VALUES BASED RECRUITMENT TOOLKIT

VBRT

MODULE 1

VBR TOOLKIT INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW



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VBR TOOLKIT INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

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INTRODUCTION

Values based recruitment (VBR) is an approach to attracting and selecting employees whose attitudes, values and behaviours align with those of the organisation and the requirements of the role.

This VBR Toolkit has been developed for disability providers and individuals hiring staff in the disability sector. It outlines the rationale for adopting a values based approach to employment, and provides a framework to support the recruitment of staff in line with values of person-centred practice. It offers a process and tools to assist disability providers to integrate VBR methodologies into their recruitment processes.

Because person-centred organisations need to be guided by the preferences and needs of their clients, VBR is most effective when it involves service users in the recruitment process. This Toolkit also provides advice on this.

The Toolkit can also be used by people with disability and their families who are self-managing and wishing to employ their own support staff.

THE NEED FOR A VBR APPROACH UNDER THE NDIS

The rollout of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) has meant a shift in the way disability services are provided in Australia. While there has been significant growth in workforce numbers during the NDIS transition, a challenge for many service providers has been finding people with the orientation and values needed to deliver quality, personcentred support.

"It's not a problem getting people per se, getting the right people to do the right jobs is the problem. We do need to recruit more front-line workers but we need workers who have the right attitudes and behaviours and who can be as flexible as our service users need them to be" (mid-sized service provider involved in NDIS trial).

The NDIS encourages providers to place greater emphasis on ensuring people with disability have choice and control in the services they receive, who supports them, and how they are supported. It also means providers need to create a good alignment of organisation values, staff values and the values of the people that use their services. Leaders need to ensure that the organisational values are embedded across all aspects of service design, delivery and development.

People with disability have made it clear that they want to be supported by people who are personally compatible and have person-centred attitudes towards the job they are doing, as much as specific technical skills and qualifications. They are interested in people's reasons for working in the disability sector, how they relate to the people they are supporting, and the awareness they bring to their work. While inter-personal skills are often highlighted as crucial, a strong values base also receives attention as the comments below demonstrate.¹

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"[Support workers] need to be teachable, willing to learn and have a positive attitude. That's all."

"[re] community access: You will not be taking my daughter out into the community if you first can't show that you respect her as a whole adult human being..." "I believe the first steps in training new support workers is back to basics – vision, values, ethical practices are at the forefront of person-centredness, self-advocacy, supported decisionmaking, importance of guardians, national service standards, human rights, community education etc."

"To never think it is their position to 'allow' or 'not allow'. You are not their boss. They are your boss. Do not be their friend/mate. Be their support worker and do a good job and work at it. Assist them to make proper friends."

"To have excellent listening skills. To have respect and humility."

"To think outside the box."

"To know what 'dignity of risk' means and 'duty of care' and be skilled in balancing the two."

(comments from people with disability and their families).2

Given the more personalised focus of support work, jobs in the disability services sector are becoming more diverse. Service providers are recruiting more widely than in the past, looking beyond typical applicant pools. While a more diverse range of candidates will provide organisations with greater opportunities to match staff to service users, it can be difficult to determine applicant suitability using only traditional recruitment methods. There is a need to go beyond broad skills assessments, and reviews of qualifications to determine applicant 'fit'.

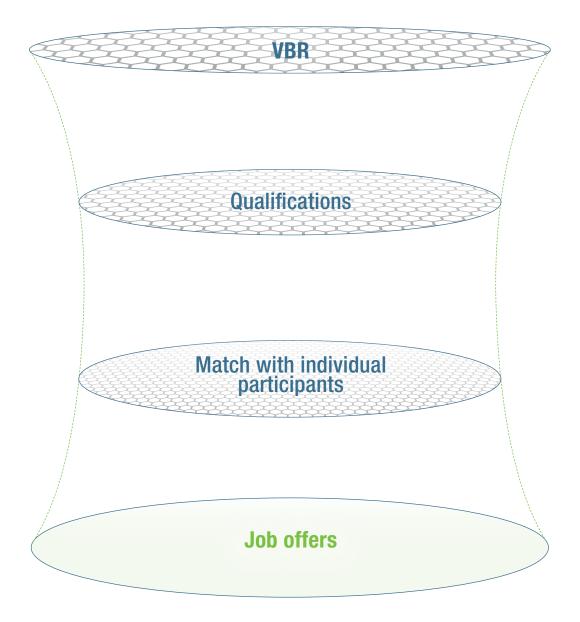
"The diversity of the role of the support worker in particular means there is no standard job description to fit all clients that we can use anymore" (largesized service provider involved in NDIS trial).

There are also business reasons to consider VBR. Providers can realise efficiencies and productivity benefits in getting recruitment right the first time, and are more likely to retain their clients and attract new ones.

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Figure 1: How VBR fits into the recruitment process

VBR can help solve recruitment issues associated with matching people with disability with appropriate workers, by recruiting on the basis of values first. It can be useful to use a metaphor where we think of the recruitment process as a series of sieves. VBR has the coarsest grade of mesh. Next is qualifications, or another priority set selected by the employer. The last stage is selecting employees to match with individual participants. The bottom platter has the people to whom we want to offer jobs.



SUMMARY

WHY ADOPTING VBR IN THE NDIS ENVIRONMENT MAKES SENSE

Service users often give priority to values, motivation, attitude and behaviour and are looking for specific qualities in the people who support them. Using a VBR process enables service providers to meet service users' expectations in this respect.

The sector cannot afford to overlook candidates who could be well-suited to roles but lack formal qualifications to demonstrate their ability. VBR enables a provider to fairly and transparently assess both candidates new to the sector and those with prior experience, in terms of values alignment.

Expanding services have high recruitment costs. Ensuring staff are a good values fit leads to higher staff engagement and minimises turnover, thereby increasing the return on this investment.

Where resources to induct and train new employees are limited, ensuring a good values fit is helpful so new staff work more easily alongside their colleagues supporting on-the-job learning.

Establishing a suitable workforce in terms of values and associated behaviours is an important aspect of safeguarding. VBR practices have been developed partly in response to abuse of vulnerable adults and children.

By employing people with a good values match, the organisation is ensuring the culture of the organisation remains strong, including ensuring there is a positive perspective on service user rights, quality and safeguarding.

WHAT DOES VBR ENTAIL?

VBR TERMINOLOGY

VALUES refer to the beliefs that underpin people's behavioural patterns, reflecting what is important to them. Values are internally held and can be hard to measure.

MOTIVATION is an energising force that induces action. It relates to decisions that involve how, when, and why people allocate effort to a certain task.

BEHAVIOUR is the way in which one acts and conducts themselves. It is observable and therefore easier to measure.

VBR incorporates the assessment of values into the recruitment and candidate selection process. Specific techniques are used to assess how well an individual's values align with the person-centred demands of the job and the culture of the organisation.

There is a complex relationship between a worker's values and other attributes such as personality traits, ability and motivation. This can mean that assessing and measuring values during a recruitment process is less straightforward than assessing abilities and skills.

- There is a need for a clear definition of values and how the associated qualities and behaviours can be demonstrated by applicants in a recruitment process.
- Defining values in this way not only supports the objective and consistent assessment of applicant values, but also sets a clear message around expectations of staff performance in their roles.
- Those involved in VBR must make assessments. These assessments need to be based on objective evidence and standardised criteria.
- The selection process must be developed using standardised, benchmarked and quantifiable selection tools against which to score candidates at each stage of the selection process. These should be applied equally to all candidates.

VBR is founded on the notion that values shape motivation and worldview, and drive behaviour.³ A second premise is that workers with values that align to those of the organisation and the people they support will be better able to perform and deliver services that make sense to people.



REMEMBER

No selection process can guarantee access to a candidate's values, and it is not designed to. Selection processes that integrate VBR can, however, better focus on whether a person's behaviour demonstrates their values align with the organisational values.

While an applicant may have previous knowledge, skills or experience in delivery of support they may not demonstrate or hold the values needed to deliver personcentred support. In other words, they may hold values or beliefs which are at odds with individualised service provision, or show a lack of understanding of contemporary views on human rights or specifically the rights of people with disability.

EXAMPLE

A large NSW disability service provider recently trialled incorporating group work tasks into their selection process. Potential new hires were invited to a session where they were allocated to arbitrary groups and asked to solve a work-related problem.

Supervisors observed the interactions and team dynamics.

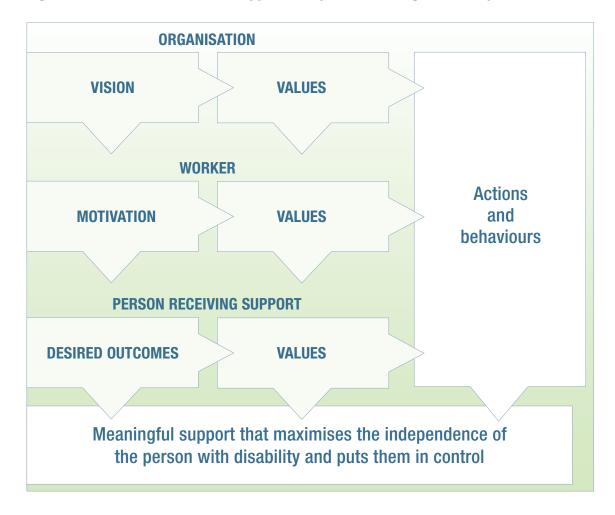
Several of the applicants were experienced, well-qualified workers in the early childhood sector. However, one group of such applicants was noticeable for their behaviour in shunning another applicant who arrived a little late to the session and joined their group. This person was from a different ethnic and religious background and was not included in the group's problem-solving discussions. The group went so far as to move their chairs away from her.

When none of these people were called to interview, there were several angry phone calls to the HR Manager. The Manager explained the reasons and pointed out that the provider had strong organisational values of non-discrimination and inclusive practice.

One of the applicants replied that she didn't act in the same way to people with disability as she did to people from Muslim backgrounds, thereby reinforcing the provider's decision and confirming to them that their new recruitment techniques were working well.

When organisations, service users and employees share a common value base, it supports the pursuit of the service users and the organisation's goals. This is illustrated below in Figure 2.

Figure 2: A common value base supports the pursuit of the goals of all parties



On a practical level, VBR means adjusting the existing recruitment processes used within an organisation. Key phases are as follows.

Pre-recruitment

Some organisations have clearly defined values. Some organisations do not. If defined values exist, these need to be used in the VBR process. If the organisation has not defined their values, it will be necessary to determine a set of values to be used in the VBR recruitment process. These values can also become the basis for all HR practices including recruitment, selection, induction, training, development, and performance management.

Attraction

The values identified in the pre-recruitment stage are the basis of VBR recruitment material. As evident in the sample job advertisements on page 11, the focus extends from skills and/or qualifications to include the values required. This can broaden the pool of people interested in applying for a position and increase the proportion of applicants motivated by a values driven approach to service delivery.

Assessment/Selection

Candidates are assessed using tools that help to find and keep employees who have values that align with the provision of individual support within an NDIS setting.

Post-selection embedding values in the employee lifecycle

Embedding values is not a tick-box solution. It is a continual process of development that needs 'buy-in' from everyone. Leaders and managers can help new workers to understand why values matter and how they fit into their day to day work. Individuals and groups in successful organisations know and understand their shared values and behaviours and use them to govern their decisions and actions.

As with the VBR process, embedding values in the employee lifecycle requires the organisation to have clear definitions of the values. Observable, measureable behaviours are also helpful. The combination of both can provide a framework for on boarding, induction, supervision, development and retention. With the values in place, teams, groups and organisations need to identify what behaviours support and contradict the values so that people can be clear about what is expected. Behaviours that support the values need to be reinforced while those that contradict them need to be challenged.

On boarding and induction

Communicating and using the workplace values throughout the induction process will ensure the values are consistently reinforced.

Supervision, development, appraisal and reviews

Supervision provides a formal setting for reinforcing individual and workplace values. It should encourage a two-way discussion that will help you to find out what is working well and where positive changes can be made.

Linking objectives back to the workplace values will help the individual to know what is expected of them, and provide a formal setting to measure and review the employee's progress.

Include feedback from people who receive supports, recording the effectiveness of the service provided by each employee.

Acknowledge and reward your workers for demonstrating the workplace values.

Check understanding of workplace values

You need a process to check that the workplace values are understood, upheld and are having a positive impact.

All stakeholders, need to be consulted including those who access supports and services. Gather and monitor feedback on workplace and individual values to show if and where change or development is needed.

It can be useful to identify examples of positive workplace practice that reflect the organisation's values. These examples can be shared with workers to help them understand what good practice looks like.

KEY POINTS

- Values must resonate with your internal and external stakeholders
- The defined behaviours need to reflect the organisation's values and be meaningful to all
- Bringing these behaviours to life is crucial
- Recognise and reward appropriately to encourage repeat behaviour
- Reinforce the values through consistent action and communication

ADVERTISING SUPPORT WORKER POSITIONS

Compare the following two advertisements for disability support worker positions. These were taken from Seek and carecareers job boards during June 2016.

CONVENTIONAL	VALUES BASED
Disability support worker Two years min. experience in disabilities or six months with Certificate III minimum. National Police Clearance obtained in the last 12 months.	Can you demonstrate initiative and think on your feet? Do you have high levels of energy? Are you positive and enthusiastic? If so, join our community access team [ABC disability] delivers careers and experiences that are challenging, rewarding and differentiated by our wellbeing ambition. Our ambition is to enable millions to enjoy wellbeing. We look for people who share this ambition and share our way of being – to be bold, warm and honest in everything we do.
You will need to be organised with strong time management skills combined with the ability to plan entertaining and educational activities. Whilst in their home, you will be required to assist with household chores Willing to obtain a Working with Children card. Must possess valid driver's licence.	We are seeking passionate and enthusiastic individuals to join our team as we grow. Essential requirements: Building relationships with the individuals you support is a vital component of being a valued support worker. Therefore, having a friendly and supportive nature with a positive outlook on life is essential for these roles.' Being passionate about encouraging and supporting people to be the best that they can be is what we are all about. As an employee you would need to demonstrate an ability to be creative and open minded as you assist people towards achieving their goals. Resilience is a must in the disability sector. We all have our good and bad days and the ability to remain calm and supportive is inherent'

As noted earlier, VBR can be embedded into whatever recruitment methods are currently being used, such as:

- Direct role advertising, organisational attraction materials and sector promotion materials
- Employee pre-screening
- One to one, multiple mini or panel interviews
- Assessment or selection centres
- Recruitment roadshows

Within each recruitment phase, there is a shift of emphasis to a demonstration of values in real life settings. For example, the recruitment team might continue to use similar tools, such as structured interviews or situational judgement tests, but the questions or scenarios presented to the candidate will also be designed to elicit information around values and behaviour. VBR offers the opportunity to go beyond whether a worker has the potential to perform well in the role to whether they are actually likely to do so, and for how long.

In a traditional approach to recruitment, the aim is often to ensure applicants don't hold negative values. VBR seeks instead to specifically identify the values applicants hold, and how they fit with the values they are expected to have. Skills and experience remain important considerations, but including values in this model takes precedence. A precondition for values based recruitment is ensuring that the organisation's values are embedded throughout the organisation, as well as in the recruitment process. This includes explicit links to values made in:

- The strategic plan
- Policies and procedures
- Codes of conduct
- Staff induction, learning and development
- Performance appraisal and review
- Succession planning

The culture of an organisation reflects the values that are demonstrated by the leaders, managers, supervisors and front-line staff. If the values of staff do not match those that the organisation upholds, the culture within the organisation will be compromised, and result in inconsistent quality of service provision.

Figure 3: The VBR flow chart

Identify and define the organisation's values	
Vacancy identified	
Team/organisational discussion to create awareness of all vacancies and create recruitment plan, staff actions and timetable.	PRE-RECRUITMENT
Job description and advertising plan or strategy developed including values and behaviours.	
Advertising – Internal and external using values and behaviours to attract a wider audience.	
	RECRUITMENT
Short list – use behavioural telephone screening questions to establish the candidates for the next stage, share screening with the recruitment team.	
Assessment – choose from the Toolkit – panel interview, multiple interviews, assessment centres. The pre-designed tools will elicit behaviours aligned to the defined values.	ASSESSMENT
Select – collectively agree on all the candidates who are appropriate for future employment, and identify suitable candidates for matching to current individual requirements.	SELECTION
Conduct reference and clearance checks.	
	Matching
On boarding – pre-employment offer, induction, etc.	

EVIDENCE FOR VBR

VBR is a relatively new concept in the disability sector, both in Australia and internationally. Several VBR resources developed in the UK provide valuable insights for Australian disability services. These resources were developed in response to the personalisation reforms in the UK social care sector, and some have been evaluated.

They highlight the importance of the following practices:

- Define, develop and communicate the organisation's values using behavioural terms to describe them
- Embed values in the whole process, including in job descriptions, advertising, interviews, induction and throughout the employee life cycle, including supervision, development and retention
- Align job descriptions to the values
- Use competency based frameworks wherever possible
- Use a standardised recruitment practice for the whole-of-organisation recruitment
- Involve service users in the recruitment process
- Train staff at all levels within the organisation to develop their recruitment skills
- Use a clear and transparent scoring system from ideal to unacceptable
- Monitor the effectiveness of the recruitment process and make adjustments as needed

Despite there being a wide variety of VBR tools available, evidence about their validity and reliability is scarce. What is worth noting is that recruiters who have responsibility for making decisions during VBR can have a significant influence over recruitment outcomes. It is important for recruiters to reflect on their practice and ensure they embody the values the organisation is seeking to attract.

What limited research has been undertaken to evaluate VBR and its effectiveness over time⁴ has identified a range of benefits for employees.

Individuals are more comfortable working in an environment that is consistent with their own values

- Values alignment is likely to increase job satisfaction, especially where the perceived values of the organisation are similar to the perceived values of the team in which the employee works
- Values alignment is likely to increase employee commitment to the organisation, and where it is high, the employee is less likely to leave the organisation over time

Evidence about effectiveness from the organisational perspective is lacking. However, a recent evaluation of care sector employers who made use of a UK values based recruitment toolkit found that many were very positive about the changes it had led them to introduce.⁵ Benefits they mentioned included:

- Reduced reliance on costly agency and temporary staff
- Increase in confidence of recruiting managers in making sound judgements about the right person for the role

- Positive impact on staff turnover, sickness and absence
- Creating a positive work environment and boosting staff morale
- Improvement in the quality and calibre of successful candidates

A review of evidence about the recruitment of people suitable to work with children by the UK National Society for the Protection of Cruelty to Children concluded that:

- The study highlights the importance of organisational culture in maximising safeguarding within organisations, of individual alignment with organisational values, and the key role values based interviewing has to play as part of a values based recruitment strategy⁶
- Within a vigilant organisational culture, driven by positive values, the values based approach to recruitment and selection can add a helpful perspective to selecting staff who can engage with and help to develop that organisational culture⁷

IMPORTANT VALUES UNDER THE NDIS

As noted earlier, under the NDIS, disability service organisations are shifting their recruitment practices from employing people with general skills to more tailored approaches that align to the needs and preferences of service users. There is also a stronger focus on ensuring staff have the 'soft skills' they need to both provide personalised support and to positively represent the organisation in different settings.

The values identified as critical to successful performance in the sector for this Toolkit were developed through a process of consultation with people with disability, carers, family members and disability services across Australia. These values are referred to as the 'values that demonstrate a commitment to person-centred practice'.

Discussions and consultations utilised NDS staff and networks in each state. In addition, they included a review of relevant literature and the discussions with people with disability and their families including:

- Face to face and telephone consultations with people with lived experience of disability
- A discussion forum convened by an advocacy organisation involving a group of their members
- Online discussions through social media with people with disability, family members and carers conducted between December 2015 and March 2016

Consultation focused on the qualities people would expect in the ideal support worker and how that would be evident in behavioural terms. Stakeholders were asked to align behaviours and attributes to values and to write definitions within the context of the disability sector and specifically for the role of the support worker. The appropriateness of these values and their definitions was confirmed by those who participated in consultations.

While the values identified in the engagement process are intended to be applicable to the disability services sector, organisations will vary in their values focus and may decide to adopt additional or different values, which they could then use in their VBR.

Values that demonstrate a commitment to person-centred practice

The values listed below for this Toolkit were developed through consultation with people with disability, carers, family members and disability services across Australia. Each organisation will have its own values linked to its own history, vision, experience and person-centred focus.

VALUE	EXPLANATION	OBSERVABLE BEHAVIOURS
Respectfulness	We work to develop and empower the people we support to speak and act for themselves. We do this by actively listening to their comments and concerns, noticing their cues, and by acting on what we observe. We defend the rights of those whom we support and encourage others to listen to and respect them.	Self-confidence Resilience Calmness Empathy Compassion
Accountability	We accept that all of our actions affect the lives of the people we support. In accepting this responsibility, we aim to prioritise the needs of the people we support and actively pursue their input in the decisions we make and the activities undertaken.	Responsible Accountable Customer focussed
Collaboration	We learn from each other and share our skills and resources across organisational boundaries for the benefit of the people we support. We support each other generously to achieve the right outcomes for the people we support and our organisation.	Mentoring Teamwork Tolerance
Resourcefulness	We apply our creativity across all aspects of our business and work. We actively seek to solve complex problems alongside people with disability and their families with an attitude of experimentation and a desire to always be better. We are guided by the need to provide appropriate services to benefit the people we support.	Imaginative Problem solving Proactive Flexible Adaptable
Integrity	Our actions and intentions are clear and transparent. We value openness and honesty in the way we communicate. We are true to our word – what we say is what we do. We follow through with our promises. We do what's right regardless of who will notice our actions.	Quality Communication

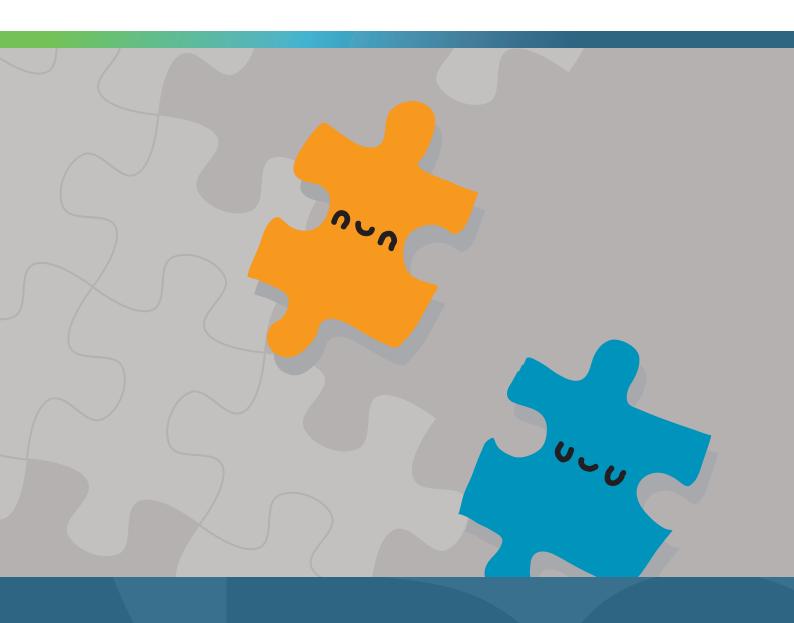
HOW TO USE THE TOOLKIT

It is recognised that providers vary in the resources they devote to recruitment and selection. A range of VBR methods is included in the VBR Toolkit, allowing organisations to select those most suited to their needs. It is recommended that people responsible for hiring combine several methods to capture a holistic picture of each candidate's suitability for the role.

MODULE	TOOLKIT RESOURCE
Introduction and overview A summary of key concepts behind VBR, and information about embedding values into all human resource management practices.	
2. Involving people with lived experience Tips and suggestions about effective ways to include people with disability in VBR and selection. This module includes models of involving people with disability in recruitment processes.	
3. Using a values based approach in interviews The inclusion of values in different interview techniques: structured, behavioural, situational or scenario based and phone or video interviews. Worked-examples demonstrate how to develop your own situational and behavioural questions and score sheets.	Question Bank Sample behavioural interview questions based on the Toolkit's values that demonstrate a commitment to person-centred practice.
4. Using a values based approach in psychological assessments A description of types of psychological assessments and ways to implement them in VBR.	
5. Using a values based approach in simulation exercises A description of behavioural simulation, or 'day in the life' activities.	Individual simulation exercise and Group simulation exercise Custom designed simulation activities with instructional guides and recording sheets based on the Toolkit's values that demonstrate a commitment to personcentred practice.
6. Using a values based approach in assessment centres Guidelines for combining multiple assessment approaches outlined in previous papers into a group assessment centre.	Templates Blank templates include 'My personal profile' and 'Assessment centre score sheet'.
7. Using a values based approach in reference checks Recommendations for maximising the predictability of information derived from reference checks.	

END NOTES

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VALUES BASED RECRUITMENT TOOLKIT

VBR TOOLKIT MODULES

DISABILITY SECTOR