



Boots on the Ground: Employment Consultant Community of Practice 2021 Project Report

David Michael Mank, Ph.D.

Overview

In collaboration with the Washington State Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA), Wise created the **Boots on the Ground: Employment Consultant Community of Practice!** webinar series. Comprised of two sessions per week, this series offered hands-on examples and opportunities to see innovative direct service from employment providers across Washington State. Tuesday seminars occurred each week from 9:30 to 11:30am PST. Friday workshops (9:30 to 11:30am PST) provided follow up conversation and activities based on Tuesday's content. These events were open to all and free of charge. This included people from other states in the USA.

Boots on the Ground was created to provide for professional development for those working in direct support roles related to competitive integrated employment (CIE) for people with intellectual or developmental disabilities (I/DD) during the COVID-19 Pandemic. The intended audience was staff in agencies who deliver employment services, not management or administrative personnel. Participation in the Boots sessions became a billable activity for employment agency staff in Washington State in March 2020 and continued through June 2021. Boot's sessions began the first week of January 2021 and continued through the end of July 2021 for a total of 30 weeks.

Wise and DDA took notice, as the Pandemic progressed, that employment agencies were rapidly adjusting to stay-at-home orders, the need for personal protective equipment (PPE) and social distancing by creating new and innovative ways to continue to provide supported employment and competitive integrated employment or CIE services. This series sought to discover and rapidly disseminate emerging best practices, focusing on the phases of employment services within DDA's Individual Employment Billable Activities (see Appendix 1).

Topic examples included (but not limited to): using technology to deliver remote services, decreasing job coaching with tools for independence and increased productivity, reaching employers in a virtual manner, family engagement, personal development activities with job seekers and teamwork. The Pandemic and the Boots on the Ground series provided an opportunity to hear presentations and have discussions with employment staff who were developing and implementing these new Best Practices in real time. A call for proposals was sent out to Washington State employment agencies (see Appendix 2).

Wise staff used multiple systems to create the Boots on the Ground series. This included the Zoom platform for two-way video interaction with presenters and among participants, and the Support@gowise.org email system to handle customer service inquiries. Basecamp, a project management software, was used to house the Boot Shop, for collaborative work with presenters and among participants. All content from the 30 seminar sessions was added to the Wise Learning Center for future views (see Appendix 3).

Session presenters were provided with guidelines on presenting and accessibility, initial planning support, and assistance with activities in the Boot Shop and live sessions. Wise staff provided support roles for planning and conducting each session. The Wise Boots on the Ground staff roles included: Project Coordinator, Emcee, Session Support, Platform Host, and a “Smoach”. A Subject Matter Coach (Smoach) was assigned to presenters for planning and practice before each session, and to debrief each session. Smoach was a unique role in the Boots on the Ground series, responsible for assisting presenters in preparation, delivery, and follow up for each session.

Session presenters were almost exclusively Employment Consultants or direct employment support staff, rather than management staff or the top level of leadership of supported employment agencies. This means the Boots presenters were most often staff members not typically among presenters at conferences. Presenters were typically the individuals who were developing and using in real time, the new methods of continuing to provide employment services in a pandemic.

The amount of experience in supported employment of the presenters varied widely. Some presenters were in the first 6-months of providing supported employment services. Others had many years of experience.

Wise staff also provided a registration process for Tuesdays and Fridays sessions, including reminders, access to presentation documents and materials, as well as participant participation certificates.

Employment Consultant Mindset – During the COVID Pandemic

January 2021

The Boots on The Ground: Employment Consultant Community of Practice series was created at the time of, and in response to, the COVID-19 Pandemic. During this time of varied conditions of stay-at-home orders, business shutdowns and limited business and community activity with personal protective equipment, providers of employment services were looking for new and creative ways to continue to provide supported employment services and outcomes. The situation was further complicated as each of Washington State's 39 counties could be in different phases of lockdown at any given time. The Boots audience was getting information about employment services from all across the state where the day-to-day reality of lockdown differed.

Some supported employees lost their jobs. Others were furloughed for some period of weeks or months. Others continued to work because their jobs were considered essential (e.g. grocery, health care, some food service, etc). Some of these essential workers took on more hours in their positions, as some coworkers were unable to return to work and their employers were having difficulty finding employees. Still others started new jobs as many essential jobs continued to be available.

Employment Consultants and other employment staff were mostly working out of their homes. Many, especially at the beginning of the pandemic, were without dedicated office space for remote communications, phone contacts and two-way video meetings. Information Technology or IT solutions were needed for employment staff to continue their work. And they also needed to teach clients, families, and home support staff how to use smart devices and two-way video communication for meetings. Adjustments were required for remote work in both the methodology of their work and in the mindset of employment consultants.

One early Boots session, in January 2021, while Washington State was in varying levels of mitigation, focused specifically on participants' mindset, outlook or way of thinking about their work. Following is a compilation of this discussion, presented as a word cloud and a summary of comments. This shows both initial

Erratic thoughts

Hit a mental block

Hard to find intrinsic motivation

Roller coaster

Optimistic

Struggle to maintain a positive mindset

Brain feels like it's in a blender

People have shown their true colors good and bad

The struggle is real

How does this mindset impact the work you are providing now and what will this mean for the future?

What shift can you make to address immediate needs and create meaningful progress?

- Improve workflow.
- Rely more on teamwork.
- Increase empathy understanding and compassion.
- Inspire creativity.
- Rework structure of how we provide services.
- Collaborate.
- Revisit job descriptions and consider updating to meet current state of economy and how that is affecting SE.
- Adjust time management.
- Continue to keep lines of communication open.
- Keep encouragement flowing to clients, students.
- Increase self-monitoring and change negative mindsets into positive ones.
- Think of others and how our services can benefit them.
- Find new ways to engage with everyone.
- We are on the same rollercoaster so keep riding on.
- Prioritize selfcare.
- Be flexible.

- Let clients drive our services.
- Embrace technology and use to your advantage.
- This is a new normal and we need to accept that we need to work within this reality. We are realizing that we need to be creative and flexible as well as use self-care more than ever.
- Doing our best to remain positive and thinking of different ways to be creative to reach our participants. It was great to hear that so many are feeling the same feelings, makes us feel less alone
- This time is hard for clients, families, and staff. Along with this being an erratic time a rollercoaster, staff feeling like it is hard to find motivation... there is hope, we have time to be creative, client-focused and we have an opportunity to provide services in a different way.
- Great conversations. The networking and sharing of ideas in trainings is my favorite part of this past year. Love learning from all of you. I have been able to get to know my clients in different ways and doing more discovery and relationship building which has been a huge help for me. I'm struggling to job develop when so many businesses are laying off people and dealing with financial crises. Trying to figure out ways to keep connecting even when it feels like Groundhog's Day. I am growing in my abilities and am thankful for all of you!
- Small successes.
- How we have had more opportunity to get to know our clients where we wouldn't have otherwise.
- How will things change when things resume to "normal" what will we continue doing that we won't.
- Stay positive.
- Be adaptable.
- Be creative.
- We are all in the same position and we are all feeling the same way and what we do is amazing work.
- Isolation is hard but we are not alone.

- Also, a COVID feelings packet came up! A great idea to check in with your client's month to month.
- Hearing from others in the field is a great way to keep the creativity going, especially when I am not sure what else I can do to help the individual stay engaged in a positive mindset. I also recently started working in the field (last fall) and it has mostly been a learning experience while also trying to get to know the individual and finding ways to connect.
- I love connecting with customers and employers. I find expanding inclusiveness to be very rewarding.

The Boot Shop

Wise staff created the Boot Shop in Basecamp. This provided 24/7 access for all participants to the content and resource documents of each weekly session, and a platform for Community Messaging and Community Chat.

Boot's participants 'enrolled' based on information in the sessions each week. Interaction was encouraged with presenters and among participants, intended to build a new kind of statewide cohort of Employment Consultants. Presenters most often offered group and individual interaction and additional information of the topic of the week. Once enrolled, participants had full access to all the Boots materials and resources. The Boot Shop has had 160 participants in addition to communications from Wise staff.

Presenters consistently offered access and resources. A Boot Shop Index was created for participants to easily find session materials within the Boot Shop (see Appendix 4). However, there was not a great volume of interaction among participants.

Boots on the Ground Participation and Evaluation

Participation in the Boots on the Ground series was high from January 2021 into late Spring 2021 (often more than 100). As more individuals with disabilities returned to work, and DDA phased out professional development as a billable activity, participation, expectedly declined (20 - 25 per session). The highest number of participants in any one session was 226. The lowest: 17. The median number of participants was 76. The mean number of participants was 92.

Overall, 2,760 individuals participated from January 2021 through July 2021. Tuesday sessions were recorded. Recorded sessions were viewed 1,165 times. Participants hailed from nearly every county in Washington State and from 13 other states. The vast majority of participants were from Washington State.

Typical job titles of participants

- 68% Employment Services staff
- 28% other (self-advocates, families, school staff, residential staff, and state or local government staff)
- Agency Disability focus (duplicate counts)
 - 78% I/DD
 - 57% MH/ Behavioral Health
 - 37% TBI
 - 48% Physical disability
 - 42% Blind
 - 36% Deaf/ Hard of hearing

Participants' Evaluation of the Boots on the Ground Sessions

Session evaluations show that participants found these sessions to be well conducted and of value. All sessions were rated a 4 or a 5 on a 5- point scale.

- Overall Quality of Training
 - 94% Good or Very Good. (4 or 5) 71.62% =5
- Presenter was Engaging
 - 97% Good or Very Good (4 or 5) 73.65% = 5
- Shared Current and Relevant information, examples, and materials.
 - 96% Good or Very Good. (54% =5)

While the percentage of participants who completed session evaluations was low, it is important to note that no sessions received evaluation ratings of “1” or “2”.

- When asked, “How do Wise online events compare to others?”,
 - 52% of respondents indicated they were about the same as others.
 - 47% said Wise events were better.
- When asked about ease of participating in Boots on the Ground sessions,

- 78% indicated that log in and participating was easy, and that the instructions were clear.

Organizations participating.

Thirteen employment providers in Washington State had staff participate as presenters. As noted earlier, this creates a new cadre of presenters or instructors on supported employment or related topics. There were 44 presenters from employment agencies, for Boots. Of these, 34 individuals participated in presenting one week. Ten presented more than one week.

Presenting organizations (# sessions) and Presenters.

- AtWork! (2) Marie-Yvonne Chase, Jenna Heberden, and Katherine Randall
- Trillium (7) Casey Serquinia, Jaymie Heberlein, Ashton Steele, Miranda Fort, Ashlee Roden, Megan Brandes, Olivia Pomata, Jennifer Hamann, Leisa Spring, and Karen Williams
- ENSO (6) Ehraina McDonald, Amy Fiddes, and Christina Lease
- VADIS (3) ErikaRose Thomas, Angela Arriaga, Katie Rivers, TJ Protho, and Ann Jensen
- Work Opportunities (3) Hannah Voss, Kacie Masten, Ali Hawkinson, Nate Stephens, and Alicia McCoy
- Lewis County Work Opportunities (1) Monica Meyer
- Lighthouse for the Blind (1) Timothy Paulding and Aubrey Munchrath
- Morningside (2) Heather Evans, Nathan Coggeshall, and Vicky Teltlaff
- Northwest Center (1) Bruce Kleb and Melissa Del Rio
- Cares of Washington (1) Kate Pitz, Jared Sand, and Wendy Ehr
- The Arc of Spokane (1) Vanessa Prendiville, Austin Storseth, and Luke Tolley
- Highline College (1) Brenda Kim
- Compass Career Solutions (1) Brandy Schutz, Doug Rowe, and Cathryn Maland

What did we learn from Boots on the Ground?

What's working during a pandemic?

Perhaps the first thing employment agencies learned was that many employment services can be provided remotely. Doing so depended on having the right technology, and devices, software or apps, fluency in the use of this technology, and ongoing IT support.

Going forward, employment staff **and** people receiving employment services will need

1. The technology, apps and stable wi-fi to engage remotely
2. Training to gain fluency in using the technology.
3. Ongoing support, accommodations, future training, and upgrades when available.

What are emerging best practices?

Remote or virtual services emerged as the “go to” approach given months of “stay-at-home” state guidelines. While emails, text messages, and phone calls were common before the pandemic, they became the primary tools for communication and providing employment services and supports. In addition, Zoom, with two-way video communication, emerged as the largely preferred tool when both employment staff and clients had the technology and support needed.

This use of remote tools, while clients were in their homes, also meant that assistance and supports were often needed from family members or home caregivers. Providing remote services was more difficult if clients had neither access to the needed technology or the in-home support for its use.

Remote tools were used for communication and for providing employment services. Video resumes were created. Job tours by video were conducted. Mock interviews were conducted. Videos of different types of jobs and industries were found online, collected, and viewed by clients and employment staff. Worksite training, skill building sessions, Person-Centered Planning and business networking were also conducted virtually.

In some instances, the frequency of contact, communication or services actually increased (compared to in-person services), because such “touches” could be provided easily (if technology and support were in place) and more briefly. For example, zoom meetings could occur weekly for 30 or 60 minutes, instead of a

single monthly in-person meeting. In some instances, more services could be delivered by employment staff because travel time and expenses were unnecessary.

Employment agencies invested in the tools and support needed for employment staff to develop and use remote methods.

Many clients learned the technology skills needed if devices and support were available. However, not all clients had the needed access to available technologies, and ongoing IT support for communication and support (percent of clients without adequate access is unknown).

In addition to remote tools for services, employment agencies also developed “Kits” to support virtual services. For example, Kits were developed for conducting the Discovery process. Such Kits were paper and document products, with related pictures and materials, instructions and activities that could be conducted in clients’ homes. Employment staff assembled these Kits and delivered the Kits to client homes. The activities in the Kits could be conducted by the client, with family or home caregiver support, and/or having employment staff use video chat to conduct the activities. These Kits were used with multiple clients.

Major Themes

Several themes emerged during the pandemic. These include the following.

1. Remote/virtual services quickly emerged as the primary methods of services and communications.
2. A “hybrid” approach (a new mix of in-person and remote supports and services) is expected post-pandemic. Decisions will be needed (by DDA, Counties and employment agencies, and by individuals with disabilities and their families) to define the parameters and boundaries of this new mix of services.
3. There will continue to be a need for technology access, as well as training and ongoing IT support for employment staff and for clients.
4. Changes in the view of the role of Employment Consultants. The pandemic created a time of rapid learning where all employment staff were on equal footing. All employment staff, experienced and new, were learning new roles and methods during pandemic. Employment staff hired during the pandemic needed to learn to provide employment services virtually starting the first day on the job. Experienced

- employment staff needed to relearn how to provide employment services with remote tools.
5. Some experienced increased access to, and collaboration with, families, and home support staff, because in home support was often needed to provide remote services.
 6. The need for “self-care”, for both clients and employment staff, emerged as an important concern, as everyone experienced some level or risk of isolation, confusion about how to be, and how to work. This continued for many months. As noted earlier, one Boots on the Ground session (Where the Rubber Meets (the LCD) Road) discussed such issues about supported employment staff “Mindset” of work in an unprecedented time.
 7. Supported Employment services continued, and even expanded as the pandemic continued. Billable remote services largely made this possible. While statewide data through the pandemic has not yet been fully reviewed and analyzed, there are many reports of new jobs begun during these months, especially in work considered “essential”. National indicators show that employment of people with disabilities was rebounding by June 2021. The [nTIDE Project at the University of New Hampshire has provided data](#) that shows that the employment to population ratio in June 2021 equaled or exceeded that of March 2020 at the time most of the country began “stay-at-home” policies.

Emerging practices with national and international implications?

Washington State responded quickly and effectively. New practices emerged that should be assessed for post-pandemic use.

1. Funding of remote services and supports enabled employment agencies to pivot to remote or hybrid methods.
2. Washington State made it possible for employment agencies to invoice for training (participating in Boots on The Ground sessions) as professional development. Given the number of Boots participants, there is a strong possibility that Washington State has an extremely well-trained supported employment workforce. The future of training employment provider staff should be discussed further.
3. A new and expanded library of Supported Employment training and related topics has been created, cataloged and is now available on

- demand 24/7. This has great potential for the professional development of the supported employment workforce. Discussion will be needed about how these online training resources should be used and discussed in the context of a new mix of online and in-person training. In addition, discussion is needed about organizing this new content, and other online sessions, into courses for supported employment practitioners.
4. In many instances, employment agencies found ways to pay for and support the use of remote tools for both employment staff and clients. These tools will remain needed and useful post-pandemic. However, discussion is needed about ongoing funding for these tools for employment staff and clients. This goes beyond access to smart phones and devices. Clients and employment staff also need ongoing IT support as well as high speed internet access in homes. Internet access and ongoing IT support is especially needed in rural areas.
 5. Ongoing Supported Employment professional development training and support should be discussed further. Work-from-Home became a new normal for Employment staff mindset and self-care became somewhat frequent topics of concern. For the first time, staff and clients alike were, quite literally, seeing into each other's homes. There has been a humanizing aspect of communications and interactions remotely during this pandemic. Seeing and understanding some of co-workers, colleagues, clients, and family's homes and living circumstances seem to have a humanizing effect in interactions.
 6. Washington State has created a new cadre of potential trainers. Forty-four practitioners, agency staff members who provide employment or other support services every day, now have experience presenting newly developed training materials, examples, and resources to other supported employment practitioners. A plan is needed for involving these individuals in future professional development offerings.
 7. State agencies will benefit from discussing and developing a plan for employment services post-pandemic. Decisions will be needed about the new mix of services and funding rates. A plan should also include discussion of funding for the IT tools and solutions (with upgrades over time) needed by employment providers or staff and by clients. Including ongoing access to high-speed internet, especially in rural areas.

Boots on the Ground Surveys at the Conclusion of the 30-week Series

Surveys were conducted at the conclusion of the Boots on the Ground series to gather additional information about the quality and usefulness of the series. These included a final survey of the participants, the presenters, and of the leadership of organizations that had staff members present one or more sessions.

Boots on The Ground Series Evaluation by Participants (N = 45)

(Rating on a 1 – 5 scale (not useful to extremely useful))

- 80% of respondents indicated the Boots Series was very or extremely useful.
- When asked “How the series was useful”, respondents indicated:
 - Increased knowledge (73%)
 - Increased depth of knowledge of some topics (69%)
 - Putting information into practice (45%)
 - Improved use of virtual tools with clients (42%)
 - Improved use of remote work tools (38%)
 - Improved agency teamwork (22%)
- Examples provided of new tools used.
 - Use of Zoom (60%)
 - Use of “Kits” (29%)
 - New combination of remote and in person supports (48%)
 - More communication with client family or home support staff (36%)
 - New ways to job develop (58%)
 - New ways of doing ongoing supports (47%)
- When asked, “Which topics should Wise develop further content?”, the following topics were noted by at least 30% of respondents.
 - Job Development
 - Discovery
 - Ongoing supports
 - Positive Behavior Supports
 - Use of remote tools
 - LGBTQ+ topics
 - Universal Design
 - Benefits Planning

- 84% of respondents indicated that Wise customer service was very useful (16%) or extremely useful (69%).

Survey of Presenters of Boots on the Ground Sessions

A survey of the presenters was conducted at the conclusion of the Boots on the Ground (30% responded).

- When asked about experience as a presenter:
 - 15% indicated this was their first experience as a presenter.
 - 38% indicated they had experience presenting inside their organization.
 - 15% had presented a few times outside their organization.
 - 31% considered themselves as familiar with presenting inside and outside their organization.
- When asked “Why they decided to present for Boots on the Ground?”, presenter indicated that they did so to:
 - Share new information with colleagues (92%)
 - Gain experience as a presenter (54%)
 - Build my own confidence as a presenter (38%)
 - Asked by a co-worker (31%)
 - For the presentation fee (15%)
- When asked “Which statement best describes your presentation content?”:
 - Content was developed for Boots (54%)
 - Content had been previously presented inside my organization and was updated for Boots (46%)
- “How helpful was the Wise Smoach in planning and preparation for your session(s)?”
 - Extremely Helpful (77%)
 - Very Helpful (15%)
 - Somewhat helpful (8%)
- “How helpful was Wise staff during the live sessions?”
 - Extremely helpful (85%)
 - Somewhat helpful (15%)
- “In which of the following areas did you increase your personal competency by participating in Boots?”
 - Creating accessible presentations (77%)

- Structuring the flow of presentations or workshops (62%)
- Framing language in a professional or inclusive manner (38%)
- Presenting in front of a larger audience than I have before (62%)
- Working collaboratively with internal and external team members (69%)
- Using Zoom as a presenter (46%)
- Facilitating breakout sessions (31%)
- Presenting information clearly and concisely (38%)
- Presenter participation in the Boot Shop.
 - Posted about my presentation the week of my sessions (50%)
 - Posted or commented on posts in other weeks (25%)
 - Read posts without commenting (17%)
 - Added resources or documents (33%)

(“This was a great opportunity to share, and I believe it increased collaboration among providers. There is a different viewpoint when presented by those who are currently in the field and doing the work and understand the current challenges”)

(“The Smoaches were so professional and supportive. It felt like a well-oiled, high-end machine. Appreciated the use of Basecamp/project management tools to make sure we had all the pieces. Wise staff were also super accommodating to the diverse consultants we had lead sessions”)

Survey of the leadership of agencies that had staff members present for Boots on the Ground (20% responded).

A survey was also conducted, at the conclusion of Boots, of leadership or management of agencies that had Employment Consultants or other direct support staff present. These respondents indicated:

- Boots on the Ground has been helpful to the work of our organization.
 - Extremely useful (67%)
 - Somewhat useful (33%)
- “How was your agency’s participation useful?”
 - Increased staff ability to develop presentation content (100%)
 - Increased staff skill to present (100%)
 - Increased staff collaboration (33%)
 - Increased staff pride or morale (67%)

- Taught staff to use new tools, (e.g. Basecamp, alt text, closed captions) (67%)
- “Do you believe the presentation and workshop activities developed for this project will be used in other ways in the future?”
 - Yes (67%)
 - Not sure (33%)
- All respondents indicated that they would participate in similar projects in the future.

(“Thank you for creating this opportunity for ... emerging leaders to show their talent, knowledge and passion”)

Other Takeaways from Boots on The Ground

Employment Services

- Creations and wide use of “Kits” for clients to use virtually and or independently now exist for future use.
- The pandemic exposed some lack of access to IT and insufficient fluency with technology tools for some clients and some staff.
- Access to and fluency with, and ongoing support using remote tools, two-way (primarily Zoom) and video platforms will continue to be needed. (Clients and Employment Consultants).
- Communications with family and home support providers appears to have been more expansive, in some instances, than before the pandemic, because assistance was often needed in the home for clients to participate with Zoom, Kits, or other remote tools.
- New strategies emerged – e.g. virtual walks, remote Discovery tools, Tele-health, two-way video supports on the job, person-centered planning, use of “Kits”. etc.
- Learning virtual methods has implications for the future of job coaching and mixing methods for fading employment staff support from worksites.
- Many clients were viewed as valued employees in essential jobs. Are there implications for future job development?
- Agencies discovered that some people with disabilities could work from home.

Employment Provider Staff Training and Boots on the Ground Observations

- Virtual trainings will continue to be an important tool for staff training in the future.
- Accessibility tools and guidelines were important for fully accessible sessions for all participants. Guidelines for presenters were developed and Wise staff worked with presenters to follow these guidelines. This means the Wise Learning Center now has a broader set of more fully accessible online training resources. Such training, however, should also be discussed related to the languages in which it might be offered in the future.
- Good use of the Zoom features the Chat Box, Q&A, and Polls, during sessions (by presenters, Wise staff, and participants) enhances such training sessions and increases participants engagement.
- 120 minutes may be too long for training sessions. 90 minutes (or 60 for some content) may be more appropriate. Some content might be offered (or edited from existing recordings) that are 10 – 15 minutes.
- Presenters should always be visible on screen even when showing slides.
- Wise staff extended their expertise with online learning processes.
- Boots presentations and interactions demonstrated the same Washington State culture of embracing supported employment, but with new methods.
- Washington State now has a new set of presenters for supported employment and related topics. In effect, this “hand the mic” to supported employment practitioners. Involving these presenters in future training events should be discussed, and a plan developed.
- From participants perspective, participation was seamless and easy in the procedures – sign ins, reminders, automated emails with Zoom links and presentation handouts, and certificates of participation.
- The Boot Shop provided a space for presenter interaction with participants, and among participants. While participation in the Boot Shop was not frequent among participants, this kind of online community space should be discussed for possible future uses.
- Wise staff began this project with notable experience and expertise with online training. This expertise was even further developed during the Boots series, including new expertise in making online events fully accessible.

Discussion and Future Implications

Post pandemic employment practices are likely to be a mix of remote and in-person work. The field will need decision rules and rubrics to decide what is a good mix (e.g. it appears to be easier to maintain relationships remotely and less easy to start new relationships). Simple sharing of information remotely is relatively easy and common now. Having complicated, or controversial discussions appears to be more difficult when done virtually. Client circumstances have also become essential to determining whether and how remote will work. For example, if there are not strong supports at the worksite, or if the client is not comfortable on camera, remote services may not be the best option.

Post pandemic training of supported employment staff will need continued discussion. What are the new expectations of training expected of new supported employment staff members? What are the topics for training for new employment consultants? In what timeframe? What should be the mix of online and in-person training? What ongoing professional development should be in place for employment staff? How will the new cadre of presenters/instructors be utilized in future professional development in Washington State? There will be a new combination of remote and in-person training and technical assistance. What will be a good balance? How will we know? What guidelines will be needed?

The Wise Boots Team

- Morgan Cain
- Jenny Crook
- Emily Harris
- Beth McKenney
- Brandi Monts
- Robyn Slocom
- Tyler Talcott
- Charly Walters

Subject Matter Coaches: Josie Sparks, Charly Walters, Emily Harris, Debbie Moore, and Shaun Wood.

Platform Hosts: Beth McKenney, Morgan Cain, Jenny Crook, and Charly Walters.

Support Roles: Robyn Slocom, Jenny Crook, Charly Walters, and Emily Harris.

Technical Support: Tyler Talcott

Assistance in reviewing and editing this report, by Jenny Crook and Brandi Monts is appreciated.

APPENDICES

1. [Individual Employment Billable Activities](#)
2. [Call for Proposals and Letter of Invitation](#)

Session Content

3. [Boots Sessions Sequence](#)
4. [The Boot Shop Index](#)