



INSIGHTS

THOUGHT LEADERSHIP, ARTICLES, CASE STUDIES & MORE

BY: MEDICAL & LIFE CARE CONSULTING
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PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE?

DETERMINE THE TYPE OF VOCATIONAL SERVICES
YOUR CASE NEEDS.

At Medical and Life Care Consulting, our work within medico-legal claims and life care planning often uncovers the need for additional resources such as the vocational consultant to provide an opinion on an individual's ability to work and earn money. In this issue of **INSIGHT**, we've partnered with CRC Services', vocational consultants, to explore the vocational rehabilitation field, the role of a vocational consultant, and examine how and when the expertise of the vocational consultant may intertwine within a case. In addition to this article, we invite you to learn more about vocational rehabilitation consulting and their services in our upcoming webinar "**The Rehabilitation Continuum: Working with a vocational consultant within your medico-legal case,**" [click here to learn more.](#)

More than 10% of U.S. adults report a disability; slightly more than 20 million Americans between ages 18 and 64 report

ARTICLE HIGHLIGHTS

- WHAT IS VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION
- WHAT IS VOCATIONAL CONSULTING

having a disability^[ii]. In 2004, the World Health Organization published that unintentional injuries were responsible for over 3.9 million deaths and over 138 million disability-adjusted life-years.^[iii] Disability-adjusted life years (DALYs) represent the total number of years lost to illness, disability, or premature death within a given population.^[iv] When an individual is significantly injured, their lives are altered, and their road to recovery often extends beyond physiological aspects of healing and includes recovery and rehabilitation of how the individual works. The practice of vocational rehabilitation uncovers their abilities and helps develop a road-map for returning to the workforce.

WHAT IS VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION?

According to the National Rehabilitation Information Center, vocational rehabilitation is made up of a series of services that are designed to facilitate the entrance into or a return to work for people with disabilities or by people who have recently acquired an injury or

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disability. Some of these services include vocational assessment and evaluation. Following the vocational interview and administration of vocational testing, vocational consultants are uniquely qualified to create suitable vocational rehabilitation plans. Plans typically encompass suitable post-injury job matches, identification of short-term and/or long-term retraining programs and research of the programs to include cost, duration and accommodations needed, and the coordination and needs of public and/or private vocational rehabilitation professionals. Vocational consultants also provide job seeking skills training (i.e., career counseling, resume and cover letter development, interviewing techniques, proper application completion, education and tips for proper disability disclosure), labor market research, employer and job development, analysis of any on-the-job accommodations and ancillary support services (e.g., job coach, transportation, nurse's aide, among others).

Vocational consultants can work with individuals to provide various levels of exposure to the world of work such as

informational interviews, job shadowing experiences, work readiness evaluations, internship/volunteer experiences, and paid employment.

WORKING WITH A VOCATIONAL CONSULTANT WITHIN A MEDICO-LEGAL CASE

In a medico-legal case, there are instances where a vocational consultant and expert are required to provide an opinion on an individual's ability to work and earn money. Through their expertise and professional services, clients become educated on the art and science of the private vocational rehabilitation field, vocational methodologies, nomenclature, and common treatises used. The services of the vocational consultant and expert may also include records review and preliminary vocational analysis, in-person vocational assessments including a vocational interview and administration of standardized testing (intelligence, memory & concentration, achievement, aptitude et al.), transferable skills



analysis, pre-post injury analysis, and labor market research to determine the availability of suitable employment and associated wages; if applicable.

Vocational consultants also assist attorneys with strategizing their cases by peer reviewing the opposing vocational expert's reports and/or opinions and discussing areas in which the attorney can develop the case (e.g., post-injury academic performance, post-injury work experience, among others). As a vocational consultant, or expert witness, the vocational rehabilitation consultant will address the plaintiff's level of employability and wage-earning capacity pre- and post-accident. In catastrophic cases, future vocational rehabilitation needs may be addressed and included as a component of a **life care plan**.

WHEN THE WORK OF THE NURSE LIFE CARE PLANNER AND THE VOCATIONAL EXPERT INTERTWINE

Oftentimes, in catastrophic cases involving young adults, future work may be possible with significant supports. As a case example, imagine an 18-year-old injured in a motor vehicle accident and becoming a paraplegic. The individual received above-average grades in high school and was college-bound before the accident occurred. Cognitive testing demonstrated they possessed above average intelligence and college-level aptitudes (e.g., reading, spelling, math). In this case, in addition to providing an opinion with regard to the plaintiff's pre-post injury level of employability and wage-earning capacity, the vocational

expert also outlined specific vocational rehabilitation needs within the life care plan. Allowances were made for transportation, college/university close to his residence, on-campus supports, and vocational case management services before, during, and after education completion.

A vocational consultant can add to a case by providing an opinion on employability, wage-earning capacity, and potential for vocational rehabilitation. In catastrophic cases, a vocational consultant can analyze and present a suitable vocational rehabilitation plan if a return to work is possible, outlining all the retraining and supports needed for success.

The goal of any expert involved in a life care plan is to identify the present and potential needs of an individual. When working with a nurse life care planner, the goal is helping the legal team prepare and present a comprehensive picture of what the individual needs to achieve maximum quality of life and independence in addition to identifying the losses incurred from the injury.

Whether your case needs a vocational consultant, a **nurse life care planner**, or both, the expertise and experience of these professionals can significantly impact the success of your case.

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Services, LLC, or constitute a formal partnership between each organization.

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[i] Disability Statistics, Retrieved from <https://www.disabilitystatistics.org/reports/acs.cfm?statistic=1>

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[iii] What are DALYs, Retrieved from <https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/statistics/global/index.shtml>