Minutes –February 6, 2014
SRC Performance Review Committee

SRC Performance Review Committee		
Thursday, February 6, 2014	10:00 am – 11:50 am	Video Conference Meeting – Rutland, Williston, Brattleboro & Bennington VR Offices
Meeting called by	Adam Leonard, Chair at 10:03 a.m.	
Members Present	Ellen Vaut, Anthony Williams and Samantha Brennan	
Members Absent	Alaina Clements	
SRC Liaison	James Smith, VR Budget and Policy Manager was unable to attend due to a TBI grant meeting scheduled at same time	
SRC Coordinator	Rebekah M. Stephens	
Interpreters	n/a	
Speakers/Presenters	n/a	
Facilitator	-----	
Guests	n/a	

1. Today's Agenda	
-----	Adam Leonard
Discussion	No discussion.
Conclusions	Approved today's agenda.

2. Approval of Minutes - December 5, 2013 Committee Meeting	
-----	Adam Leonard
Discussion	No discussion. Ellen Vaut moved to approve. Anthony Williams 2nd.
Conclusions	Minutes approved.

Action Items	Person Responsible	Deadline
Upload approved minutes to www.VTSRC.org	Rebekah Stephens	2/14/2014

3. Training Data – What We Know: Areas of Strength & Areas of Improvement ; Relationship Between Training Offered to VR Employees and Length of Service ; and Next Steps	
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Discussion	VR has provided the PR committee with a lot of information on VR training offered

to employees. Training consists of in-house training, seminars and certifications. Some of the training

is mandatory some is not. Employees are encouraged to participate in at least 6 trainings a year. Training

is offered by both VR staff and outside contractors. Alicia Wein is the training supervisor for VR. She is

very good at organizing the training for employees. Trainings are offered both in person and via online.

Anthony Williams provided a brief summary of a variety of trainings offered to VR/VABIR employees. Many

different trainings are offered: from resume writing to traumatic brain injury. Specific training is offered

to specific job positions within VR, as well as, general training offered to all VR staff ie. HIPA training.

 The questions for, the PR committee, today are how far into this topic do we (PR committee) want to go?

Is a deeper dive required at this time? Is this an area of opportunity for VR? And where are those areas?

Sam Brennan shared: That training is a hot topic for VR counselors. The issue seems to always be that we

want more training but don't have the time. She expressed that the trainings are really, really good for the

most part. The new counselor training is excellent and the sooner that new counselors get this training the

better. It would actually be great to be able to take new counselor again once you (the counselor) are a

more seasoned counselor. The timing of new counselor training may be an issue. Sam likes to keep in

contact with senior counselors so that she can tap into that knowledge base. Ellen Vaut asked Sam if there

is sufficient training being offered around "cultural reciprocity" due to the growing population of non-

Americans in Vermont. Sam answered, that there is training offered during the masters classes on

cultural sensitivity and disability awareness, however, ongoing training in this area would not be a bad idea.

Adam posed the questions, "How are the mandatory trainings tracked and followed up on? Is there anyone

ensuring that VR employees attend the mandatory training?" Sam shared that she maintains her own training records. Anthony shared that there is no real tracking system, it is based more on the honor system. Sam will go back once a year and make sure she has attended all of the trainings. Adam wanted to know if more accountability is needed? Would VR employees like more accountability in this area? Sam shared that "office accountability" comes into play in her office. If a mandatory training comes up the office makes sure everyone is aware that it is coming up. However, if a person doesn't participate...she is not sure if there is any follow up to make sure that an employee gets the training later. Anthony shared that participation in the trainings is great, however, if the training is not brought back to the office and implemented is it worth while in the long run? Adam shared that his employer is using training that provides more hands on real life training that can be transferred easily into the workplace. Ellen offered that more practical training could be offered to VR employees around specific skills. Sam shared that she is optimistic that the upcoming trainings will offer more practical hands on applications ie., Motivational Interviewing. Adam asked Sam and Anthony about the training feedback process. Where and how do VR employees share or provide feedback on trainings? Anthony shared that there is always an open channel of communication to the higher levels in the organizations. Anthony feels that employees are very open with their opinions on training. Adam wanted to know what the PR committee wants to do on the topic of training. The PR members would like to see the data on the correlation between when training is offered and the retention rate of employees. New counselor training is approximately 30 hours – 6 different 5 hour sessions. The Committee posed the question – Is a more concise training needed immediately upon hiring? For example a 1 hour online training offered within the first few days of hire. Sam expressed that the most valuable experience to her was the mentoring opportunity offered when she was first hired. Sam sought out the mentoring experience on her own. It was not a formal process. Anthony shared that when a new employee is hired that person usually takes over someone else's caseload. He suggested that the exiting counselor work with the new counselor that is coming on board for a 2 week overlap period (if it is known that the person is leaving). Ellen shared that this practice would be wonderful and go a long way in saving time for the new employee and the clients. It could be very beneficial for VR as a whole. Adam asked if the mentoring experience could be made more formal. Anthony shared the idea of bringing back retired counselors to fill these mentoring positions. It would go a long way with counselor morale and customer service.

Conclusions	The PR Committee members agree that the majority of feedback on the training offered by VR to its employees is positive. The members agree to have one more follow up meeting to address the questions: Does training participation effect employee retention? Is there a correlation between training participation and successful case closure rates in each region? The Committee would also like to discuss with Alicia Wein the idea of adding a concise new counselor training for new counselors, follow up on mandatory training participation and a formal mentoring program.

Action Items	Person Responsible	Deadline
Request data from Alicia Wein - identify current active employees and inactive employees from the VR training list.	Rebekah Stephens	2/14/2014
Request data from Alicia Wein - for the inactive employees provide the information on how long employed (if info available) and the employment dates for these employees (if info available)	Rebekah Stephens	2/14/2014
Request data from Alicia Wein – for the inactive employees please provide the information on how quickly new counselor/new employee training was received by the employee?	Rebekah Stephens	2/14/2014

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Request data from Susan Wells - Is there any correlation between training participation and successful case closure rates in each region?	Rebekah Stephens	2/14/2014
Invite Alicia Wein and possibly additional training related individuals to next PR meeting, April 3, 2014	Adam Leonard & Rebekah Stephens	2/20/2014
Put "Discussion of Correlation between training participation and employment retention" on April 3, 2014 PR meeting agenda	Rebekah Stephens	3/20/2014
Put "Discussion of Correlation between training participation and successful case closure rates in each region"	Rebekah Stephens	3/20/2014
Put "Discussion of Implementing a more concise New Counselor Training, Follow Up on Mandatory Training Participation and Formal Mentoring Program" on April 3, 2014 PR meeting agenda	Rebekah Stephens	3/20/2014

6. Other Business

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Discussion	What does PR want to focus on in 2014 as we look at how VR is performing state-wide. Adam Leonard did a quick recap of last year's PR topics: Unsuccessful Closures and Mental Health Consumers, Transition Counselors Program and Training. Does anyone have a passion around a particular topic? Anthony Williams threw out the idea of somehow looking at how a counselor's time is spent working on a case when a successful employment outcome is not achieved. Anthony shared that in some instances, a counselor must interact with a consumer on issues that don't necessarily end up in gaining employment. Sometimes it is about getting a consumer on the right track for housing or other life concerns before employment can even be put on the table. Ellen Vaut wondered what data we would look at in order to measure this area. The new case management system is not yet scheduled to roll out as of yet. The kinks are being worked out and then a trial period will be scheduled prior to roll out to all VR. The intent behind taking a look at how a counselor's time is spent working on a case is to provide some information around what level of work goes into a case without just looking at employment success. The measuring of this could benefit both the counselor and the consumer. Currently, the emphasis is primarily on those people we (VR/VABIR) can close successfully so our focus is sometimes on those cases that can close quickly and successfully. The harder cases, sometimes, get left behind. The Committee wants to know "how do we look at this data now? Is there a way to take a look at this information with what is currently available? Will the Needs Assessment provide anyway to identify the areas to pull this data from?" Sam Brennan shared that during her annual employee review that "numbers are not the only way used to measure a counselor's success." Anthony shared that he is required to do a certain percentage of mock interviews, volunteer placements, on the job training, resume building, etc. in order to be considered successful in his position. Anthony shared that VABIR opens a lot of doors for people with a lot of different businesses. VABIR has made it possible for businesses to be more comfortable hiring from within different populations of people. So sometimes a person will get hired outside of VABIR but due to the doors VABIR has opened.
Conclusions	Adam suggested that PR take a look at the tools used by VR to measure success.
The PR Committee would like to delve into the topics of "How is VR currently measuring success?	
and "What other possible ways of measuring success might be used?" Topics discussion to be included on	
April or June 2014 PR agenda.	

Action Items	Person Responsible	Deadline
Put discussion of "How is VR currently measuring success?" on next available PR agenda – April or June 2014	Rebekah Stephens	TBD
Put discussion of "Other Possible Ways of Measuring Success?" on next available PR agenda – April or June 2014	Rebekah Stephens	TBD

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7. Adjournment		
Discussion	Anthony Williams made motion to adjourn. Ellen Vaut 2nd.	
Conclusions	Committee members voted unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 11:41 am.	
Action Items	**Person Responsible**	**Deadline**
Draft minutes respectfully submitted for approval	Rebekah Stephens	3/7/2014
Draft minutes emailed to Committee members	Rebekah Stephens	3/7/2014
Draft minutes uploaded to website www.VTSRC.org	Rebekah Stephens	3/7/2014
Minutes approved	Committee	4/3/2014
Approved minutes uploaded to website www.VTSRC.org	Rebekah Stephens	4/11/2014