

MIG-RATS
Benefits Counseling Outcomes Call
September 25, 2008

The purpose of the call was to review the BC analytic model, the sub-models, and the accompanying materials to determine whether the materials meet the needs of the group.

Review of the model:

Overall, the group felt that the models would meet their needs. The group recognizes that the provision of BC services is complicated, happens on a lot of different levels, and can be provided in varying degrees from trained benefits counselors, from peers, from medical providers, and from family members. This model, and its accompanying sub-models and guidance, represents a first step in trying to understand BC outcomes.

To use the model, states will need to decide which research question they want to start with, and how they can get the data necessary to answer the question.

Guidelines:

Again, the group thought that the guidelines were useful. A few clarifications were suggested to better define the evolutionary characteristics of this model, and to better identify that these are suggestions for state-based research, not requirements.

Data Template:

The group discussed the data template and tried to identify additional data sources that might be useful. There was some discussion about the scales presented in the data template. We were seeking to identify scales that were normed in work with people with disabilities, and that were used in their entirety. While there are many scales for constructs such as work readiness and work motivation, many of these have not been normed with individuals with disabilities. Also, when they have been used in surveys, they have often been modified, including the use of only a few questions within the scale. We encourage group members to let us know about additional surveys that might be useful in the template.

Also, given the number of variables that will rely on survey data, the group suggested pulling together research questions that have been used by states in the past. Both NCHSD and NEP have compiled lists of survey questions in the past, so we will do some research to find these lists and share them with the group.

Next Steps:

- Guidance:
 - Add additional explanation to indicate that this is a preliminary model and it will evolve based on the research conducted by states.
 - Emphasize that these are recommendations for BC outcomes research, not requirements.
 - Develop sections on how to understand data (basic descriptors), and options for analyses with the types of data in the models

- Add sections on how to address restrictions to data access, IRB applications, survey questions (using materials previously developed by NCHSD and NEP).
- Models:
 - Develop grid to assess level of state interest in pursuing different sub-models.
 - Make language around earnings and employment clearer, whether earnings are an intermediate outcome.