

Employment and Wellbeing

A Toolkit for Work Coaches/ Employment Advisers

Obtaining and Keeping Work to Promote Wellbeing

DWP
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Foreword

The **Employment and Wellbeing Toolkit** for DWP Work Coaches and Employment Advisers illustrates how the current DWP Interview model provides a basic foundation for interviews with claimants with Mental Health issues¹. It also shows that an **augmented interview approach**, which includes a consideration of work solutions, being vigilant to claimant concerns and including some interview questions and strategies, will result in more effective interventions and improved employment and mental health outcomes. This augmented approach will enable Work Coaches to work with claimants to establish a **clear employment focus** and identify the appropriate interventions and actions to enable claimants with mental health issues to undertake **effective job search**, and to **progress to employment as quickly as possible**.

We acknowledge that talking about mental health can often be difficult for some people. By adopting the forward-looking approach noted above, the Work Coach can play an important and influential role.

The toolkit aims to help Work Coach understanding and knowledge through discussion and reflective practice.

¹

The term *Mental Health issues* has been used throughout the toolkit in preference to the more commonly used term Mental Health Condition (MHC). MHC refers to people who have or have had a diagnosed condition; whereas *mental health issues* is a broader term that includes those with MHCs as well those who have elevated but not clinical levels of a symptom and individuals who may not recognise they have a condition.

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Section 1: Introduction to the Employment & Wellbeing Toolkit

Overview

Section 1 introduces the Toolkit, outlines the aims and principles, how it will help Work Coaches, and be used to aid learning. Section 1 also looks at DWP claimants and jobseekers and those who may “have” or “have had” a mental health issue.

These are very varied groups, who have a range of employment experience and skills. Most of these individuals will benefit from obtaining a job, although some may be helped by engaging with appropriate services as a step towards employment. The toolkit aims to assist Work Coaches to help claimants make appropriate employment decisions.

How will the Employment & Wellbeing Toolkit help Work Coaches/ Employment Advisers?

The toolkit will help Work Coaches and employment advisers (from here on the term **Work Coach** will be used to refer to both roles) to provide employment advice to claimants who have or have had an issue with their mental health, to obtain work as soon as possible. Understanding the toolkit approach will also be helpful to Work Coaches in their work with other claimants, including disabled people and those with other health conditions. What is different about working with mental health issues is that the individual’s experience of the mental health issue can result in additional challenges (such as loss of confidence) and can distort thinking about self and work. Because these differences are not about symptoms they are not directly addressed by health treatments; however, **employment-related interventions** have been shown to have both a **preventative** and **restorative impact**. The toolkit builds on existing DWP training and adds some new interview question and assessment strategies. By focusing on employment and how the claimant can obtain and keep a job, employment and wellbeing can be progressed.

This **Employment Approach** differs from screening approaches, which tend to provide a measure of the severity of symptoms or conditions. In contrast, the Employment Approach can provide evidence about what the claimant needs to do to obtain employment and improve their wellbeing. This shows that **Work Coaches do not need to “diagnose” mental health issues**, because they will be exploring employment issues. In addition, Work Coaches’ employment and labour market training and experience will enable them to provide appropriate employment advice. All of this helps to promote the belief that employment is a real possibility for the person with a mental health issue.

There is a growing body of research evidence which shows that an increasing proportion of DWP claimants have or have had a mental health issue. Most of these individuals will benefit from obtaining a job which will help their mental health, although some may be helped by engaging with appropriate services as a step towards employment. The toolkit, which is also based on research evidence, helps work coaches to review an individual’s current and future employment situation, and, to provide the employment advice that will enable them to obtain a job as soon as possible.

This new approach will help Work Coaches to recognise potential issues, gather evidence and discuss with the claimant the advantages and disadvantages of the options open to them. The toolkit helps to resolve two key questions for Work Coaches. These are:

1. **Will this claimant benefit from obtaining work now; or do they need an intervention?**
2. **Can the claimant search for work on a self-help basis; and what would help them do that?**

As a Work Coach it is important for you to consider these two important questions when working with a claimant.

- Many claimants will improve their wellbeing by looking for and obtaining a job and benefiting from the positive impact of searching for work and being employed.
- Other claimants will be helped if they follow a health intervention in parallel to their job search.
- Some may be best helped by having a job target but seeking an intervention before they engage in job search activity.

Understanding which **pathway** a claimant needs to follow and helping them to do this, will aid efficiency by enabling appropriate decision-making and avoiding unnecessary referrals to services that may not be required. The toolkit will help Work Coaches and managers understand the issues and the action they can take to help job seekers.

Similarly, if you are an adviser working with ESA claimants (both WRAG and Support Group individuals who express an interest in employment), the toolkit should help you begin a conversation and understand the claimant's situation. It will help you to think about work-related activity and appropriate work goals and whether you may require additional advice, eg, from a Work Psychologist.

This approach is consistent with DWP learning as well as Welfare Reform changes, and the introduction of Universal Credit. It also reflects DWP's objective of reducing the employment gap for disabled people and those with other health conditions (see "*Fulfilling Potential*") and the aims of the Government's strategy of better working between health and employment services (see "*No Health without Mental Health*").

The toolkit will help Work Coaches progress from a work-focussed discussion to one that considers **both employment and wellbeing** and the interventions that will help job seekers obtain and importantly, keep a job. It is not a training programme but a framework and resource that complements other DWP Work Coach training. It provides a means for experienced or new Work Coaches to reflect on and develop their practice. It is also a valuable aid to managers who will be able to discuss with Work Coaches what the employment and wellbeing approach means for DWP and how the toolkit can help.

Aims of the Toolkit

The aims of the toolkit are to help Work Coaches, whether experienced or new to the role:

- to provide appropriate employment advice to claimants who have or have had mental health issues to enable them to obtain employment as soon as possible and to keep their jobs.
- to provide a foundation for improved claimant wellbeing through job search and being employed.
- to add to and enhance their existing knowledge and understanding.

On a practical level, the toolkit seeks to provide guidance about:

- employment strengths and direction;
- gathering evidence and being vigilant;
- employment situations and work solutions;
- helping individuals to help themselves;
- discussing with claimants the advantages and disadvantages of their employment and/or health options;
- helping claimants to recognise when they can job search independently, following their claimant commitment.

How to use the Toolkit

You can choose whether you read through the toolkit in one go or whether you read it section by section. The key point is to use the toolkit to help you consider **your current practice/ interviews** with claimants who may have or have had mental health issues and to help you think about whether the suggestions made in the toolkit will develop your practice.

The questions at the end of each section will help you with that review process. The toolkit also has a number of **case studies** presented in Section 4. At various points the toolkit will suggest looking at a case study to help you review what you have just read. It is a good idea to follow this advice – but equally, you can look at the case studies as you gain more experience or develop your thinking about possible options for helping your jobseeker. You may even find that your view of the case studies change.

So, as you read through the toolkit guidance and case studies, you should reflect on your current practice. You can do this on your own, with a colleague or in small groups (eg. action learning sets, case conferencing, etc).

The principles of the Toolkit

The key principles underlying the toolkit are:

- Better wellbeing through suitable and sustained work is the goal;
- Understanding a jobseeker's employment situation is the starting point for individuals who have or have had a mental health issue;
- Advice and interventions (including health interventions) **should be framed as steps towards employment;**

- Employment is possible for people with mental health issues;²
- Jobseekers do not have to be 100% healthy to work – appropriate work is known to lead to health improvements;
- Work Coaches should enable claimants to establish appropriate job goals and work solutions;
- Improving wellbeing may require consideration of a mental health intervention;
- Where people can self-manage (eg. their job search, their condition and what works for them) this should be encouraged – what people can do for themselves they should do for themselves;
- Work Coaches are employment advice specialists and should recognise when individuals have issues, and be able to help them think through if they need to seek specialist or health-related advice.
- If an individual is to keep their job (sustained work) they and their managers must believe that they can perform job, and, the manager should provide constructive feedback.

Who are DWP claimants?

DWP works with a wide range of claimants and jobseekers. Some of the things we know include:

- About one in five JSA claimants have a common mental health condition (and also found in ESA claimants).
- Some will also have physical health conditions
- Individuals may experience distress as a result of job loss/ being unemployed.
- As a group, people with mental health conditions spend longer on benefit
- Two people with the same diagnosis and similar symptoms may think differently about their employment goals, job search and health needs.

There is a growing body of research evidence indicating that an increasing proportion of DWP claimants **have** or **have had** a mental health issue. Also, there is a proportion of claimants who have *elevated*, but not *clinical* levels of anxiety or depression. The individual may or may not recognise their situation and may or may not perceive there to be any impact on their ability to job search. Undertaking job search and obtaining a job is likely to have a positive impact for these claimants.

The work coach will play a key role here to help clarify the claimant's work situation, their belief about finding and keeping work and how they will manage any health condition during the job search process and when in work.

- ❖ Some claimants may discuss more serious behaviour and reactions, and again, they may or may not recognise their situation and may or may not perceive there to be any impact on their ability to job search. Undertaking job search and obtaining a job may have a positive impact on these claimants. Also, they may or may not be aware that there are activities and interventions that could help them progress to work. Again, the approach the Work Coach can take here is to clarify the

² There are many people who have or have had a mental health issue who are in employment. Many of those who are not in employment want to work and can work.

claimant's situation and their perception of where they think they are at in terms of finding and keeping a job (**see Table 1a & 1b**)

- ❖ Other claimants may have recognised their situation. They will have discussed their situation with their GP and may be receiving medication or have been referred to a specialist service, such as Talking Therapies or a Consultant Psychiatrist. For employment purposes it will help the claimant and the Work Coach if they are able to clarify the situation. Exploring the individual's perceptions will help the Work Coach and the claimant clarify the options open to them and how they can be accessed.
- ❖ Some claimants will present very clear evidence that there is an issue but others will present more subtle indications or behaviours. It is only through Work Coach **vigilance**, including a willingness to explore issues that clarification will be achieved. This topic will be discussed in more detail in Section 2.

For those claimants who “have had” a mental health issue there will be some who have been through treatment and now need employment advice to enable them to obtain a job.

But there will also be some claimants whose experience of the mental health issue has resulted in additional challenges (such as loss of confidence or heightened anxiety) and some distortion in their self-belief and perceptions of their ability to undertake job search or perform the tasks of a job. Work Coach advice to help individuals view their work opportunities appropriately will provide a foundation for return to work.

Section 1 - Reflections

Some questions to consider before moving on:

1. What provides the best foundation for enabling claimants with mental health issues to return to work as quickly as possible?
2. When coordinating employment and health interventions for claimants with mental health issues, what do Work Coaches need to consider in order to ensure interventions are effective?

The next section (Section 2) considers interviews with claimants and jobseekers and how the employment approach can be used to explore opportunities and identify the appropriate pathway and specific steps they need to take to obtain employment.

Section 2: The Aim is Employment and Wellbeing

Overview

Section 2 considers interviews with claimants and jobseekers and how the employment approach can be used to help them explore opportunities and identify the steps they need to take to obtain employment. The PIGEEP interview structure is outlined as a basic foundation for Work Coach interviews, with the caveat that additional elements are needed to enable claimants with mental health issues make effective progress in terms of employment and wellbeing.

The work coach interview: focussing on employment and wellbeing

The interview models and Learning & Development (L&D) events produced for DWP have been designed to provide a basis for understanding the claimant's/ jobseeker's employment situation. This approach is aimed at helping individuals to obtain employment as quickly as possible. This section discusses this specific employment approach, and the steps that can be taken to make the approach more effective for people with mental health issues.

Good interviews help people think things through. When a person thinks things through for themselves they become much more committed to fulfilling a course of action. Allowing jobseekers time to think about what they want to say helps with this. Good interviewers will use an appropriate range of skills, including listening and summarising, and, when exploring employment will use an appropriate interview structure. DWP has used **Work Targetted Interviewing (WTI)**, also known as **PIGEEP**. PIGEEP addresses the reality of the claimant's employment situation, including their actual employment strengths that they can discuss with potential employers.

The starting point is to help the claimant clarify an appropriate employment direction, by building on the individual's employment strengths and their ability to do their target job. All of this should contribute to building trust and the individual's belief that they can obtain employment.

Why is PIGEEP used as a structure for claimant interviews?

Work Coaches in DWP are trained to use the PIGEEP framework. Internal research has shown that the use of the PIGEEP interview structure (ie how the claimant interview is structured) consistently produces the best outcomes with claimants³.

The principles of the PIGEEP interview are straightforward enough – though their application may vary having been tailored to the needs of the particular claimant.

PIGEEP helps to guide both the Work Coach and the claimant through the process of progressing towards work in the most effective way. It facilitates effective job-matching

³ This is important because some advisers have preferred to conduct interviews in their own way. However, there is no factual evidence that those ways are more effective, or as effective, as a properly conducted PIGEEP interview. PIGEEP or WTI remains the research-based, basic standard for conducting advisory interviews with unemployed people.

and job-getting (or vacancy filling) thereby serving the needs of both claimants and employers.

The PIGEEP Interview

- Preparation
- Introduction
- Goal – define the job goal
- Evaluation – evaluate the job goal
- Exploration - explore options (as necessary)
- *Planning - agree the plan*

The first stages (preparation and introduction) would be a part of any interview structure. It is the 'GEEP' part that is the unique element. This can be used flexibly by Work Coaches who can, when appropriate, help claimants to go through "GEE" more than once to establish an appropriate job goal. This has the added advantage of providing claimants with the opportunity to identify additional employment strengths. The whole interview is **employment-focused**, aimed at helping the claimant to get suitable work as soon as possible.

- By addressing the claimant's employment strengths and target job, the Work Coach and claimant can focus on how to make job search effective.

For ESA claimants the starting point might require additional work in terms of preparatory steps and employment planning, still building on employment assets and helping claimants to look ahead to a time when they may commence work.

Advantages of the PIGEEP approach

- it is based on a clear job-getting model;
- it is about being claimant-focused, efficient and effective;
- Best suited to individuals who are:
 - unemployed
 - working towards a job target or specific job goal
 - building up a view of their employment strengths
- Facilitates evaluation of a job goal and the individual

This PIGEEP framework is a basic structure for employment interviews, prompting Work Coaches to maintain a focus on the job goal. It will work for some disabled people, who may also have mental health issues. However, the addition⁴ of several key elements, including **being vigilant** and considering **work solutions**, will help improve the employment progress and wellbeing of claimants with mental health issues.

⁴ The PIGEEP model discussed here is the core model covered in many adviser L&D skills events. The authors are aware that enhanced PIGEEP models have been used in some DWP training courses, where work solutions have been discussed. What is different in the current context, is that work solutions are discussed in some detail, and, in combination with other evidenced-based strategies, that will combine to be more effective.

Augmenting PIGEFP to address employment and wellbeing needs

Although PIGEFP provides a basic foundation for interviews with people with mental health issues, an augmented approach is needed to ensure these interviews are effective and efficient. This augmented approach will include:

- being **vigilant**;
- understanding **mental health issues** and their interaction with claimant perceptions of job search and job performance;
- understanding **work solutions** and how they can be used to facilitate employment progress and job performance;
- encouraging Work Coaches to use additional **questioning and progression strategies** to explore issues and enhance employment opportunities.

By using this approach, Work Coaches will be able to address issues directly and with a greater understanding of the interaction between mental health and employment. Maintaining a clear employment focus and helping the individual to consider work solutions aimed at overcoming any work constraints, will mean the claimant/ customer will make better progress in finding and keeping a job.

Vigilance and being vigilant

The term vigilance has been mentioned on a number of occasions in the toolkit. In the context of Work Coach employment interviews it refers to being:

- **attentive and alert**, throughout an interview, to the claimant's behaviour (both observed directly and reported by the individual) that might imply the presence of mental health issues;
- **ready to explore** and **act** on the information observed; and,
- **alert** to the **actions of employers** and others which may aid or impede the employment progress of the claimant.

But **vigilance** is not just about “what” to do but also about “how” you go about it. Work Coaches need to adopt a respectful and sensitive approach and bear in mind that permission and agreement will be needed before exploring these issues. A question along the lines of “**Do you mind if I ask another question about this/ that?**” will help here. Furthermore, some claimants may choose not to disclose or may not feel comfortable in disclosing straightaway. However, this may change as rapport and trust is established between Work Coach and claimant.

In practical terms, being vigilant means being alert and **picking up signs and clues** from the interview. Making sense of this information involves thinking about what action might help the claimant make progress towards work and discussing appropriate options with the claimant to achieve this.

Helping the claimant to search for a **job goal** can, in itself, have a beneficial effect on mental wellbeing, in much the same way as having a job can promote better health, because it provides a purpose and meaningful activity. In doing so, a good Work Coach will reinforce activity and be vigilant to issues that will hinder employment progress.

Vigilant Work Coaches will help claimants make effective progress with both their employment and wellbeing. This will involve helping claimants to decide whether they are best helped by:

- having a job target but seeking a health intervention before they engage in job search activity.
- following a health intervention in parallel to their job search.
- engaging immediately in job search activity and benefiting from the positive impact of this.

We now move on to listening to individuals with mental health issues and their perception of the interaction with job search and job performance.

Understanding mental health issues and the interaction with job search and job performance – introduction to Tables 1a & 1b

Some of the employment-related characteristics of claimants who “have” or “have had” a mental health issue were discussed on pages 7 & 8.

In addition, a broad understanding of mental health issues, their likely impact on claimant job search and the options for addressing these, will also help Work Coaches to facilitate appropriate claimant job search and actions to enable employment progress. While it is helpful to have a broad understanding, it is worth remembering again that Work Coaches are not expected to diagnose mental health conditions.

There is also a growing recognition that the experience of a mental health condition, including absence from work, produces a distorted perception of self, illness, relationships and work.

Some authors argue that the *secondary* “handicaps” of MHCs, create the major difficulties for return to work. These include loss of confidence and responsiveness in interpersonal and supervisory situations (eg. responding appropriately to a management request; getting on well with work colleagues). Individuals will need help to address these if they are to maximise their chances of successfully obtaining or re-entering employment and performing their jobs well.

Work Coaches will observe behaviour or hear comments made by claimants that suggest there is reason for checking the wellbeing of the individual. The tables presented in the following pages will provide some examples. Sometimes it will be very clear that there is an issue. Sometimes by being vigilant and exploring the behaviour and words used, the Work Coach will be able to clarify whether or not there is an issue for job search and employment.

Table 1a summarises three claimant/ customer mental health scenarios (in terms of treatment) and their perception of how their mental health issue and its severity interacts with their ability to undertake job search activities or perform in work.

Table 1b looks at how the adviser can **explore the issues further** and the options available.

Table 1a: Making Sense of Claimants' Perception of their Ability to Job Search

Treatment Group	Claimant Perception of their MH Issue on Jobseeking Behaviour		
	No impact on job search	Some impact on job search	Major impact on job search
Not in Treatment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Individual notes behaviour or concerns that may be related to a MH issue (increased anxiety or depression) but does not perceive this will have any impact, or very minor impact, on job search. ❖ Some individuals may indicate that undertaking job search or obtaining a job may help their situation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Individual notes behaviour or concerns that may be related to a MH issue and states that there would be an impact on their job search or job keeping. ❖ For example, indecision about what to include on application forms, being very nervous about travelling to interviews or worried their nerves would be apparent in a job interview. [Refer to Table 2] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Individual notes behaviour or concerns that may be related to a MH issue and states that there would be a serious impact on job search or job keeping. ❖ For example, worrying about what to include on application forms, being extremely nervous about travelling to interviews or convinced their nerves would be apparent in a job interview. [Refer to Table 2]
Treatment Ongoing*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Individual indicates or reports that they have discussed their situation with their GP or other HCP. ❖ They may describe the treatment programme, but do not perceive this will have any impact, or very minor impact, on job search. ❖ Some individuals may indicate that undertaking job search or obtaining a job may help their situation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Individual indicates or reports that they have discussed their situation with their GP or other HCP. ❖ They may describe their treatment situation and their perception of some impact on job search eg. answering job interview questions when feeling a bit down. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Individual indicates or reports that they have discussed their situation with their GP or other HCP. ❖ They may describe their treatment situation and their perception of some impact on job search eg. feeling too nervous to complete job application forms.
Post Treatment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Individual reports that they have discussed their situation with their GP or other HCP and describe that they have completed a treatment programme. ❖ They may be taking medication for maintenance purposes. ❖ They do not perceive this will have any impact, or very minor impact, on job search. ❖ Some individuals may indicate that undertaking job search or obtaining a job may help their situation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Individual reports that they have discussed their situation with their GP or other HCP and describe that they have completed a treatment programme. ❖ They may be taking medication for maintenance purposes. ❖ They do perceive that their situation will have some impact on their ability to job search. ❖ May express concerns about confidence to achieve work targets, work with colleagues and managers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Individual reports that they have discussed their situation with their GP or other HCP and describe that they have completed a treatment programme. ❖ They may be taking medication for maintenance purposes. ❖ They do perceive that their situation will have a major impact on their ability to job search. ❖ May express serious concerns about confidence to achieve work targets, work with colleagues and managers.

*[Ongoing treatment, for the purposes of the Toolkit, is considered to be treatment prescribed/recommended by a registered doctor or health care professional (so this would not include self-help medication or treatment, such as following guidance in a book or IT package about anxiety, unless it was recommended by a registered doctor or health care professional)].

Table 1b: How Can Work Coaches Explore Claimants' Ability to Job Search?

Work Coach Action			
Treatment Group	Explore	Options	Advantages/ Disadvantages
Not in Treatment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Check (e.g. play back) what is said and clarify perception of impact on job search. ❖ Why do you think there will be no or little impact, on job search? ❖ Explore if they have been actively job seeking. ❖ Ask for recent examples of where job search went well – discussions with employers or in interviews are very important. ❖ Why did they think it went well? Did they receive any feedback, from employers? ❖ Ask for recent examples of where job search did not go so well – again, discussions with employers or in interviews are very important. ❖ Why did they think it did not go well? Did they receive any feedback, from employers? ❖ Are their views based on a perception that job search would not benefit them. ❖ Explore why. ❖ Review examples of job search application forms, letters and CVs and review reasonable expectations for job search and explore reactions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Claimant undertakes job search independently following Claimant Commitment/ My work Plan ➤ Light touch input from Work Coach 	Claimant develops confidence they can job search on their own
Treatment Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ If you hear a report about a GP or HCP ask if they have had any conversations about treatment/ treatment options. ❖ Explore perceptions of progress and medical feedback and clarify perception of impact on job search. ❖ Why do you think there will be no or little impact, on job search? ❖ Explore if they have been actively job seeking, as above, ❖ Ask for recent examples of where job search went well etc., etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Work Coach helps with identifying employment strengths & assets to inform CV. ➤ Act on any feedback from claimant's experience of job search to help them think about and prepare for effective job search 	
Post treatment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ If you hear a report of treatment completed check if they are at a stage where can they undertake job search. ❖ Explore perceptions of progress and medical feedback and clarify perception of impact on job search. ❖ Why do you think there will be no or little impact, on job search? ❖ Explore if they have been actively job seeking, as above, ❖ Ask for recent examples of where job search went well. ❖ Remember that job seeker may continue to take medication for maintenance purposes. ❖ Have they had any work experience since they completed treatment? Because of the issues noted in Table 1a above this needs to be explored carefully. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Consider specialist provision/ support to help claimant with job search, eg, CV preparation, enhanced interview skills, etc ➤ Uses My Work Plan to discuss and review Job search activities, with more regular contact and feedback 	Marked increase in claimant confidence to undertake job search. Claimant believes they need work coach support before they can undertake take job search

Section 2 - Reflections

Some questions to consider before moving on:

1. Why is PIGEEP a valuable starting point for helping individuals with mental health issues obtain employment?
2. How can PIGEEP interviews be augmented to be more effective for people with mental health issues?
3. Why should Work Coaches attend to perceptions of ability to job search?

The next section (Section 3) focuses on wellbeing, wellbeing at work and the importance of “listening” and “exploring”, to better understand and progress the employment and wellbeing of claimants with mental health issues.

Section 3: Wellbeing: Listening & Exploring

Overview

In Section 3 the toolkit discusses wellbeing and wellbeing at work. It then looks at how to explore the words and descriptions that claimants may use, including those phrases used in interviews that may sound like cul-de-sacs; but where the claimant can be helped to identify an employment direction. This helps Work Coaches to help claimants consider whether they should seek employment straight away, or, seek help with any issue in parallel to looking for work.

What is wellbeing?

Wellbeing is a feeling we have about ourselves based on how we feel about our work, relationships, health, finances, security, etc, and the interaction between these. In general, the more positive the judgements we make about these, the more positively we are likely to judge our wellbeing. This sense of wellbeing will be supported and enhanced by a feeling or judgement that we can find the resources⁵ to cope with set-backs and difficulties (known as resilience). Some people also describe that finding a good balance in their lives helps with their sense of wellbeing. Furthermore, being in employment and undertaking activities to obtain employment can contribute to this sense of wellbeing, as does being more in control of health issues.

At a social level it is about individuals being able to contribute to and benefit from: the economy; relationships (with family, friends, and neighbours); and, a sense of security (not feeling under undue threat from crime or criminal activity, from loss of financial security or poverty). But equally it is not about absence of stress or threat, which may actually play a role in stimulating action that leads to a stronger sense of security and resilience.

Altogether these issues would add up to a view of an individual's satisfaction with their life situation.

For Work Coaches there are a couple of important observations here:

- Wellbeing is about the sense of being in a better place.
- Few people are in a position to influence individual's overall feelings of wellbeing. Work Coaches cannot do this but they can influence a job seeker's employment situation, this is a very important aspect of wellbeing.
- Enabling individuals to improve their wellbeing is not just about responding to health issues - although there will be situations where this will be a good start – it is more the sense of being in a better place.

⁵ Resources can include problem-solving strategies which individuals use and find helpful, stress reduction/ relaxation techniques, etc, as well as friends/ colleagues/ mentors who can provide advice or help with considering options/ actions in addressing issues or set-backs.

What is wellbeing at work?

This is a feeling or judgement we have about ourselves in the context of our working environment. It is influenced by the job we do, self-perceptions of our performance, relationships with colleagues and managers, our health/ changing health in the workplace and how all of these interact to influence our sense of wellbeing. Our sense of wellbeing will be enhanced if we are confident that we can find the resources to cope with any set-backs or difficulties that may arise in the workplace (ie. resilience).

For most people, work provides their main source of income, it boosts self-esteem and identity, and is part of the individual's contribution to society.

But as has been discussed, the reaction to the experience of having a mental health condition is loss of confidence, and, this appears to impact on self-monitoring, where individual's may become more sensitive to aspects of their work performance and relationships; for example, in the way they compare their performance with others and react to comments from managers or supervisors.

At first sight Work Coaches may think there is little they can do about this – but in actual fact some very straightforward steps can make a difference. These steps will be discussed in greater detail on pages 25 – 28, but include:

- Ensuring the individual has a strong belief (based on evidence about their **employment strengths**) that they can do their target job.
- Having the opportunity to **look ahead** to doing the job and thinking about what may have caused the difficulties in the workplace.
- **Anticipating possible set-backs** and thinking about what can be done to manage these.

Good mental health at work comes from the employee being able to balance the demands of the job and exercise control over the way they do their work, while also receiving support to maintain that balance.

The above paragraphs provide Work Coaches with a general introduction to wellbeing and wellbeing at work and includes an early discussion of how wellbeing can be developed. Before expanding this discussion in Section 4. the toolkit will now consider some of the words claimants use to describe their behaviour and reactions; and, when they have doubts about employment. **Tables 2 & 3 that follow help advisers to explore these words and the possible options.**

Listening to the claimant

Table 2 highlights some of the words and descriptions of claimant behaviour that Work Coaches may hear that possibly indicates the claimant may be experiencing mental health issues. The toolkit has already discussed that some of these behaviours may be similar to behaviour related to physical or developmental (e.g. Autistic Spectrum Disorder) conditions that are not related to mental health.

The toolkit has also discussed that the way to respond to this evidence about behaviour is not to question the claimant about their condition or information HCPs have provided about the condition or their perceptions of it's duration or severity, **but to ask the individual about their ability** to job search, and what will help them to job search and obtain employment.

In that discussion the claimant/jobseeker may note or signal that help with their mental health would be beneficial for them and may look to the Work Coach to discuss their next step.

Table 2 is designed to help the Work Coach with that discussion and how to keep the focus on employment. To engage with that discussion the Work Coach does not have to make a health diagnosis, they are not trained to do that - it is the role of others to do that, GPs and HCPs for example – but if the aim is to help people into employment then discussing what will help is the most important step.

However, by referring to or keeping Table 2 in mind the Work Coach will be able to help the claimant/jobseeker think through what is the appropriate pathway to help them reach their job goal and move forward with their wellbeing.

Table 2 should be read very flexibly. It is not a precision instrument but a general guide. The strength of concern or emphasis regarding nervousness or confidence may point to a higher or lower option pathway.

If the individual does not recognise they have a mental health issue, does not wish to discuss it, or feels that job search will help them, they should be encouraged to job search for their employment goal, but the Work Coach should monitor their progress carefully.

Table 2: Listening to the Evidence and Exploring Pathways

Evidence	Pathways
<p>1. Description of every day ups and downs that everyone experiences when things do not go well, Of more concern would be descriptions of not coming to terms with set backs as they usually do, emphasising they are feeling more vulnerable or more down than usual. They may describe needing a moment or two to think things through and think they will be able to job search, if they take short breaks and have a contact for advice.</p>	<p>Explore whether claimant/jobseeker thinks that their situation could be improved by paying more attention to looking after themselves, better diet, more exercise, taking opportunity to talk to family or friends. That is, whether self-management and monitoring of progress will help, along with taking opportunities to hear friendly advice.</p>
<p>2. Description of clear tensions and nervousness or unusual, unexplained emotions or feeling quite down, that many people report occasionally when they are under pressure. Although they are expressing concern, the individual is not saying they want help, but they would like to better understand what is happening and to hear advice. Of more concern would be descriptions of not being in control or not having the control they would like, where if they slide further and these feelings or thoughts become more intense or frequent, it may indicate descriptor 3 below. Describe needing some time out (half an hour or an hour), have a cup of tea, before they will be able to job search and needing regular breaks to cope with the pressure and tension.</p>	<p>Explore whether claimant/jobseeker thinks that their wellbeing could be improved by understanding more about their situation or seeking informed advice, for example by looking at relevant web sites or contacting a telephone help line. That is, whether self-management and monitoring of progress related to informed advice will help. The informed advice could suggest a more intensive version of 1 above or help as at 3 below.</p>
<p>3. Description of marked tensions, nervousness, unusual emotions or feeling very down, that some people may report very occasionally but here they may be described as intense and recurring and are clearly causing concern. The individual is concerned and may or may not know what to do next, whether the feelings will pass if they become active, for example through their job search. The individual is able to discuss their situation appropriately - of more concern would be if the individual did not appreciate the steps they should take or see the implications for job search, which might indicate descriptor 4 below. Describe needing long rests or breaks (eg. two, three or four hours), or needing to take pills, (paracetamol for example), to recover from the pressure and tension of job search or to prepare for anticipated tensions, if they are to function effectively.</p>	<p>Explore with claimant/jobseeker whether they are OK with what they have described and whether they think there is a way of improving their situation? Could they seek advice from someone who would understand more about their situation? Do they have any ideas about who they could talk to? They may suggest a helpline, Talking Therapies, a Health Care Professional or their GP. That is they need contact with health care advice to enable them to manage their situation and to monitor their progress. This may not mean job search has to be suspended but that it should proceed in the light of Work Coach advice. If as Work Coach you are challenged by the claimant eg “are you telling me I’m not well enough to work”, Work Coaches should advise that they are not able to do that and that they are not a medical practitioner. As a Work Coach you could follow up with saying to the claimant “you have said “x” and “y” and I’m concerned and just checking if you were saying it would help to talk about these things with someone who understands”.</p> <p style="text-align: right; color: red;">[continued overleaf]</p>

4. This situation is very rare, some Work Coaches may not hear this type of description in a lifetime of advisory work, but if they do hear this it requires serious consideration. Description of severe tensions, nervousness, emotional reactions or feeling very, very down, that only occur in extreme situations, and which may be accompanied by indications of self neglect, hopelessness and possible self-harm. The individual may not know what to do next, may not care or feel lost. It is very unlikely that the individual would be able to follow a job search plan and very unlikely they would be offered a job. Most employment interviewers would be concerned about the health and wellbeing of the individual and might well arrange for medical help, as they would for an employee who arrived at work in this way. If the individual is able to discuss their situation appropriately it still may be wise to supervise contact with an HCP, GP or mental health therapist – if they are unable to discuss their situation coherently it will be wise to make direct contact with an HCP, GP or mental health therapist.

■ The response to this situation is about ensuring that the individual makes contact with appropriate mental health services either through their own actions (but supervised) or through the Work Coach or another responsible, reliable adult taking action for them. The aim will be to achieve urgent contact with a GP or mental health services to review whether a mental health assessment is required.

Words that a claimant may use to describe employment self-doubt: Work Coach exploration – Introduction to Table 3.

In this section we will focus on the interview with the claimant and explore the words you might hear from the claimant about self-doubt, worries and concerns.

There are a number of important points to note before you review the scenarios contained within **Table 3**.

- Table 3 and the wider toolkit is not about finding a ‘fix’ for the person’s mental health condition. It is a framework to help you and the claimant to think about and plan what kind of self-help or more specialist mental health support could form part of their return to work plan to move into and sustain employment.
- The table has three sections. Column 1 gives examples of what you might hear a claimant say in an interview. Column 2 provides some information about what the information supplied by the claimant may mean. Column 3 provides some possible options for you and the claimant to discuss.
- The table is intended as an aid and a prompt and does not aim to account for every scenario that the claimant may report. It is illustrative of some of the more common issues that may arise.
- All of the scenario examples relate to either claimants/ customers managing in-work concerns associated with their difficulties or other personal or situational concerns about coping.
- Given the importance of Work Coaches needing to be vigilant and attentive to what the claimant is saying in order to take the appropriate action and guide the claimant, it is strongly recommended that you take time to review this table.
- It is structured in a specific way that reflects how we think and make decisions based on how we organise and process information. The table contents will give you a good framework to help you make sense of what you are hearing.
- Individuals’ will express issues in different ways. Some may struggle to put into words what they are experiencing or have difficulty describing their worries or concerns. It is important that you remember the PIGEEP model (pp 9-10) for interviewing and not to be put off by what you are hearing. Try to maintain a focus on the future with the individual, i.e. in work, performing well and enjoying the benefits that work can bring.
- Your confidence in learning how to work with the different scenarios will be further enhanced if you take the opportunity to work in groups with fellow colleagues to discuss the approach you might take in each situation.

Section 3 - Reflections

Some questions to consider before moving on:

1. What can Work Coaches do to influence a claimant’s sense of wellbeing?
2. How does listening contribute to wellbeing?

[continued overleaf]

3. Do Work Coaches ever hear claimant words that are difficult to respond to?
4. Where would you find out about local services & provision for people with mental health issues.

The next section (Section 4) will help to bring this together with some employment questions and strategies. What will be different for Work Coaches will be having a clear focus with the tables helping to understand where claimants are and not being distracted by spurious information or arguments.

Table 3: Work Coach Reflection

What you may hear	What it may indicate & what you might do	What are your options?
<p>"I'm not sure I've got what it takes to get back to work – it's been a long time"</p> <p>[The individual has been out of work for some time and is unsure about getting back]</p>	<p>Consider ways to increase confidence and resilience e.g. help them to recognise the skills they have to offer an employer. You may feel there is a greater level of need and think about a referral for more intensive confidence-building to address the individual's longer term concerns.</p>	<p>Consider with the individual whether they could benefit from either a self-help programme or a guided/facilitated intervention</p>
<p>" Even though I'm 22 I still find it difficult to speak to people "</p> <p>[The individual recognises they find conversation at work hard.]</p>	<p>Consider a supported work trial as a way of making a further assessment or exploring whether individual has other difficulties (perhaps long standing) that would benefit from specialist mental health input</p>	<p>Discuss opportunities and options to develop conversational or social skills. For more significant issues, specialist help may be required e.g. talking therapy or GP.</p>
<p>" How will I cope – I had to leave my last job"</p> <p>[The individual talks about having 'highs' and 'lows' at work and that this was one of the reasons for losing her last job]</p>	<p>Enable the individual to develop specific coping strategies e.g. by understanding more about their mood and emotions, so they feel more confident in dealing with them. Having an "advance plan" can help reduce situational anxiety</p>	<p>Explain the benefits of working with a specialist employment adviser for help with job or health coaching. If the client offers more information, e.g. about their depression, think about talking therapy options to help them cope with their emotions</p>
<p>"I can't cope in some situations. I get very anxious and have panic attacks"</p>	<p>Aim to reduce occasions when individual becomes anxious and identify and talk through practical coping strategies.</p>	<p>Re-assure about types of support including self-help groups where they can talk to other people with similar experiences. Finding out more from a psychological wellbeing practitioner, health adviser or wellbeing coach may help as a first step towards feeling in control. The adviser can offer to help the client find out more by referring them to a talking therapy service for low intensity specialist mental health support</p>
<p>"My doctor told me I can't cope with stress".</p> <p>[Discussion focuses on the individual's feeling that they are unable to cope.]</p>	<p>Anxiety management could help build the individual's ability to cope to enable job performance in the workplace – avoiding stress can be counterproductive if it means the person finds more and more things they can't cope with, so the goal is to enable them to experience that they can cope successfully with stress.</p> <p>Build sustainable coping to help the individual</p>	<p>Reflect back that not being able to cope and feeling stressed affects almost everyone at some point, but there are still things that can help. Could refer to self help material and psycho- educational groups via local talking therapy service.</p> <p>Reviews with mental health practitioner to boost coping resources.</p> <p>[contined overleaf]</p>

	perform well at work and stay in employment. Help individuals to consider job search and employment options which minimise the stress they will experience	
“I can’t think straight, I am tired all the time, irritable. I can’t see the point of going on anymore”. [Individual says they used to be quite good at their job]	Better ability to cope to boost self- confidence and help individual develop a more positive appraisal of their skills and prospects, help to break out of a pattern of reinforcing depression and low mood that can undermine their sense of self worth and purpose.	Be alert to how low the person may feel and whether there is any risk of self harm . If person agrees, consider referral to GP for specialist mental health referral, but can also offer information on different therapy options for depression and help to access talking therapy service. If seriously concerned, consult with a manager while the person is present.
“I don’t like being in large groups of people. Coming to meetings is very difficult for me”.	Recognise individual is anxious in social situations and consider how this might be managed to help them to travel to work and develop relationships at work – a work trial could help. Specialist mental health input could be considered to help overcome the difficulties.	Talking therapy referral might work well along side assistance from a job coach or workplace buddy .

Section 4: Employment Strategies & Practical Case Studies

Overview

In this section some new questions and strategies are introduced to Work Coaches to help them work more effectively with claimants with mental health issues. What is clear now is that attending to solely to a claimant's health issue will have limited impact with regards to return to work. This is obviously a role for a Work Coach or employment specialist and there are a number of important reasons for this. Work Coaches are trained to have an understanding of the labour market, employers' recruitment practices and in-work issues. Enabling identification of an appropriate job goal or job progression strategies for individuals is the starting point for progress. But, Work Coach input is also needed to help individuals complete the journey to successful work performance.

Employment strategies and practical case studies

People with mental health issues often describe themselves as not being sure about a job goal or having doubts about their confidence to get back to work. Until they can picture themselves doing the tasks of the job and working with colleagues it can be difficult for individuals to consider their readiness to work.

If individuals do not believe they have the ability to work or believe they will fail, there is the risk they will try to avoid getting a job. Although individuals with mental health issues may have doubts about returning to work there is evidence that work is good for people and can have beneficial effects for individuals with mental health issues. So there is an important role for Work Coaches.

So far, the Toolkit has discussed that WTI (PIGEEP) provides the basic foundation for this role. It has also discussed that having an understanding of vigilance, the range of treatment groups/ mental health issues and the claimant's perception of their ability to job search, particularly where this is related to confidence (as addressed in Tables 1a & b, and 2), will help the Work Coach to conduct interviews.

Additionally throughout the Toolkit it has been suggested that there are a number of strategies and questions that will augment the PIGEEP approach, and make interviews with claimants with mental health issues more effective.

The toolkit will now look at the strategies and why they help the claimant and Work Coach. Then we will move on to look at how the Work Coach can make practical use of the strategies in the case studies, and integrate them into their interviews and consider when they might need to seek further advice.

Building belief, wellbeing and resilience

It has been noted that it is difficult for claimants to consider their work readiness until they are able to view themselves doing the tasks of the job. People with mental health issues also need to consider their specific health issues and the interaction with work tasks and colleagues. In other words they need to look ahead, anticipate issues that might arise and begin to think about strategies to cope with these. This envisioning

process, through developing belief that the individual can do the job and the sense of increased personal control, promotes wellbeing and also resilience, because it helps claimants to see they have the resources to respond to future set-backs and difficulties. For claimants with mental health issues, this is an important step, as research has shown that undertaking these activities and developing coping strategies has positive preventative psychological benefits.

The additional strategies that will help the Work Coach include:

- Looking ahead
- Work solutions
- Self-efficacy
- Job entry preparation (gradual return)

It should be noted that these strategies are not independent and will overlap and interact with one other. For example, thinking ahead about doing a job, will help with identifying potential work solutions and this in turn can have a positive impact on work self-efficacy (see below).

Looking ahead

We know that helping jobseekers with mental health issues to look ahead enhances their ability to job search, obtain and keep employment. For example, where individuals anticipate having difficulties, where they previously found a task to be very difficult to complete or very stressful, or where they were very concerned about unexpected events causing set-backs. Enabling individuals to talk things through and contribute to finding solutions appears to provide reassurance and increased confidence.

This is not surprising since individuals are able to find a way of managing tasks they previously found difficult or stressful. They are able to see the problem in perspective (for example how it impacts on others and how they deal with it) and have a better understanding of the resources they have available, both within themselves and through consulting with others, when faced with unexpected situations.

Doing a job within their capabilities is very important for people with mental health issues. It is well known that individuals will compare their task performance with other colleagues and react to feedback from management and supervisors – individuals with mental health issues appear to be more sensitive to this.

So, enabling individuals to look ahead, talk things through and explore possible solutions appears to increase an individual's sense of control and motivation through belief in their ability to perform the actions of job search and the tasks of a job.

Work solutions

A need for a work solution arises when, for a reason associated with their health condition and or disability, an individual is currently unable to perform the tasks of their job or job goal. A work solution is always the minimum change that enables the individual to perform their job successfully. Work solutions differ from adjustments

(Equality Act, 2010) because they are not subject to negotiation or the employer's perception of what may be reasonable.

The aim of a work solution is to enable the individual to perform the job successfully. Working with a claimant to identify potential work solutions will help them to visualise that it is possible to do the job and build their belief they can do the job and manage their health condition in the workplace.

It may also provide a foundation for negotiation with an employer, where necessary. However, it is not necessarily unreasonable for an employer to take a different view. In arriving at a decision they will take into account the costs and organisational factors, including compatibility with other workplace arrangements and acceptability to other members of the workforce, as well as potential impact on the individual (eg stigmatising, labelling). Some examples are outlined below.

Scenario 1: A Work Coach and claimant may identify that a daily starting time 30 minutes later than the organisational norm would enable the individual to start work at a good tempo on arrival in the workplace, without drug-related early morning drowsiness. The employer however, may only agree to a concession of 15 minutes and accept lower productivity on arrival in the work place, because the operation always experiences a high volume of customer calls at the start of the day.

Scenario 2: An individual with a job that involves data checking and problem resolution finds it difficult to concentrate on the data when they return to work after a period of depression. They prefer to focus totally on problem solving tasks at this time, with colleagues taking over the data checking. Management accepts this partial change saying some inaccuracies will be acceptable and because they have a number of new members of staff still learning the job.

When you look at the case study exercises below, (for example, Exercise 1), you could consider the possibility that a work solution may be appropriate. For example, you could consider whether a work solution might be working or starting as a retail assistant, rather than as a supervisor; or working on a part-time rather than a full-time basis. Other examples could include omitting organising staff rotas from the job description or ensuring the manager is present on high volume days⁶.

Self-efficacy

Self-efficacy is the belief that an individual has that they are able to successfully execute the tasks of a given job.

Self-efficacy is a key factor in predicting return to work for people who are unemployed and it therefore makes sense for Work Coaches to be aware of this and do what they can to improve and increase a claimant's self-efficacy.

⁶ One of the challenges faced by all professionals working in this area of mental health issues is that, compared to physical health and disabilities, there is a dearth of literature (particularly research literature) on work solutions. One major review of Health & Work in 2006, noted only one reference pertaining to this area. This has the consequence that there is a weak foundation for training. This can be addressed to some extent by Work Coaches working jointly with Work Psychologists to identify appropriate and effective work solutions to enable successful claimant job search and job performance.

Helping claimants to identify, an appropriate job goal, their employment strengths, and relevant work solutions, will all contribute to building a claimant's belief about work and their commitment to undertaking relevant job search activities.

More broadly, a person's sense of self-efficacy can be developed by enabling them to acquire the skills they need to do a task, by helping them to see they have relevant skills and experience, and by providing encouragement and positive feedback.

Job entry preparation (gradual return)

Work Coaches have an important role in helping claimants with mental health issues, build up a realistic picture of the job and what the claimant can do by way of preparation for job entry (or return).

Equally, having an appreciation of the claimant's employment strengths and assets and any issues that need to be taken into account, ensures that the Work Coach can help the claimant build up an accurate and objective picture of how they might perform in the job and what work solutions will help, for example, at different times - at the start of a job, when a person has settled in and when they become more familiar with the role, the job demands and work place in general.

It is important for Work Coaches to consider these issues, because individuals with mental health issues have a tendency to compare themselves and their job performance unfavourably, to others doing a similar job, and also may "receive" manager or supervisor feedback more negatively, as mentioned above.

By providing the claimant with the best chance of receiving accurate and positive feedback about their employment strengths and performance, Work Coaches can play an important role in moderating claimant self-monitoring or regulation and help them overcome any self-doubt or lack of confidence in their ability to undertake and perform a job successfully and sustainably.

Helping claimants to work towards establishing an appropriate job goal(s), undertake job entry preparation and access on-going support in the workplace, can combine to help prepare jobseekers with mental health issues (including those claiming ESA) to plan for work and perform successfully in the workplace.

So, what this means in practice for the Work Coach is that they should consider the areas outlined below and decide the priorities for the individual claimant in order to facilitate progress. If Work Coaches are unsure about how to go about doing this with some claimants, they may wish to consult with their local Work Psychologist:

- Identify appropriate job goal
- Help individual to identify their employment strengths
- Clarify belief they can do the job
- Clarify belief that they can manage health in the workplace
- Identify any work solutions
- Help individual to look ahead to undertaking job search
- Help individual to look ahead to performing tasks of job

- Help individual to look ahead and think about how they will compare their performance with colleagues and receive feedback from managers
- Help individual to look ahead to working with colleagues
- Help individual to look ahead to working with supervisors and managers

Overall this toolkit provides an introduction to working in this area. If Work Coaches find that an individual's employment situation is too complex, or, are unsure about effective work solutions, they should consult their Work Psychologist, whose role is to help with these types of issues.

Case Study Learning

In this section you will be introduced to three exercises.

As you read through the case studies, think about what help an individual might need to help them make the transition to work and the support they might need in the workplace.

As you read the case studies, use the questions below to prompt or inform your decisions about employment and the kind of specialist mental health input that a claimant may need and what their next steps might be.

-
- 1. What are the individual's employment strengths?**
 - What would you recommend they put on their CV or Application Form and be prepared to discuss with employers?
 - 2. Does the individual have a clear employment goal?**
 - Supported by their employment strengths?
 - 3. What evidence is there that the individual will need a work solution?**
 - 4. What evidence is there that the individual is ready to search for a job?**
 - Is there evidence to show they can job search independently?
 - Is there evidence to show that Work Coach advice will be required frequently?
 - 5. What evidence is there that they are ready to return to work?**
 - Is there anything that tells you they need to attend to any issues at the same time as returning to work?
 - Is there anything that tells you they need to attend to any issues before going back to work?
 - 6. If the individual needs to attend to mental health issue what will you do next?**
 - 7. What evidence is there that work will be beneficial for the claimant now?**
 - 8. What else will help you to decide if they need more help?**
 - 9. What other questions might you ask?**
-

Case study exercises

You can now work through the exercises that follow, using the above questions, to help you think about your approach and how you might work with the claimant to help them make progress towards work and improve their wellbeing.

Note: You can work through the exercises on your own, with a colleague/ manager/ Work Psychologist or in a small group. Exercises do not have to be completed in one session. The important thing is to think about your approach to coaching the claimant and to reflect on your practice in terms of helping the claimant to make progress both in terms of work and wellbeing.

[Appendix 1](#) contains pro formas to help you record your responses to the exercises.

Exercise 1

Anita, Bola and **Carla** are claimants with similar employment histories and diagnoses. On first reading you may think there is little difference between them. The question is though, whether Anita, Bola and Carla have three different employment situations and needs, including work solutions?

ANITA

Anita informs you that she has bouts of depression and anxiety and has told her GP that her treatment is not helping much. She says her problem is lack of energy and confidence. She now finds it hard to talk to people socially. Anita was employed as a store supervisor for a high street retail chain for eight years. She wants to look for similar work again. She used to feel a little over qualified, but enjoyed the company and helping junior staff to learn. Anita's key tasks were leading a team, training and discipline, monitoring customer handling, stock management and display, and deputising for the manager. Looking ahead Anita thinks the formal training, customer and till work will be OK but is concerned about busy days – e.g. coping with big deliveries or talking to staff members being difficult about their leave or shifts.

BOLA

Bola informs you that she has bouts of depression with anxiety and has told her GP that her treatment is not helping much. Drained of energy with low confidence, she can't relax in social situations and worries about what people say about her. Bola was employed as a store supervisor for a high street retail chain for 8 years. She wants to look for similar work again. She used to feel over qualified, but enjoyed the company and helping junior staff to learn. Bola's key tasks were the same as Anita's. Looking forward, Bola thinks training, customer and till work will be OK but is worried about fumbling her words and getting stuck. She says she'd need someone else to help when everything happens at once or with staff difficulties.

CARLA

Carla informs you that she has bouts of depression and anxiety and has told her GP that her treatment is not helping much. She has no energy and feels guilty about her lack of progress. Constantly tense in social situations, she knows that people may be putting her down. Carla was employed as a store supervisor for a high street retail chain for 8 years. She would like similar work. She used to feel a little over qualified, but enjoyed the company and helping junior staff to learn. Carla's key tasks were the same as Anita's and Bola's. Looking ahead Carla thinks the training, customer and till work will be a struggle and hard to imagine without help on high pressure days. Carla wonders if she needs more pills.

Exercise 2

Patrick and Stefan have very different work histories. Stefan has little work experience, whilst Patrick was in an established job role before becoming unwell. The work coach hears this information early in the Initial Work Search Interview and the issues are what specific questions will help to take the interview forward and on what basis should Patrick and Stefan search for work?

PATRICK

Patrick notes he is 47 and provides evidence he is a printing technician with an established work history in the trade. He says a downturn in the industry and a spell of physical ill health has meant that Patrick had to leave employment and claim a sickness benefit. He reports good days and bad days with his health condition: and following a Work Capability Assessment is considered fit for work. He is frustrated and angry with his situation. He says he “can’t see a way forward” and is beginning to think he will not get back to work. He says that this is dragging him down but he’s reluctant to talk about what might help.

STEFAN

At the Initial Work Search Interview Stefan reports that he left formal education five years ago, at age 16, following the death of a close relative. Since then he has worked now and again - mostly in labouring jobs for anything from one day to three weeks. For most of the time he has not been in paid work. You observe that Stefan does not communicate easily. You ask a number of questions about him being employed. He mumbles his responses and looks at the floor. Eventually, he says that he wishes he could stick at something and that he finds being with people difficult. He has lost touch with his childhood friends and he spends much of his time alone.

Exercise 3

George is an extended case study, which covers a number of interviews. At interview 1 the work coach hears a lot of information and observes changing emotions. At interview 2, George is more subdued but identifies a job goal and works through and signs his claimant commitment. At interview 3 he reports he has only partially completed his planned actions...

GEORGE

Interview 1:

George is 23. He has recently returned from a 4 -week camping holiday with his uncle and has had to make a fresh claim. At his Initial Work Search Interview with you, he seems full of energy and is keen to get started. You ask what he has been doing or thinking in terms of getting a job (Note this is not a good question and used for case study purposes only!) He reports leaving school at 16 and working on and off helping friends in the building trade. He tried retail, but the job did not last because of arguments with management, particularly because on one very busy evening he asked about working on but was not paid overtime – the manger said they hadn't asked him to work, he had volunteered. He said he knew when he was volunteering – as he had done when he did a 3-months voluntary job in a nursery. George remarked that he was better at getting police cautions than getting work. He says he has not worked for three years. In talking about his past employment, George becomes agitated and at times tearful. He reveals that life has been hard to cope with and there are things from his past that he just can't overcome. He continues to be tearful, but now expresses how angry he is with all those who have messed up his life. George mentions his previous employer, acquaintances and family members. He feels all of them have conspired against him. You observe that his frustration and anger are clearly causing him some distress. He is now withdrawn and subdued. He asks you where he is and what is the point of the interview, saying he has to leave soon.

You say that he has done well to come in today to talk about these issues – talking can be a first step in moving forward. You say that the two of you should be able to think things through, decide on the best steps towards employment and other things he might wish to discuss. You note that his future employment is not controlled by what people have said in the past and you ask if he thinks that a longer meeting is needed to discuss things. You explain about the Claimant Commitment and say the two of you need to draw one up.

At the end of the meeting, when George has left the room, you reflect on the changes in emotion and the need for more evidence about what he has to offer employment and the work he has done. You think about following the PIGEEP structure, with attention to Tables 1 a & b and 2, and very careful monitoring of George's responses to the CC.

Interview 2:

At the follow-up meeting, you ask how things have been going, and if he has been thinking about the previous discussion with you. You outline your thoughts about the meeting and working together, and ask if he is OK with discussing employment options and the claimant commitment. He agrees to this and you prepare to work through the GEE cycle. His first idea of a job goal is nursery work. You jointly list five or six key tasks and although he discusses some good evidence regarding play and reception, he acknowledges that he has little or no knowledge of care & toileting and equal opportunities. You make a note of the skills used and particularly for reception where he used organisational skills, including recording messages left by parents. You also make a mental note that his history of police cautions may be an issue with any CRB check that would be needed for this work.

His next job goal idea is working in a fast food outlet, which he says does not require specific skills. Again, you work together to list some key tasks (customer reception, taking orders, food selection and handover, till management and clearing tables). He is able to present some good evidence for these tasks, and you help him to make links between the tasks and his voluntary work, including reception, organisational skills and recording messages. As he talks it appears he understands the role.

He agrees that a Fast Food Outlet Assistant is a good goal (and you know there is a flow of local vacancies). You talk through the Claimant Commitment (which you both sign), My Work Profile and My Work Plan. At this point you think, given his responses, that developing his job search skills will help him to take more control of his situation and develop his confidence. You explore his understanding and experience of job search. He says he has an old CV. You also make a mental note that you will have to revisit how he describes the retail manager and overtime issues, so as to be less about his anger and more about the injustice. Given your uncertainties about his behaviour you decide he should report to you on his progress next week and you arrange the appointment time. You agree that in the next week he will register on Universal Job match, locate his old CV, make a list of local fast food outlets and look in the local newspaper and on a website for vacancies, and download a blank application form.

His behaviour during the interview has appeared to be more consistent but quite subdued. He has answered your questions, identified some goals, contributed to thinking about the job tasks, but you sense a degree of distance or reluctance. Reflecting on his story and the range of emotions you have observed you consider whether he might benefit from additional help and what help would help, you wonder if he might be helped by developing a better sense of self worth. You decide to check if he is helped by beginning to be active in job search but you ask if he has had ever talked to anyone else about his employment issues or other concerns, or if he is getting any help at present. He replies it's funny but a policeman asked him the same question before he went on holiday – he asks if you and the policeman are trying to tell him he's not right. You say you asked to check if he was attending other services. You ask if he is happy to work on the job search actions you discussed and pick-up any other needs in your next meeting. He says yes and agrees to meet next week.

You sum-up your PIGEEP discussion, remind him that he has signed the Claimant Commitment and can use his My Work Plan to record his job search activities. You note some of the skills that he has to offer a potential employer, such as a Fast Food Outlet manager.

At the end of the meeting, when George has left the room, you reflect again on his story and the range of emotions you have observed, how you will approach the employment and mental health issue. You look again at **Tables 1 a & b** and **2** of the Mental Health Toolkit and you re-consider if he would benefit from help. At this stage, you have not decided what help might be relevant, but you make a note to consult your manager and/or DEA and Work Psychologist. This will help you identify the range of mental health help that may be available in the community.

[At this point you may find it helpful to complete the Exercise 3 Pro Forma.]

Interview 3:

At this meeting you ask how he has been getting and how what happened with the job search actions. He says OK. You read what was noted on his Claimant Commitment, that he would register on Universal Job match, locate his old CV, make a list of local fast food outlets and look in the local newspaper and on a website for vacancies, and download a blank application form. You ask if he has completed his My Work Plan – he says no, and you explain the advantages.

After a number of questions, when you sometimes wondered if he was attending to the question or the answer he was giving, you learn that he has brought a copy of his old CV to the interview and has produced a list of local fast food outlets (although it does not look like his handwriting). He does not appear to have registered on Universal Job match, looked in local newspaper or on websites, but has not explained why.

In most Claimant Commitment review interviews you would know what to do, but you reflect on his behaviour during the first two interviews, where he has appeared to be excited at the start but becoming more subdued and you wonder if he is disorientated. He has answered your questions and discussed job tasks, but you sense without engagement. Again you consider whether he might benefit from additional help and what would help? Your discussions with your manager, colleagues and the Work Psychologist suggested something is missing (even as a volunteer in Nursery he would not have continued if he was not contributing) and they wondered about Talking Therapy.

You consider your next step options to be:

Apply conditionality

Re-try job search

Try looking ahead to see if building more confidence in his ability to work

Help him to refer himself to local talking therapy via GP

You summarise the discussion and present your thoughts about your options to George and ask his views and about continuing to work together. He says he will try to do the job search tasks he should have done.

[Now complete the exercise 3 Pro Forma (and compare to the end of Interview 2 pro forma, if you completed one.)]

Appendix 1: Case study pro formas



Exercise 1 Pro Forma



Exercise 2 Pro Forma



Exercise 3 Pro Forma

Well done. You have completed the Toolkit.

Remember you can look through the Toolkit at a later time and use the case studies again to consider whether you might do anything differently.

Having now completed the Toolkit you may wish to reflect on your personal development – have you identified any learning needs? How might you take these forward.