



**TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE and CONTINUING EDUCATION
TACE CENTER: REGION IV**

*A Project of the Burton Blatt Institute at Syracuse University
in collaboration with the DBTAC: Southeast ADA*

**USING THE EMPLOYMENT
OPPORTUNITY SURVEY PROTOCOL
(EOS) TO INCREASE EMPLOYMENT
OPPORTUNITIES FOR CONSUMERS
AND TO DEVELOP EFFECTIVE
RELATIONSHIPS WITH EMPLOYERS**

Event Date: April 22, 2009

Presenter: Dr. Dennis Gilbride, Jennifer
Coughlin, and Dr. Jamie Mitus

Facilitator: Nicole Zolnowski

Overview

Nicole Zolnowski: Good morning everyone and welcome to the 2009 Southeast TACE webinar series. My name is Nicole Zolnowski and I am the Program Assistant for the TACE Center in Region IV. The Southeast Region

TACE Center's mission is to improve the quality and effectiveness of services and enhance employment outcomes for individuals with disabilities in eight southeastern states: Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina and Tennessee. TACE Center is a collaboration with the DBTAC Southeast ADA Center and both the TACE Center and Southeast ADA Center and are managed by the Burton Blatt Institute of Syracuse University, New York.

We are hosting quite a few webinars this year. If you are already signed up for upcoming webinars, that is great. If not, please visit our website or our new TACE webinar room and our moderator will post the URL in the chat area for your information to see what we are offering this year. Registration will open one month before the session is scheduled, so make sure that you sign up for the topics you are interested in when the registration is open. All instructions and materials for each webinar are posted on our website which is:

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The Online Conferencing System we use is a fully accessible integrated data and voice medium that enables us to conduct webinar trainings over the internet from just about any computer with an internet connection and web browser. There are many computer issues that are beyond our control, but there are a few things you must do to enhance your experience. It is really important that you check your system prior to the session. We are unable to trouble shoot technical issues right before the webinar is scheduled to begin. You can only ask questions by typing them in the chat area, and I will follow these questions and direct them to our featured speakers at the appropriate time. You should close all other applications and automatic system checks on your computer during the webinar to eliminate potential interference, and finally if your computer is connected to a network and has a firewall, it is

important to press the space bar once in awhile during the webinar to let the system know you are still present. Sometimes a networked computer shuts down if the computer is idle for too long.

Today's format will be as follows, our featured presenters will speak for approximately an hour and 40 minutes with 20 minutes at the end for any final questions. There will be three times during the presentation where our presenters will stop for questions that you may have. All questions will be read aloud for the benefit of the participations and also the captioner.

Today's session is titled, Using the Employment Opportunity Survey to Partner with Employers and we are privileged to be joined by our featured presenters, Dr. Dennis Gilbride who is from Syracuse University, New York, Jennifer Coughlin who is also from Syracuse University, and Dr. Jamie Mitus who is from Hofstra University in New York.

Their impressive bios are posted along with our webinar materials on our website so I hope you had an opportunity to read them. Today, we have Dennis, Jennifer and Jamie who will provide you with a description of the EOS protocol walk you through each of the questions and explain how the answers to the questions provide insight into the openness of the employer to hire people with disabilities. Extensive examples from the presenters will also be provided.

Now I will ask Dr. Dennis Gilbride to begin the presentation.

Slide 1: Overview

Dennis Gilbride: Hello, everyone. This is Dennis Gilbride. If you can hear me please someone indicate that on the public chat area. Or someone go a public chat and say "yes, we can hear you," so I do not feel alone in my office here. We are very excited about doing this presentation today, we think that this instrument and protocol and these questions

are something that you will find of value in your work pretty much immediately. We are very much looking forward to this presentation. I am going to start the presentation now. I will talk about the background and how we came to use this strategy in our understanding and work with employers. Then we will switch it over to Jennifer Coughlin who will talk about some of her specific experiences with employers and walk us through each of the individual questions. And the Dr. Jamie Mitus will talk about her experience with employers. We will all answer questions and do kind of a summary at the end.

To give you a few notes on how the presentation is going to go forward, for the purpose of the captioners and for those of you who are wanting to look out your window instead of the slides at all times. Each of us will describe first, as we switch each slide, we will describe exactly what is on each slide and then we will discuss the issues raised by the slides. As Nicole said, there will be an extended

question and answer period at the end, but we will stop a few times during the presentation to catch up with some questions. Do post your questions as we go along. We will try to keep track of them. If you see what I see, you cannot see a lot of the public chat at once so we might lose some of those, we will do the best we can. We are going to try to keep track of those and we want to answer as many questions as possible. We want this to be a really valuable, useful experience for you. At the end of the presentation our hope is not only do you understand the background and why we created this instrument, but also some of you might be able to use it tomorrow. Or if you are in central time if you have another meeting this afternoon you might be able to use it right away today. We are hoping this will be very, very practical.

I want to start with a little background to let you know where this started. Many years ago I was working with a colleague of mine at Drake University in Des Moines, Iowa on a project on

Demand Side Job development and in fact one of our partners was the Georgia VR department. I spent a number of wonderful times in Warm Springs, Georgia with many of the vocational rehabilitation professionals there. I cannot remember what you called yourselves, but there were employment consultants or placement people of some kind. In fact, I know we have a lot of people from Georgia here, if any of you were part of those meetings please let me know at some point. It would be wonderful if after all these years I am connecting back with some of the people that I knew back in Georgia. Along with people from Georgia we have – called a rehabilitation employment specialist, yeah that sounds right, or vocational coordinators, thank you for that. We also have people as we said from most of the southeast states. My understanding is we have people from across the country, too. We have somebody from Texas, Michigan and many other states. We are quite pleased that we are talking to people that we have worked with

before in some of the states down there, and reaching out to new people.

My original work with RWSIR in Georgia was on demand side placement. Basically, everything that we have done in the last 15 or 20 years on demand side job development starts from the sort of obvious idea, which is employers have the jobs. And if they have the jobs and we know that everybody -- not everybody, but many, many of our consumers will have their life enhanced by being employed then somehow we need to make that transition from being on our case load to being successfully employed in the work area. My work has been on the demand side, which is to really understand employers and find a way to connect with employers better to make that transition to work more effective. Most of vocational rehabilitation works on the supply side, which is obviously of deep importance, to understand our consumers, to work with our consumers, to provide all the services we do with our consumers, to help them in a variety of ways to

enhance their lives. We do not see demand side as competing with supply side, but adding to it.

Someone just asked why we are still on slide 1. We will get to slide 2. I just wanted to give a sense that the deeper role of what we are doing here comes from the notion of how do we better understand and partner with employers.

Slide 2: Our Initial Goals

Okay Jennifer let us do slide 2. Slide 2 says our initial goals. Bullet point one is to develop an easy to use method to identify employers likely to be open to hiring and accommodating persons with disabilities. Bullet point two, a method not depend on special skills or personal characteristics. Bullet point three, a method that is time sensitive and simple. Bullet point four, an approach that can be used by professionals, consumers and students.

So in this current project that we are talking about today it started from the recognition that

employers vary in their openness to hiring people with disabilities. That again seems pretty obvious. We all know we are much more successful placing people with some employers, and for a variety of reasons some employers find it easier or more committed or are more connected to us, they will readily hire our consumers. We know that other employers seem much more closed. What we wanted to do is find a way, could we find a simple set of questions that would help us understand which employers are open and which employers are less open? Now the employers that we work with a lot we already know about them. We might have a consumer that wants a particular kind of job that is an occupation where we do not have an employer who is a partner with us. . . Many times we are reaching out and trying to connect to new employers. We do not want to be stuck just with the few employers that we already are connected to. We are aware that it is of value to us to connect to a wide range of employers. We are also aware that some

employers are more open and some employers are less open.

Our initial goal for this instrument was to figure out simple ways that, as we say in bullet point two are not depended on special skills or personal characteristics. – or questions that anybody could ask. And bullet point three that is quick and easy to let us know if this is an employer that seems open and does not seem open. If an employer doesn't seem open that does not mean that if they are a big hirer in our community we still might want to deal with them but it might mean that they need some consulting, or some educational assistance or we might approach them in a different way. It also might mean that if we have three or four employers of equal value to our particular consumer better we put our effort into the more open employer because we might have more success there. Because we understand about employers varying, we wanted a simple and easy way to approach them. Let us go to slide number 3.

Slide 3: The Results

The results of this goal come up with the instrument. Which is the development of the Employment Opportunity Survey, originally entitled the Employment Openness Survey and what we call the EOS. . As I indicated, our original goal was to find a way to measure employer openness to hiring and accommodating and promotion of people with disabilities. We wanted to find those employers that were a good place for a person with a disability to work. We were looking at openness so we called it the Employer Openness Survey. What we discovered was when we went out to meet with employers, we had written at the top of our sheets, employer openness survey, that wasn't such a great thing to say, it sort of implied -- to put the employer on the defensive a little bit, so we changed the name to Employment Opportunity Survey, which is a more neutral statement. The reason I bring this up is because if you are interested in looking at some of our older materials or articles, because

we have published articles on this, you will see the EOS referred to as the employer openness survey. It is the same questions, but now it is called the EOS, Employment Opportunity Survey. When we first wanted to understand open employers we did focus groups with successfully and happily working consumers. We did a series of focus groups in different states, working in a variety of occupations working happily and successfully. We also did focus groups with providers who were very successful in placing people with disabilities in a variety of contexts. We also did focus groups with employers who seemed to be -- that we knew from our previous work, were already open to hiring people with disabilities. What we wanted to do is find the most successful consumers and the most successful providers and the most successful employers and have all of them told us what the characteristics of these open employers were. Slide 4 now please.

Slide 4: Key Characteristics of Open Employers

Key characteristics of open employers. There are three areas with bullet points underneath all of them. The first is work culture issues. Inclusion, values diversity second bullet point under work culture issues is flexible management style. The second large factor is job match. First point under that is focus on essential functions and second bullet point, employer collaborates with consumer. The third key area is employer experience and support. Under this title we have ability to supervise diverse workforce and employer has support system. These are the three key components. Under them actually there were 13; I have a few less than 13 listed here. We found three major areas that really told us if an employer was open. The first is work culture issues. This is a work site which all of us would like to work in and hopefully most of you do work in, where employers include people with disabilities with all workers and treat them equally, where

employers welcome diversity and they are equalitarian, inclusive, where the employers management style is more personal, and flexible, where senior management expect and reward diversity of all types, where employers are comfortable with providing accommodations to all of their employees. Not surprising to those of you who have worked in this area a long time, a good employer for people with disabilities is often an open employer in general. I am sure that many of you have experienced that. I will be interested in discussions if someone hasn't experienced that to raise some questions. That might be something to talk about.

The second key characteristic of open employers is job match. This is where employers focus on the consumer's capacity and what they can do and how they can contribute to the work site. I can remember one employer; a very, very open employer talked about everybody has something to contribute. Our job is to figure out what it is and create the

environment that they can maximize that, because that will be good for them and that will be good for the company. It is an employer that focuses on capabilities and the essential components of a job and not marginal components. We also see employers who collaborate with the consumer. We all know that the ADA requires employers when looking at essential functions to have a discussion, they do not necessarily have to do what the consumer wants but they certainly need to have a discussion, it is a collaborative process. Some employers find that really easy, if you want to find out how someone can be successful is you ask them what we can do here to make you successful. We know that there are other employers who tend to not have these characteristics where it is this is what we are going to do for you and take it or leave it. It could even be more expensive but it is not what would work for this consumer to be successful in this particular job. So, employers that collaborate with consumers are looking at how we do the job matching for them.

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The third issue was employers' sense of their own ability to supervise a diverse workforce and that diversity is in a variety of ways. They have a variety of ways of thinking about the different kinds of accommodations or supports that consumers with different types of disabilities might require. And the last one on that is does the employer know who to call within their system or someplace else when they do have a question? Hopefully you noticed that this section has a lot to do with us. We cannot necessarily go in and change work cultures unless they invite us in. We might do some consulting with them and that happens. We can certainly help solve job match questions. One thing we really cannot do, to be very successful we really need to focus on voc rehab and the various agencies that everyone here works in can be seen by employers as a support system. That makes them much more open. Even if they have open work cultures and they know how to do job matches if they do not feel they have the experience and support they will be reluctant to hire. Slide 5 please.

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Slide 5: Consumer Results: Inclusion

We are going to go to slide 5 now. What I am going to give you are some direct quotes from the participants that are in our focus groups. The first -- I could not make this up, which is why I give quotes. I can still remember this man who loved his job and very was successful in his job and had a very serious disability and was very successful in working. "They include us in everything that they do. I mean we are included. We were having a Christmas party a couple of weeks ago, and they are including us in it. Everything they do we are included. They include us in everything." We have a little figure of people holding hands on the right-hand side. He used the word "inclusion" five times in this one statement. The importance of feeling included in the workplace for this being an open employer was just key to this consumer and too many of our consumers. Here at Syracuse University we are proud of our history of working in inclusion in a variety of ways, inclusion in our schools and least restrictive

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environment and as I am sure all the people on this call ultimately our goal is including people with disabilities in all aspects of life, including employment. We see just how that need for inclusion jumped out of this person. Let us move to slide 6.

Slide 6: Consumer Results: Job Performance

Another quote which is Consumer Results: Job Performance and this come from that second area of job match. "I do not think they see the disabilities. They treat us like we are -- like you want to be treated, like a regular human being, and that is the way they treat us down there. You know they do not see disabilities. They see our performance. As long as we perform to the best of our abilities that is all they ask." We have a picture of a man who is using a wheelchair in front of a computer on this. That is not the man who made this statement; this is a confidential statement from the focus group. But it is an example where we see this job

performance issue of somebody – their abilities and their capacities are what are emphasized. Let us go to slide number 7 about the Providers Results

Slide 7: Provider Results

These are quotes from, actually these are from providers. These are, rather than a direct quote, this is a summary of what these providers who were very successful at placing people said. We recognized the business needs and interests of employers. Bullet point two we created businesslike standards of behavior within programs. And bullet point three guaranteed results to business partners and assured follow-up. We see that the providers that were successful were the support system for their employers. One said “I have really become part of their HR team.” We also see that they recognize what it takes for businesses to be successful and understanding business, which rolls into one of the purposes of this instrument. We move now to slide number 8.

Slide 8: Employer Results: Support

Is a quote from an employer who has successfully integrated people with disabilities, Employer Results: Support and this is a quote, "I think what I could use the most is a point of contact, someone that I know I can pick up the phone and call and ask questions about reasonable accommodations, the ADA, especially that, what it is that we are expected to do, what is reasonable." This quote really hit me very hard when we heard about this point of contact. We are actually doing a webinar next Thursday talking about our model of how people in local communities can collaborate more effectively to be that point of contact. We know that employers can be quite confused about the range of rehab providers who might contact them to place their people. Our research has indicated that employers do not differentiate between the state and non for profit agencies and the VA and between workforce development people. They do not know the difference between one agency and another.

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What they know is they just want someone to help them if they have a question. If they cannot get that question answered they will be nervous about hiring somebody with a disability who might require an accommodation that we know is quite simple but if they do not know that they are going to be nervous about that. What we have found in our research is employers can be risk avoidant. One of the areas of seeing openness is for just to try to reduce that risk as much as possible. Let us do slide number 9.

Slide 9: Employer Openness Instrument for Provider Use

Our initial work was on trying to first understand what these openness characteristics were. And then to come up with some simple questions that could capture all of these items, all of these characteristics in a way that we could easily use. Now I will move into the actual instrument itself and then as indicated in the public chat, you can see the whole manual for yourself. We will walk you through that. That was the

background on the ideas for how we got ourselves to the instrument. Then we wanted to come up with a way to create the instrument. On slide 9 we have employer openness instrument for provider use. Bullet point one, elicit openness characteristics in a subtle way. Bullet point two, gather relevant placement information. Bullet point three, is about gaining respect from employer regarding rehabilitation professionals' sensitivity to personnel and workplace needs. That was our goal when we created this instrument. Now we move to slide number 10.

Slide 10: Most Important Use of the EOS

After we started using the instrument with employers, actually while we were validating the instrument we discovered it did something we did not expect at all. On slide 10 the title is, most important use of the EOS, which is it is an effective method to develop relationships with employers. Which results in, bullet point one about higher quality occupational opportunities

for consumers and two, enhanced job retention. So what we found -- as I said our initial goal was just to figure out a way to measure, we can do that, we have the validation and we published this is not -- this instrument is a validated instrument that we have everything in order in the way we want it to be and it worked and it did exactly what we wanted it to do We were funded by NIDR, the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research and we did what we said we were going to do when we got the grant, to come up with this instrument. Then we discovered this very unexpected side effect that is when we were doing the questions with the employers we found it turned out to be a wonderful way to begin a relationship with the employer. By the time we got the final 18 questions, which we are going to be going through in just a few minutes, it turns out that going through those questions in that order, in that way, dramatically changes the relationship between the rehabilitation professional and the employer.

What we found is that it changes us from going to employers and talking and trying to tell them our story and trying to market or sell to them, it changes the dynamic to one in which where we are listening to the employers and trying to understand them and to understand their personnel needs and to understand how they conceptualize their hiring, retention and promotion practices. And by going and beginning a relationship with an employer by listening it completely changes the relationship then by starting a relationship where you go in by talking. We all kind of know that, when we are first meeting people that listening to them is more rewarding for them. I think this was a way for us to learn that lesson in the context of employment. Let us move to slide number 11.

Slide 11: EOS Consumer/Student Use

We are currently expanding the instrument to include ways for other groups to use it. This slide reads EOS consumer/student use. The bullet points are use for informational interviews

with companies by consumers or students, bullet point two, ask questions about selected items in actual employment interviews, and bullet point three use to make decisions along with counselor on which companies to pursue. The instrument as we are going to be talking about it in just a couple moments is for you, the providers, to use with employers to begin your professional relationships with those employers. But we are also seeing that the questions in modified form and some of the questions can be a powerful tool to give consumers so if they do informational interviews or students in order to help them learn how to better connect and develop relationships with employers. We currently are working on a student version, we are changing the language so it sounds more natural coming out of a high school student. This is not validated, that instrument is not validated, it is using some of the questions, and it is not using all of the questions. If people are interested in seeing that, understand it is in draft form, if you work in transition, we are happy to provide a copy of that. You might want

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to use it. Our next research project is working in transition and working with kids and training them to go out and use some of these questions for them to begin to understand employers. Going to slide 12 now.

Slide 12: The Instrument

Slide number 12 the title is The Instrument. We are going to give a brief discussion of the instrument itself. The instrument, and you have it in front of you from the materials, is 18 open-ended questions. Two of the questions are not scored, we kept them in there even though they are not related to placement they are not related to openness, and we kept them in there just because, they are useful just to know. In terms of the measurement of openness the responses range from 1-5. We are not recommending that you even score the employers. We are going to help you to understand what high scores are from low scores. We really want you to use it more for partnering with people and understanding that a

low score means that might be an area in which you can do more consulting with the person, or where there might be friction points in terms of openness. I am going to hand it over to Jennifer in just a moment, who will walk you through the instrument. I do want to reiterate that as we go through the instrument the questions seem pretty simple and straightforward. But we actually spent three years coming up with these questions, asked in this order.

The order matters a great deal, as you will see. We got a lot of feedback from employers on these questions. As we created the questions we did focus groups with employers who we knew were open. They helped us to reword the actual questions; they helped us put them in the proper order, and to understand how the questions were heard. This is deceptively simple, hopefully ordering of questions. As we talk about it you will see we try to go through the questions in a particular order that is why we will switch now. I want to introduce Jennifer Coughlin who works with me here at Syracuse

University and has probably done more of these with more employers than anybody on our team. Okay, Jennifer. I am passing it to you now.

Jennifer Coughlin: Thank you, Dennis. I wanted to ask before I start, did you want to take any questions right now? Or should we just continue on? I will turn it over to you for just a minute for your answer. Okay. I will just take a few seconds here and not speak. If you have any questions we are happy to answer any at this point, but if not we will go ahead and continue on. Okay. Celestia is say if you have a question type it in the chat. Feel free to type. I will start to talk. Again I will just introduce myself.

My name is Jennifer Coughlin I am here talking to you from Syracuse, New York. I wish I was down there in the southeast with you, we are still trying to come out of winter up here, and it is not very warm so sometimes I wished I lived down where you are. The next few slides, most of the remaining slides, will talk about each

individual EOS question. In addition to the questions we have sample answers from employers that we actually interviewed. You will get to see some responses from the employers and examine what typically an open employer will say and what more of a closed employer will say. Before we get on to those I wanted to tell you about my experience with the EOS. As Dennis mentioned, I have done a lot of these. Between myself and the agencies that we have worked with here in Syracuse, we have probably done about a hundred or more. We have gotten very comfortable with using the EOS, and I must say that I love it. It is been a great opportunity to learn more about the employers.

My experience is we have a separate research project, this is one tool we use within the research project, we were working with community providers here in the Syracuse area, they represented people with all sorts of disabilities, psychiatric disabilities, people with physical disabilities, developmental disabilities

and we would use this tool to go out and meet with employers. We did -- most of the time we did it in a very structured way. We would send a letter beforehand to the employer and explain that we would like to come out and meet with them and that we have a series of questions, we would follow-up with a phone call to schedule an appointment. Our theory behind that was, we sort wanted to -- it was sort of beginning the relationship building with the employer. We wanted to let them know we would contact them. We know they are busy; we wanted to be conscious if that. Like I said we would follow-up with a phone call. I cannot remember one time, I do not think there were any times where an employer was not willing to meet with us. It was very easy to set up the appointment. We would tell them, if they wondered how long it would take, we would tell them it would take about 30 minutes. But oftentimes when we got there they would talk and talk, we would be there for well over an hour. At first I would say that some of the providers we worked with because this was so

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different than what they typically did, were a little bit nervous. Typically they did not go in with a structured interview system in terms of interaction with the employers. It was more sort of happenstance, it was different but, all of the providers here in Syracuse ended up loving it, too. We have learned so much about the employers in our loyal community. It is been a great way to get to know them more. Let me think if there is anything else. I wanted to mention we talk to employers from every facet, from hospitals, manufacturing, recycling plants, different offices, universities. This was used in all sorts of capacities. You can certainly contact any sort of employer and use this instrument. I will now move on to slide number 13.

Slide 13: Question One: what are your company's key strengths?

Question one from the EOS. And question one reads, what are your company's key strengths? And as I said we have a couple of examples of what employers have said. Employer number

one says that the work culture is diversified. All employers are valued for what they bring. Put downs and sarcasm are not allowed. There is continual communication between staff along with team building exercises. Employer number two says their key strengths are maintaining the property and providing excellent customer service. What we are looking at with this question, we want to know whether the employer is thinking about the employees or are they more focused on the business end of things. And as we can see, Employer one if we look at some of the words they used, diversified, employees being valued, communication and the importance of communication, and team building. You get a sense this feels like an open employers, they are thinking about the employee and what the employee needs are and they are focused on diversifying their employees. Whereas Employer number two is more focused on just running the business, this is actually a hotel. They are looking at maintaining the property, and providing customer service. So there is no

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mention of the employees there. In general we would say that employer one is a little bit more open. But aside from whether being open or closed, I wanted to mention that this question is a great question. It is a good question to start with. And as Dennis mentioned, there is a purpose for the order of these questions. This question is a good question to start with because the person that you are interviewing is talking about their company; everyone loves to talk about themselves and their place of business. We are just asking about their key strengths so we find that it is a great way to open up the conversation and employers are very comfortable with answering this. Let us do slide 14.

Slide 14: Question Two: what are the three top concerns of your company's chief executive officer?

Question two is what are the three top concerns of your company's chief executive officer? Employer one says the first is properly training

each individual to allow everyone the chance to maximize their potential, two is maintaining a favorable work culture, and three is maintaining an infrastructure to support growth. Whereas Employer two said their first top concern is, ability to compete to be the best in the business, two is maintaining costs, and three is cash flow. This is a little bit like the first question, we are looking here for a focus on employees and the work culture and if we look back at employer one here, which was similar to the last question, they are much more focused on their employees. They are saying words like training, maximizing potential, favorable work culture. Whereas employer number two is more focused on running the business. We tend to say that employer number one is a little more open. What I want to point out here is employer number two, because they are not so focused on the employee doesn't make them a bad company. We understand that a business -- the business's bottom line is very important. If they are not running their business well obviously there is not an

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opportunity for a person to work there, we understand that. We know that is important. From our perspective we do want to see a little bit of focus on the employee because that is going to be a better culture for the people that we work with. It is very important from our perspective that we see that. Again, it doesn't make number two a bad business. And like Dennis said in the beginning, it just might mean that perhaps we can work can with them a little bit more so they would become more open. Let us do slide number 15.

Slide 15: Question Three: What recruiting resources do you use to find good candidates?

Question number three. If you will just excuse me for one minute. I apologize for that. I turned the volume down on other phones, but not that one. Question three. What recruiting resources do you use to find good candidates? Employer number one responded their top two resources are the local online help wanted ads and

employee referrals. We also ask, part of the questions is, it is not listed here at the top but we also ask about experience with government agencies. Employer number one said they post the job openings on the Department of Labor career link and they also recruit through the local one-stop center. Employer two said that their top two resources are job candidates find us, they do not even do recruitment, and recruitment is not needed. And experience with government agencies is none at all. What the ideal here would be is that the employer is interacting with government agencies. The ideal would be those government agencies that serve individuals with disabilities. We want to know that the individuals we work with can actually access the jobs.

Employer one here, they are listing their jobs on the DOL career link and recruiting through the one-stop. We know that the people we work with sometimes access those places so that is very good. Whereas employer number two they do not even do recruitment, the job candidates

just go to them. They have no experience working with government agencies. They are a little bit more closed than employer number one. What I also want to say about this question, this is just a great question in general because as we are sitting talking to the employer, if we are starting to learn this would be a great place for this one consumer that I work with, we are starting to learn how do we find these jobs? If an employer says I post job openings on our website we also post in the newspaper. Then we know, ok, well, if this would be a good match for someone, this is where I need to look to find these job openings. We are starting to learn more about how this particular employer finds their candidates. We can use this information in our daily work. Let us go to slide number 16 about question four.

Slide 16: Question Four: How has using automated electronic applications, such as resume scanning, using fax machines, email and the internet changed the makeup of your applicant pool?

How has using automated electronic applications, such as resume scanning, using fax machines, email and the internet changed the makeup of your applicant pool? Employer one says, there is no change in particular. Many resumes are now sent via email. The HR department still accepts walk ins and the front desk has applications for walk ins. HR, Human Resources, prefers that applicants call for an appointment but will meet with walk ins if available. Employer two says, all applicants must apply at our onsite kiosk. Now there are a couple things we want to look at here, really what would be ideal is that there is more than one option because we know that different people have different needs in terms of how they communicate. Employer two has only has this one option, it is a good option, but it is only

one option, they are not so flexible. Employer one has many different options; you can send via email, we still accept walk-ins, and if HR is available when you walk in they will meet with you. They are showing that they are a little bit more flexible.

We also want to look at here whether the employee understands the implications of the highly technical world that we live in now. We know that technology will sometimes exclude those that we work with. It is important that an employer understands that so they do offer different avenues for a person to access their business. That also indicates that they are a little bit more open. I will tell you this one question really sparks a lot of conversation among our group at Syracuse University when we were doing these EOS. Over time we started doing them four or five years ago, that is when big companies were starting to use the kiosks in their place of business, but also had interview questions that people had to fill out the at the kiosks, this complicated things a lot

for some people. We had a lot of discussion about this. We have tried to figure out ways to try to interact with the employers. What I am trying to say is that the relationship building with the employer becomes so important when there are limited options to apply to a company and learn about a company and connect with them. We have really tried to build relationships in these places and businesses so we can increase opportunities for the consumers that we work with. Now we have slide number 17.

Slide 17: Question Five: What jobs do you currently have openings for or that you will have in the near future?

Question five in slide 17. What jobs do you currently have openings for or that you will have in the near future? Employer one says, entry level customer service and management jobs which requires a bachelor's degree. Employer two said housekeeping department. This is one of the questions that are not scored at all. We are just trying to gather placement information

here. It is a great question. We are learning about openings in the future. We can begin to perhaps, make a job match. As you learn more about the employer you are talking to, if you think of someone, who would have skills or someone that would fit well in this culture and in this place of business. One thing I do want to mention is as you are talking to the employer we hear about the jobs, we think immediately, oh wow, x person would fit well here, maybe I can make this job match. We typically did not get into details with the employer in terms of asking if we could send resumes. What we are trying to do is develop the relationship with the employer. This interview is about listening to them, we typically do not jump to that point yet where we are actually trying to lace someone, we are just trying to gather the information here. Sometimes by the end you get a sense that the employer might not mind if I ask about potentially filling some of the job openings with the people that I work with. We avoided doing that, again, this is just about relationship building and hearing what the employers have

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to say at this point. Let us move to slide number 18.

Slide 18: Question Six: What personal attributes or characteristics does your company look for in new hires?

What personal attributes or characteristics does your company look for in new hires? Employer one says, enthusiasm, integrity, pleasant, good work ethic and no drugs. Desire to grow and move to the next level and respect for the company culture. Employer two says, work history, customer services skills and reliability. In this question, we are looking more for characteristics of a person versus a skill set. We want to know that an individual can learn on the job. They can build skills they may not have yet. Some of the people we work with and are helping to find jobs will be highly skilled; some people may not have a lot of skills and work experience. A more open employer is one that focused more on the characteristics of the person and their ability to grow in the job. We

see that more in employer one they are saying things like enthusiasm, integrity, pleasant. . Where as employer two is focusing more on the work history, their skills and their reliability. Also, too, just in general, this is a great question because we might learn something about the employer here that will help us to make a better job match down the road. We might learn something that the employer absolutely requires, we know that in order for someone to work here they would have to have this certain skill or attribute. This helps us to start begin making good job matches. Let us do slide 19 with question seven.

Slide 19: Question Seven: What criteria or measures, such as interviews and reference checks, do you use to determine if an applicant is a good fit for the job?

Question seven. What criteria or measures, such as interviews and reference checks, do you use to determine if an applicant is a good fit for the job? Employer one says must submit a

resume and have three interviews prior to hire, also undergo a criminal and reference check. Employer two says, HR requires a resume only, no interview. Criminal background check is also conducted. What is optimal here is a mix of ways to get to know someone. Employer two does not offer an interview. It is very objective, just a resume and criminal background check. It is a little bit more difficult to get to know a potential employee and evaluate them when they will not talk to them. So this indicates that they are a little bit more closed. Whereas employer one has more ways to get to know the potential employee, through a resume, there are three different interviews which is great because the different interviewers will connect with the interviewee in different ways and see different things in that person so that is great that a potential employee has three different opportunities to interact with three different people in that place of business.

I will say that personally in Syracuse, we liked this question because it really helped us -- this

is great inside information about employers. After we went and met with employers and learned what criteria that they used to determine if an applicant is a good fit, we knew exactly what we would have to prepare the consumer for, in terms of getting into this place of business. We were just better equipped to prepare someone in terms of applying to this place of business. Again, this is insider information that we are finding out. We want to keep this in mind as we are working with the consumer and the employer trying to make a job match. Now we have slide number 20.

Slide 20: Question Eight: If you had to choose, would you select someone who you knew to be a quick learner, or someone who you knew to be very dependable?

If you had to choose, would you select someone who you knew to be a quick learner, or someone who you knew to be very dependable? Why? Employer one says, dependable. If they have heart we'll teach them.

Employer two, quick learner, it is a fast paced environment and we do not have a lot of time to train. This is an either/or question. With an employer answering more on the dependable end this tends to be more of an open employer, and that is what employer one said. Number two said quick learner. We get the sense from employer two that it is a fast paced environment; they do not have a lot of time to train new employees, so they are not so flexible. The person has to come in with the skills, they need the skills in order to do the job tasks and they are just not going to work with them as much as employer number one would. They are looking for someone who is a little bit more dependable and they are going to be more willing to teach them and mentor them as the person starts the job and works into the job. I will say to from my experience 99% of the time the employers have said they prefer someone who is dependable, which actually sort of surprised me. I guess I would have thought more would have said quick learner, but almost all say dependable and all seemed pretty

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flexible in terms of helping people to move into a new role and teach them the skills that they need to be successful. Let us do slide 21.

Slide 21: Question Nine: Do you provide internships and/or apprenticeships?

This is the question here. Do you provide internships and/or apprenticeships? Employer one says, yes, college level internships and job shadowing opportunities for high school students. Employer two says, no, so they do not provide any internships or apprenticeships. Excuse me just for one second. What we are looking here for is the employer open to providing different types of experiences? Not just the traditional job. Will they open up their place of business to help mentor and train other people aside from the day-to-day jobs that they provide? Also, this is a good indication of whether an employer is flexible. Some employers look at it, and maybe number two looks at it this way, I really do not know, as they do not have the time to coach or mentor people,

no, we will not provide internships or anything else. Again, this will give a little bit of an indication of flexibility on the employer part. From our experience in Syracuse with the group that we were working with, I will say we did have a provider that represented a school in the community and she loved this question. It became an important part of her interview. She was looking to place her students for internships. This was very useful for her. It is useful for us, but it was particularly useful for her.

I am done with my section here. We have nine more questions to go through. But I am going to turn the mic over to both Jamie and Dennis to ask if they have any additional comments to make on the questions that I presented. I know I wasn't reading the public chat while presenting because it gets too confusing switching back and forth, but I saw a lot of activity. I bet that Jamie and Dennis have some comments to make and I also add that Jamie will be

reviewing the next nine questions with you. Jamie and Dennis, I will turn it over to you.

Questions & Answers

Dennis Gilbride: Hi, this is Dennis Gilbride, again. Let me take a shot at a couple of the questions that have been raised as we have gone through, so we do not lose them before we move on to the next section that Jamie is doing. I will answer a couple. I will give my impressions of some of these questions and then I will hand it over to Jamie who will give her answers to some of these questions and also continue on with the rest of the presentation. The first question that happened toward the beginning was what do we mean by guaranteed results? That is a really wonderful question. It is a challenge to the rehabilitation community. When we meet with employers one of the things that we hear over and over and over again is that those rehab people will come out here and want to place and they will help us for the first 30 or 60 days but a year later

something comes up and we never hear from them again. Or we never hear from them after the person is hired. What those successful providers said is when they meet with employers and develop a relationship with an employer they say to that employer even after I close this case if something comes up in order for this person to be successful in a promotion or to save a job, or if there is restructuring and we need to look at changes in that person's job you may call me, I will be there for you.

I know that is really difficult for us in our systems. But employers don't care about how difficult it is for us in our systems. Employers want to know if they have a relationship with you that it is going to be there, you will help them. Even if that is not exactly how our billing systems work out. States need to look at that. Non for profit agencies, CRP's need to look at that. We need to see if we really want to develop a relationship with employers then we need to be reliable. We need to be committed to being reliable. That means being

reliable in a pretty timely manner. I know that if my cell phone doesn't work I want to talk to somebody straightaway, I want it fixed, you know. Employers feel that way, too. If they are having an issue, a disability related issue; with somebody they would like that comfort. If you can give them that comfort they'll be more willing -- that reduces the sense of risk. That is another way to do that.

Let me make a couple of comments on two other questions. Somebody asked how often the people -- are they willing to meet with us to do the interviews. And how do we approach people now because of the poor economy? I want to answer both of those together. The first issue I would say, and I wrote it into the public chat, I will expand here. What we did with our group here is we just changed our initial contact with the employer to we are just people in the employment business; we are just really interested in finding out about you. We want to know what your needs are, what your short term needs are what your long-term needs are.

How you go about solving your personnel problems.

Right now some of the personnel problems that a lot of employers have is it is going to be in downsizing and layoffs, maybe morale problems because they might have hiring freezes or they might have salary freezes. It is undoubtedly a little harder right now. Yes, we are going through a difficult time for some. But it also can be a time where we say when you come out of this next year; this is also not a time I would give up on making partnerships with employers. It might be a particularly good time; they might want to talk to somebody about how difficult it is for them and for us to really understand what they need. I think the whole key from our perspective is in that initial approach, we come at the person wanting to listen to them and hear what their experiences are. Given what is going on in the economy how are you guys approaching the personnel? So that might be my initial approach with them. We know this is tough. People are

much more open to talking to you if you do not come at them wanting something from them but you want to come at them listening.

Now I will switch it over to Jamie, she might want to add a little something to those and then she is going to continue on with the presentation.

Jennifer Coughlin: This is actually Jennifer, Dennis; I will steal the microphone for a minute. I noticed one; I was looking at the public chat and noticed a great question. Did you speak to the employers who were persons in charge of hiring, or directly supervising employees? From our experience in Syracuse it was a combination of both. The reason I like this question is that when we initially -- usually our focus initially when we choose a business that we want to select, and there was no rhyme or reason of why we selected a business, it was usually because someone was interested in that business. We would always contact the HR staff. Oftentimes that would be who we would meet with. We all know they are not the

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ones that are always making the hiring decisions. They may have different perspectives than the supervisors and the people in the business that are making the hiring decisions. . Usually after we met with the HR staff we would try to get in to talk with some of the supervising staff and some of the people that did make the hiring decisions. Those are the ones that we really needed to talk to and stay connected to and to know what they are thinking. I wanted to make that comment. It was a great question. Now I will turn it over to Jamie, I do not know if you had anything to add about this issue.

Jamie Mitus: Hi, everybody. If anyone is having difficulties hearing me send a message in the public chat. I want to follow-up on the question Dennis spoke to in terms of the economy. Then I will proceed forward in addressing the remainder of the questions. Followed by, we will talk about some tips and then Dennis will finish off with the summary. As far as the economy question, to build off of what

Dennis was saying, one of the things that we are trying to really stress with regards to this training and utilizing the EOS is this consulting role. What that means is although the economy is really rough right now if you are able to build relationships with the employers then it goes beyond simply dealing, as we said earlier, with the actual hire, but serving as a consultant to the employer in terms of improving certain aspects of the organization. You guys carry a wealth of expertise about not only individuals employed with disabilities and hiring but what it takes to succeed once you are in the actual work setting and to be able to retain jobs, help your clients in terms of getting promoted and things like that. You have a lot of knowledge base that can be utilized with the employers beyond the actual hiring. This tool is a nice way to be able to say although we recognize the economy is rough right now, we know that you probably may still have needs as far as employment issues in the work setting. We are out here with expertise that we can share with you and we would like to be able to do that. The

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goal of course is that later on you will reap the benefits of the relationship by having an employer who really appreciates your expertise and will want to come back to you with other openings that exist. On that note we will proceed forward to the next question, question 10 in slide number 22.

Slide 22: Question Ten: Can supervisors' flexibility assign job tasks based on an employee's strengths and weaknesses?

The question is Can supervisors' flexibility assign job tasks based on an employee's strengths and weaknesses? Employer one the response is, absolutely and they do. Response from employer two is, typically this does not happen. Employees must be able to complete the tasks assigned. Essentially what this question is tapping into that you are going to be interested in as the rehab professional is accommodations. And what avenues you have to be able to sell this particular candidate into that particular employer setting. Although you

will not be doing that right now because right now you are focusing on simply getting to know the employer, this is information you will be equipped with and able to use later when you are trying to negotiate with respect to finding somebody to fit in with their culture, meaning your clients. Obviously employer one is saying absolutely and they do, it is telling you that we do look at our work in a flexible way, the end outcome is really important to us. The method is important to us as well but the method can vary in terms of getting to the end result. Whereas employer two is saying there is only one way to do this, these are the steps that are necessary to get that end result, we do not bend in any way shape or form to get it done. What this means, as we have been saying all throughout is obviously employer one you know has more flexibility to work with. Employer two, I would challenge you not to disregard them and think you can never work with them, but perhaps as you are conversing utilizing your expertise in the situations that you have confronted out there in the field, you might be

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able to provide consulting right there. As long as it is welcomed by the employer. You have to gauge if they are willing to listen to what you have to say. Very respectfully you may share some of your experiences in terms of other ways that you know some work has been done and just get their thoughts about that simply. As opposed to again automatically assuming this is an employer you will not be able to work with.

Slide 23: Question Eleven: does your company have special recognition programs for employees, teams, departments or other groups?

In slide 23 we have question 11. The question says, does your company have special recognition programs for employees, teams, departments or other groups? Employer one says, two monthly awards given by the supervisors, three annual victory celebrations. There are also SOGTUR, meaning stop the praise give us the raise, these types of raises are given. President also gives out personalized

cards to employees who have done a great job. Employer two says, annual luncheon for all employees. What you can see from these two responses is that employer one looks to provide rewards and recognition to employees in a variety of different ways, as opposed to one luncheon a year. For the one luncheon a year, some employees might not be able to make that luncheon, and depending upon where they go to eat, there may be employees that, based on cultural background or whatnot that wouldn't be able to eat at that particular some restaurant. You can see that employer two is a bit more limited in providing recognition to its employees in a way that will actually meet that particular employee based on the diversity in the work setting. In other words, the more that they do, they do not have to have a lot of different things, but at least they are doing a few different things to reflect the diversity in the organization, then you know this probably an employer that is going to be a bit more open. Let us do slide 24 with question twelve.

Slide 24: Question Twelve: How do you communicate with and get feedback from your employees?

How do you communicate with and get feedback from your employees? Employer one says, bi-monthly team meetings (great huddle) when each staff member gives a “state of” (personal status report), mandatory bimonthly meetings on the first and third Wednesday of each month from 6:00 to 8:00, dinner is served. Employer two says, employees can raise concerns at quarterly staff meetings. Here, again, we see that the first employer is trying to provide a way to tap into its various employees to be able to have dialogue and communication with respect to what is going on in the work setting. They even have hosted the first and third Wednesday of each month from 6:00 to 8:00 and they provide dinner. In a sense what that is saying to the employees is they want us to be here to be able to provide feedback, input, because they are providing an incentive, the dinner, for us to be able to participate. Whereas

in the second scenario, employer two the feedback, or meetings are typically held on a quarterly basis.

That is a significant amount of time to go by before allowing for employees to be able to express their concerns. So, the message that employer number two is sending is that they are saying they are not as open about listening or having meetings with our staff where we can have open dialogue, we are too busy perhaps for that, we do it on a quarterly basis we feel that is sufficient. Whereas in the case of employer one, they are trying to create this team feel as we saw (great huddle). They call it team meetings as opposed to staff meetings. Really trying to create a bi-directional communication between employees and supervisors. This is important because when you look at that in relation to your clients that you are working with you knowing that down the road if they are hired by that employer they may need to go and negotiate for an accommodation, or they may have concerns to

share with the employer, being able to have a mechanism in place that is open and flexible to do that would be important. Moving to question thirteen in slide 25.

Slide 25: Question Thirteen: What benefits do you offer?

What benefits do you offer? Employer one says, contribution to health insurance, personal days, sick days, vacation days, leadership training, opportunities for advancement. Employer two says, for full-time employees, health, dental, life insurance, vacation and personal days after one year, accrued sick. For part-time employees no benefits. Here we see that is a little bit of a difference between the two employers on a couple different levels. Number one, our first employer is providing a combination of benefits that are what we call extrinsic, as far as concrete benefits that deal with compensation, work days, sick days, and things like that. I am sorry, vacation days sick days, but they also have intrinsic rewards like

leadership training and opportunities for advancement that basically account for personal growth and professional growth and development of their employees. They are more open in a sense that they are trying to account for both aspects of their employees. Whereas employer two is primarily focusing on the extrinsic rewards and not accounting for ways to provide benefits to their employees that go beyond that. They are doing what they have to do. Secondly, employer two creates a distinction between full-time and part-time employees. Whereas employer one doesn't appear to do that. That means there may be some division within how employer number two is operating that you might want to be aware of as that pertains to your clients that you are trying to help find jobs. Being that some of your clients will likely be hired part-time anyway. Let us see slide 26.

Slide 26: Question Fourteen: What kind of social activities does your company have, and who participates?

What kind of social activities does your company have, and who participates? Employer one says, holiday party, summer BBQ, dinner meetings at local restaurant, special parties for employees, such as having a baby shower or having a bar-blast where a limo picks up employees and returns them home, or attending a professional hockey game. Employer two, HT is currently planning its first annual staff picnic. What we see here is that employer two is just starting to offer some kind of activities that will benefit employees. In the past they have not done anything that acknowledges or offers social activities for employees. Whereas employer one clearly has an established history of offering different kinds of activities to benefit their employees. What this speaks to is employer one is looking at their human resource capacity and how they can best in a way reward that to retain the

employees in their organization, it is more employee friendly in that regard. Whereas employer two based on the statement right now, doesn't appear to be as much that way.

Again, it is the idea that employer one is looking for different ways to provide a workplace for their employees that is rewarding and will lead to satisfaction and commitment of their employees. Whereas employer two has not thought about that as much and perhaps by doing this first annual may be inclined to move more in that direction. I want to make a comment here, its kind a combination of questions 14 and 13 for employer number two. One of the things to be mindful of is if you go back to question 13 for a second, Jennifer if you could scout back to slide number 25 for a second, this employer, employer two speaks to benefits that were provided and says there are no benefits for a part time employee. Let us just say for an instance that employer two only tells you that for full time employees they have health, dental, life insurance whatnot, they do

not address part-time employees. And again, as I was speaking earlier I had talked about the extrinsic versus the intrinsic rewards. What you would want to be careful about in terms of how to interpret these two employers, with number one being more open and number two maybe not, is exploring with employer two what their capability is. It may be this employer has more limited resources than what employer one has. If that is the case then the question becomes -- maybe they cannot provide certain types of benefits but there might be others that they have not considered. This is another opportunity where you might be able to consult with them as far as types of benefits that are out there. All right here is slide 27 with question fifteen.

Slide 27: Question Fifteen: If a new hire or current employee asks for an accommodation who would you go to for technical assistance?

Slide 27. Question 15. If a new hire or current employee asks for an accommodation who would you go to for technical assistance? Employer one says, the company will purchase whatever is needed also our policy states that HR will answer accommodation requests within one day, and the IT department is immediately responsive and is provided a budget for adaptive technology needs. Employer two says, employee can talk to supervisor. In this question employer one is demonstrating that they have something in place in terms of accounting for accommodations in the work place, demonstration once again a more openness about that. As opposed to employer two has probably not put a lot of thought into a formal accommodation process. Let us move on to slide 28.

Slide 28: Question Sixteen: How do you handle it when an employee returns to work after an illness or injury?

How do you handle it when an employee returns to work after an illness or injury? Employer one says, a doctor's note is needed and accommodations are made when necessary. We are committed to problem solving with the employee to figure out the best fit upon return to the job. Employer two must obtain note from doctor to return to work. Much like question number 15, what this is telling you is for any employee who is injured on the job that is planning to go back, does the employer have a program in place that allows for the individual to come back? And how flexible is that particular program? Is it a program that if you come back you have to come back part time only for a month and after a month you have to be back to full time or is a program that is based on individual employee need and capability? Depending on how the employer answers this question will give you a sense if

number one, they have considered issues around disability and made it part of the culture? And number two, what is the extent of flexibility in openness within any kind of programming that they have? Now we are moving to slide 29 with question seventeen

Slide 29: Question Seventeen: What was the single most effective action your company took to promote diversity in the workplace?

What was the single most effective action your company took to promote diversity in the workplace? How did that come about? Employer one says, company policy to hire diverse staff is included in the “how we are going to do it” statement and “rules statement.” We also have a diversity coordinator in the HR department and a community outreach coordinator. Employer two says, no action, staff is already fairly diverse. Once again, obviously employer one is more open. We are talking about diversity programs on a more general level as opposed to specific to disability. What

these answers show is when you look at employer one they actually have certain policies and programming in place. They are doing it. Employer two is not. Clearly employer one is probably going to be more open because they are actually doing it. Let us do slide number 30.

Slide 30: Question Eighteen: What are you most proud of at your place of employment?

Question 18. There is a picture on this slide to the right of the screen, it shows about eight professional employees all dressed in suits and skirts and they are sort of looking up at you when you look at the picture, one of the individuals on the left is utilizing a wheelchair. The question says, what are you most proud of at your place of employment? Employer one says, the culture. The employees work as a team. Employees value the culture and they are an integral part of it. Employer two, consistently meeting financial goals from year to year. This goes back to the initial question as far as employer one seems to be more focused

toward its HR and employees in terms of developing and having a culture that is employee friendly. Whereas employer two is about the bottom line and the end result. That again distinguishes between openness. The other important point of this particular question is that it is a nice way to wrap up the session and end on a positive note. You are having the employer speak something to they feel positive about. Hopefully this with further establish your relationship with the employer.

Okay. We are going to now take a couple of questions before we proceed into tips. I will turn it over to Dennis or Jennifer to make some responses.

Questions and Answers

Dennis Gilbride: I think we are sort of answering some questions on the live chat. I know there is an accessibility issue that the TACE staff will get back to you quickly. It is a very important question. I know there was an issue asking if anyone is using JAWS on the

live chat, please do let us know. We want to make sure we are as accessible as possible. This is the end of the specific questions we are then going to do some tips and a little summary. Are there any questions here, we will give you a moment to post those. Then we will move on to the final couple of slides. I will let go of the microphone so Jennifer can come on if she has something that she wants to say.

Jennifer Coughlin: Thanks, Dennis. I just wanted to make a comment. We had a question while Jamie was talking, and the question was, we have been advised against writing in employer interviews. Is it okay to write down employer answers during the EOS? I am just speaking from my experience, I always take notes. It is worked fine. I have not ever had the indication that the employer is offended by that. I think it shows we were very interested in what they are saying. Of course, at the same time I keep eye contact with them; and making sure that I am engaged in the conversation. I do jot down a few things to make sure that I

remember the points. I like to keep all of it on record. I just wanted to answer that. Looks like we have some other questions that have popped. I will give the microphone back to Dennis and Jamie in case they want to answer those.

Dennis Gilbride: I see that Kelly has a question, how do you approach the employer in the beginning? Do you reveal you work with individuals with disabilities in the beginning? That is a really good question. I will let everybody speak to that, I think I will take the next two and then I will roll it back. What we did -- we talked, our group here or providers in Syracuse, we do not make a big point about that. How we present ourselves are people who are interested in employment. We focus on being employment organizations rather than disability organizations. We do have people that say their name of their organization and like anyplace else, local people would generally know the name of that, so they would know that ARC for example or here we have different

names if it is a hospital based program or something. Our real focus is on employment. We work with people to solve employment problems. We really deemphasize that. I would say that is a choice we have made.

Let me go back. What is the follow-up with the employer? And what time-frame once you complete the interview? That is just a great, amazing, wonderful and profoundly difficult question. We have been working on that with our group here. Again I will put in a couple plugs here, we are going to have a Blackboard class later where we are going to go into discussion on that and that sort of follow up is something that we work on a lot. We are building systems to follow-up. I will say two more things quickly and then I will let the other people talk. One is we try to personalize it. For example, we will meet with an employer; they will say nothing is happening now but in the fall things happen. We will put into the system a reminder. We now have an online system that we are trying to use with our provider network

so that an email will go to them saying it is time to contact this person. It is that follow-up is what we do, not nearly well enough and we have been working on that in a variety of ways. Having a structured planned follow-up individualized to that employer is exactly right. And putting that into place is something that we are working on in terms of emails in terms of just following up, some it is 6 months later some it is a year later or it might be next month. Jennifer or Jamie?

Jamie Mitus: I was going to say exactly the same as Dennis. It is important to individualize it to the employer whom you are interviewing. It may be that you come to the end of the interview; you highlight the strengths and the positives that occurred out of the interview you just conducted. If it seems appropriate based on the receptiveness of the employer, inquire about -- first highlight, again you are not going to sell yourself too much, this is more about understanding and getting to know the employer and emphasizing that is why you are

there, but say as you know I am an expert in terms of dealing with employment issues. I would like to be able to follow-up with you in the near future. I am wondering what would work in terms of your schedule and how we could best serve your needs. What you have done then is given them an opportunity to tell you exactly what the follow-up should be and the method to use to follow up , whether it is phone, who it is with, or you are going to use a letter. Now you have been given the permission. What you should also do, upon the leaving the interview, maybe the employer told you to follow up with them in three months, but immediately you should send a letter thanking them for their time, expressing what you learned about them from the interview, and reiterating how you might be better able to serve their needs. Jennifer, I do not know if you wanted to add to that.

Jennifer Coughlin: I would just concur. The one thing I do want to say is that the follow-up in terms of the group that we were working here

in Syracuse, we did sort of try to systemize it. Doing the EOS was very systematic for us, we would send the letter, we would call, we would go out and do the EOS, then send the thank you letter. We wanted to work the follow up into our system. What we learned is each employer is so different. Like Dennis and Jamie were saying, one of them might say contact me in the fall. Or you might leave thinking, they might not say anything to you, but you think it would be good if I followed up with them in three weeks. It is so individual depending on the employer that it was a little more difficult to systemize the follow up so we are trying to get into the habit of doing just that, doing whatever the individual employer needs.

Jamie Mitus: Okay. With 15 minutes remaining I think we will move forward to the next slide in terms of tips. I will start it off and then turn it over to Jennifer and Dennis and then we will proceed on to the final summary slide which Dennis will begin and then pass back to Jennifer and myself and I guess we will take a

few remaining questions. Now we have slide 31.

Slide 31: Tips in Using the EOS

Jamie Mitus: Tips in using the EOS. Bullet point one, meet in person when possible to do the interview, bullet point two, remain time sensitive to ensure all questions are asked at a pace comfortable for the employer, point three, highlight purpose and benefit of the EOS to employers, and point four do not disregard employers who seem closed but consider how to work with them towards openness in hiring employees with disabilities. I will let Jennifer and Dennis speak to the first three. I want to make a comment in terms of the final one. We have been saying this all along, as far as do not disregard employers that seem closed. I do not think we can emphasize that enough. I think as rehab counselors we are so accustomed to being trained more in the area of counseling and case management that it can sometimes seem a bit intimidating dealing with an

employer who may seem a little bit more resistant or closed to the idea of being more open in general let alone being more open to hiring someone with a disability. This is where I will emphasize again using your expertise to try and figure out how you can first understand the employer and then by understanding them you can identify maybe some of the purpose of why the employer has been closed. And perhaps identify a need that they have, where they would be served better by being more open. You can then introduce the method of being more open as a way to meet that particular need. This is something that you can only do which practice and getting more comfortable with dealing with employers that are like that. With that I will turn it over to Dennis and Jennifer.

Dennis Gilbride: Okay. I thought Jennifer would take over there, but I will say a few words. We emphasized meeting in person to do this. I know that we have done it sometimes with people by email and telephone. Once we

move from validating the instrument to seeing it as the center of our relationship development we just think that the usefulness of going and sitting in the person's office is really valuable. Another issue that came up in terms of the fourth issue is with closed employers. An interesting discovery we had when we started to validate the instrument was a lot of employers asked about what people usually say. A hospital might say what did they say about this at this other hospital? They really want to know particularly HR people. Certainly there are people that are closed and this and that but a lot of people want to do things right if it can be done in a way that is not frightening to them, and doesn't overwhelm their systems or get them in trouble. Even in some closed employers there is openness to learning how to improve. Look at the questions, as you go through -- I wouldn't do it then but in a follow-up you could say here are some issues that we found with other employers, this is what they do to try to make themselves more open. We have seen employers really use that. It is the

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beginning of a consulting tool, too. It is very important to remain time sensitive to the employer. We always say we will take only 15 or 20 minutes of your time, and as Jennifer indicated toward the beginning, our experience is that overwhelmingly employers want to talk. When you get people talking about what they do and their needs and how they look at it and they do not feel pressured -- I do not think I have ever done one of these that did not go much longer than the person anticipated. Usually they are walking us to the door still wanting to talk. People like to be heard. If you give them the idea that they are being heard they'll like that. Jennifer do you have anything to add?

Jennifer Coughlin: I would just agree with everything that you say Dennis. Yes, I was supposed to be speak, but I got so caught up in the public chat I was really enjoying reading all the questions and posts. Again, just reiterating what you said, I vote for meeting with the person in person. It makes a big difference. It is

better in terms of developing the relationship. I am pretty sure we want to move on to the next slide at this time. Dennis I will turn it over to you just in case there is anything else. Now we have slide 32 with the presentation summary.

Slide 32: Summary

Dennis Gilbride: Yes Jennifer go to the next slide and while we are moving to the next slide I will talk about a couple questions that have come up. Has this been implemented anywhere? Our pilot projects are here in upstate New York and there is a project in the Bronx and on Long Island. Jamie is involved in Long Island and Jennifer and I are in Upstate New York and then we all kind of work with the people. The Bronx is a transition so that is the transition. Jamie's project and she can talk about it; I see we are short on time so I will go quickly. We are doing it here. We have talk to people. I know they are using it in Iowa. We have made a number of presentations across the country and in other places outside of our

pilot places. I know that it is being used. The only place that I know that they tried to use it and it did not work, they weren't that successful with it was the rural rehab program in Montana, working with very small employers, mom and pop shops. These questions really did not work for them. They thought it would so they tried it and the feedback we got from them was that it did not work with them. We do not know exactly what the number is but it is probably too formal for very, very small employers. In terms of -- I know that was a question on what kind of data. We have been collecting data, we are publishing articles here and there, we certainly are beginning to collect -- we certainly have a lot of anecdotal information. We are working towards really good evidence-based practice. Let me go through this summary, otherwise we will not get done, the questions are actually better than what we were going to say. Let me go through it.

We only have five minutes remaining. Slide 32 is the summary and it says, the instrument

interview is non-threatening, bullet two, currently using the instrument with our consortium for employment success partners to develop employer relationships and that is the webinar we are going to have next week on Thursday, employers really respond positively to interview questions, providers use the instrument too help them focus and listen, rather than talk to employers. That has been the change, the fundamental change in approach that we have been working on. I see we only have four minutes. I know that we have some technical things we have to do. I am not sure. Maybe Nicole you could come on to tell us how we should proceed.

Closing Summary and Information

Nicole Zolnowski: In reference to running out of time I should probably do the end and close it up for you. If there are no more questions I would like to thank Dennis, Jennifer and Jamie on behalf of the TACE center for a wonderful, educational presentation on a very interesting

topic that has provided the participants with a detailed discussion on the Employment Opportunity Survey protocol and how it can be used to effectively partner with employers. I would like to provide a very quick overview of our discussion today.

We went over the initial goals to partner with employers resulting in the development of the EOS protocol, the many important uses of the EOS protocol as well as a discussion of each of the 18 questions among many other aspects and questions that were answered. A transcript of this session, along with all other handout materials will be posted and available on the TACE website which again is TACEsoutheast.org, within two weeks of the session.

Please remember to complete the evaluation of today's session. Your feedback is important to us and to our continued planning so that we can address your specific needs and concerns. I am also going to ask the moderator to please put the link to the evaluation form in the chat area

so you can click on it straight from the chat area and fill out the evaluation when you are done with this session. This session has been approved for .2 CEUs and 2.0 CRCC credits. Please refer to the site coordinator for instructions and additional information. Remember if your questions are not answered today; please contact the Southeast TACE Center. You can do it by phone. The number is 1-866-518-7750 or by sending an email to tacesoutheast@law.syr.edu. You can also visit the website for more information on how to access those two communication resources.

That concludes today's session. I hope to see you back during other future Southeast TACE webinars. On April 30th there will be a webinar on the Consortium Employment Success Model from 1:00 pm to 3:00 PM EST and on May 6th there will be a webinar on Improving Case Management Skills for Effective Vocational Rehabilitation Services which will be held from 11:00-12:30 pm EST. At this point that, I thank

you for your participation, I thank again the presenters and we will see you next time.

Thank you and goodbye.

[Event concluded – April 22, 2009]