Getting Ready for the Employability Measure

What county, tribal and employment services managers in the Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP) program need to know about the Employability Measure (EM)

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Background on the Employability Measure

Purpose
Minnesota’s Department of Human Services (DHS) developed the Employability Measure (EM) in collaboration with the Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED), and job counselors and managers from counties, tribes, and employment services providers. Members of immigrant, African American, and American Indian communities participated in EM development and revision.

The Employability Measure (EM) is a way to structure an interview or conversation between a job counselor and an MFIP participant around areas that can be challenges or strengths in dealing with everyday life and therefore with employment. The interview allows the job counselor to measure and assign a level from 1 (low) to 5 (high) in 11 areas that affect a person’s ability to get and keep a job. The areas are: transportation, dependent care, education, housing, social support, child behavior, financial, legal, safe living environment, health, and workplace skills.

The EM instrument has 11 area matrices, each describing five levels with enough detail and clarity that a person’s current situation can be placed in one of the levels, based on the conversation between job counselor and participant plus any other verified information. Information collected on the 11 areas during the EM interview – both the levels assigned and comments about each area – is entered on the assessment tab in Workforce One, the employment services data base.

Having an overview of the strengths and issues of participants in the EM’s 11 areas helps job counselors and participants develop an Employment Plan (EP) that is appropriate to the participant’s unique circumstances. The plan should then help participants build their strengths and eliminate barriers to employment. Finally, the EM will provide data on the MFIP population that can be used to inform decision-making.

EM User’s Guide, Training and Mailing List
The EM User’s Guide provides supporting materials to help in using the measure effectively. The Guide defines each area, describes the context, and gives examples that are real-life scenarios for practicing assigning levels. The User’s Guide is published in the manuals section of CountyLink on the DHS website. Job counselors must print the User’s Guide and bring it to their scheduled training by following these steps:

- Go to the DHS public web page, [www.dhs.state.mn.us](http://www.dhs.state.mn.us) and select County and Tribal Workers on the top menu bar to access CountyLink.
- Select Employment Services Manuals on the grey menu bar.
- Select Employment Services Manuals on the left-hand column.
- Select Employability Measure (EM) in the section titled Employability Measure & User’s Guide.
- This will take you to the User’s Guide. Print the Employability Measure & User’s Guide (May 2009 version) and bring it to your class.
The EM training is in two parts. Part A is in the classroom and prepares the job counselor with one day of instruction including hands-on learning and practice. Part B is an additional online training to reinforce this learning. It should be completed within ten days after attending Part I training.

Employability Measure – Part A training is scheduled throughout Minnesota beginning in June 2009. Registration is available through TrainLink, DHS’ web-based learning management system.

- Go to the DHS public web page, www.dhs.state.mn.us and select County and Tribal Workers on the top menu bar to access CountyLink.
- Select TrainLink on the grey menu bar.
- Select Income Maintenance.
- Select Class Schedules.
- Select Employability Measure – Part A.
- Follow TrainLink procedures to register for the class in your area.

At the Employability Measure – Part A class, directions are given for accessing and completing the online Part B training. Part A and B must be completed before receiving access to the EM on Workforce One.

While the EM training is required for all job counselors who will be working with MFIP employment services participants, it is also open to supervisors or managers who would like more detailed knowledge and some hands-on experience.

An additional resource, a mailing list, is available for future EM updates. Follow these steps to sign up for the EM Mailing List:

- Go to the DHS public web page, www.dhs.state.mn.us and select County and Tribal Workers on the top menu bar to access CountyLink.
- Select Manuals on the grey menu bar.
- Select Employment Services Manuals on the left-hand column.
- Select EM Mailing List in the section titled Employability Measure & User’s Guide.
- On the mail list screen, fill out the form, select “subscribe” from the drop-down list, and submit.
- Verify your subscription by replying to the confirmation request e-mail you receive.

**Implementation**

After EM training, all employment services job counselors will use the EM at intake to gather information that will help in writing Employment Plans and making management decisions.

The implementation of the EM will proceed by region. Videoconferences will be held to discuss implementation issues with county and employment services managers in each location.
Agencies that used the 2005 version of the EM at an Integrated Service Project (ISP) site should attend training when their region is scheduled for training and then convert to the new version.

Counties, tribes, and employment services providers have a number of things they need to do to prepare for implementation of the EM. The following sections discuss the benefits of using the EM, outline actions needed to prepare for implementation, and tell whom to contact at DHS with questions.
Benefits of using the EM

Quick and comprehensive overview of participants
The EM is a measure of the status of Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP) participants in 11 areas of life functioning. Job counselors who have used the measure confirm that it covers most major issues faced by MFIP participants related to obtaining and retaining employment. It is an effective and efficient way to give job counselors an overall picture of their participants’ strengths and barriers.

County, provider and tribal level benefits

Contributes to more individualized Employment Plans
By using the EM during the intake process to become aware of participant strengths and issues interfering with employment, job counselors may be able to create more individualized and effective Employment Plans.

For example, knowing a participant’s strengths and barriers:
• Can help job counselors decide whether to refer participants for additional assessment – such as screeners for mental health or chemical health issues or a learning disability, or IQ testing – or for services
• Can assist job counselors in determining the appropriate mix of work and work-related activities for participants
• Can suggest that a family violence waiver should be considered for the participant
• Can indicate that the participant is a possible candidate for SSI.

Periodically repeating the EM can help in assessing the participant’s progress and updating Employment Plans.

Helps prioritize Employment Plan activities
Participant situations are scored from 1 to 5 in each of the 11 areas of the EM, with a Level 1 indicating a serious barrier to employment and Level 5 indicating an area of great strength. In prioritizing activities, the Employment Plan should generally address at minimum all areas that receive a level of 1 or 2. Job counselors should be mindful of how strengths of participants that are identified during the EM might help the participant make progress in areas of difficulty. The fall 2009 revision of the EP aligns it with the EM areas.

Potentially reduces disparate treatment and outcomes
Considerable effort has gone into making the EM process culturally appropriate for both limited English participants and African American and American Indian participants. Using the EM to understand participants’ strengths and barriers will hopefully have the short-term effect of ensuring that activities and services in their Employment Plans are based on their actual strengths and barriers rather than on any preconceived ideas about their group. In the long term, it is hoped that that the EM can contribute to improved outcomes and to the reduction of disparities for participants.

Increases probability that difficult cases achieve success
Some of the most difficult-to-serve participants may not be successful in meeting the MFIP standards of the Self-support Index or the Work Participation Rate without
additional assistance. The EM will help the job counselor identify participants’ greatest strengths and some of their most significant barriers to employment. Helping participants reduce barriers and build strengths could increase the probability that, over the long term, additional participants will become successful as measured by the Self-support Index and Work Participation Rate. Using the EM on an ongoing basis to assess progress and update plans is likely to further increase this probability.

**Provides data to assist with local agency resource management**

The EM can help local agencies to organize assessment data on Workforce One for their participants and understand how their caseload compares with the MFIP caseload in other parts of the state. As agencies use the EM to improve identification of participant needs, they may be able to redirect their own agency resources to better align with issues identified by the EM and more effectively use community resources.

For best results, the Department recommends that job counselors discuss situations that are difficult to score with colleagues, perhaps at team meetings.

**Statewide benefits**

**Provides a common framework**

All job counselors will routinely discuss a common set of issues with all participants and thus have a common frame of reference.

**Increases consistency in assessment**

When used statewide, the EM will contribute to greater consistency in assessment, from county to county and provider to provider. This is particularly valuable given the amount of participant movement between counties and between providers.

**Provides statewide data on participant barriers**

The EM will make it possible to provide statewide data on the extent and seriousness of participant barriers to employment. This data will inform DHS, the legislature, and other groups and could have important policy implications.
Section 1: When an Employability Measure is required for an MFIP/ES participant

DHS will require one EM for each MFIP Employment Services (ES) participant. (The EM is not required for DWP participants at this time.)

For new MFIP participants: complete the EM sometime during the first three months following the date of ES enrollment. Ideally, the EM should be completed within three months of the start of MFIP benefits.

For returning MFIP participants who have not already had an EM: complete the EM sometime during the first three months following the date of ES re-enrollment.

For all existing MFIP participants: complete the EM within 18 months of the start date for EM implementation in your county.

Including the EM in intake may make intake times longer, so sites need to plan for this and support it. There is a learning curve for using the EM and the time it takes typically decreases by half with experience. Also time invested up front usually is balanced by time savings later.

DHS RECOMMENDS DOING THE EM AT THE ES INTAKE APPOINTMENT.

What are the considerations for when during the first three months to do the EM with new participants?

- **Immediately at intake** (which may include one or several meetings)
  
  **Pros:**
  
  - The EM can be incorporated into a streamlined intake process, eliminating duplicating parts of other intake instruments.
  - The job counselor will learn early about the person’s strengths and barriers and this information can be used to write an appropriate Employment Plan.
  - EM information can be a trigger for other decisions, such as whether to place the person into Family Stabilization Services (FSS).

  **Cons:**
  
  - The job counselor may not have had a chance yet to build rapport, so may not get complete or accurate information.
  - This may lengthen the intake process.

- **Later in the first three months**
  
  **Pros:**
  
  - The job counselor may have had a chance to build rapport with the person.
  - At six weeks is a natural time to check in with job searchers and complete the MFIP Self-Screen and the Brief Screening Tool for Special Learning
Needs if needed. The completion of the EM might fit well with these activities.

Cons:
- It would be more difficult not to duplicate information gathering efforts.
- It is not always easy to get the person back in for an appointment, especially those who are working.
- Some people will have left MFIP before participating in the EM.

**When should the EM be done with existing participants?**

The purpose of doing the EM with ongoing participants who have not yet completed the EM is to uncover important information before they get close to the time limit.

The most convenient time to do the EM would be when the participant has an appointment with the job counselor, for example, the next time the Employment Plan is reviewed, when the participant is meeting with the job counselor as part of the job search process, or at the time of the 12-month comprehensive case review and recertification process. For ongoing MFIP participants, the EM must be completed within 18 months of when the county begins EM implementation, so it can be done at a convenient time. Participants who exit before the EM has been done will not have the assessment unless they return to MFIP/ES.

Once all current MFIP participants have a completed EM, the EM will only be required for new ES enrollees.
Section 2: Considerations for follow-up EMs

Follow-up EMs are not required by DHS. However, DHS strongly encourages counties and providers to consider repeating the EM when a participant remains on MFIP for an extended time.

Why repeat the EM?

Here are some reasons for repeating the EM:

- To update and help ensure the appropriateness of Employment Plans as the person’s situation changes over time
- To help fulfill the requirement that assessment is ongoing
- To conduct the comprehensive review required for participants who have not worked in their last 12 months on MFIP
- To continue building relationships
- To track a participant’s progress or problems in moving toward employment by identifying barriers as they arise
- To measure progress when a participant moves off FSS
- To acknowledge and celebrate the participant’s strengths as they emerge

When is a good time to repeat the EM?

Here are some times when a subsequent EM may prove useful:

- At an ES intake after a break in eligibility to find out why the person came back on assistance and to understand their current situation
- At consistent intervals (such as every six months or annually) while on MFIP to see change over time
- At any time additional assessment is required
Section 3: Eliminating redundancies in intake

The matrix for each EM area defines the area and describes each level in detail. The matrix can be used to guide the interview or conversation that the job counselor has with the participant. The user’s guide also provides sample questions that can be used to start or focus the conversation. The conversation, however, is interactive, and must adapt to the participant’s responses and obtain the information needed to select a level for the area. The EM is not a set series of questions.

Eliminating redundant questions by comparing and combining local intake materials with the EM is essential for a smooth transition and to avoid duplicating work and staff time. The goal is to establish and support a more uniform, comprehensive, and efficient intake process. This is to help staff assess participants in a more consistent and holistic manner, and improve coordination of services.

For the EM, the level and an informative comment for each area are recorded on Workforce One. There may be information beyond these that a county, tribe or ES provider needs to collect.

What steps should management take?

These issues should be discussed and decided by ES managers and staff before the EM implementation.

- Decide how to streamline the assessment process and eliminate duplicate questions within various forms.
- Review current intake assessments and forms and determine whether they duplicate the information to be gathered to complete all areas of the EM. Note: the MFIP Self-Screen and Special Learning Needs Screen are required by law and must be retained.
- Review the EM and supplement with any additional questions and areas that are needed for county, tribe, or ES provider purposes.

Are there examples of how this has been done?

A county Integrated Services Project site uses a full family assessment. They incorporated additional questions in areas where they were not gathering enough information to determine the level in a particular area of the EM. Job counselors using this approach need to stay flexible and ask follow-up questions where needed to distinguish between levels. They also need to make this a conversation, not a form-filling session, for the participant.

A provider in the EM pilot started with the EM and added questions from their former intake assessment that covered important topics that were not covered in the 11 areas. Their focus on the EM has made it an established and valued part of their work, so they continued to use it after the pilot ended.
Section 4: Ensuring meaningful access to the EM for limited English speakers

Counties are required to provide plans for how they will ensure meaningful access through effective communication for people with Limited English Proficiency (LEP). MFIP participants have a right to meaningful access to the full range of ES services for which they are eligible, including the EM. When an interpreter assists with using the EM with people with no or little English, this raises additional issues of data privacy and confidentiality because of the nature of the topics discussed.

The following guidelines provide some options for ensuring meaningful access through effective communication for participants with LEP. They do not replace your county’s Limited English Proficiency Plan (LEP Plan). Please contact Alejandro Maldonado at (651) 431-4018 if you have any questions about your plan, technical assistance, or need training on Title VI.

What are some options for ensuring meaningful access through effective communication (listed from most to least desirable)?

- Conduct the EM interview in-house using a bilingual, bicultural job counselor, if possible.
- Conduct the EM interview with a professional interpreter physically present during the interview.
- Conduct the EM interview by having a professional interpreter present via a phone conference.

An interpreter included in the EM interview must be briefed on the welfare and employment services context, and on the purpose and structure of the EM, as noted below.

Can a family member be used as an interpreter?

DHS recommends that family members or friends not be used as interpreters. A minor can never be used as an interpreter. The standard is that counties, tribes, and providers use a professional interpreter with no personal connection to the participant when administering the EM. However, participants do have a choice of using a family member or friend as an interpreter. In this situation, the provider may also bring in an interpreter of their choice to sit in on the EM session (see below).

When using a family member or friend as an interpreter, it is important to document that:

- An offer of a non-family, professional interpreter has been made
- The participant insists on using a family member or friend as an interpreter
- Data privacy and confidentiality will not be violated
- The family member or friend is proficient in both languages
- The family member or friend is familiar with the terms used in the EM
- The family member or friend understands his or her role as an interpreter
• The agency has never initiated, suggested, required, or encouraged that a family member or friend serve as the interpreter

Who is a family member?
Family members include all individuals related to the participant by blood or a legal relationship such as marriage, adoption, or kinship.

What if the ES worker or job counselor wants a different interpreter?
The ES worker has a right to an interpreter, too, to make sure their message is getting through to a program applicant or participant and to protect themselves, even if the participant insists on using her or his own interpreter. Under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, participants have a right to meaningful access. A job counselor who does not consider an interpreter provided by the participant to be providing effective communication has the right to bring in a professional interpreter. This means there could be two interpreters involved in the EM interview.

What if the professional interpreter is related to the participant?
This situation is a conflict of interest and should be avoided. Find another interpreter.

What can be done to help the interpreter prepare for an EM interview?
• Give the interpreter the DHS EM Fact Sheet for Interpreters which describes the EM, gives the context, and emphasizes the need for data privacy and confidentiality.
• Explain the purpose of the EM and familiarize the interpreter with the EM and the welfare and employment services context, clarifying any concepts and terms the interpreter is not familiar with.
• Remind the interpreter of the importance of data privacy and confidentiality.
• Try to build a working relationship with interpreters from the most common participant cultures your agency serves.

What else should be done to prepare for EM implementation?
Counties, tribes, and employment services providers should work together to develop a plan prior to the EM implementation in their region so that job counselors are prepared to conduct the EM with any participant required to take it, including those with LEP.

What are contract interpretive services and how can they be used?
• The Department of Administration maintains statewide master contracts with qualified vendors of spoken language interpreter services. All government entities are Cooperative Purchasing Venture (CPV) members (cities, counties, etc.) and can use these contracted vendors.
• The vendors offer in-person, videoconference, and telephone interpreting. Availability and rates vary by vendor and the urgency of the request.

• To access the list of contracted vendors of spoken language interpreter services visit the Department of Administration’s Web site at http://www.mmd.admin.state.mn.us/pdf/s-885(5).pdf.
Section 5: Incorporating EM results into an effective Employment Plan

What are some considerations for incorporating EM results into the Employment Plan successfully?

- The EM may surface issues that are not typically addressed in an Employment Plan. DHS highly recommends addressing these concerns as well. For example, if a child behavior issue is identified, the job counselor should write a goal around the child.
- FSS plans require identifying strengths and barriers in the plan. Using the different areas of the EM can bring forth those strengths.

What steps can be taken to incorporate EM results into an effective Employment Plan?

- Collaborate and engage the participant in the development of the plan.
- Write clear expectations and goals.
- Address and acknowledge long-term goals with the participant. This helps build and maintain rapport and tap into the participant’s motivation even if the current tasks do not directly relate to those goals.
- Assist the participants in identifying intermediate steps and an appropriate sequence for reaching long-term goals.
- Document strengths for each of the areas of the EM that have a level of 5 or 4 in the plan.
- Write goals for each of the areas of the EM that have a level of 2 or 1. (Depending on individual circumstances, counselors may want to limit the number of goals.)
- Encourage participants to talk about their strengths and how to use them to help achieve their goals.

What are examples of the interaction between the EP and EM interview?

Note: The following examples use Motivational Interviewing techniques (Section 7).

**Strength:** Participant scores a 5 in transportation because she has a good working vehicle and solid back-up plans for replacing the vehicle if necessary.

**In the interview:**
- Encourage the participant to talk about this strength and how it can help her achieve her goals.
- Use this as an opportunity to encourage and compliment the participant.
In the Employment Plan write:

| Transportation: | Strength – solid transportation plan, provides flexibility for job search. |

**Barrier:** Participant scores a 2 in Legal because she has a felony for theft and this makes it difficult for her to work.

**In the interview with the participant to develop the plan:**

- Ask questions that would get at the level of concern for the participant as well as an idea of what the participant may be willing to do to address the barrier. The following open-ended questions may assist in drawing out the issue and possible goals.
  - What concerns you about the felony?
  - What kind of steps do you think you need to take to address the issue?
  - What's one thing you could do fairly soon to start the process?
- Based on answers and subsequent discussion, help the client decide how to address their job search.

In this example, the person indicated that it has been very difficult to find a job with employers and she does not really know how to talk to employers about the felony. This is the point at which a counselor might ask if she could make a suggestion. Assume the client was open to the suggestions as written in the plan (described below).

In the Employment Plan write:

| Legal: | • Meet with the job counselor to practice ways of talking about felonies with an employer.  
        | • Learn about the bonding program.  
        | • Get brochures on the bonding program that can be given to the employer at the time of an interview. |

**In the interview after the Employment Plan has been developed:**

Summarize both the concerns that the participant brought up and the steps and timeline that the two of you have agreed on to address the issues.
Section 6: Resources to address the needs identified by the EM for inclusion in the Employment Plan

DHS recommends that counties, tribes, and employment service agencies create and maintain resource lists and update existing lists so that they cover as many of the 11 EM areas as possible.

What are some considerations when developing and maintaining resource lists?

- Implement a plan for keeping the resource list current. Community agencies change phone numbers, locations, or stop providing services frequently.
- Build relationships with community agencies on your referral list. When job counselors are familiar with agency locations, programs, and staff within the agency, referrals can be more effective.
- Consider arranging site visits to build these relationships and to familiarize job counselors with services available in the community. Incorporate community agency site visits into training for new staff.
- Invite representatives of local resources to present information on their services at a staff meeting.
- Make job counselors aware of the many resources that exist within county and tribal agencies – public health and social services, for example. Be sure job counselors understand the referral processes with the county, tribe, and community.
- Use this as an opportunity for staff to learn more about chemical health, mental health, and developmental disabilities to help them recognize when referrals to social services may be appropriate.
- If your agency finds that many participants have similar needs and no agencies in the community currently address those needs, consider discussing service development or redesign with county, tribal, and community agencies to fill the needs.

What are some considerations when working with participants to provide resources?

- Talk with the participant about their natural support network and ask how they might be able to request help from family, friends, or neighbors.
- Encourage participants to report their experiences with the various agencies in your region. This will help job counselors make the most appropriate referral when multiple agencies are available.
This is a list of statewide resources to get you started:

General

Minnesota Help Info
http://www.minnesotahelp.org/public/

United Way 211 (formerly First Call for Help)
Dial ‘211’
Available throughout the state through local United Way

Child Behavior/Social Support

Early Childhood Family Education (ECFE) programs
Contact the local public school system

More information on ECFE available online:
http://education.state.mn.us/MDE/Learning_Support/Early_Learning_Services/Early_Childhood_Programs/Early_Childhood_Family_Education/index.html

Dependent Care

Child Care Resource and Referral Network
Call (888) 291-9811 to connect to your local agency
http://www.mnchildcare.org/

Education

Minnesota Literacy Council
(800) 222-1990
http://www.themlc.org/hotline.html

Financial

Lutheran Social Services (LSS) Financial Counseling Service
http://www.lssmn.org/debt/
Phone counseling (888) 577-2227

Social Security
To locate the nearest Social Security Office:
https://s044a90.ssa.gov/apps6z/FOLO/fo001.jsp
Health

Public Health, Medical Assistance/MinnesotaCare, Rule 25 Assessment,
Contact the county public health and social service agencies

Smoking Cessation
http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/hpcd/tpc/quit.html
1-888-354-PLAN
http://www.preventionminnesota.com/objects/pdfs/quitcardF7422R05.pdf

PACER
http://www.pacer.org/
PACER Center is a Minnesota nonprofit organization that provides information to
Minnesota families of children with all disabilities.

National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) of Minnesota
http://www.namimn.org/

ARC of Minnesota
http://www.thearcofminnesota.org/
Advocacy and Support
for People with Intellectual and Other
Developmental Disabilities and Their Families

Autism Society of Minnesota (AUSM)
http://www.ausm.org/
The Autism Society of Minnesota exists to enhance the lives of individuals with
autism spectrum disorders. AuSM seeks to realize its mission through education
support, collaboration, and advocacy.

Housing

Public Housing Agencies
http://www.hud.gov/offices/pih/pha/contacts/states/mn.cfm
http://www.housinglink.org/Section_8.htm

Legal

Legal aid
http://www.lawhelpmn.org/MN/index.cfm

Federal Bonding Program
http://www.bonds4jobs.com/
MINNESOTA (Updated 04-28-08)
Section 7: *Motivational Interviewing* training for job counselors

A Motivational Interviewing (MI) course will be available to all job counselors to build counseling skills. See details of the course arrangements below.

**How does MI fit in with MFIP and the EM?**
Helping clients make positive changes that lead to improved economic and family outcomes is central to all MFIP services. However, facilitating behavior change in adults who have had little experience with success, are suspicious of the county and other service providers, and are exhausted by a struggle to meet basic needs is challenging. The result is often resentment, a lack of engagement that can appear to be a lack of motivation, resistance, or an inability to follow through.

MI helps counselors move to a directive and client-centered approach to bring about change in behavior. MI training helps counselors recognize client ambivalence toward change; recognize, reinforce, and strengthen client initiated talk about change; deal effectively with resistance; develop plans for change; and consolidate client commitment for change. The expected outcomes of using MI include:

- Increased client engagement
- Reinforced client self-motivation
- Improved client completion rates
- Improved client outcomes

**What is MI and how does it work?**
Motivational interviewing (MI) is a client-centered method to help increase the motivation to change. MI is an evidence-based practice that originated in the chemical dependency field, but it is used in many other areas, including mental health clinics, probation offices, primary care settings, the courts, and school systems. Research indicates that MI improves behavior, treatment retention and program outcomes.

The philosophy of MI incorporates six points:
1. Client resistance typically is a behavior evoked by environmental conditions.
2. The client/counselor relationship should be collaborative and friendly.
3. MI gives priority to resolving ambivalence.
4. The counselor does not prescribe specific methods or techniques.
5. Clients are responsible for their progress.
6. MI focuses on clients' sense of self-efficacy.

The purpose of this technique is to give counselors an effective way to address ambivalence, reluctance and resistance; to help clients recognize discrepancies between their stated goals and their behavior, and then to facilitate change. Relatively simple changes in framing questions and reacting to resistance can make a great deal of difference in the result. For example:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Say….</th>
<th>Instead of….</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Addressing a stalled job search</td>
<td>“What can we do this week to move forward with your goal of finding a job?”</td>
<td>“Why haven’t you been able to find a job?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responding to a client who thinks the counselor is too young and asks for a new counselor</td>
<td>“You’re wondering how I’m going to be able to relate to what you’re dealing with. Tell me more about that.”</td>
<td>“This isn’t about me, it’s about you. We don’t give people new counselors.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Training**

Courses are available through Minneapolis community and Technical College (MCTC) and are completely subsidized by DHS for employment service staff who regularly work with MFIP clients, including MFIP Family Stabilization Services case managers and Integrated Services Project staff. Training is two days in length, followed by "coaching circles," where staff practice skills and get feedback from co-workers and a facilitator who is experienced using MI. Participants earn 16 hours/1.6 CEUs for completing the two-day program. MI trainings at locations around the state are scheduled from May through the end of 2009. For more information on MI training in your area, please see MCTC’s web page at: [http://continuinged.minneapolis.edu/certificatesandprograms/counseling/motivationalinterviewing](http://continuinged.minneapolis.edu/certificatesandprograms/counseling/motivationalinterviewing).

Section 8: Cultural competency resources and the EM

The quality of the EM interview can be affected by how the job counselor relates culturally to the participant. Familiarity with the participant’s culture is important as are appropriate language and body language.

DHS has identified that improving the cultural competency of state, county, tribal, and provider staff is a key strategy toward improving outcomes for racial and ethnic minorities and reducing disparities in program outcomes. DHS issued the Guidelines for Culturally Competent Organizations, Second Edition – May, 2004 (Source: http://edocs.dhs.state.mn.us/lfserver/Legacy/DHS-3963-ENG) to encourage health and human services providers and organizations to demonstrate their ability to serve diverse populations before they serve individuals from diverse cultures.

Who should implement the Guidelines for Culturally competent organizations?

- These guidelines apply to all organizations and agencies that receive grant funds from, or that are under contract with, the Minnesota Department of Human Services, including county social services organizations and their vendors or contractors, managed care organizations and their provider networks, and community-based organizations.
- DHS encourages county social service agencies to develop and implement cultural and linguistic competence plans. These Guidelines will complement counties’ Limited English Proficiency Plans.
- DHS’s health plan contracts for Medical Assistance, General Assistance Medical Care, and MinnesotaCare services require health plans to develop and follow cultural and linguistic competence plans.

What steps should counties and agencies take to prepare for the EM implementation?

- Review the county or agency Cultural Competency plan to ensure that it is up to date and that recommendations and suggestions in the plan are being followed.
- Examine the current intake process and the proposed process for EM to determine if there are any cultural issues that could affect agency staff’s ability to conduct a thorough and culturally appropriate assessment of each participant.
- Provide cultural competency training, as needed, to staff that are expected to administer the EM to diverse participants.
- Analyze ES results by race and ethnicity to determine if outcomes are related to the race or ethnicity of participants in patterns that are not warranted by participant characteristics such as education or years of job experience.
- Review the EM User’s guide and supporting materials for information about cultural issues specific to the 11 areas.
The resources and links below are provided by DHS to help individual employees and organizations provide services in a culturally competent manner.

**What are some cultural competency best practices?**

**Best practices in mental health**

[National Mental Health Association's Position Statement](#) NMHA's position statement on cultural competency in mental health care, 2006

**Other organizational best practices**

[Removing Barriers](#) The North Carolina Office on Disability and Health offers a number of publications highlighting basic guidelines and strategies to help organizations of all kinds make their meetings and physical plants accessible and welcoming to people with disabilities

[Hennepin County Office of Multicultural Services](#) Resources from the county, including city of Minneapolis

[Ramsey County Office of Diversity Programs](#) Resources from the county, including city of St. Paul

[Limited English Proficiency Plan for Minnesota Courts](#) LEP plans for each of Minnesota’s district courts and the Minnesota Judicial Branch

[Efficiency Through Partnerships](#) A best practice guide from the Minnesota Association of County Social Service Administrators

**What other cultural competency resources are available?**

The links below provide connections to general resources and to Minnesota government resources.

**General and state government resources: Minnesota**

[MultiCultural Development Center](#) Source for professional development activities related to Minnesota's many ethnic communities

[Welcome to Disability Minnesota](#) Provides a single entry point to over 100 Minnesota state agency programs, products, and services that are devoted to the range of disability issues. Also provides access to laws, statutes, and regulations in pertinent disability-related areas.

**Directories**

[Disability Resources Regional Resource Directory](#) Minnesota advocacy, health and other resources

[Health Resources Directory for Diverse Cultural Communities](#) Refugee and immigrant health and human services in the seven-county metro area, Minnesota Department of Health, 2005
Minnesota Organizations Serving Diverse Populations  Directory of mental health and community-based resources, from the Children of Color Initiative, Children and Family Services, Department of Human Services, March 2005

Nonprofit Organizations of Color in Minnesota  Searchable database of nonprofit and community organizations, Center for Urban and Regional Affairs

Women: National
Cultural competency in women's health care  Resources and information on cultural competency issues in working with women, including minority women and immigrant women, the National Women's Health Information Center, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Cross-cultural communication
National MultiCultural Institute  A source for articles on a range of topics related to diversity and cultural competency

DHS contacts for the EM

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