



Client Assessment, Work Readiness Discovery, and Service Coordination in the Human Services Context: A Real-world Perspective for a Changing Environment

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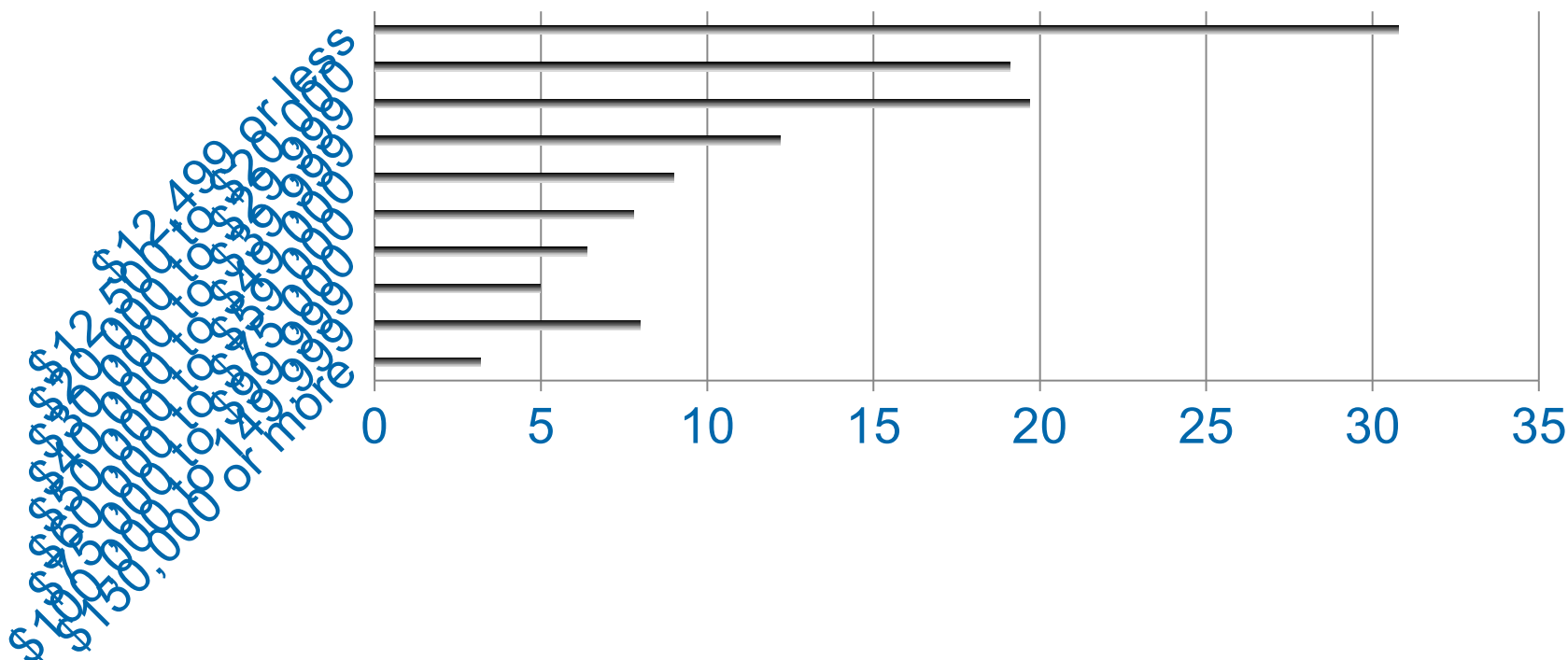
2013 NAWRS Conference

**A Broader Perspective on
“Work Ready”**

Analysis Questions

- What is the role of client assessment in the development of comprehensive case management activities for low-income individuals served by human services agencies;**
- What is the potential impact of assessment data on the development of responsive client service plans on the increased employability of assessed clients;**
- How can client assessment be more fully integrated into human services delivery systems to better inform client service provisions; and**
- What role does client assessment play in the redesigning of client-centered human services models that are work-focused?**

Unemployment across income levels



Data from Bureau of Labor Statistics

What is Assessment?

Assessment entails the collection of information in order to identify, analyze, evaluate, and address the challenges and strengths a client brings to bear in the service relationship.

Assessment is often used as the initial step in the case management or service continuum and serves as the foundation on which service interventions are built.



Why Assessment?

- The emphasis on work and career pathways inherent in welfare reform and other public policies
- Importance of quickly identifying and addressing the personal, family, and logistical and community challenges
- There remain a considerable percentage of individuals that have significant barriers to employment and these individuals typically go underserved or their barriers go unnoticed

Why Assessment?

Workers in the lowest income bracket faced an unemployment rate of nearly 31% while those in the second lowest income bracket had an unemployment rate slightly below 20%

The employment picture for those with multiple barriers to employment and among low-income Americans represents some of the highest rates of un/underemployment since the Great Depression

Many low-income workers have struggled to make the transition into the labor market due to factors such as substance abuse, poor mental and physical health, physical disabilities, low educational attainment, limited work experience, limited English proficiency, low basic skills, and domestic violence

Role of Assessment in the Service Continuum

- Assessment plays a crucial and indelible role in the development of a clear pathway to employment and employment supports
- Assessment as a part of continuum of services that are specifically tailored to the needs of clients seems to have the most impact on client outcomes

Assessment activities and practices have been shown to improve the work readiness assessment results

- Assessment during the service continuum has been shown to be a successful strategy for moving clients along the case management continuum and provided a more comprehensive and effective strategy for assessing and providing case management



Role of Assessment in the Service Continuum

- Clients who were assessed had improved service delivery options developed and often made more significant progress toward achieving individual goals
- Work readiness assessment conducted by trained case managers reduced the likelihood that identified barriers went underreported and were less likely to be an ongoing impediment to client progression
- Assessment as a part of a comprehensive service continuum was more likely to yield results if it was viewed not as a one-time prediction activity but rather as continuous throughout the service process

Assessors as consumers and producers

- The value of assessment was to recognize that the client was an active participant in the assessment process and as a result the interaction was of personal benefit to the client
- Assessors transitioned from just being a consumer of the data, but they became both consumers and producers of assessment data
- Assessors were able to help the client uncover information that for many years remained hidden not just from the world, but from the client as well

Integrating client assessment

Client assessment is:

- obviously central to evaluating the work readiness of clients across the human services
- essential to adequate service coordination, to procurement and planning of appropriate services and resources, to efficient resource use, and for monitoring and modifying service delivery to clients

Role of client assessment in redesigning human services



- Assessment in the human services should be a fluid process throughout the service continuum.
- Assessment should be conducted by trained individuals who value and invest in the service relationship with the client.
- Assessment should include various methods of gathering information and that information should be housed in a single place to promote better efficiencies.
- Assessment should incorporate sociocultural factors that may influence behaviors in the assessment process, interpretation of the results, and compliance with referrals and recommendations.
- Assessment should extend beyond the initial assessment interview because clients become more comfortable overtime and as a result more information can be gathered and incorporated in the revised assessment and career plan.

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