

A PROCESS EVALUATION OF THE WINNING NEW OPPORTUNITIES PROGRAMME FOR UNEMPLOYED PEOPLE

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Background

The Winning New Opportunities (WNO) programme, which is based on the international evidence based JOBS programme, is designed to enhance job seeking skills and improve the mental health of the unemployed. Between November and June 2010 the Health Promotion Service in the HSE West, in collaboration with other agencies, implemented the programme across seven counties in Ireland; Donegal, Sligo, Leitrim, Galway, Roscommon, Limerick and Tipperary. The programme consists of five intensive half day workshops held over a one to two week period. The WNO programme is facilitated by two trainers and applies problem solving and group decision making process, together with inoculation against setbacks, social support and participatory job search skills.

Research Aims

The study aims to assess the quality of implementation of the programme with a diverse group of both recently employed and long-term unemployed people. The intention of the project is to inform the feasibility of extending the WNO programme to a national level.

Methods

Data were collected from the trainers and participants at the baseline and post-intervention. A total of 247 participants and 31 trainers took part in the evaluation across 24 centres. A range of measures was used to assess the quality of implementation and the impact of the programme on the participants. These measures were based on those used in previous studies on the JOBS programme (Vinokur *et al.*, 1995; Barry *et al.*, 2006).

Results

The results from this evaluation indicate that the programme was implemented successfully and that it had a positive impact on programme participants. Feedback from the participants at post-intervention indicates a high level of programme fidelity and quality of implementation. The results confirm that the WNO training techniques were actively used throughout the implementation of the programme and that the trainers successfully built trust and facilitated an active and supportive group process within a positive learning environment.

In terms of the programme impact, results indicate that the programme led to a significant improvement in the participants' job search skills. There was also a significant increase in participants' confidence levels in relation to their sense of control of the current situation and their ability to deal with possible difficulties and setbacks in their search for a suitable job. The benefits reported in this study are consistent with previous evaluations of the JOBS programme both in Ireland (Reynolds *et al.*, 2010; Barry *et al.*, 2006) and internationally (Vinokur *et al.*, 1991; Vinokur *et al.*, 1995; Vuori *et al.* 2002; Vuori & Silvonen 2005).

Dissemination

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