pendlebury – I have really enjoyed being part of the SRC. People really want to be part of this Council. The SRC has really become something special.
- Whitney Nichols – The energy in this group is very positive. Thanks, Sam for your leadership. Thanks William for being a great driver and providing me with transportation.
- James Smith – Not sure what we are going to do without Sam's painful puns in P&P. I am going to miss the puns in particular. We shared a lot of giggles.
- Ellen Vaut – Appreciated today...first time I really understand what we are here for...particularly the family member portion. The SRC puts the consumer first.
- Terri Shane – Really enjoyed this as usual. There is passion in this group. You are really here for a purpose. Always looking to improve. Answering the question...what do consumers need.
- Rebekah Stephens – Have enjoyed working with Council these past 2 years. Looking forward to the upcoming year.
- Sarah Launderville has met two presidents
- James Smith has been to Rome
- Kerry White built her own home
- Sam Liss is a pharmacist without a license
- Adam Leonard loves the Red Sox
- William Pendlebury loves baseball
- Diane Dalmasse has a granddaughter in Hong Kong
- Ellen Vaut has two rescue dogs
- Patti Shane loves cats
- Whitney Nichols has performed at Carnegie Hall twice

Respectfully submitted for approval on November 6, 2013 by Rebekah M. Stephens, Coordinator, VT SRC
To Be Approved by SRC on December 5, 2013
To be Uploaded to www.VTSRC.org on December 13, 2013