Introduction to the Issue by Amanda McCarthy, Editor-in-Chief, VECAP Journal

This issue of the VECAP Journal contains two articles in the form of brief reports. The first article discusses sensory friendly environments as related to individuals on the autism spectrum. Emily Hrabovsky provides a brief review of literature aiming to help professionals consider how processing differences can impact employees with autism spectrum disorder in the workplace. In the second article, Peter Campbell provides an examination of vocational expert involvement in damages awarded in personal injury in Ontario Canada. The brief report introduces the compendium of damages process in this system and provides insight regarding the involvement of vocational experts.

We hope you enjoy this issue of the Journal and find it valuable for your practice and professional development. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have questions or comments.

On behalf of the VECAP Journal Team,

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Workplace Accommodations to Foster Sensory-Friendly Environments with Autism Spectrum Disorder: A Brief Literature Review

Emily Hrabovsky

Abstract

This brief report will outline a literature review that supports workplace accommodations for employees with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) who exhibit sensory difficulties. Individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder experience processing differences in sensory information when compared to those who are neurotypical. These processing differences may present as hyper- or hypo-sensitivity to sensory stimuli. In addition, these differences in sensory processing pathways can impact the individuals’ ability to perform effectively in the workplace, particularly when adequate accommodations are not provided to help them navigate their work environment. An assessment to determine how an individual processes sensory input can be beneficial and would help them better understand themselves in order to advocate for accommodations and foster a sensory-friendly work environment. Some examples of workplace accommodations that can be beneficial for employees with autism include but are not limited to, noise-canceling headphones, customized settings with lighting, sensory break rooms, and modified work attire. This report will aim to help rehabilitation counselors and related professionals understand the unique sensory needs of consumers with autism and provide them with proper accommodations that will help foster supportive, sensory-friendly work environments.

Keywords: Autism Spectrum Disorder, workplace accommodations, sensory difficulties

Introduction to ASD

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is a neurodevelopmental disorder characterized by difficulty with social interactions and communication, as well as repetitive, restricted behaviors (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). Adults with Autism Spectrum Disorder experience higher rates of underemployment and unemployment when compared to those who are neurotypical. According to the U.S. Department of Labor, approximately 85% of adults with ASD, with a college degree, are unemployed (Peralta, 2023). This can be due to the unique needs of this population and employers
who do not understand how to best support them in the workplace. Each individual with autism possesses a unique set of skills and the capacity for personal growth.

**Sensory Difficulties Exhibited by ASD Individuals**

According to the Diagnostic & Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (5th ed., text revision; DSM–5TR; American Psychiatric Association, 2013; p.57) individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder can experience “hyper- or hypo-reactivity to sensory input or unusual interest in sensory aspects of the environment”. Approximately, 94.5% of adults with ASD have reported differences in sensory reactions (Crane et al., 2009). These differences can impact all seven senses of human experience which include tactile, olfactory, visual, auditory, gustation, proprioception, and vestibular. Every individual with autism has a unique sensory profile. For example, one person with autism can have hypersensitivity to sounds and hyposensitivity to touch, while another one may experience hypersensitivity to bright lights and hyposensitivity to taste.

Hypersensitivity is characterized by negative, heightened responses to daily sensory stimuli, while hyposensitivity is characterized by a delayed or lack of response to stimuli (Schoen et al., 2014). Adults with autism who experience hyperreactive responses may find sensory experiences overwhelming, painful, and/or dysregulating (MacLennan et al., 2021). Some examples of how this can show up include but are not limited to, lighting being too intense, loud sounds causing pain, and discomfort from physical contact with others (Robertson & Simmons, 2015). On the other hand, those who have delayed or lack of response to sensory stimuli may engage in sensory-seeking behaviors that may be self-stimulatory in nature or they may engage in high-risk behaviors without awareness of danger (MacLennan et al., 2022). These can include seeking deep pressure, eloping from an appropriate environment, and exposure to adverse stimuli. Keep in mind, these unique responses are ways in which adults with autism navigate the world around them and it affects every aspect of their life.

**Impact of Sensory Difficulties in the Workplace**

Individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder experience sensory processing differences when compared to those who are neurotypical. This impacts how individuals with ASD are able to function in various work environments. For example, excessively loud and bright environments can exacerbate sensory difficulties, which can lead to poor job performance. This can be especially difficult since the individual may have difficulty concentrating on the tasks given to them (Khalifa et al., 2020). In a study conducted by Bontempo (2010), twenty adults with autism and twenty adults without autism completed the Adolescent/Adult Sensory Profile (AASP) and phone interviews detailing their employment experiences. The Adolescent/Adult Sensory Profile is a 60-item self-report questionnaire that assesses an individual’s level of sensory processing in everyday life across each sense, and participants are asked to indicate a frequency of responses to various sensory experiences on a five-point scale (1= almost never, 2= seldom, 3= occasionally, 4= frequently, 5= almost always) (Crane et al., 2009). The participants with autism reported that their sensory processing patterns have an impact on the work they choose to pursue, job performance, and job satisfaction.

As sensory difficulties can be a barrier to obtaining and maintaining employment for adults with Autism Spectrum Disorder, it can be important for these individuals to advocate for themselves and request accommodations. Self-disclosure is a personal choice, one in which the adult would need to think through as they navigate the vocational process. A person with autism must consider several factors that go into personal self-disclosure to employers. On one hand, there can be benefits to self-disclosure, as employers can provide accommodations to help the employee be successful at their job. However, on the other hand, many individuals with autism do not choose to self-disclose out of fear of discrimination and stigma (Romualdez et al., 2021).
Recommendations for Rehabilitation Counselors and Related Professionals

Everyone with autism has a different sensory profile, so it is important to understand the unique sensory experiences of each employee. It is important for rehabilitation counselors to assess for any sensory differences that a person with autism may experience, whether it is an over-response or under-response to environmental stimuli. Some of the ways in which this can be done is through a clinical interview or by providing the client with a self-report questionnaire such as the Adult/Adolescent Sensory Profile (AASP). The assessment process is important in vocational evaluation because it helps the counselor and the client identify and better understand the client’s sensory needs, and can help the client determine their ability to work in different environments, as well as advocate for the necessary accommodations needed in those environments.

Skill Tran is a useful resource to guide the evaluator through this process. Under the “Ability Profile,” vocational evaluators can look up occupations based on certain environmental conditions such as workplace requirements, noise intensity level, exposure to weather and different temperatures. For clients with autism who have workplace preferences, it can be helpful for them to look at occupations and make decisions on where they would like to work based on these preferences. When assessing clients with an Autism Spectrum Disorder in a vocational evaluation interview, it is important for the evaluator to ask them questions about any heightened sensory experiences.

Employers should be informed of how sensory experiences can impact an employee with autism and ensure that reasonable accommodations are in place that will foster a sensory-friendly environment for the individual. When hiring an individual with autism, it is imperative for the employer to assess the work environment to reduce potential distractions (Seagraves, 2021). Examples of accommodations that can be in place include sensory breaks as needed, adapted work attire, reduced volume of sounds, and the removal of fluorescent lighting. Some assistive technology that can be utilized to address these accommodations can include noise-canceling headphones, separate rooms that reduce stimuli and give the employee a break, and customized settings for lighting (Tomczak, 2022). Providing such accommodations for employees with autism can help increase productivity and comfortability within their work environment. These accommodations can be low to no cost for the employer to implement, as the employee can typically accommodate using their own pre-existing devices (ex: noise-canceling headphones, work attire) or a universal design can be implemented (ex: not installing fluorescent lighting in the workplace).

Communication between the employer and employee about potential workplace accommodations should be done either during the interview process or during training once the employee has been hired. However, employers should be mindful of the courage that it takes for the employee to self-disclose their autism identity, the difficulties that come with the diagnosis, and the ways in which they respond to their environment. Furthermore, this should also be an important conversation for the rehabilitation counselor to have with the client. Rehabilitation counselors can provide valuable guidance and resources for individuals to assist with navigating the process of self-disclosure to employers and advocating for workplace accommodations.
References


Author Bio

Emily Hrabovský, BS, earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Psychology in 2022 from Kennesaw State University. She is currently a Master of Education in Clinical Rehabilitation Counseling student at Auburn University. She also obtained the Vocational Evaluation Forensic certificate at Auburn University in 2023. She serves as a peer mentor for Auburn University’s EAGLES Program, a comprehensive transition program serving students with intellectual disabilities. In addition, she also represents the clinical rehabilitation counseling program on Iota Delta Sigma, Auburn’s chapter of Chi Sigma Iota. Emily has been a member of VECAP since 2023 and currently serves as Board Secretary and a volunteer on the Communications Committee.
Compendium of Damages Awarded in Personal Injury Actions across Ontario, Canada: A Review of Vocational Expert Involvement

The Compendium of Damages Awarded in Personal Injury Actions across Ontario (the Compendium) is a compilation of personal injury awards before the courts of Ontario between the dates of January 1999 and October 2020. It was authored by the Hon. James B. Chadwick, Q.C. and Phillip Byun, then a common law student at the University of Ottawa. Twenty-five other individuals were also acknowledged for further contributions in its creation. Cases are arranged by injury type, for example, head, wrist, etc. and list plaintiff, defendant, year, citation, judge, sex, age, nonpecuniary general damages, other damages, and comments.

The purpose of the current project was to determine what value a vocational expert can offer to the court in cases of personal injury. Specifically, if offering greater clarity brought greater insight into vocational harm caused by injury, then cases which used a vocational expert would be expected to show a higher amount of award than those which did not. Additionally, a qualitative outcome was expected in terms of gaining a better insight into the types of claims in which vocational experts were retained. That is, for what claims did litigators retain vocational expert? In what claims or cases was a vocational expert not used, although they might be of value?

Although the methodology and findings are preliminary, some interesting insights were found about the utility of vocational opinion in this body of judicial decisions. This report describes the methodology, limitations, results, discussion, and recommendations for next steps.

Background

A vocational expert can enlighten the court on aspects of vocational trajectory as well as educational achievement not only in terms of what may be lost but also in terms of what may remain (Echarti, Schüring, & O'Donoghue, 2020; Robinson, 2013; Matheson, Dodson, & Wolf, 2011; Rockett, 2020; Stoneburner, 2020, Field et al, 1978). The capacity for estimation of vocational trajectory and educational achievement is something that may not be shared with other disciplines such as economists or forensic accountants absent the possibility they too have specific training in vocational estimation. A vocational expert should be able to quantify, in terms of income, lost, residual and/or retained employment capacity and trajectory. Doing so, makes the impacts of injury pecuniary and assists the court in determination of harm.
An inquiry was done to determine if the use of vocational experts by litigators offered value to the courts of Ontario and, by extension, other jurisdictions in Canada. The research incorporated numerical analysis of awards by categorizing them according to whether or not a vocational expert was retained and comparing between these circumstances. Also, subjective observations gleaned from the review of judicial decisions were examined. Additionally, this investigation sought to show the utility, over time, of vocational rehabilitation expertise to the legal community and our own profession.

**Court System of Canada**

According to the Government of Canada, the court system of the nation is represented with the following diagram:

**Figure 1. Outline of Canada's Court System**

https://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/csj-sjc/just/07.htm

The Superior courts in a province address both criminal and civil cases. They also may review decisions from lower courts in the province such as a small claims court or youth court. The provincial Court of Appeal hears criminal and civil appeals from the Superior court of the same jurisdiction. The trial and appeal courts are viewed as one body performing two functions rather than two courts. The provincial court system is administered by the provincial government in which it operates but is funded by the federal government. The cases in the Compendium are drawn from decisions of this legal body in Ontario.

Briefly, the Federal Court hears cases related to federal-provincial disputes, maritime law,
intellectual property, and civil cases involving terrorism. No such cases were reviewed for the purposes of this study.

**Methodology**

Each listed case from the publicly available Compendium was searched for on the Canadian Legal Information Institute (CanLII), a free listing of judicial decisions made in Canada. CanLII was necessary as the Compendium did not contain enough information to determine if a vocational expert was used and therefore cross referencing was required. Each listed case was reviewed for its potential to hold an opinion from a vocational expert as judicial decisions typically identify experts and their testimony. In some cases, a wider Internet search was completed to identify the specialty of an individual. The Compendium contained 3177 entries. The Compendium is organized by type of injury, which results in multiple entries of the same case. For this study, a case was counted once even if the case had multiple entries in The Compendium.

In addition to being a unique case, cases must include an award that a vocational expert could be retained to offer an opinion. Specifically, cases in which an award for future loss of income, loss of earning capacity and loss of competitive advantage were included. However, awards for past loss of income were excluded because they proved of little potential for vocational opinion and so examinations of cases only holding this award as an income loss were excluded. This was because past loss of income was a calculation based on the plaintiff’s earnings by the time missed from work which did not require a vocational opinion. Continuing forward, cases awarding future loss of income, loss of competitive advantage and future loss of business income were examined. There were some cases where damages were calculated but not awarded within these categories. These were also reviewed as per the standards described. Based on inclusion criteria and limitations in CanLII, 174 cases were reviewed overall.

Findings were then split between decisions where a vocational expert was identified, where no vocational expert was identified, as well as a category labelled as unknown. The pertinent awards were then tracked, and a descriptive statistical analysis was done to compare the categories.

**Limitations**

As with any research study, limitations of the project must be outlined so results can be interpreted in an appropriate context. As a vocational evaluator solely performed the analysis about the utility of vocational opinion there is the prospect of uncertainty that findings are completely unbiased. Future research could use multiple raters to mitigate against the bias a single rater might possess. If multiple expert categories were analyzed, they could be coded (made anonymous) for later statistical analysis by researchers.

CanLII does not contain every decision in the Compendium. Often, the most recent decision in a case, such as the decision from the appellate court, was in CanLII, but prior decisions such as the trial decision were not. This prevented a review and any identification of a potential vocational expert in the case as appellate decisions focus on the reason for appeal. Future research could utilize methodology to account for this arrangement. Some cases involving harm to children, and in particular sexual assault, are not contained in the database. Finally, some cases were not on CanLII for unknown reasons. Therefore, the review cannot be considered comprehensive and should be viewed as a sample. Future researchers could purchase a subscription service, gaining access to a law library or contacting litigators directly as other methods to review judicial decisions.

Another factor to consider when interpreting the results is this analysis is a compendium of awards before the courts only. The Compendium does not contain awards and other adjudicative
venues in Ontario such as the License Appeal Tribunal or the Workplace Safety Insurance Board Appeals Tribunal or any mediated agreement or settlement that occurs before any adjudicative activity is completed. This limitation may prevent a full examination of the value of vocational opinion as they can also occur in those venues or methods.

The Compendium is a compendium of awards, not a compendium of excellence in defense litigation. Consequently, the effect of vocational opinion from the perspective of defense may not be fully contained in the Compendium itself. A broader analysis of the other adjudicative bodies is expected to be time intensive since the cases would have to be found and then analyzed. So, too, would be a return to the twenty-year span of Ontario Court decisions to find decisions in favor of defense. Doing both would be expected to give more insight into the value of vocational opinion in adjudicative settings, as would a similar exercise in other jurisdictions.

It was observed that expert opinion is sought from a variety of disciplines such as medicine, economics, engineering, and other areas. The degree to which the vocational expert’s contribution was entirely isolated statistically was not undertaken. In multiple cases where a variety of experts are retained this may be accomplished through a regression analysis. Doing this, however, faces a logical problem of distinguishing the necessary from the sufficient. That is, a medical opinion of diagnosis related to injury may be necessary to show harm but might not be sufficient in providing clarity to the court in terms of demonstrating that harm as pecuniary or vocational. Despite this potential problem, a regression analysis may offer greater insight into individual professions relative contribution.

Based on the reviews performed, judges write their decisions according to their own style, and they might not include mention of experts who appeared in the case. In two cases which held the prospect of using a vocational expert, counsel was contacted and asked if a vocational expert was retained. In one case that proved true and in another it did not. The example shows that the style of decision writing may have the unintended effect of preventing access to all impacts of vocational opinion in court awards. This is not a criticism of any judge or any decision but rather an identification of how the research interest in this matter may be constrained in broader attributions to other adjudicative environments due to the methodology used.

Results

Of the more than 3,000 entries in the Compendium, 174 cases met the inclusion standard of having an award that related to harm in generating future income or competitive advantage (earnings capacity).

Table A.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Awards in Compendium by use of Vocational Expert and Value</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vocational Expert</td>
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<tr>
<td>Awards $CDN</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cases</td>
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<td>Average Award</td>
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Table B.

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<th>Percentage of Awards and Cases by Vocational Expert Use</th>
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<tr>
<td>Award Value</td>
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<tr>
<td>-------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vocational Expert</td>
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<tr>
<td>Absent Vocational Expert</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vocational Expert Undermined</td>
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*Percentages of all awards and cases

Table C.

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<th>Ration of Average Award Value Between Expert Use and Other Categories</th>
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<td>Average Award</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocational Expert</td>
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<tr>
<td>Absent Vocational Expert</td>
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<tr>
<td>Undetermined</td>
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<td>Absent and Undetermined</td>
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The total awards in the 174 cases included in the analysis was $71,103,689.59 between 1999 and 2020. This number represents the sum of the awards at the time they were awarded. No present value calculation was attributed.

The use of a vocational expert was associated with a higher total award value than all other circumstances despite representing 25.29% of all cases reviewed. The average award for vocational harm was almost two and a half times larger when retaining a vocational expert than when not doing so.

When comparing against cases where the use of a vocational expert was unknown the distinction lessened. However, when that category was combined with cases where an expert was not retained the average award value was almost half that as when one was retained.

Discussion

Awards for loss of future income and loss of competitive advantage, collectively considered as loss of earning capacity, were greater when vocational opinion was retained. The distinction is most notable when comparing against cases where no vocational expert was deemed to have offered an opinion. However, even in cases where it was unknown if an expert was retained, and possibly could have been, the average award was greater when retaining a vocational expert was known. This may be because the contribution of the vocational expert in those cases was sufficiently important as to result in mention in the judicial decision.
Weighing against that possibility is that precedent-setting cases or cases of influence often did not identify a vocational expert. For example, in 2008 the case of *St. Prix-Alexander v. Home Depot of Canada Inc.*, 2008 CanLII 115 resulted in a $400,000 award for loss of competitive advantage. There was no reference to any vocational opinion being offered to the court in the decision. Similarly, in follow-up contact around a case where awards were over $10 million as the result of a motor vehicle accident including substantial six-figure estimate for loss of future income, no vocational expert was retained.

As an effort to control the misattribution of such circumstances the two categories of “unknown” and “no vocational expert” were combined. This allowed for precedent setting cases or unusually large awards not involving a vocational expert to be compared against cases that did include an expert. It is recognized that some of the cases in this fourth categorization would likely include some where a vocational expert was retained. Nonetheless, the results continued to support the use of retaining vocational experts vis-à-vis award value. Retaining a vocational expert resulted in an average award almost 100% greater than the average award in the combined category.

A possible explanation for this discrepancy may be related to the vocational expert’s ability to associate vocational harm with loss of wages. A vocational evaluator or vocational rehabilitation counsellor is trained in identifying wages associated with specific vocational participation trajectories. The effect may be to make more specific the degree of vocational harm in cases of injury/disability as compared to other estimates.

Another possible explanation is to conclude that lawyers are smart. It can be easy to look at any one case from one perspective and have a question about why a particular lawyer may or may not have done one particular thing. Such is the luxury of modestly informed hindsight given the latitude of free personal time. However, the results of the Compendium review show that lawyers use vocational experts well. A balanced view may conclude that while vocational expert opinion adds pecuniary measure to an award, it is equally true to assert lawyers know when such an opinion might be sought.

**Observations**

An early observation was understanding the standard by which the potential loss of future income or competitive advantage was viewed as worthy of consideration as potential harm by the court. That standard was termed “a real and substantial risk” or the substantial possibilities test. This is a lower standard of proof than balance of probabilities or beyond reasonable doubt. It suggests vocational harm and future loss of earnings may be considered if it is established that the plaintiff has a real and substantial risk of its occurrence. This also necessarily implies such a loss might not happen.

However, the substantial possibilities test may be viewed as an access issue for persons with disabilities as it made the potential to be heard more likely given its lower bar of substantiation. This may make it more likely that an individual’s disability circumstance will be represented by a litigator. As access is a lifelong concern for persons who are disabled (Statistics Canada Labour Force Survey, 2023), it is reinforcing to observe a process that had a type of built in accommodation effect. Particularly an institution as important as the legal system.

A second observation concerned contingencies. Contingencies are potential future events that would have the effect of either increasing or decreasing a loss of future income. Most typically the impact was to decrease, up to as much as 20%, the future income loss estimate. Examples for contingencies include the potential for future unemployment, and antithetically enough, the potential
for future employment. Both events, if they were to happen, would either reduce an estimate of future lost income or mediate an estimate of future lost income.

Vocational experts appeared to be well regarded by the court. It became common in reviewing decisions to read about the credibility judges attached to the opinions of vocational experts called to testify. In only one of the 174 cases reviewed was a vocational opinion viewed as unhelpful or potentially biased. In one case, the specifics of the vocational expert’s testing was copied into the written decision and in several others described using the technical language of the profession. In more than one case, the written decision referred to the vocational expert’s testimony as credible, compelling, or useful. That standard of objective, professional conduct over a twenty-year span supports the continued use of vocational opinion by the court.

Loss of competitive advantage did not appear to be entirely well-defined in decisions. However, most typically this term was used for awards of an expected loss of future income in an individual’s own occupation or occupational trajectory. Typically, it was the case that the individual could continue to work in their own job, but less efficiently, which necessarily implied lesser performance and lesser compensation as a result. There were very few such awards; five in total over a 20-year span.

**Recommendations**

The review showed that vocational experts in Ontario were not often used to estimate loss of future income in cases of harm to children (pre-vocational involvement). What happened most typically is that the expected level of education, were the child uninjured, was used as the basis of lost future income estimation. The capacity for estimation of vocational trajectory and educational achievement is something that may not be shared with other disciplines such as economists or forensic accountants absent the possibility they too have specific training in vocational estimation. Economists were largely retained for this analysis. Using both professional scopes in such cases is warranted, particularly when employment is or was expected in a child’s future because the estimate of a vocational trajectory may reveal a greater or lesser degree of lost future income than relying solely on actuarial tables tethered to educational level alone. In short, the input of the vocational expert makes more specific the circumstance of the individual in such cases.

A second area that might offer potential value is in a greater exploration of loss of competitive advantage. Many people return to their own occupations after injury. For example, according to the Workplace Safety Insurance Board (Ontario) 9 out of 10 people return to their own occupations after injury (Workplace Safety and Insurance Board, n.d.). However, if some people continue to experience symptoms affecting job function, they may be experiencing a competitive disadvantage and incur a real and substantial risk for future loss of income. Of the 174 cases reviewed, five contained an award for loss of competitive advantage. The degree to which they remain as efficient as they were pre-injury is a more open question and one that is recognized by the courts. However, it may be less than fully explored.

The issue of contingency may offer a potential role for a vocational expert. A reduction of up to 20% of an award for loss future income may be applied as a contingency against future events which might expect to lessen or mediate such an estimate. This judicial latitude as part of a decision is as reinforcing as a nod to wisdom and experience. It may also be that a vocational assessor could make such an estimate pecuniary and further inform the court.

Lastly, the Compendium offers more information than that explored here, allowing for greater insight into the role of vocational experts and, possibly, other professions as well. As noted, some decisions were not reviewed despite an interest to do so. The Compendium continues to be updated.
each year with recent decisions giving the opportunity for further analysis to be more current and applicable to today’s practice in this field. For these reasons, more research on this topic is warranted.

References


Author Bio

Peter Campbell RRP, CVRP, CCVE/ICVE is a vocational evaluator who has been employed in the field of vocational rehabilitation since 1993 and in private practice for 15 years where he provides forensic vocational services and vocational evaluations. Peter graduated from Carleton University (Ottawa, Ontario Canada) with a bachelor’s degree in psychology and obtained an Employment Specialist Certificate from McLaren School of Management, University of San Francisco. He is an Internationally Certified Vocational Evaluator and serves on the Board of Directors of the College of Vocational Rehabilitation Professionals. His prior publications include “Medical Marijuana: Vocational Perspectives and Impacts”, Rehab Matters, Fall 2017 a publication of the Vocational Rehabilitation Association of Canada and; “Origins of Therapeutic Occupational Indexes: A shared Contribution in North America”, unpublished, in progress. He has been an expert rater for the Occupational and Skills Information System, a peer reviewer for the VECAP Dictionary of Vocational Evaluation and Career Assessment and an editor for the ICVE study guide.
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General Call for Papers

Vocational Evaluation and Career Assessment Professionals (VECAP) Journal

The VECAP Journal is a peer-reviewed journal that aims to advance the knowledge and practice in all areas of career assessment, vocational evaluation, and work adjustment by publishing evidenced-based research as well as conceptual papers, case studies, assessment tool reviews, policy briefs, reaction papers, and brief reports (e.g., interesting, or new ideas; pilot projects).

The variety of paper types is deliberate for welcoming a wide range of authors including (but not limited to) academics, service providers, and students. Additionally, authors representing various professions and settings are encouraged to submit (e.g., vocational evaluation, rehabilitation counseling, career assessment, additional counseling specialties, special education, allied health).

The VECAP Journal is uniquely positioned to reach both academics and service providers and authors who benefit from this exposure. Upon publication, the VECAP Journal is immediately distributed to all VECAP members. Additionally, the Journal is indexed with Crossref, which allows for each paper to have a unique Digital Object Identifier to further increase discoverability of content. Finally, sometime after publication, a full-text copy of the Journal is posted to the VECAP website to encourage additional exposure for authors.

At this time, there are no fees to authors associated with publishing in the Journal.

Paper Submission Procedures
A complete submission includes three main components: (1) Paper, (2) Cover letter, and (3) Author bios. These materials must be e-mailed to editor Amanda McCarthy at amccarthy@niu.edu.

1) Paper: With your submission, please include a deidentified copy of the paper prepared according to the current edition of the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (APA). Please be sure to remove author names and identifying information from the title page and from the paper. Please include an abstract and keywords in this paper document. Any tables or figures should be included in this paper document. The paper must be submitted electronically in one Microsoft Word document.

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2) Cover Letter: On a separate document from the paper (or in an e-mail) include a brief cover letter describing the paper, its significance, and it fits the VECAP Journal. In the cover letter (or e-mail), also confirm that you agree to the VECAP Journal Author Agreement (which is listed out below):
   - Agree to obtain written permission and pay fees for materials (e.g., tables, charts, artwork) from other source(s) that are included in the paper.
   - Confirm the paper is not published in or submitted for publication to another periodical.
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   - Confirms that the manuscript meets submission standards.

3) Author Bios: On a separate document from the paper and cover letter, please submit brief author(s) biography that would be published with the paper, if the paper is selected for publication.

Again, in the end, you will be submitting three things: 1) Paper, 2) Cover letter, and 3) Author bios. After submission, you will receive confirmation of receipt within 5 days of submission (not including holidays or weekends). For information on the status of your paper or questions about the Journal please contact Amanda McCarthy, Editor-in-Chief, amccarthy@niu.edu

**Descriptions of Paper Types**

To further assist prospective authors, the descriptions of the types of Papers considered for publication are provided.

**Research Papers (peer reviewed)**
Research Papers provide new research results related to vocational evaluation, career assessment, or work adjustment. Research Papers generally consist of an abstract, introduction, methods, results, discussion, and references. Quantitative (e.g., statistical analysis of original or secondary data), qualitative (focus groups, interviews, or similar), and mix methods projects are welcome.

**Review Papers (peer reviewed)**
Review Papers assemble many different papers on a specific subject into an articulate narrative about vocational evaluation, career assessment, or work adjustment.

**Case studies**
Case studies is a report of a single case/client. This is a popular form of manuscript among practitioners of vocational evaluation, career assessment, work adjustment, and related fields. Case studies typically draw from the author’s experience with cases/clients that are deemed interesting or unusual. Case studies must provide sufficient references.
Test, book, or work sample reviews (peer reviewed)
A test, book, or work sample review provides a detailed description and analysis of a standardized test, work sample, or book utilized in vocational evaluation, career assessment, work adjustment, and related fields.

Policy briefs (up to 3,500, peer reviewed)
A policy brief is an analysis of a proposed, new, or existing policy that focuses on the background of a policy issue, the details of the policy, and its real or predicted impact.

Reactions (up to 3,500 words, not peer reviewed)
Reaction Papers are opinions on content published in the journal. If a reaction is found acceptable, a copy will be sent to the author of the original Paper and the author of the original Paper will have an opportunity to provide a response, with new material, that will be considered for publication along with the reaction Paper.

Brief Reports (peer reviewed)
Brief reports describe interesting new ideas or innovations in vocational evaluation, career assessment, work adjustment, or related fields, works in progress, or concise reports of small pilot research studies that are not sufficiently developed to be published as research Papers.

I hope you consider submitting your paper to the VECAP Journal.

Please note, the VECAP Journal is also looking to add additional peer-reviewers. If you are interested in being considered as a peer-reviewer for the journal, please e-mail your interest and a copy of your CV/Resume to the editor-in-chief.

Best,
Amanda McCarthy, Ed.D., CRC, CVE, LCPC (IL)
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VECAP MISSION

VECAP is a nonprofit 501(c)6 organization originally founded in 1967 to promote the professions and services of vocational evaluation and work adjustment. Formerly known as the Vocational Evaluation and Work Adjustment Association (VEWAA), the name was changed in 2003 to better reflect the focus of the organization as well as emphasize the independent status of the organization. This group has no affiliation with the National Rehabilitation Association (NRA) or the NRA/VEWAA.

The VECAP association is committed to advancing and improving the fields of vocational evaluation and career assessment and represents the needs of the professionals who provide those services. Its scope of services will encompass individuals who need assistance with vocational development and/or career decision making.

VECAP is comprised of a membership of professionals who provide vocational evaluation, assessment, and career services and others interested in these services.

VECAP members identify, guide, and support the efforts of persons served to develop and realize training, education, and employment plans as they work to attain their career goals.

For membership information, visit VECAP.org.