

# Expanding Access to Employment for People Living with HIV

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National Working Positive Coalition

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# National Working Positive Coalition (NWPC)

- Who we are:
  - People living with HIV, HIV service providers, educators, researchers, and vocational rehabilitation and workforce development professionals, policy makers, advocates and employers
  - Focused on HIV and employment, working for the economic and personal well-being of people living with HIV
- Mission
  - Promote research, development and implementation of effective practices in employment services
  - Coordinate sharing and dissemination of this information
  - Advocate for work options and opportunities for people living with HIV

## Community-Based Employment Programs (HIV-specific)

- Limited number of targeted programs in the U.S. (partial list)
  - Liberty Community Services – New Haven, CT
  - Education for Life – Minnesota
  - Cascade AIDS Network – Portland, OR
  - Positive Resource Center – San Francisco
  - Chicago House/iFOUR Program – Chicago
  - Albany Damien Center – Albany, NY
  - GMHC/MATCH Program – New York
  - Housing Works – New York
  - Harlem United – New York
  - The Alpha Workshops – New York
  - Catholic Charities Community Services – Rochester
  - AIRS – Baltimore
  - Action AIDS/Positive Action Program – Philadelphia

## A New Era of Coordinated Federal/State Resources for Employment, Health & Prevention Outcomes?

In the U.S., HIV prevention and health care providers have rarely coordinated services with the primary federal/state systems of employment and vocational rehabilitation services which can be utilized (and maximized) by people living with HIV considering employment:

- State/Federal Vocational Rehabilitation – BRS in CT (U.S. Dept. of Education/Rehabilitation Services Administration/RSA)
- Workforce Development/American Job Centers, formerly called One Stop Career Centers – CTWorks in CT (U.S. Dept. of Labor)
- Ticket to Work (SSA)

## Cross-Sector Service Coordination Strategies

- Opportunities within & among federal, state, local and private agencies and programs
  - HIV services (Ryan White Program, HUD/HOPWA, SAMHSA, CDC)
  - Vocational rehabilitation (DofED/RSA, state VR agencies, local district offices, Ticket to Work/ENs, WIPA, CBOs)
  - Workforce development (American Job Centers/One Stops, DEI, JobCorps, YouthBuild, WIBs, CBOs)
  - Education Institutions (adult basic education/GED, LEP, community colleges & other post-secondary)

# Recommendations

- Regional/local networks
  - Working collaboratively to increase vocational skills and combat stigma
- Ensure expertise specifically related to HIV represented within vocational rehabilitation and workforce development systems
- Cross-training for HIV service providers on vocational rehabilitation and workforce development systems
- Include employment status and supports in HIV-related health and prevention research
- Examine policies that limit vocational participation
  - Complexity of employment incentives
  - Lack of access/understanding of employment supports
  - Limited post placement services
  - Eligibility criteria for programs (e.g., BRS, CTWorks)
  - Ability for Ryan White Grantees to link with BRS services

## VRCs and DRCs: Well-Matched to the Needs of Many Individuals Living with HIV

- Enhanced training and expertise on, and experience with
  - Chronic health conditions and episodic disabilities
  - Invisible disabilities
  - Stigma and discrimination
- Individualized services
  - Assessment and goal-setting
  - Plan implementation support and follow up
  - Employment transition adjustment and post-employment supports

## HIV Service Provider Presentations to VR and Workforce Development Staff

- Invite HIV service providers to make in-service presentations for VR and workforce development staff about
  - Issues related to employment and living with HIV
  - Local HIV programs and services
- Develop a liaison relationship with an HIV service provider contact.
- To strengthen support for individual plans for employment of PLHIV, learn about include local HIV resources that may strategically complement and supplement other commonly utilized VR and workforce development services and referrals.



## HIV Outreach –

### VR and Workforce Development Leadership

- Invite HIV service organization staff for VR and workforce development services open house/site visit events. Information presented can highlight:
  - eligibility requirements
  - available services
  - strategies that may help to facilitate the application and determination of eligibility process
  - best practices and opportunities for agency collaboration and referral.

## Develop A Liaison to HIV Service Providers

- If one VR or workforce development staff person can function as a liaison to HIV service providers, the potential for productive relationship building and bridges between service systems is significantly increased.
- The liaison to HIV service providers can become an internal resource about HIV for VR or workforce development staff, and a conduit for information about community HIV services and resources.

## Cross-Sector Outreach: One Model

- In collaboration with HIV service providers, convene a meeting to bring together VR, workforce development, and HIV service providers.
  - Include multi-directional cross-training
  - Explore opportunities to streamline and customize referral process
  - Solicit ideas from local HIV contacts for how to increase accessibility of and engagement with VR, workforce development and other services
  - Include contacts from vocational training programs and post-secondary education institutions (student disability services, adult basic education, LEP)

## Presentations for Consumers

- VR and workforce development counselor presentations for HIV program participants can
  - increase understanding about VR and workforce development services and policies
  - encourage realistic expectations and well-informed employment and vocational rehabilitation plans
  - increase comfort levels of individuals concerned about confidentiality, stigma and discrimination
- VR or workforce development counselor presentations onsite at HIV service settings send a message into the community (consumers and providers):

“We want to work with you - individuals living with HIV are welcome.”

# The Considering Work Model

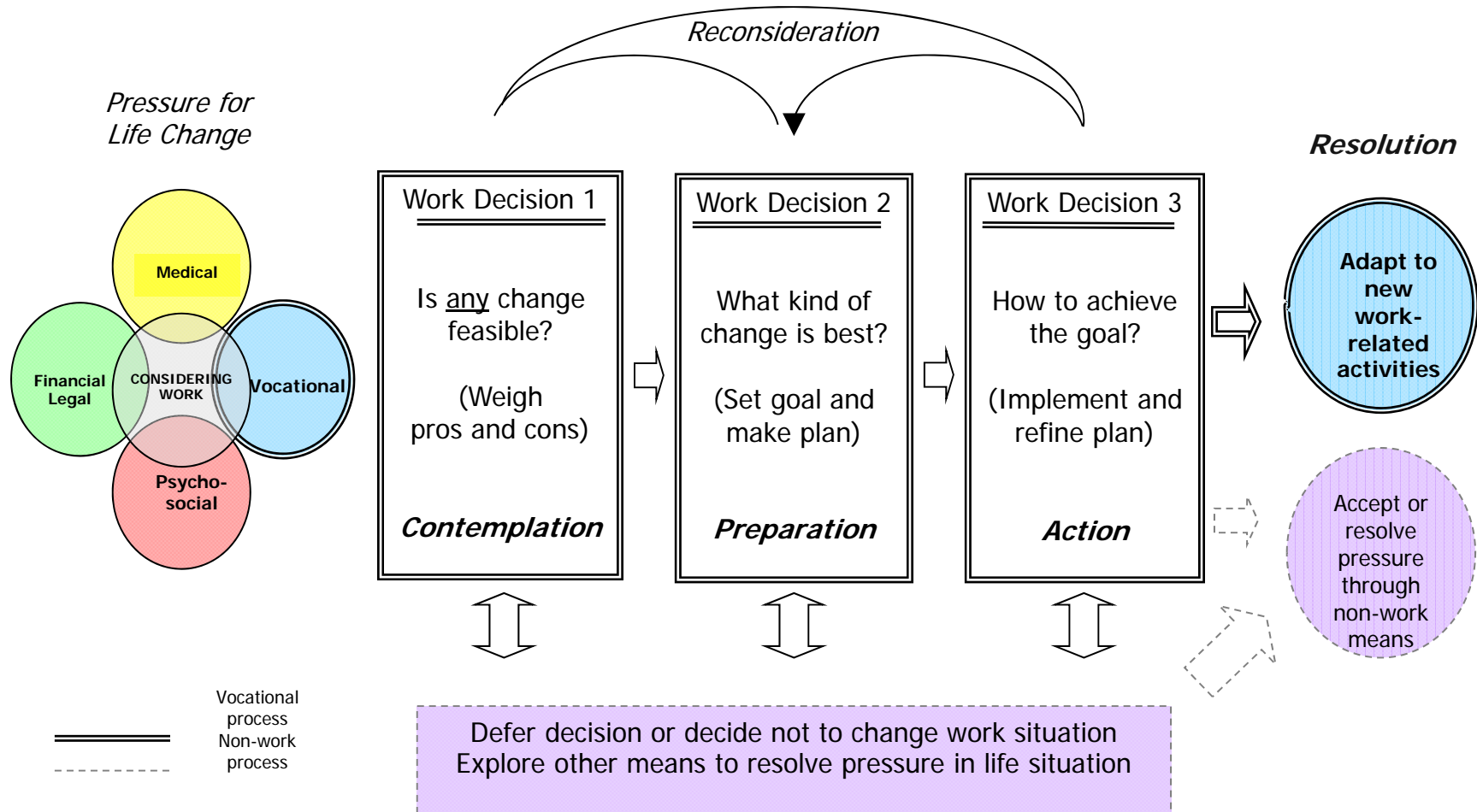
- People living with HIV who are considering going to work, or changes in their employment, may be at one of four stages.
- They may move among the stages as new information emerges or life circumstances change.
- In each stage, there are decisions to make and strategies to consider.

# The Four Stages of Considering Work

- These four stages are:
  - **Contemplation:** considering making life changes to enter or change employment
  - **Preparation:** setting an employment goal and making a plan to achieve it
  - **Action:** implementing the plan to achieve the employment goal
  - **Resolution:** adjusting to a new job or other non-job-related life change

Goldblum, P., and Kohlenberg, B. (2005) Vocational counseling for people with HIV: The client-focused considering work model. *Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation*, 22, 115-124.

# The Considering Work Model: The Phases of Change are Non-linear



# Considering Work: Four Key Factors

In each stage of considering work, there are four key factors to explore for people living with HIV:

- **medical,**
- **legal/financial,**
- **psychosocial,** and
- **vocational** factors.



# Four Interrelated Factors for People Living with HIV Considering Work

(Goldblum, Kohlenberg 2005)



# Stages of Considering Work:

## **Contemplation**

- Contemplation: Considering Making Life Changes to Enter or Change Employment
- Contemplation begins the Considering Work process by addressing the question:

**“What—if any—change is possible?”**

# Stages of Considering Work:

## **Preparation**

- Preparation: Setting an Employment Goal and Making a Plan to Achieve It
- Preparation continues the process by asking the question:

**“What change is best for me? How could I achieve it?:**

# Stages of Considering Work:

## **Action**

- Action: Implementing the Plan to Achieve the Employment Goal
- Using the resources you have identified, proceed with your plan.
- Make progress toward achieving your goals for employment.

**“How to achieve the goal?”**

# Stages of Considering Work:

## **Resolution**

- Resolution: Adjusting to a New Job or Other Non-job-related Life Change
- Resolution for PLHIV who are considering work means one of two things:
  - starting and adjusting to a job change, or
  - resolving the pressure to change by adjusting another aspect of your life.

# Resources

- U.S. Dept. of Labor, Office of Disability Employment Policy – Employment & Living with HIV/AIDS
  - <http://www.dol.gov/odep/topics/HIVAIDS/>
- NWPC Vocational Development and Employment Needs Survey (2008/2009 – in HIV/AIDS Employment Roundtable Report/U.S. Dept of Labor, April, 2011)
  - <http://www.dol.gov/odep/pdf/20110408.pdf>
- U.S. Dept. of Justice – Fighting Discrimination Against People with HIV/AIDS
  - <http://www.ada.gov/aids/>
- U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development – Getting to Work Initiative (for PLWHA)
  - <http://www.vpi.org/tap/gettingtowork/>
- The National HIV/AIDS Strategy
  - <http://www.whitehouse.gov/administration/eop/onap/nhas>
- National Working Positive Coalition (NWPC)
  - <http://workingpositive.net/>

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[workingpositive.net](http://workingpositive.net)

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