

# SEEKING QUALITY CUSTOMISED EMPLOYMENT SUPPORTS



**School To Work**  
for Secondary Students  
with Disability



## Approaching a Service

This resource aims to support family members to approach services or job coaches in a positive and helpful way, to help achieve better Customised Employment outcomes.



### What to look for?

#### 1. Inclusive and open approach to supporting people with disability into employment.

If a service/support person has general knowledge of the Customised Employment process or most importantly, **is open to learning about the process**, they could be a good option. A service/support person that acknowledges everyone can make a contribution to a work environment and with the right supports can work in typical, meaningful employment.



#### Consider asking:

**We want to support our family member to access a Customised Employment approach, is this something I could explore with you?**

#### A good response might be:

- We don't have specific training or knowledge currently but are open to learning more.
- We have started looking into this model and are open to learning more.
- We believe everyone can work.
- We believe everyone should be paid award wages.



## What to look for?

### 2. General knowledge of Customised Employment principles.

Customised Employment is based on a strong fundamental principle that *'everyone can work in typical, paid employment, however people with complex disabilities are often disadvantaged by traditional job-seeking practices.'*

It looks at contributions of the person, rather than how they compare to others.

It has been used successfully to support people with development disability who often face low expectations about their capabilities and those who have failed or performed poorly on comparative vocational evaluations. Having said that, the principles and strategies can be applied to any person.



#### Consider asking:

**What is your knowledge of the general principles of Customised Employment?**

#### A good response should include some of the following:

- Customised Employment acknowledges everyone can work.
- Customised Employment focuses on one person at a time – it's not grouped.
- Customised Employment starts with the person, not the job.
- Customised Employment looks at the person's interests, contributions and conditions for success, including support requirements.
- Customised Employment is not competitive or a comparison between job candidates.
- Customised Employment addresses the business needs of the employer.
- I'm not that sure but I'm interested in learning more.

If a service/support person is interested in learning more, share the following **resources**:

- The Essential Elements of Customised Employment for Universal Application (US based) - <https://leadcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/The-Essential-Elements-of-Customized.pdf>
- Marc Gold & Associates website <https://www.marcgold.com/> – Marc Gold & Associates are one of the lead organisations in the United States who specialise in employment in the community for persons with significant disabilities, including the method of Customised Employment. They have free resources as well as publications available at a cost.

- Resourcing Inclusive Communities regularly offers workshops and webinars on Customised Employment. Visit our events page: <https://www.ric.org.au/events/>
- Centre for Disability Employment Research and Practice (CDERP) – Provide Customised Employment training and courses. <https://cderp.com.au/>



## What to look for?

### 3. General knowledge of Customised Employment processes.

While there are varying models of Customised Employment, key organisations in the United States came together and developed *[‘The Essential Elements of Customised Employment for Universal Application.’](#)* This document aims to provide consistency in the strategies and techniques used in the process of Customised Employment.



#### Consider asking:

**Is there a model of Customised Employment your staff/you have been trained in or have knowledge of?**

#### A good response might be:

- We don’t have specific training or knowledge currently but are open to learning more.
- We have reviewed some resources from, either Marc Gold & Associates (US based), Griffin-Hammis Associates (US based), training through Centre for Disability Research and Practice (CDERP) (Australian based) or a combination.



#### Consider asking:

**Can you describe the aspects of Customised Employment process you support job seekers to work through?**

#### A good response should include some of the following:

- **Discovery** – up to 40 hours of time spent with the person, their family and friends. Both at home and importantly, in the community; looking at interests, contributions and conditions for success.
- **Engagement with family members, friends and allies** – obtaining thoughts and observations from trusted individuals in the person’s life.

- **Job Development** – including the Customised Plan for Employment and utilising a Job Agent or Job Developer to approach businesses
- **On-site Job Support** – We look at bringing in support when needed but also identify the people who work in the environment that can provide support (natural supports).



## What to look for?

### 4. Previous employment outcomes

Services will often promote their experience in supporting people with disability into employment. However, it's important to scrutinise the information they are providing to you. Ask the hard questions; remember you know your family member best and are best placed to support their vision of a good life.



#### Consider asking:

**What are your employment outcomes for others in the past year/past 6 months? How have you supported people to achieve success in the workplace?**

#### A good response should include:

- We focus on inclusive, community based environments; **not disability specific settings** where only people with disability are working.
- We have supported a number of people into employment. More importantly, the jobs we have found for people have been long lasting.
- We have spent time getting to know people well which has resulted in better opportunities for people.
- We supported a person into a job that didn't work out for them but this is how we supported them to move forward...



#### Be mindful of services that:

- Provide Customised Employment, or any of the steps in the process, in a grouped setting.
- Don't include your family and trusted individuals in your family member's life in the process.
- Only complete the Discovery Process at your family member's home or in limiting settings.
- Say they complete Discovery in a short period of time, for example, in one day or far less than the recommended 40 hours.

- Make statements such as:
  - ‘Some people can’t work in typical settings.’
  - ‘We always attempt Customised Employment, but it won’t work for everyone.’
  - ‘We use subsidised wages’
- Makes limiting statements about your family member’s skills and contributions.

Finally, services that look at job descriptions with your family member as part of the Customised Employment process are not following essential elements of the process. Remember, Customised Employment starts with the person, not a job and does not try to fit a person into a pre-existing role.

For more useful resources and information, please visit our websites at [www.family-advocacy.com](http://www.family-advocacy.com) or [www.ric.org.au](http://www.ric.org.au)

## Contact us



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