

FREE WEBINAR

May 24 10 am to 11 am

**Customized Employment:
Lessons Learned &
Recommendations for SC**

- Housekeeping
- Webinar Objectives

Housekeeping

- If you have questions for the speakers, please put them in the chat or use the raise hand feature to speak.
- If you need tech help, please let us know in the chat.
- This presentation is being recorded for informational purposes.
- Closed captioning is available but you must turn it on to access it.

Webinar objectives

- Overview of customized employment
- Success and barriers experienced when implementing customized employment
- Recommendations for South Carolina to make customized employment an employment service

What is Customized Employment?

Customized employment is competitive integrated employment for an individual with a significant disability. This means a position is designed specifically to each person with a significant disability based on their strengths, interests, and needs.

- Customized employment individualizes the employment relationship between employees and employers in way that meet the needs of both.
- It is especially effective for individuals with high or complex support needs.
- It stands on the shoulders of Supported Employment.
- It is not a service or a program.....it is an approach.
- Customized employment is not group based or labor-market driven.
- Customized employment relies on natural relationships, supports, and training.

When using Customized Employment we are negotiating employment outcomes and not usually looking for jobs in the newspaper or online. In Customized Employment we are finding the jobs behind the job.

What is Customized Employment? (Continued)

Service components of Customized Employment:

- **Discovery**
- **Job search planning**
- **Job development and negotiation**
- **Post-employment supports**

While the Customized Employment process used with each individual may vary, it is intended to be a process that is coherent and logical where each step or task builds logically on all previous steps or tasks.

Advancing Capacity and Collaboration

ACCESS: Advancing Capacity and Collaboration for Employment Services

Able South Carolina partnered with Charles Lea Center, Thrive Upstate, SC Vocational Rehabilitation, and Griffin-Hammis Associates to explore the barriers in the current service delivery system and build provider capacity to provide customized employment through the following strategies: training, systems change, and data collection.

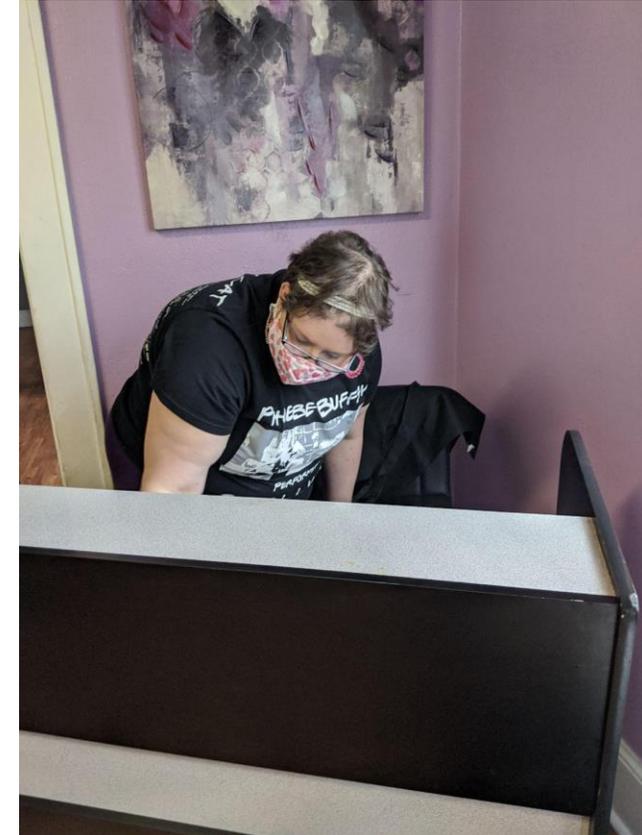
ACCESS is a three year grant funded through the SC Developmental Disabilities Council which started on July 1, 2019 and will end on June 30, 2022.

Success: Charles Lea Center

Taylor connected with CLC through the DSS SNAP2Work program. Through the discovery process, Taylor identified cosmetology (specifically all things related to beauty and entertainment) as her areas of interest.

The Career Consultant worked with her to identify her interests, hobbies, family support concerns, and advocate for community resources to help her manage barriers that would affect successful employment. Despite the obstacles and challenges presented by COVID, the Career Consultant was able to support Taylor to obtain part time position in a hair salon.

Taylor works three days a week at a local salon. She conducts supply inventory, cleans and sanitizes the shampoo areas, preps the stylist's workstations, answers phone calls, and greets customers. She has a career goal of becoming a certified Makeup Artist and Cosmetologist.



Success: Thrive Upstate

- Through discovery, we learned Lamont has great organizational skills and loves to go above and beyond to help others.
- Lamont was taken to an open interview at a local family-owned restaurant based on his organizational theme.
- Lamont was hired as a busboy.
- He started helping the servers as they would bring dishes to kitchen.
- Restaurant has allowed Lamont to create his own position.
 - Carefully organizes all the glasses, plates, bowls, etc.
 - Often helps run the dishwasher.
 - Stocks dishes on the buffet line.



Success: SCVRD

- Partnering with SOS Care for customized employment training through Griffin-Hammis Associates.
- Two (2) job coaches from SCVRD trained.
- Consumer and parents very supportive of customized employment program and results.
- Customized employment training helped staff to think differently about consumers and the idea of employability.
- Provided an opportunity for the job coach to really get to know the consumer, being able to better identify the consumer's talents, interests, and skills.
- Secured two (2) task-based activities in the community, resulting in stronger relationships with those employers, and the consumer being hired directly in a job which he greatly enjoys. The consumer was directly placed into employment, but this was not a true Customized Employment outcome - we are presently working with another consumer trying to achieve a true Customized Employment outcome.

Making Change II: SOS Care Grant

In July of 2019, SOS Care was awarded funding from the SC DD Council and established our customized employment program. The grant focuses on:

- Providing ACRE certified customized employment training from Griffin-Hammis Associates (GHA) to staff members and agencies across South Carolina.
- Encouraging new motivation and ideas to take Employment First to the next level.
- Offering technical assistance training from GHA to ensure implementation within agencies.
- Completing the CE process with individuals so they gain competitive employment or start their own businesses.
- Increasing awareness and knowledge of CE in South Carolina.
- Creating a series of webinars to showcase CE using current job seekers and ACRE certified staff. Show real world examples of what CE is, how we use it as an organization, how job seekers benefit from the process and successful outcomes.

Success: SOS Care



Collective Barriers

- Started CE training earlier than expected (Fall 2019) because of SOS Care offering training so we did not immediately start working with CE consumers until Spring 2020.
- COVID made it impossible for Griffin-Hammis to provide one-on-one mentoring in person.
- Learning curve with implementing customized employment (especially for employment staff that have been in the field for a long time-different way of thinking).
- Staff turnover
 - Charles Lea: 3
 - Thrive Upstate: 3
- Bringing in new staff members-staff needed to be trained before they could work with consumers.

Collective Barriers (continued)

- Funding from DDC grant was not enough to make up difference in lack of waiver funding.
- Staff has been inconsistent with using Griffin-Hammis online tool which has caused lapses in data collection.
- COVID slowed the overall progress of the customized employment process and working with participants (Ex. Travel restrictions impacted the marketing of consumers to employers, staff were relegated to new roles, and employers were hesitant to participate.
- Several consumers determined CE wasn't right for them after starting the process.
- Family members not supportive of customized employment (reason for making info flyer).
- Consumer and parents not following through with the initial stages of the customized employment program, resulting in slow or no progress.
- Adding new participants and time needed to work with each participant.

Recommendations to the State

- Dedicated funding for customized employment (including funding for training and mentoring, hiring staff only for customized employment.)
- Dedicated funding for participants to start microenterprises.
- Principles of customized employment embedded into SC's employment services.
- Develop Integrated Resource Teams (IRTs) throughout SC so that other partners (SC Works, DOE, DMH, Chambers, etc.) could be involved and increase likelihood of success.
- Determine potential collaboration with SC Department of Education for students with disabilities to receive customized employment while in high school.
- Develop opportunities for partners to connect about customized employment: share success stories, best practices, and how to navigate barriers.

Questions?

For any questions or comments, reach out to Hire Me SC at hiremesc@able-sc.org

Special thanks to the SC Developmental Disabilities Council for funding these projects!

Additional resources:

- Corey Smith from Griffin-Hammis Associates did a video with SOS Care discussing customized employment: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sSJ6uf6OtRM>
- [SOS Care CE video: Thomas](#)
- [Thrive Upstate Customized Employment Flyer](#)

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