

Rocky Mountain Conference on Aging Aging in the Workplace

Best Practices in Career and Retirement Counseling for Older Adult Workers

Presenters Name: Dr. Bryan Dik and Dr. Tammi Vacha-Haase
Presentation Date and Time: October 25, 2007 12:30 pm

This presentation hoped to open the eyes of the attendees to “reinvent retirement”. The future retirement needs will be different from today’s. The presenters stressed the need to address the retirees concerns both financially and emotionally. Sometimes we think retirement and think only financial. Instead the whole picture needs to be addressed including the emotional part. Also addressed was the three phases of retirement and types of interventions appropriate for each phase.

1. The preparation for this session was to imagine you were retiring on Monday, what would you look forward to? What would worry you? Would it make a difference if the retirement was forced or voluntary? What types of things would you be looking for from a retirement counselor? The presenters went on to explain the general model of retirement counseling: building rapport, an assessment of the individual’s needs, and an intervention strategy.
2. The three phases of retirement were outlined as Pre-Retirement which generally starts at middle adulthood; Retirement Decision-Making which outlines the when and how; and Retirement Adjustment which is after the act of retiring and is a continual process. Each of these phases are important and requires different thought processes. Even after years of the first two phases, the final phase of Retirement Adjustment may be difficult to face when the time comes.
3. When working with older adults, your approach as the counselor matters. Your own self awareness and thought process of retirement is essential when working with someone considering retirement. They must trust your advice and not suspect you haven’t thought about your own future. Body language and verbiage are also important. Too much separation from the retiree can be detrimental to the counseling process.

The presenters made it clear the future of retirement counseling is a work in progress. Many of the practices associated with today’s retirees will not be appropriate for the Baby Boomer age group and we must adapt according to their needs and perspectives.

Submitted by: Julie Weber, University of Northern Colorado, October 29, 2007