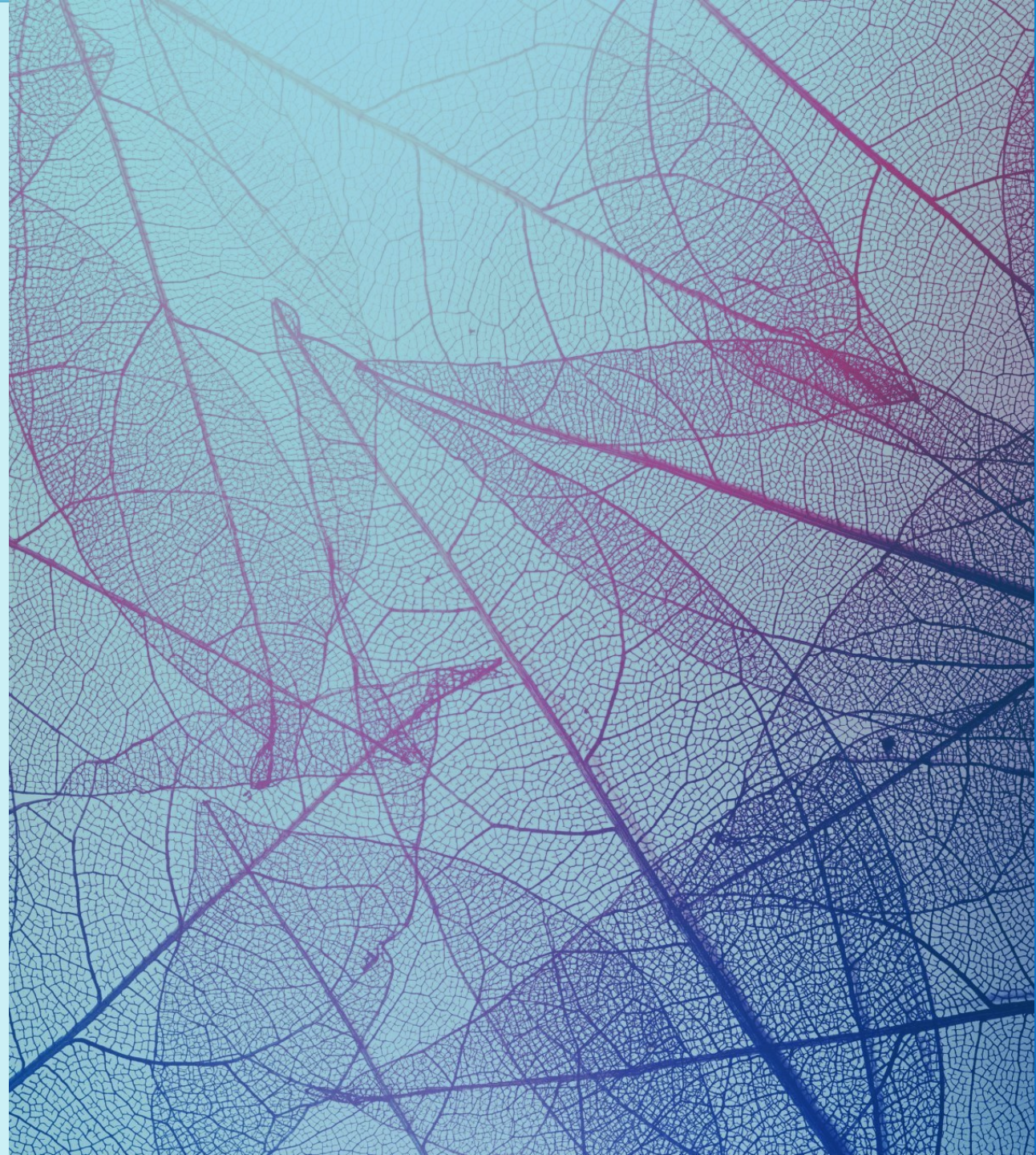


Employment First

A Path to Supported &
Customized Employment



Affirmation

Today, we're here to both learn and unlearn. As we explore **Employment First**, we'll challenge old assumptions and embrace new ways of thinking about what employment can look like for individuals with disabilities. Together, we're not just building knowledge — we're creating a shift in how we approach our work.



Objectives

- ✨ Understand what Employment First is and how it applies to what we do
- ✨ How to Apply an Employment First mindset at each step of the VR process
- ✨ Services/Tools that Emphasize Employment First Principles
 - ★ Supported Employment
 - ★ Customized Employment

Employment First

shift

initiative

belief

expectation

MOVEMENT

Vision

principle commitment



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EVERYONE CAN WORK IN COMPETITIVE INTEGRATED EMPLOYMENT WITH SUPPORTS



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MINDSHIFT

EXPECTING
JOB
READINESS
FIRST

ASSUMING
SHELTERED OR
CENTER-BASED
EMPLOYMENT IS
THE ONLY
OPTION

ASSUMING
COMPETITIVE
JOBS ARE
TOO
DEMANDING



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MINDSHIFT

Thinking Only
Certain Jobs
are Suitable for
People with
Disabilities

Stereotypes
and biases
lead to doubt
of capabilities

Underestimating
the Value of On-
the-Job
Supports



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VR Orientation: All are Welcome!

Ensure the person walks away feeling encouraged with the possibilities

- ◆ Expand on the script/Unpack what that looks like
- ◆ What's in it for them?
 - ✧ Tell people what we do, instead of focusing on what we don't do
 - ✧ Explain how we provide supports
- ◆ Listen to the person's story/ personalize it
- ◆ Use plain language, instead of our VR jargon

WHAT IS VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION (VR)?

- **VR is a work program.** You must want to work in order to qualify and receive services from VR.
- VR helps people with disabilities **prepare for, find, and keep jobs.**
- VR helps you prepare for a job; VR does not find your job for you.

VR Orientation: Emphasize Supports

Explaining the supports during each step of the VR process:

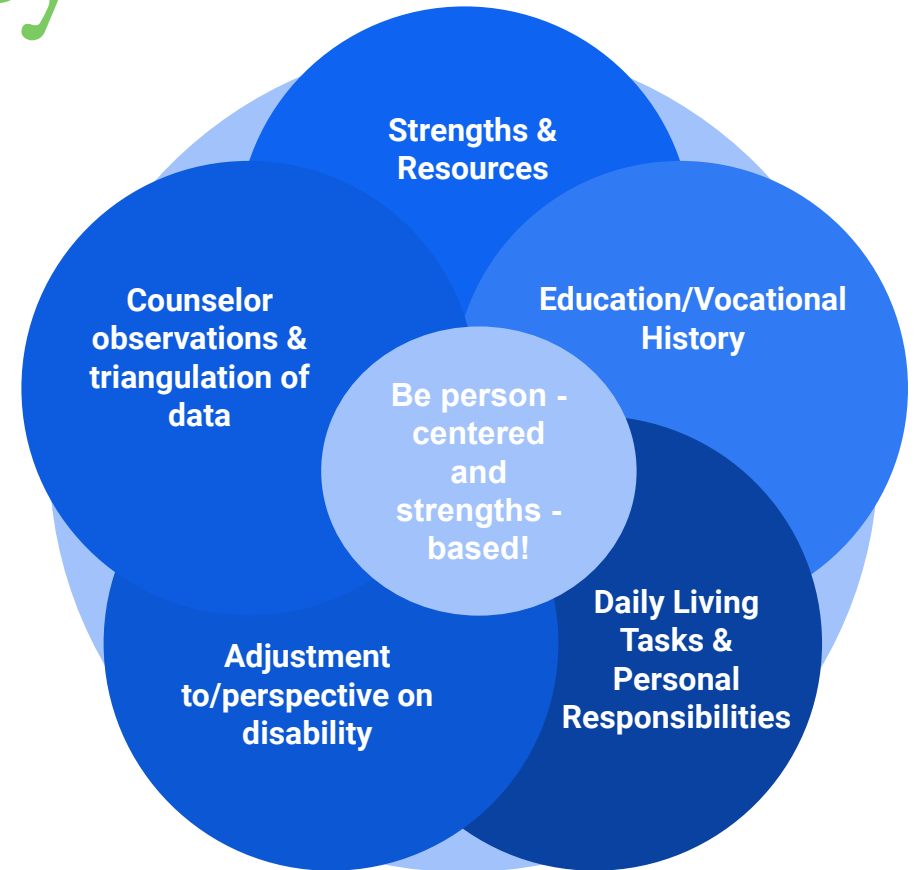
- ◆ For example: There is more support past the 90 days if needed!
- ✧ Closure is 90 days after job stability, for all VR clients
- ✧ Can provide job coaching supports



VR Intake & Eligibility

The VR Intake is an Assessment!

- ✧ Assume competence & the ability to work competitively with the right supports!
- ✧ Intake is to learn about support needs, not determine if “job ready”
- ✧ They’re applying because they want to work, and we have a responsibility to honor the request.



Eligibility: Presume Person Can Benefit

Regardless of the outcome, the person can benefit!

We want to exhaust our resources to support person

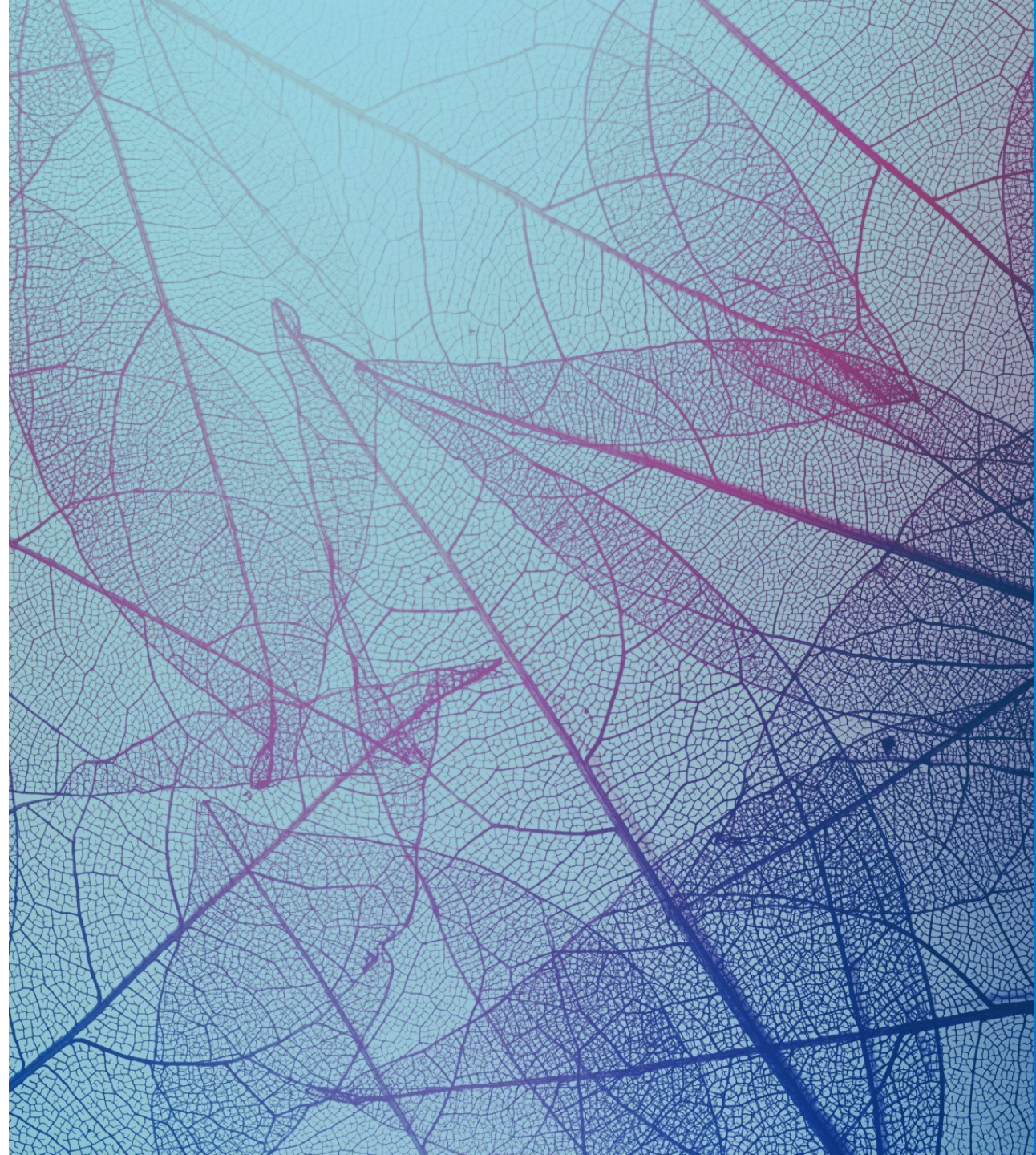
We're not fortune tellers! We don't know until we try. Lets try it!

We help people get work ready!

Avoid Trial Work Experiences



Tools/Services that Support Employment First



Assessing & Addressing Support Needs



Supported Employment vs. Customized Employment

Supported Employment

- ◆ Intensive job coaching services to prepare for, obtain, and maintain employment
- ◆ Delivers collaborative services and ensures integration with interdisciplinary team

Competitive-Integrated Employment
CIE has not Historically Occurred
Empowers Choice & Individual Strengths and Resources

Customized Employment

- ◆ Discovery: Intensive exploration of individual's unique strengths, needs, social resources, and interests
- ◆ Customized, negotiated job that meets the employer's needs, the preferences and needs of the job seeker, results in an individualized job description, and optimizes job retention of the individual with a disability

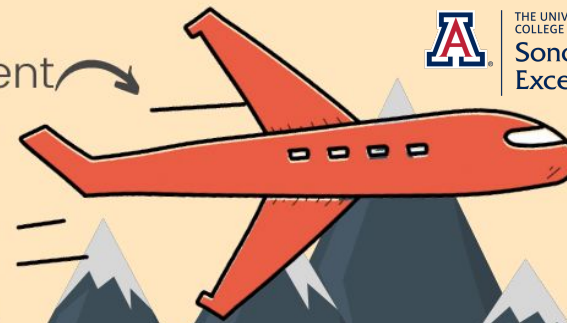
TRIP

Employment First

Supported Employment



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Customized
Employment

LET'S GO

ADVENTURE



Destination
Competitive
Integrated
Employment

Next Steps

Future Trainings for VR Staff:

- ✧ Supported Employment
- ✧ Customized Employment

Resources:

- ◆ Arizona Employment First
www.azemploymentfirst.org
- ◆ [Employment Defined](#) Handout
- ◆ [Supported & Customized Employment Comparison Guide](#)
- ◆ [Customized Employment Pilot Webpage](#)



Thank You!

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