



# ASSESSING THE VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION CONSUMER EXPERIENCE

## MARKET DECISIONS RESEARCH

Better Data  
Better Insights  
Better Outcomes

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

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**DEFINING CONSUMER EXPERIENCE EVALUATION**

**CONSUMER EXPERIENCE CORE METRICS**

**QUESTIONS INCLUDED IN THE CONSUMER EXPERIENCE CORE METRICS**

**CALCULATING CONSUMER EXPERIENCE CORE METRICS**

**REPORTING THE CONSUMER EXPERIENCE CORE METRICS**

**BEYOND THE CORE METRICS**

**PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER**

**CONCLUSIONS**

# DEFINING CONSUMER EXPERIENCE EVALUATION

## The Goals of a Consumer Experience Evaluation

Understanding the VR experience from the consumer perspective

- What is the consumer experience?
- What influences the consumer experience?
- What can be done to improve this experience?

We want to understand how consumers evaluate their experience

- This is more than just the ratings consumers give to questions about satisfaction
- The ways consumers think about their experiences and the relationships they have with service providers
- The way consumers **arrive** at the ratings they give

# Consumer Experience Versus Satisfaction

## Satisfaction

- Satisfaction is a single measure
- Satisfaction is a simple overview of a consumer's feelings toward DVRs
- Should be positive or negative, with little nuance

## Consumer experience is more complex than satisfaction!

- Individuals can be satisfied overall, but find specific aspects or services unpleasant or they have difficulties achieving goals
- If consumers are dissatisfied, it is as important to understand what in the process led to that sentiment
- Both the measure and their personal experience

Consumer experience surveys lead to an understanding of the entire process a consumer goes through and all the aspects of that experience

# Understanding Consumer Experience

Consumer experience must be measured in ways that reflect how the consumer understands and thinks about their experience

- Questions need to be designed from the perspective and understanding of the consumer
- Measures presented are most useful if they represent the ways consumers understand the process
  - It is difficult to understand measures made of unrelated parts
  - It is difficult to effect measures made of unrelated parts

MDR has done much of the background research and analysis required

- Decades of experience designing and deploying this research
- Thousands of surveys conducted
- Measurement tools and deliverable items prepared for consumer experience surveys

# The Importance of Understanding Consumer Experience

## Give the consumer a voice

- Allows consumers to feel they have a say in the process
- VR values and listens to their point of view

## Understand where you stand with your consumers

- “How are we doing?”

## Improve the services provided to consumers

- Identify key issues or concerns
- Identify areas for service improvement
- Test program or policy changes to determine what works and what doesn't work

## But as important, telling the positive story of VR

- “What are we doing well?”

# The Importance of Understanding Consumer Experience

## Better target policy reforms

- A more detailed understanding of how improvements can be made, what works, and what doesn't
- Better measures to track changes—by understanding the way consumers evaluate experience, we can look at what changes have an impact
- Track what problems consumers face and solve problems that can be fixed

## More valid measures and presentation of results

- With solid methodology, results can be presented with more confidence
- More persuasive to audiences on the ground and at a high level

# What Should a Consumer Experience Survey Measure?

The most valid and useful surveys include questions on:

- **Process** – how consumers use services, how consumers are engaged to participate in the services received
- **Performance** – how consumers rate the quality of the services and their experiences and how they rate the organization providing these services
- **Outcome** – how consumers view the effectiveness of the services they receive
- **Quality Improvements** – areas where consumers perceive problems or concerns, areas where consumers identify possible improvements



# Why These Types of Measures?

Each of these measures provides an important insight that can be used to evaluate your organization's performance and improve services in the future.

- **Process measures** show what consumers do and how they interact with VR
- **Performance measures** show where consumers are achieving success and where services can be improved
- **Outcome measures** provide the link that shows the relationship between successful services and achieving goals
- **Quality Improvement** provides concrete directive on what policies and changes need to be made to improve services from the consumer perspective

# THE CONSUMER EXPERIENCE CORE METRICS

## Understanding What is Important to VR Consumers

MDR has worked with VR agencies in more than half a dozen states

- We identified many areas of common experience and concern for VR consumers
- Our analyses revealed several areas of experience identified by consumers that are consistent across states and agencies
- We measure these important areas using the Consumer Experience Core Metrics
- The Consumer Experience Core Metrics are areas that have been identified by **consumers** as being important to their experience.

# Important Domains

Domains are made up of multiple questions measuring facets of the same element of consumer experience

- **Overall Satisfaction and Expectations** – A global measure of the consumer experience with VR
- **Experience with Services Provided by VR** – This measure focuses on the services provided by VR and the range of services available
- **Experience with Staff and Counselors** – Consumer's experience working and interacting with VR staff and their counselors

# Important Domains (continued)

- **Communications with VR Staff** – This measure looks at consumer's interactions with staff, focused specifically on communications between the consumer and staff. That this is separate from other experiences with staff underscores the importance of communications in consumer ratings.
- **Consumer Control and Involvement** – How consumers perceive their involvement in the process and control over the choices and goals
- **Outcomes and Meeting Goals** – How well consumers perceive that the services provided by VR help them meet their goals

# Key Individual Questions

These questions measure other important aspects of the VR experience

- Would you tell your friends with disabilities to go to the VR program for help? (recommendation)
- Ease of the application process
- Accessibility of the VR office for someone with your type of disability
- Did you experience any problems with VR, or the services provided to you?

**This list is by no means exhaustive but are key areas identified by consumers and important to their experience with VR**

# Capturing the Whole of the Consumer Experience

These measures are stable across agencies.

- This stability indicates they measure areas that are not only important to the experience of consumers in any one state
- These measures are applicable to all VR agencies and agencies providing services to those who are blind or visually impaired

They provide an easy way to evaluate how well you are meeting the needs of your consumers

**It is important to note that this list is by no means exhaustive**

- These measures represent key areas identified by consumers to be important to their experience with VR
- There are other aspects of experience that need to be measured but fall outside of this framework

# QUESTIONS INCLUDED IN THE CONSUMER EXPERIENCE CORE METRICS

## The Domains

The domains are based on responses to two or more questions

Your survey does not have to include all the questions to provide valid measures!

- Agencies pick a sub-set of questions within each domain that are most meaningful to their specific situation
- We work with agencies to identify the most appropriate questions to include in a survey

# Overall Satisfaction and Expectations

1. Overall, how satisfied are you with the VR's program?
2. How satisfied would you say you are with the services provided by VR?
3. Considering the expectations you may have about the services provided by VR, to what extent have these services met your expectations?
4. How well do you think the services you received from VR compared to the services that would be offered by your *ideal* program?'
5. Thinking about meeting your expectations, overall, did you get the results you wanted?



# Experience with Services Provided by VR

1. How satisfied were you with the choice of services that were available?
2. How satisfied were you with the choice of service providers?
3. Overall, how easy was it for you to access vocational rehabilitation services?
4. Thinking about meeting your expectations, overall, were services delivered well?
5. Were services provided as promptly as you felt necessary?

# Experience with VR Staff and Counselors

1. How helpful were the staff of VR in helping you achieve your vocational rehabilitation goals?
2. Do you feel the VR staff treated you with dignity and respect?
3. Did your counselor helped you gain a better understanding of your vocational skills and abilities?
4. Did VR staff understand your particular situation and needs?
5. Does your counselor help you plan for the future, not wait until things go wrong?
6. Do you feel your counselor helped you make good vocational decisions?
7. Did your counselor help you develop a better understanding of the demands of various occupations?

# Communication with VR Staff

1. How satisfied were you with the kind and amount of information you were given about the choices you had?
2. How satisfied were you with how long it took your counselor to answer your questions or address your concerns?
3. How easy was it for you to contact your vocational rehabilitation counselor?
4. Did your counselor make clear your role and responsibilities in communicating with vocational rehabilitation?
5. Did your counselor follow through on actions, tasks, and commitments in a timely manner?

# Consumer Control and Involvement

1. How satisfied were you with your control and involvement in your vocational rehabilitation experience?
2. How satisfied were you with your choice of a vocational goal?
3. Did VR staff ask for your opinions and ideas about the services you need?
4. Did VR staff ask for your opinions and ideas about your vocational rehabilitation goals?

# Outcomes and Meeting Goals

1. My services helped me or will help me achieve my vocational goals
2. The vocational rehabilitation services I receive will help me become more financially independent
3. The vocational rehabilitation services I receive will help me become more independent in general
4. Overall, I am better off because of the services I received
5. Has the help you received made your life much better, somewhat better, about the same, somewhat worse, or much worse?
6. My services help me to achieve my personal goals

# Important Metrics Based on Individual Questions

These topics measure important aspects of the VR experience beyond the previous domains.

1. Would you tell your friends with disabilities to go to the VR program for help?
2. Ease of the application process
3. Accessibility of the VR office for someone with your type of disability
4. Problems with VR or the services they have provided
  - Did VR work to resolve this problem?
5. Satisfaction with current employment
6. Satisfaction with outside vendors/service providers
7. Satisfaction with job coaching or job development service
8. The value of benefits counseling services

# CALCULATING THE CONSUMER EXPERIENCE CORE METRICS

The consumer experience core metrics all use a common 0 to 100 scale:

- Most positive result bound to 100
- Least positive result bound to 0
- Even intervals for all responses between
- The mean average of scores is then calculated

The higher the score the more the more positively consumers view their experience

- A score of 100 represents an extremely positive experience among VR consumers
- A score of zero implies an extremely negative experience

Responses such as 'Don't Know' and 'N/A' are not factored into the results

For domains, respondents answering less than 50% of the questions included are not factored into the results

# REPORTING THE CONSUMER EXPERIENCE CORE METRICS

## The Value of the Consumer Experience Core Metrics to Your Agency

The consumer experience core metrics measure the key factors from the consumer perspective that impact their experience with VR

- They provide a quick summary of consumer experience.

These core metrics provide the key measures that can be compared:

- Across the measures (In what areas do consumers view us most positively, in what area do they view us less positively)
- Across services (general VR, transition students, older individuals who are blind)
- Across geographies (districts or offices)
- By other characteristics such as age, gender, race, or type of disability

The results can be trended to track changes

They allow comparisons to other agencies throughout the nation



# Simplifying Reporting

These Consumer Experience Core Metrics can be reported using a dashboard of consumer experience

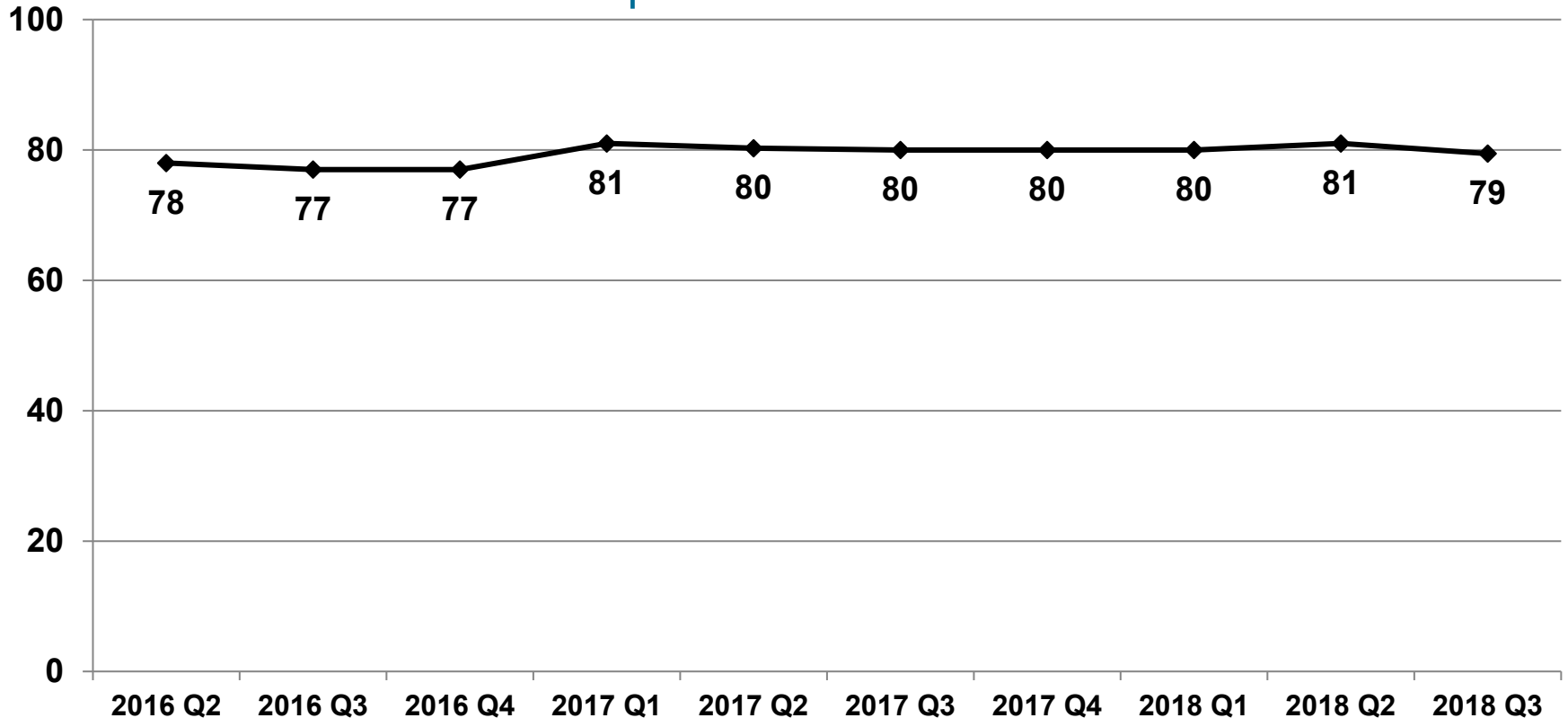
- A summary of data for those without time to dig into detailed survey results:
  - Data that is simpler to display
  - Easier to understand
  - Quicker to review
- The results can also be presented in trending charts to see changes over time
- A dashboard of consumer experience core metrics about VR performance can provide a summary of the consumer experience with VR

# A Dashboard Example

Measure	2017 Q2	2017 Q3	2017 Q4
<b>Overall Satisfaction and Expectations</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>80</b>
<b>Experience with Services Provided by VR</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>80</b>
<b>Experience with VR Staff and Counselors</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>90</b>
<b>Communications with VR Staff</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>80</b>
<b>Customer Control and Involvement</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>80</b>
<b>Outcomes and Meeting Goals</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>82</b>
<b>Satisfaction with Current Employment</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>75</b>
<b>All things considered, would you tell your friends with disabilities to go to the VR program for help? (% Yes)</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>94</b>
<b>Have you experienced any problems with VR or the services they have provided to you? (% No)</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>82</b>

# A Trending Chart Example

## Overall Satisfaction and Expectations



Overall, how satisfied are you with the VR's program?

How satisfied would you say you are with the services provided by VR?

Please rate how well VR services met your expectations

# BEYOND THE CORE METRICS

While important, a survey should not just focus on the core metrics

- Core metrics provide a valuable summary of big picture performance

Other topics in a consumer experience survey include:

- Use of and experience with other services such as benefits counseling or job placement
- Job coaching, mentoring and other pre-ETS services
- Client assistance and dispute resolution
- Employment status
- Educational attainment and aspirations
- The impact of having multiple VR counselors
- Reasons for leaving the program

# Quality Improvement

The Consumer Experience Survey provides an important tool for quality improvement (QI)

To facilitate QI, the survey asks consumers to provide feedback when they indicate a less than positive experience with an aspect of service measured by the survey. We ask follow-up question to understand why their experience wasn't positive:

- Why do you say that?
- This follow-up is asked for all questions included in the Consumer Experience Core Metrics
- Consumers are not prompted with categories; the consumer is asked to respond in his or her own words
- This invites responses about things we may not have thought to ask and give consumers the opportunity to feel heard directly

# Other Aspects of the Consumer Experience

A consumer experience survey includes other quality improvement questions as well:

- Are there problems or concerns and what are these problems or concerns?
- What worked well?
- What were the most challenging parts of the experience?
- Did VR work to resolve any problems or concerns?
- Are there needed services that are not being provided?
- What can VR and its staff do to improve the experience of its consumers?

# PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

## How Do We Design a Survey?

Work with the agency to understand their needs

Look at any existing survey current survey, decide what is still useful and where you could improve

Look to other surveys

- MDR will provide resources – existing surveys and questions, expertise.

Identify key elements from other sources that meet your needs

Identify gaps, what is still missing, what else do you need to know

- We will work with you to develop and test questions if existing questions do not work

Iterate! We can continue evolving the survey as we work together

# What We Aren't Saying

We are not suggesting you simply use an existing survey from another agency

While some commonality is good, each agency faces its own unique situations and challenges

We recommend questions that address areas that are important to your consumers

- That have also been tested and validated in prior research

**BUT** add questions to address your specific need and issues

- What is happening in your state we should know about?
- Don't feel tied to these. As situations change and arise, change questions

Remember, if you include a common set of questions asked in other states you gain the ability to share information!



# Reporting Results and Deliverables

We typically provide results in a variety of formats

- These provide varying level of detail from a simple summary of the data to detailed breakdowns of all results

A summary presentation that presents the results of the survey but also focuses on interesting findings, specific topics, or any issues apparent in the responses given by your consumers

A full report of findings, focused on trending results and trends to watch

# Reporting Results and Deliverables (continued)

For those who really like data, a detailed data compendium

- This provides results broken out by key demographics and characteristics as well as trending data
- The compendium also identifies differences between groups: which groups are responding more positively and which less positively

We work with agencies to tailor deliverables to specific needs

# CONCLUSIONS

## Consumer Experience Surveys Capture More Than Satisfaction

Satisfaction is just one part of the consumer experience

Consumer experience surveys should cover:

- Process
- Performance
- Outcomes
- Quality Improvement

By working to understand the consumer experience in a systematic way data will become more meaningful and more useful when making decisions

Remember, it is important to let your consumers have a voice!

# Some Concrete Suggestions

Create a solid core of widely applicable questions for all your populations

- This core will help you understand consumers overall and differences between groups
- We will help you design a survey that adapts to the person taking it—it's one of the advantages of telephone interviewing!

Focus on items over which you have control

- Ask yourself: What will our response be when this measure isn't where we want it to be?

Figure out what you already know about a consumer. We don't need to ask questions about those things

- Survey analysis can 'pipe in' any data that you can send to us. This saves time in the survey and can make analysis richer

# Areas for Discussion

What in your current survey would you like to retain?

What is going on in your state you think we should know?

What would you like to see your survey effort do better?

- Survey design, sampling, reports

What changes are going to happen at your agency in the next year?

- How can we be ready to measure them?

How would you define a successful survey effort?

# ASSESSING THE VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION CONSUMER EXPERIENCE

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