

# The Résumé-Development Process and Its Impact on Job-Search Behaviour

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A significant proportion of injured workers are not able to return to their original job. Employers have a responsibility as part of their disability management programs to assist this population to find a new vocation. The purpose of this qualitative study is to explore the résumé-development process in terms of its potential impact on job-search behaviour for injured workers who are unable to return to their previous job. Data were collected from 22 Australian rehabilitation counsellors via questionnaires, sample documents, and telephone interviews. Thematic analysis of the data reveals that the résumé-development process may be useful in promoting effective job-search behaviour in clients. However, for this to occur it is suggested that the résumé-development process must provide relevant knowledge and skills, overcome or reduce clients' doubts, address disability but focus on ability, provide ongoing emotional and practical support, value individualisation, and increase clients' motivation. It is speculated that the findings may be explained by the increased sense of self-efficacy that occurs through participation in the résumé-development process.

**Keywords:** vocational rehabilitation, work-related injury, return-to-work, self-efficacy

Injured workers who are unable to return to their pre-injury role because of their functional restrictions are faced with the prospect of finding new occupations and careers. However, they often experience difficulty identifying and obtaining employment in a new vocational field, and find the prospect of job seeking daunting and challenging (Bolles, 2010; Centrelink, 2001; Chan, Woo, & Tang, 2007; Jackson, 2003; Power, 2006). This situation arises because they doubt their ability to successfully compete for jobs, do not believe they have the requisite skills relevant to the new occupation, and lack the job-seeking skills necessary to engage in effective job-search efforts (Bolles, 2010; Centrelink, 2001; Jackson, 2003; Li-Tsang, Li, Lam, Hui, & Chan, 2008; Power, 2006; Rubin & Roessler, 2001). As a result they often become discouraged, unmotivated and less earnest in their job-search efforts, thereby reducing their likelihood of gaining employment (Krieshok, Ulven, Hecox, & Wettersten, 2000; Strauser, 1995). This is of concern because the likelihood of them returning to work decreases as their length of unemployment increases (Feuerstein et al., 1999, as cited in Li-Tsang et al., 2008; Watson, Booker, Moores, & Main, 2004). Furthermore, unemployment has a significant negative psychological

impact, reducing confidence and self-esteem, increasing levels of depression and anxiety, and decreasing life satisfaction (Caplan, Vinokur, Price, & van Ryn, 1989; Centrelink, 2001; Winefield et al., 2002). Governments and employers, as part of their disability management and rehabilitation programs, have a responsibility to assist these injured workers to find new vocations and careers to prevent the occurrence of long term unemployment.

Vocational rehabilitation and disability management aim to safely return injured workers to work, and to consequently mitigate the fiscal and human costs of unemployment (Hein, Lustig, & Uruk, 2005; Power, 2006; Strauser, 1995). Part of the vocational rehabilitation process involves rehabilitation counsellors assisting clients with job-search skills and techniques. This provides clients with the skills and knowledge necessary to participate in effective job-seeking and to independently find employment (Li-Tsang et al., 2008; Millington, Butterworth, Fesko, & McCarthy, 1998; WorkCover Queensland, 2008). These interventions often involve increasing motivation through activities such as *résumé development*, a process that assists clients to better understand their transferrable skills from prior occupations.

A résumé is a self-marketing tool that is essential to the job search process (Centrelink, 2001; Jackson, 2003). Its purpose is to secure an interview by convincing potential employers that the job-seeker has the skills necessary to succeed in a given role (Bolles, 2010; Hacker, 1999; Hilton & Brandis, 2001). Identifying transferable skills is especially important for people wishing to change careers as it provides them opportunity to acknowledge that they already possess skills relevant to the new field and do not necessarily need to be extensively re-trained (Bolles, 2010; Centrelink, 2001). By teaching job-search skills and making workers aware of their transferable skills, the process of résumé development can increase clients' self-efficacy and, consequently, promote determined and sustained job-search efforts (Bandura, 1977; Eden & Aviram, 1993; Hergenrather, Rhodes, Turner, & Barlow, 2008; Krieschok et al., 2000; Strauser, 1995).

However, what is not clear from the research is what components of the résumé-development process enhance job search behaviour. Understanding the role résumé development plays in motivating client efforts in job searching has important implications for how rehabilitation counsellors approach this area of practice. The purpose of the current study, therefore, was to examine the résumé-development process and its role in enhancing job search behaviours from the perspective of rehabilitation counsellors. In particular the study sought insights from rehabilitation counsellors in relation to those clients who had sustained work-related injuries and were unable to return to their previous employment.

## Method

The study design consisted of questionnaires and semistructured interviews, which were used to collect data from rehabilitation counsellors, involved in the provision of vocational rehabilitation services to people with work-related injuries and disabilities.

### Participants

A convenience sample consisting of 22 rehabilitation counsellors employed in government, private and not-for-profit vocational rehabilitation services was obtained through an e-mail request sent to members of the two professional organisations representing the rehabilitation counselling profession in Australia. In terms of work experience, 10 participants (45%) reported greater than 10 years working in the field, five (23%) reported 7 to 10 years, one reported 4 to 6 years, and six reported less than 4 years experience.

All participants had provided résumé-development services to clients with a work-related injury. Eighteen participants were working with clients requiring résumé-development assistance during the time of the study. Of these participants, 5 spent 25% to 50% of

their working week providing résumé-development assistance and 13 spent less than 25% of their week undertaking this task. Four participants, while not working with clients requiring résumé-development assistance at the time of the study, had previously worked in such a role. The geographical locations of the participants included rural and metropolitan regions in the states of Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria and Western Australia. Twenty-one participants were female and one male. Each participant reported having at least one university degree, with degrees in the disciplines of rehabilitation counselling (13 participants) and psychology (15 participants) the most common.

Three of the 22 participants were chosen for telephone interviews based on their years of experience, their knowledge and understanding of résumé development, the client group with which they worked and their willingness to be interviewed. These participants (one male, two female) each had seven or more years experience providing résumé-development assistance to clients with injuries or disabilities and were, therefore, ideally placed as a purposive sample to provide relevant information and reflect on the research issues (Morse & Richards, 2002; Patton, 1990).

### Procedure

Data were collected through questionnaires, sample documents and telephone interviews. Questionnaires were e-mailed to all full members of two professional organisations. The questionnaire's purpose was to identify the résumé-development processes used in the participants' organisations, descriptions of clients' job-search attitudes and behaviours prior to and after receiving résumé-development assistance, and rehabilitation counsellors' perceptions about the reasons for any changes in these attitudes and behaviours. The questionnaire consisted of 21 questions in four sections. The first section contained six questions collecting demographic data including years of experience, working hours spent providing résumé-development assistance, geographic location and qualifications. The second section consisted of five questions about the number of clients requiring assistance with résumé development, experiencing work-related injury or illness, experiencing physical injury, and experiencing psychological injury. It also asked participants about their observations of attitudes of clients towards job search before and after résumé development. The third section asked about the organisation each participant worked for at the time of responding, and included five questions about the services provided by the organisation, organisational guidelines for résumé development, the use of résumé templates, the provision of one-on-one résumé-development assistance, and the provision of group résumé-development assistance. The fourth section about the résumé-development processes included

five questions about the steps taken to assist clients with physical injury to develop résumés, the steps taken to assist clients with psychological injury to develop résumés, the similarities and differences between the processes for the two client groups, the similarities and differences between the résumé-development processes learnt at university and used in practice, and the changes to practice over time.

Participants were invited to provide de-identified sample documents in areas such as organisational guidelines and policies, résumé templates, and sample résumés. These were used to confirm and/or clarify questionnaire responses and provide example résumés and materials used for résumé-development assistance. Five of the 22 participants provided sample documents that included sample résumés, a résumé template and a job-seeking summary.

The questionnaire also invited participants to participate in a follow-up interview — 14 of the 22 participants agreed to follow-up contact. The interviews were intended to provide additional in-depth data to clarify and build on the questionnaire responses and assist with the refinement and finalisation of the themes (Morse & Richards, 2002). Semistructured telephone interviews were conducted with three of these participants. The interview protocol consisted of six main questions:

- Could you tell me about the ‘typical’ process you undertake when helping clients with work-related injuries to develop résumés?
- In your experience, what circumstances and/or personal characteristics are most likely to lead to *successful* return-to-work outcomes for injured clients?
- In your experience, what circumstances and/or personal characteristics are most likely to lead to *unsuccessful* return-to-work outcomes for injured clients?
- With regards to the rehabilitation process and their return to work, what do you think causes clients to be ‘motivated’ or ‘unmotivated’?
- The sample résumés I received as part of this project do not appear to meet the ‘ideal’ suggested by the questionnaire responses. What do you think are the reasons for this? What impact do you think this has on clients, rehabilitation counsellors, and the success of the job-search/rehabilitation process?
- Some rehabilitation counsellors, when filling in the questionnaire, commented on the need to be ‘strengths focused’. Others commented on the need to be ‘realistic’. What are your thoughts on this? Is there a ‘good’ or ‘bad’ way to deal with these issues?

### Data Analysis

A thematic analysis of the questionnaire responses was conducted in order to draw meaning from the data.

Thematic analysis involves reading and rereading the data in its entirety, and reflecting on it as a whole (Holloway & Wheeler, 2010; Morse & Field, 1995). It aims to identify the core ideas and experiences (themes) running throughout the data, and is interested in the meaning within it (Browne, 2004; Holloway & Wheeler, 2010; Morse & Field, 1995). These themes, although not always identical in form, are conveyed by the participants time and time again (Morse & Richards, 2002). Themes link portions of the data together (Morse & Field, 1995) and can, themselves, be linked to other themes (Holloway & Wheeler, 2010). It is through thematic analysis that hierarchical relationships in the data can be identified with main themes containing subthemes (King & Horrocks, 2010). The sample documents were read in the context of the questionnaire data and were used to clarify the questionnaire responses. It was apparent after reviewing the responses that saturation was reached as there was redundancy in questionnaire responses indicating there were no additional concepts to be identified (Holloway & Wheeler, 2010).

The analysis of the questionnaire responses was peer reviewed to ensure it had been appropriately completed (i.e., without bias or excessive subjectivity), and to ensure that the themes had been logically and credibly drawn from the data (Holloway & Wheeler, 2010). An unmarked copy of the document containing the grouped open-ended responses was provided to an appropriately qualified person who performed their own thematic analysis of sections of the document. The researcher and peer reviewer then discussed their individual themes and reached 90% to 100% agreement on each section indicating a high level agreement about the themes identified.

Data collection and analysis occur simultaneously in qualitative research with each piece of data undergoing initial analysis and then influencing the collection of further data (Grbich, 1999; Holloway & Wheeler, 2010; Llewellyn, Sullivan, & Minichiello, 2004; Merriam, 2002). This practice was adhered to in that the questionnaire responses were first analysed, and the initial themes that emerged assisted in analysis of the sample documents. The interview questions were based on the themes that emerged from the analysis of the questionnaires. Interviews were taped and transcribed verbatim and analysed to add depth to the existing themes. As a result, themes were refined, combined or amended in accordance with additional clarification provided by interview data. Summaries of the interviews were e-mailed to the relevant participants for their comment. This allowed the participants to clarify or add to their interview data and helped guarantee the accuracy and trustworthiness of the analysis (Holloway & Wheeler, 2010). Ethical approval for the study was obtained through the Griffith University Ethics Committee.

**TABLE 1**

Themes Identified From Questionnaires and Interviews

Themes	Subthemes
Doubts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Future employment options</li> <li>• Self-ability and self-value</li> <li>• Employer attitudes</li> <li>• Job-search and rehabilitation process</li> </ul>
Knowledge and skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Job-search techniques</li> <li>• Résumé writing</li> <li>• Rehabilitation process</li> <li>• Employers' expectations</li> <li>• Suitable jobs</li> <li>• Transferable skills</li> </ul>
Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emotional states</li> <li>• Job-seeking</li> <li>• Empowerment and engagement</li> </ul>
Résumé-development principles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strengths focus</li> <li>• Ongoing support</li> <li>• Individualisation</li> <li>• Motivation</li> </ul>

## Results

Data analysis identified four themes and 17 subthemes from the questionnaires, sample documents and interviews (see Table 1).

### Doubts

All participants reported that their clients typically experience many doubts prior to receiving résumé-development assistance. These doubts relate to issues directly relevant to seeking employment in a new field and are summarised here.

*Future employment options.* Participants reported that clients with work-related injuries who are unable to return to their previous roles can become overly focused on those roles and, consequently, unable to picture themselves in new roles. They are unaware that jobs can be modified to suit injury-related limitations and, consequently, they believe their future employment options are limited or nonexistent.

*Self-ability and self-value.* Due to their work-related injuries, many clients feel that they have nothing to offer in the workplace and are of no worth to employers, society, or their families. According to one participant clients are often 'apprehensive, nervous, demoralised, dealing with the fact they cannot [return to work], embarrassed about needing assistance'.

*Employer attitudes.* Many clients feel that their work-related injuries will result in employers refusing to hire them. As one participant stated:

Some don't see the point as they believe that their previous work experience is no longer relevant if they can't return to their previous field of employment. They believe that employers will discriminate against them as soon as they know they have had an injury or illness.

*Job-search and rehabilitation process.* Many clients feel that the job-search and rehabilitation process is destined to fail. They do not believe that 'rehab' will enable them to secure a role that they enjoy, that matches their skills, or that provides remuneration at their desired level. They view the job-search and rehabilitation process as requiring a lot of effort, and having no guarantee of success. Findings also indicate that the résumé-development process can reduce these doubts. Participants observed that clients are typically more positive after receiving résumé-development assistance:

Usually they are more positive about the chances of getting a job, feel like they have something to offer an employer, [and are] clearer about the job direction they wish to follow. [They are usually] motivated, organised, feel more prepared, [and] can see they have transferable skills.

### Knowledge and Skills

The majority of participants reported that, prior to receiving résumé-development assistance, their clients typically lack specific knowledge and skills with which to successfully seek, and obtain, employment in a new field. Knowledge and skills relate to a number of areas.

*Job-search techniques.* Often clients have held the same job for many years, or obtained their job either through word-of-mouth or by going to the worksite and speaking with the person in charge. Consequently, they often have no experience writing résumés, preparing job applications, or addressing selection criteria, and do not know how best to approach these tasks. They are often unaware of where job vacancies can be 'found' and so limit their job-search to reading the employment section of the newspaper once per week.

*Résumé writing.* The majority of clients write extremely basic résumés that, by omitting transferable skills and past achievements, do not allow employers to properly assess their suitability for specific roles. Others write résumés that are too long and detailed and, consequently, lose the employer's attention. Others use the same résumé to apply for many different roles rather than tailoring their résumés towards each specific job. Others have unexplained gaps in their employment history, or experience difficulties because they cannot remember details such as the start and end dates of previous employment. Once introduced to the process it becomes easier:

Most people do sort of say at the second session 'I was feeling a bit overwhelmed by this [writing a résumé] but it's really quite easy when you sit down and just write your experiences and things down.' So I just kind of try and keep it really quite basic. 'Write your job, write your dates, write some of the things you used to do, and bring it back to me and see what we have'. And once they start they kind of go it

wasn't as big as they initially thought it was. It's just typically because they haven't done it.

**Rehabilitation process.** There is often a lack of understanding of the rehabilitation counsellor's role, accompanied by the assumption that the rehabilitation counsellor will find employment for them (similar to a recruitment agency). They often do not understand their obligations under the workers' compensation system and do not understand what is, and is not, possible within the rehabilitation process.

**Employers' expectations.** Frequently clients do not understand what employers expect from résumés, or what information employers need to determine their suitability for particular roles. For example, one participant stated:

Job-seekers often submit applications that don't present the information required by the employer to determine their suitability for a job, and/or rely solely on applying for advertised vacancies. These behaviours are unlikely to result in any positive outcome.

**Suitable jobs.** Clients are often unaware of the types of roles that are available and the types of roles they can perform within the limitations of their work-related injuries.

**Transferable skills.** Many clients are unaware of their transferable skills and are unaware of the roles these skills make available to them. While it was evident that clients' doubts result from a lack of knowledge and skills, the findings also indicate that the résumé-development process can increase clients' knowledge and skills and, consequently, reduce their doubts. As one participant stated:

A lot of people might come through the door saying 'Well, I've been doing this job for the last five years. Now I'm injured I can't go back to it. There's nothing I can do' not understanding that some of the experience and skills that they've obtained through their employment is actually relevant to other areas of work and other industries. So, when you pull that out [their transferable skills] and present it to them I think it does certainly give them a bit more confidence in understanding, 'Well, I shouldn't be just boxing myself into this job role. There's a lot out there that perhaps I'd be able to do'.

## Outcomes

Findings indicate that clients' individual levels of knowledge and skills, and doubts, result in them experiencing either positive or negative outcomes. See the following examples of such outcomes.

**Emotional states.** Emotional states can be positive or negative. Positive emotional states refer to feelings that promote enthusiastic, earnest job-search behaviours, while negative emotional states refer to feelings that emotionally and psychologically 'get in the way' of job-search efforts.

**Job-seeking.** Clients' doubts, knowledge and skills impact the quality and quantity of their job-search efforts. For example, clients with limited knowledge and skills

often employ job-search techniques that are inappropriate, and have limited chance of success. Further, clients with doubts about the job-search process often appear reluctant to engage in job-search behaviours.

**Empowerment and engagement.** Participants referred to empowerment in the context of clients feeling able to direct the job-search process independently and of having the requisite knowledge and skills. The engagement of clients referred to them becoming interested in the job-search process and *wanting* to become personally involved in writing résumés and searching for employment.

Participants often alluded to the relationship between lack of knowledge and skills, doubts, and negative outcomes. One participant, describing the 'typical' client prior to receiving résumé-development assistance, stated that clients 'have lost confidence and are often bitter and jaundiced about their experiences'. Another participant observed that clients are 'passive, [and] generally [use] one standard résumé and job search technique rather than a multi-pronged approach'.

An increase in knowledge and skills appears to result in reduced doubts and more positive outcomes for clients. For example, one participant stated that clients experience an 'improvement in confidence, skill level and interest in job seeking because they have more knowledge'. Another participant stated that clients feel 'relieved (due to having increased their skills) [sic], empowered, positive, increased belief in and knowledge of their transferable skills, excited, confident'.

## Résumé-Development Principles

The findings revealed four 'résumé-development principles' that help increase knowledge and skills, reduce doubts, and facilitate positive outcomes for clients.

**Strengths focus.** While rehabilitation counsellors and clients should discuss physical or intellectual impairments caused by work-related injuries, and their impact on work, the résumé-development process must focus on clients' strengths and abilities. As one participant highlighted:

It's not actually about [the] injury — the interview process - it's about that person being suitable for that job . . . So say, 'Yes, I have had an injury but now I'm going to do a sedentary role with [inaudible] culture that suits all of my things that I can do' and then start talking about all the skills they've got.

**Ongoing support.** Participants described how their ongoing support focused on them working with clients to jointly identify transferable skills, explore the job market, write résumés and job applications, and prepare for job interviews. Ongoing support involves continued feedback and encouragement throughout the job-search process, with one participant stating:

[We would] certainly encourage people to find vacancies and opportunities and source them themselves and then we would say 'Look, if you find something give me a call. Let's talk about it. If you want

to draft the application, e-mail it to me first so I can review it before you submit it.' That way I can just offer, you know, any feedback in terms of how it might be able to be improved.

**Individualisation.** The résumé-development process must be individualised so the process and the résumés produced best match the individual needs and circumstances of the clients. As one participant stated:

Each résumé needs to be tailored to the industry, [and] type of work they are looking for — sometimes a client will have two or three different style résumés for each type of work they are looking for . . . Also a résumé design/layout needs to consider the clients circumstances . . . a 'one size fits all' résumé template would defeat the effectiveness of the résumé.

It was suggested that the success of the résumé-development process can depend on taking an individualised approach, with one participant stating, 'I have used set formats with low results. A résumé is as individual as the individual and should reflect that person'.

**Motivation.** Participants indicated that clients sometimes lack sufficient compelling reasons to engage in job-search behaviours. Therefore, the résumé-development process should allow rehabilitation counsellors to discover and target the job-related factors most likely to encourage clients' sustained and determined job-search behaviour. One participant provided the following example:

Very occasionally you even get [clients] who've got a large family and are low-skilled and . . . are actually financially better off within the Centrelink system than if they go for work . . . That is very, very hard to deal with, but the approach I would take is to look forward to 'Okay you may start with earning this much now but, you know, if you prove yourself' and then look at what is the next step. What could they be possibly applying for next? And try and motivate them that way.

## Discussion

The findings of this study indicate that the résumé-development process can increase clients' motivation and encourage their sustained and determined job-search behaviour. It appears that components of the résumé-development process, rather than résumé format and content, most influence clients' motivation to engage in job-search behaviour. In particular it is evident that a crucial component within the résumé-development process is the provision of knowledge and skills necessary for clients to engage in effective job-search efforts. The majority of participants reported that, prior to receiving résumé-development assistance their clients lack knowledge and skills with regard to job-search techniques, résumé-writing, the purpose and processes of vocational rehabilitation, employers' expectations, the jobs to which they are best suited and their transferable skills. Our findings indicate that each knowledge and skill area can be targeted and enhanced by the résumé-development process.

The results show that, prior to receiving résumé-development assistance, clients typically experience

doubts about the job-search process, and about their ability to gain employment in a new field. Clients' doubts, which relate to future employment options, self-ability and self-value, employers' attitudes, and the job-search and rehabilitation process, appear to result from a lack of relevant knowledge and skills. By providing knowledge and skills, the résumé-development process provides opportunity for rehabilitation counsellors to overcome, or reduce, clients' doubts.

Another important component of the résumé-development process is addressing clients' disability, but focusing on their ability. Rather than being a disempowering process, 'addressing disability' refers to clients and rehabilitation counsellors considering limitations caused by work-related injuries, and consequently pursuing roles that clients can successfully obtain and maintain. After addressing these limitations, the résumé-development process can focus on exploring clients' skills, experiences, and abilities in the context of roles available in the current job-market. In this way, the résumé-development process prevents clients from investing time and effort in job-search endeavours that are unlikely to succeed.

Ongoing emotional and practical support is a component of the résumé-development process that allows clients to more fully understand, and so more successfully apply, the knowledge and skills provided by rehabilitation counsellors. The key to ongoing support is in viewing the résumé-development process as occurring over a period of time, rather than as a 'one-off' event. Many participants provide feedback on clients' résumés and job applications over the course of the rehabilitation process. This allows the résumés and applications to be improved, allows clients to refine their skills and, consequently, makes securing employment more likely.

Individualisation is another important component of the résumé-development process. The results indicate a need for clients to tailor their résumés for each job application; for résumés to be adapted to suit clients' circumstances, skills, and experiences; and for the résumé-development process to be flexible so as to meet the needs of individual clients. A number of participants commented on the importance of individualisation, with some stating that a lack of individualisation results in less effective résumés.

The final component of the résumé-development process relates to increasing motivation. The résumé-development process can provide clients with the knowledge and skills necessary for effective job-search behaviours, and can reduce clients' doubts through the provision of this knowledge. However, clients may still not engage in sustained and determined job-search behaviours. Participants indicated that rehabilitation counsellors need to search out the reasons for this inactivity. Once they understand the reasons for this lack of interest in job-seeking, rehabilitation counsellors can better

adapt the résumé-development and job-search processes to ensure they contain the motivating factors that their individual clients will respond to most.

The mechanism through which résumé development increases motivation may relate to increased self-efficacy. According to self-efficacy theory, people will make sustained and determined efforts to succeed in specific situations or with specific tasks if they have, and believe they have, the skills necessary for success (Bandura, 1977; Krieschok et al., 2000; Strauser, 1995). When applied to people with work-related injuries, self-efficacy theory implies that they are unlikely to engage in job-search efforts if they do not have, or do not believe they have, the skills necessary to obtain employment in a new field. Similarly, they are unlikely to engage in job-search efforts if they do not believe that doing so will result in valued or desired outcomes. Increasing self-efficacy, therefore, has been found to have a positive impact on the job-search process through increasing the intensity of job-search efforts (Eden & Aviram, 1993; Regenold, Sherman, & Fenzel, 1999; Sterrett, 1998). As our findings show, an important area of the job search is the process of developing an effective résumé. It is likely that rehabilitation counsellors can use the résumé-development process to increase clients' self-efficacy and consequently increase the effectiveness of their job-search behaviours (Hergenrather, et al., 2008; Krieschok et al., 2000; Toporek & Flamer, 2009). Through the teaching of job-search skills and raising clients' awareness of their transferable skills, the résumé-development process may increase clients' self-efficacy and promote their job-search efforts (Bissonette, 1994; Eden & Aviram, 1993; Hacker, 1999; Power, 2006; Strauser, 1995).

In effect the résumé-development process may increase self-efficacy as it provides clients with the knowledge and skills necessary to secure employment in a new field and allows them to believe that they can use the knowledge and skills in a manner that will result in valued outcomes. This increased self-efficacy makes clients more likely to undertake sustained and determined job-search behaviours even when faced with initial difficulties and setbacks (Hergenrather et al., 2008). When these sustained efforts meet with eventual success, clients' beliefs in their ability are confirmed and, consequently, self-efficacy is further increased (Strauser, 1995). These conclusions are supported by previous studies which found that increased self-efficacy results in more earnest job-search efforts and, consequently, more successful job-search outcomes (Eden & Aviram, 1993; Hergenrather et al., 2008; Regenold et al., 1999; Sterrett, 1998; van Ryn & Vinokur, 1992).

### Implications for Practice

In order to increase clients' self-efficacy and promote their sustained and determined job-search be-

haviour, rehabilitation counsellors should ensure that their résumé-development processes contain the components discussed above. This may necessitate some changes to existing processes. For example, instead of scheduling one or two appointments in which to 'write a résumé', the résumé-development process should continue throughout the rehabilitation process. Notwithstanding that rehabilitation counsellors sometimes need to motivate their clients by providing them with compelling reasons to engage in job-search efforts, rehabilitation counsellors must examine their own processes before labelling clients as 'unmotivated'. Rather than assuming that clients are 'unmotivated' and solely responsible for any lack of job-search success, rehabilitation counsellors must examine their résumé-development processes to ensure that they are not preventing the clients' success.

Interviewees commented that although it would be quicker for rehabilitation counsellors to type the clients' résumés themselves this would not enable clients to become independent job-seekers. It appears that, in order to empower and engage clients in the job-search process, rehabilitation counsellors need to invest time and effort in increasing clients' self-efficacy thereby facilitating their confident, effective, and independent job-search behaviours. As Strauser (1995) states, 'a counselor who can identify and target the areas of low self-efficacy and intervene appropriately, can facilitate participation in rehabilitation activities and increase the potential for successful outcomes' (p. 9).

Rehabilitation counsellors providing résumé-development assistance to clients seeking employment in new fields must not underestimate the importance of transferable skills. Not only are transferable skills an important component of résumés, but their identification can increase clients' confidence. Upon discovering that they already possess skills valuable to new roles, clients' self-efficacy is increased, and they become less anxious about moving into new fields, and more confident in their ability to succeed. The emphasis on transferable skills is also necessary for employers to realise clients' potential. Résumés that simply list the duties performed in previous roles are unlikely to result in employment in a new field. For clients seeking employment in a new field due to work-related injury, a list of their previous duties (that they may no longer be able to perform) will have little relevance to potential employers, and is unlikely to lead to job-search success. However, describing transferable skills informs potential employers that the applicant, although lacking experience in the new field, has many well-developed skills that would allow him or her to succeed in the role. Consequently, rehabilitation counsellors must take the time to identify clients' transferable skills, to ensure the clients can discuss them confidently and convincingly, and to ensure that they are appropriately incorporated into résumés.

## Study Limitations and Suggestions for Further Research

This study has several limitations. Data collected were rehabilitation counsellors' perceptions of client behaviour. This may or may not have been an accurate reflection of clients' lived experiences of the rehabilitation and job search processes. Further research is recommended that explores clients' perceptions of these processes to see if they match or differ from those of rehabilitation counsellors. The study sample was a limited 'convenience' sample rather than a representative sample of rehabilitation counsellors in Australia. The findings of our study therefore may have limited generalisability. Further research is recommended that collects data from a larger representative sample of the rehabilitation counselling population.

The study obtained less information than anticipated about the job-search behaviours undertaken by clients after receiving résumé-development assistance. The researcher was wary of 'pushing' for this information, being aware that it could influence the participants to report higher levels of job-search behaviour than actually occurred. Further research could be conducted in an effort to better understand the impact that the résumé-development process has on job-search behaviour. This could include explicitly measuring clients' self-efficacy before and after the introduction of the résumé-development process to determine if this process does impact self-efficacy.

Finally, the research data focused primarily on clients with physical injuries. Due to the inherent differences between physical and psychological injuries, it cannot be assumed that the self-efficacy and job-search behaviours of clients with psychological injuries are influenced in the same manner as those with physical injuries. Consequently, further research could be conducted regarding the impact the résumé-development process has on the self-efficacy and job-search behaviour of clients with psychological injuries.

## Conclusion

This study suggests that the résumé-development process may increase clients' capacity to engage in effective job-search behaviour, and that this possibly occurs through a process of increasing self-efficacy. By providing knowledge and skills, overcoming or reducing doubts, focusing on ability, providing ongoing support, valuing individualisation, and increasing motivation, the résumé-development process enables rehabilitation counsellors to address the issues that hinder clients' efforts to secure employment in new vocational fields.

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