EMPLOYMENT READINESS SCALE™
Agency Training Notes

www.EmploymentReadiness.com
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Part A: Getting Started

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ERS Agency Training Notes

Part A: Getting Started

Introduction

A1. Three parts of the website
There are three parts to the website – Client, Agency, Sponsor – each in a different color. Your license provides access codes for the Agency portion of the site, from which you can set up client access codes.

A2. Links between English and Spanish
You can go back and forth between the two languages transparently. Clients can take the ERS in Spanish, and then staff can read the Feedback Report in English, or visa versa. The only exception is the Action Plan, where the items always appear in the language in which they are entered.

You can select the language of your choice on the splash page or, once you are into the website, you can click on the link to the other language at the bottom of each page of the site (except reports).

A3. Staff only use the “dem” complimentary codes [demxxxxx]
Each agency license comes with two complimentary Client Access Codes. This enables staff to try the ERS without their answers getting mixed in with their clients’ answers, which would distort the reports. Because each “dem” Code can be used three times, six of your staff members could complete the ERS...or, if you don’t answer the last question, more staff can use it to get a feel for the scale.

A4. Why clients like taking the ERS
Clients report at least five benefits to them of taking the ERS:

a. The ERS gives them a chance to say what is going on in their lives and have that taken seriously. Often in a social assistance context, they feel like they are being told about themselves. With the ERS, they feel more in control ... and so more motivated to act on the results.

b. Taking the ERS is an educational process, and they learn what it takes to succeed from the questions they are asked.

c. To the extent that any action planning is based on their own input (rather than a staff person’s decision), they trust it more and are more likely to follow through.

d. They get a road map for work life success from the ERS Feedback Report, even if they score low on all the factors.

e. They can see how much progress they are making (when they re-take the ERS), which helps them stay motivated.
**Client Assistance Functions**

A5. **Tracking the number of client access codes remaining**

In “Client Assistance Functions” on the secure agency site, there is a table with two functions – Search and View. Above that table, there is a message stating the number of unassigned client access codes remaining in your license. “Unassigned” means that a user name and password have not yet been created for that code.

Please remember that, if an access code is created for a client and the client has not yet taken the ERS, that access code can be reassigned to another client. However, once the ERS has been taken with that access code, the code may not be changed to a different client because each code is for one client only (please see your agency license).

A6. **Setting up a client’s user name and password**

In “Client Assistance Functions” (first item on the left-hand orange menu bar), there is hypertext saying “Add new client” under the right-hand corner of the Search/View table. If you click there, it will take you to the Client Info screen where you can set up a new client as follows:

⇒ Enter your client’s First Name
⇒ Enter your client’s Last Name
⇒ Enter the Client User Name*
⇒ Enter the Password**
⇒ Click on “save”

*User name: A decision as to the user name pattern to be followed will have been made during planning for ERS implementation. All Client User Names must start with your Client User Code, which links the record to your agency for the reports. It appears in red on the screen where you set up a new client. The next letters or numbering pattern are up to your organization, but they often reflect client file numbers. The resulting User Name can have 8 to 50 characters. The ERS Lead for your office can tell you what your agency’s user name pattern is. For ease of reference, note the pattern to be used below. Our client user name pattern is as follows:

You can always edit the client information (going in through the magnifying glass icon) so, if you set up a client to take the ERS who then doesn’t take it, you can simply change the information to a new client. This means that you can set up clients ahead of their appointment or their attendance at an intervention.

Note: The “Client Details” box in the lower part of the screen is related to the Client Transfer function, and those details would follow a client if transferred (see Agency Training Notes, Section B13). However, you can use this space yourself to keep notes on a client.
**Password:** Again, this decision is made during planning for ERS implementation, and the ERS Lead for your office can let you know what convention(s) have been decided in respect to what client passwords will be utilized in your setting.

From a technical standpoint, it is possible to use any password as long as it has 5 to 12 characters. *Only letters and numbers are used in the Client Password, not periods or other symbols.* You may wish to use the same password for all of your clients. Passwords are assigned in our agency as follows:

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A7. Searching for clients [using “Search”]
On “Client Assistance Functions”, click on the circle in front of “Search”, then type in part of a name or pattern, select the appropriate option (first name, last name, user name), and click on the orange “go” button. You will see a table display of the clients that meet your search criteria.

To start over again, click on “new search” up under the message about client access codes.

A8. Client Coding [keyboard icon]
The Client Coding function is provided so that you can do administrative coding of clients, enabling your agency to generate valuable customized reports on groups of clients for each of those coding categories. For example, if your agency serves clients from multiple communities and it would be valuable to be able to analyze ERS data by community, then your agency could use Community (or Location) as a Client Coding Variable and customize the menu of options to include all the areas you serve.

In most cases, a decision as to what Client Coding Variables will be used by your Agency is made prior to ERS staff training. If so, the variables will likely already be set up and ready for staff use. If the set-up has not yet been completed, procedures for the ERS Lead to do so are outlined in the ERS Set-up Guide for Agencies. The ERS Lead for your office will let you know when these are ready for you to begin client coding.

Once the variable(s) are set up, you can code clients by going to “Client Assistance Functions”, bringing up the table of clients (“go”), and clicking on the “keyboard” icon next to the client that you want to code. Select the option from the drop-down list next to the variable you have defined, and then save by clicking on “submit.” When you return to the table of clients, you will see that the “keyboard” icon has turned orange to show that the client has been coded.

A9. The Sponsor Client Coding function [keyboard icon]
If your agency license is linked to a sponsor license, your Sponsor may have defined an administrative variable for you to use in coding clients. This variable is used only for
reports on the Sponsor site, not for reports on the Agency site. For example, the Sponsor may have defined a variable called “Status” and the options might be “accepted” or “not accepted.”

Once the Sponsor Client Coding variable has been set up, you will need to code clients to this variable. You can do so by going to “Client Assistance Functions”, bringing up the table of clients (“go”), and clicking on the “keyboard” icon next to the client that you want to code. Select the option from the drop-down list in the second part of the box, which is labeled as “Sponsor Client Coding”, and then save by clicking on “submit”. When you return to the table of clients, you will see that the “keyboard” icon has turned orange to show that the client has been coded.

Note: You cannot generate a report by this variable from the Agency site. If your agency wants to generate reports by the same options as the Sponsor Client Coding, the ERS Lead can arrange to define one of your Client Coding variables in the same way. Then, when you code a client, you would tick that option both under (Agency) Client Coding and Sponsor Client Coding – with a single click on “submit” at the bottom of the screen. However, unless you are asked to do so, you can ignore this note.

A10. Coding a client to a Local Program [note pad icon]

Often agencies are interested in using the ERS to see whether groups of clients demonstrate changes in readiness before and after interventions. If so, individual clients will be coded in respect to which local programs they are participating in. The Local Programs may be ones that you deliver yourselves or ones to which you refer clients.

Some other benefits to using Local Program coding include being able to:

⇒ Get a needs assessment for the clients that will be in that local program in order to help you design the program to be most effective.
⇒ Evaluate the effectiveness of the services or programs you provide.
⇒ Evaluate the effectiveness of the services or programs to which you refer clients.
⇒ Report clients to a Sponsor.
⇒ Separate clients being reported to a Sponsor from clients not being reported to a Sponsor (or being reported to a different Sponsor).

In most cases, a decision as to what Local Program coding will be done by your agency is made prior to ERS staff training. If so, the Local Programs will likely already be set up and ready for staff use. If the set-up has not yet been completed, procedures for the ERS Lead to do so are outlined in the ERS Set-Up Guide for Agencies. The ERS Lead for your office will let you know when these are ready for you to begin local program coding.

To code a client to a local program, go to Client Assistance Functions. In the table of clients (“go”), click on the “notepad” icon next to the client’s name. You will go to the screen where you can code the client to a local program by selecting the local program from the drop-down list and adding the start and end dates. Once you have coded the
client and returned to the main table, you will notice that the “notepad” icon has turned orange. If the local program you want is not in the drop-down list, there may be a good reason. Ask the ERS Lead whether this Local Program is one to be added, or if it’s been omitted from the list for a particular reason.

We suggest that you code a client to a Local Program when you have talked with a client about participating in it. If the client does not finish the program, it can be deleted. If the dates change, simply delete the initial entry and then re-code with the correct dates. The dates are used only for generating reports on groups of clients.

A11. Coding the “job ready” date [check box icon]
This coding is done if your agency has decided to do Employment Status follow-up with clients after they have exited your services at a point of 12, 26 and/or 52-week follow up. To code a “job ready” date, go to Client Assistance Functions, select the client, and then click on the “check box” (Employment Status) icon. You will see where you can enter the “job ready” date. It is this date that becomes Day 1 for calculating when you need to follow up with the client to find out if they are employed.

“Job ready” refers to your judgment that a client is ready for independent job search. “Employment ready” is determined by the client’s scores on the ERS.

You can use the multiple-administration feature of the ERS to verify your judgment of “job ready.” When you think a client is “job ready,” you can have them take the ERS for the second time. An ERS result of “fully ready,” confirms your “job ready” assessment. If the client scores “not ready” (or even “minimally ready”), additional intervention(s) may be needed. The ERS could then be administered a third time at the completion of these interventions.

If the Agency wishes, you can use this coding instead for “employment date”. Speak with your ERS Lead about whether and how this ERS function will be utilized in your office.

A12. Coding employment status [check box icon]
On the same screen where you code the “job ready” date, you also enter whether or not a client is employed at 12 weeks, 26 weeks, and/or 52 weeks. You can use just the 12-week function if your funding only allows for 12-week follow up, but the other time periods are available especially for follow up with multi-barriered clients who may need longer to acquire work.

A13. Returning to the splash page
To go from the Agency site to the Client site, click on “Employment Readiness Scale” in the upper black bar – you will return to the opening “splash” page. If you click on “logout”, you will go to the opening page of the site you are currently on (e.g., Agency site).
Getting Started with Clients

A14. Which clients take the ERS – the importance of complete coverage for reports

One of the main benefits of the ERS for your agency is the roll-up reports that can be generated from the agency’s client data. These reports are most useful if all of your clients, or all clients in a particular program, have taken the ERS. We encourage you to have all clients take the ERS, including those with whom you are already working, so that you have a baseline of data on all of them.

Note: If you do not have all clients (or all clients in a particular program) take the ERS, you will not be able to generate valid roll-up reports on the Agency site.

A15. When to administer the ERS

Each client can take the ERS up to three times (or six times, if your license has been upgraded). Decisions as to when clients will take the ERS are normally made by the ERS Lead (or implementation team) prior to staff training. We generally recommend the following timing:

#1 – Immediately as part of your client intake process; then use the Feedback Report to plan what interventions the client needs (and put that in the client’s Action Plan).
#2 – Once the Action Plan is completed (to confirm “job ready” status).
#3 – After any additional interventions that are needed (i.e., if the client was not employment ready on #2).

Alternately, clients may be asked to take the ERS for the second time after a major intervention and then a third time when you think they are “job ready.”

Your ERS Lead will inform you of plans as to when the initial and subsequent takes of the ERS are to occur in your agency. Consistency with these guidelines will help maximize the benefit to individual clients as well as the value of the group reports generated.

A16. Having a client take the ERS

The ERS typically takes a client 15-20 minutes to complete. The reading comprehension level is set at seventh grade. If you have a client with reading comprehension problems or a learning disability that makes reading comprehension difficult, you may wish to read the questions to the client. As long as the client does the answering (clicks on the answer, unless there is a physical disability that interferes), the results will be valid. Please note that, to help in getting valid results on re-takes, the questions rotate randomly.

Appendix A summarizes for you the initial steps for having a client take the ERS:

a) Set up the client’s User Name and Password.
b) Orient the client to the ERS.
c) Stay with the client until they have passed at least the following screens:
   - The Welcome screen.
- The screen where they pick an age group and answer demographic group questions.
- The Instructions screen.
- The first question they answer.

If you do not stay with the client, you may want to check back with the client in about 10 minutes when they would have started Part B of the ERS.

You will notice on the Instructions screen that there are two parts to the ERS: Part A measures the five employability dimensions and the four supports (we will review these when we come to the Feedback Report), and Part B measures the 30 most common challenges. Part B is structured as a stress scale – i.e., it measures the amount of stress the person has been under in the past six months – and the various challenges are weighted differently depending on how much stress they typically generate.

For those of you who want clients to talk with a staff member instead of viewing their feedback report themselves, there is a “pause” page after the last question which suggests that the client contact a staff member to review their feedback report. If you want the client to self-serve, simply ask them to click on the hyperlinked “Feedback Report” and it will take them to their results.

Some agencies find it most efficient to train a front office staff person to set up client access codes and get clients started on the ERS. That way the ERS Feedback Report and Summary are available to the counselor from the beginning of their first session with a client. This also means that counselors can benefit from the ERS without doing any data entry. In other contexts, it makes sense for those working most closely with clients to be the ones to set up client codes and get clients started. The ERS Lead for your office will let you know of procedures that are applicable in your setting.

A17. Orienting clients to the ERS
We spent three years field testing the ERS with 758 clients, and so we have confidence that the ERS measures the factors it is designed to measure in a reliable and valid manner (see “ERS Research Results” for details). However, it is a self-assessment and so the data are useful only if clients are reasonably honest. It is very important that you put clients at ease about responding truthfully so that they don’t either try to impress you (and score too high) or try to look bad in order to qualify for assistance (and score too low). There are two examples of what you could say to clients in Appendix B.

NOTE: You need to be sure that there is enough temporary memory available for the client to take the scale (see Appendix A).

Appendix F has the initial screen text for your review.

A18. Avoiding website access problems
In order to protect client privacy, the Server does not save a client’s ERS answers. Instead, they are stored in temporary memory and erased either when the ERS is
completed (and the factor totals have been computed) or when the connection to the Server is lost. It is important that you make sure that your client will be able to sustain a connection. If they lose the connection, they will have to start again from the beginning – which they are likely to find frustrating. The most common reason for losing contact with the Server is running out of RAM (temporary memory). Therefore, we strongly recommend that the computer is rebooted before the client starts the ERS session. See Appendix G for more detailed instructions.

The program is housed on a Server in downtown Vancouver, British Columbia, and is monitored 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to make sure that it is running properly. It is possible, though very unlikely, that the website could be functioning properly but its domain name is not resolving properly. If you get a “page not found” message, please try again using the IP address on the front page of the training notes.

See Appendix G for more information about ensuring a stable connection.

**Working with the Feedback Report**

**A19. The Structure of the Feedback Report**

Once a client finishes the ERS, the program will stop at a page that will allow the client to either talk to a staff member or click on the hyperlinked “Feedback Report” to go directly to their Feedback Report.

The Feedback Report is organized in two main sections: Goal #1, and Goals #2 and #3. The green bar in each graph represents the first ERS and the yellow bar in each graph shows the latest ERS. The factors in the employment readiness model are summarized in Appendix E.

Goal #1: The first graph shows how well clients have mastered the skills that they need to find and keep a job. If the bar extends past the grey line to the right, they are self-sufficient – i.e., they don’t need any more training or assistance in that area. The first four factors come from Human Resources Development Canada’s original work and have been supported by international research. The fifth factor, Ongoing Career Management, has been added because few people now stay in the same job all their life. Below the graph is an explanation of each of the employability dimensions so that clients can understand why they are important. Their specific feedback is in the boxes.

Goals #2 and #3: Just having employability skills is not enough. Each of us faces challenges that could keep us from succeeding. The four supports, displayed in the second graph, measure factors that help a person manage or deal with challenges. If a person is high on challenges, it is very important to also be high on all four supports. If a person is low on challenges, being high on supports is still important because challenges may emerge in the future.
Just below the second graph you can see how the client scored on each type of challenge (Note: This is the only place where this breakdown is displayed). If they are high on personal, environmental and/or systemic challenges, be sure to talk with them about any areas where they would like some help. The second graph shows how well they can handle the challenges that they face.

A20. Interpreting the Feedback Report with a client
Whenever you review a Feedback Report with a client, you need to think of what the “good news angle” is. For example, even if they are not self-sufficient on any dimension, the good news is that you can help them succeed and not fail.

It is often helpful to view the Feedback Report from the bottom up, starting with their challenges (the context in which they are functioning), then the strengths they have to deal with those challenges so that they don’t interfere with success at work, and finally the employability dimensions. Reviewing the Feedback Report with your client is the easiest way to start the action planning process.

Appendix C provides you with a four-step process for interpreting the Feedback Report with a client, always emphasizing what is important to employers:

a. Overall sense of accuracy
   Does the pattern make sense?

b. Briefly exploring challenges
   If the client scores “high”, you can determine what referrals might be needed.

c. Identifying strengths
   See the sequence of factors and possible comments in Appendix C. You’ll want to select a couple to emphasize from the top of the list. If the client scores high on Skills Enhancement but low on Career Decision-Making, do not consider Skills Enhancement a strength as it won’t be clear what skills are relevant until a career choice has been made.

d. Forming an action plan
   Focus only on the areas that you want the client to address before seeing them again. You can set the stage for retaking the ERS by saying something like, “Let’s have you take the Workability workshop and then come back and retake the ERS to see how you are doing.”

Also in Appendix C are six sample client Summaries to give you examples of how to interpret the Feedback Report. “Explaining the Feedback Report” (under Helping Clients Get Employment Ready) can also be helpful.

A21. Debriefing the Feedback Report in a group
If you administer the ERS to a group of clients at the same time, you may find it helpful to complete part of the feedback report debrief in a group setting. After discussing the structure of the feedback report and defining terms used, you could then conduct individual sessions to discuss confidential issues and to build action plans. See Appendix D for a script to use with the group.
A22. Using the “printable version” buttons only
Under your Agency License, you have two important responsibilities:
   a) A commitment to protect client confidentiality.
   b) A commitment to protect the intellectual property of the website by using only
      the “printable version” buttons and not doing screen printing.

Please help make sure that neither staff nor clients “print screen” parts of the website
instead of using the “printable version” buttons. For example, there is a “printable
version” orange button near the top of the screen that you or the client can use to print off
the Feedback Report.

A23. Viewing the ERS Summary
For a snapshot of the client’s employment readiness, click on Action Plan and scroll
down to the midpoint of the screen. You will find a “printable version” button for the
Summary. This Summary gives you, the staff person, a quick overview of the areas in
which the client needs assistance, without all of the text in the Feedback Report.

A24. The link between Feedback Report and Action Plan
When you click on “Action Plan” on the purple left-hand bar, areas needing work will
show up on the purple bar of the Action Plan so you and the client don’t have to
remember them.

A25. Creating the ERS Action Plan
You access the ERS Action Plan (to add items or update them) by clicking on the factor
that you want to address in the left-hand menu bar (under “Action Plan Section”) and
then scrolling down past the printable version button. You have two choices: Select an
option from the drop-down list, or enter your own. Be sure to enter a completion date.

Once you are finished, scroll back up to where you can print the Action Plan. You can
select a sorting format to control how the items in the Action Plan are ordered – by factor,
target completion date, or whether or not the action has been completed. Then click on
the “printable version” button and the complete Action Plan will appear. You can then
print off a hardcopy.

This Action Plan feature is intended to give the client a step-by-step map of what they
need to do. It is structured to be informal – i.e., to include both formal programs and
informal activities.

A26. Keeping the Action Plan updated
If you or the client tick “done” when an Action Plan item is completed, the Action Plan
can help clients track what they have accomplished and what they still have to do. You
can do this by clicking on the factor in the left-hand menu under Action Plan Section(s),
finding the item that has been completed, clicking on “edit” next to that item, clicking on
“yes” under “Done?”, and then saving. If an item has become irrelevant, you can also delete it.

Note: The Action Plan must be updated before retaking the ERS; otherwise, if the client tests “self-sufficient” on a factor, they will not be able to edit actions relating to that factor.

A27. Action Plan not linked to any of the agency reports
The Action Plan is not linked to any of the Agency site reports. Only the Local Program coding and the Client Coding on the Agency site is linked to the Change and Interventions reports.
Appendix A
Getting Clients Started on the ERS

   a) Enter your Agency User Name and Password.
   b) Click on “Add new client”.
   c) Enter the client’s First Name and Last Name (you can always change these later).
   d) Create a Client User Name, using your Client User Code as the first few letters.
   e) Create a Client Password. This can be the same for all clients if you wish but should
      be different from your administrative passwords.
   f) Save.
   g) Click on “Employment Readiness Scale” (black banner) to get to the splash page.

2. With your client, explain that you would like to use the ERS to identify what will be most
   helpful to them in being successful in finding and keeping a job. Emphasize the following:
   a) All answers are confidential – the computer does not save individual answers.
   b) It is important to be honest so that the feedback report is helpful.

3. When your client is ready to take the ERS:
   a) Click on “Client” on the splash page.
   b) Enter the Client User Name and Client Password that you created.
   c) Sit with your client for the initial page (age, demographics), the instructions, and the
      first question to make sure they are comfortable with the tool.

4. Please direct your client as to what they should do when they finish the last question. The
   program will suggest that they contact a staff member or, by clicking on the hyperlinked
   Feedback Report, the client will go directly to the Feedback Report:
   a) Click on the “printable version” orange button to print off the Feedback Report for
      your client and yourself.
   b) Review the Feedback Report with them, starting with the challenges.

5. Once you have reviewed with your client the areas where they need assistance, use the
   Action Plan to spell out the steps they want to take.
   a) Click on Action Plan on the purple left-hand bar.
   b) Click on the factor (on the purple bar) that they want to improve.
   c) Either select an intervention from the drop-down menu or enter your own option.
   d) Put in the target completion date.
   e) Click on “Add”.
   f) Add as many steps as you wish, then click on the “Printable” orange button to print it.

6. If you forget the Client User Name and Password you created, enter the Agency site. On
   Client Assistance Functions, click on Search and then type in the last name. You will be able
   to see the User Name. If you need the password, click on the icon for Client Info.
Appendix B
Sample Client Orientation Scripts

Below are two client orientation scripts to use with clients prior to their taking the ERS. Both include the main points to be covered, but depending on the client and the time you have available, you may wish to use the shorter version over the longer version, or vice versa. Whichever you select, it is important to use these scripts as a template only, and use your own words as you help clients prepare to take the ERS.

Version A
We’d like you to take the Employment Readiness Scale so that both of us know what kind of help will be most useful to you so that you can succeed in finding and keeping a job.

In order for the results to be helpful, you need to be as honest as possible. Please give your first response to the question and don’t spend a lot of time on each question. Once you answer the last question, the program will give you a Feedback Report summarizing your results that we can review together.

Your answers are completely confidential – in fact, the computer does not even save your responses to individual questions, just your total factor scores. That way no one can see how you answered a particular question. But that also means that you have to complete the ERS in one session – it will take about 15-20 minutes.

Version B
(Your agency’s name here) has invested in your success in obtaining ongoing employment by making the Employment Readiness Scale available for all participants. The scale, or ERS, is an on-line assessment tool that will assist you in identifying what kind of supports and opportunities would be most useful in helping you to succeed in finding and keeping a job. In addition to helping you and your case manager to quickly identify the types of activities to include in your personal employment action plan, you will also be given opportunities to retake the ERS (insert details of when clients will retake the ERS). When you retake the ERS you will be able to measure the progress you have made and to make sure your action plan continues to include the opportunities most beneficial to you. The ERS will also help (Your agency’s name here) to plan and deliver the most effective employment programs.

In order for the results to be most useful for you and your case worker it is important that you be as honest as possible. Please give your first response to the question – don’t spend a lot of time thinking about each question. There are no right or wrong answers. This is not a test. The feedback report that is generated will indicate areas where you are self sufficient (e.g. you do not need a lot of support) and areas where you may need a bit of help. All of us have some things we are very good at doing for ourselves and others we need some assistance with. For example some people are very self-sufficient in the kitchen but may not be as self-sufficient in filling out their own income tax returns. You will have an opportunity to review your feedback report with your caseworker. (Insert the
details of when, where and with whom the client will receive a copy of the report and debrief with a case manager)

Your answers are completely confidential – in fact, the computer does not even save your responses to individual questions, just your total scores. This ensures no one can see or find out how you answered a particular question.

The ERS should take you about 15 to 20 minutes to complete, and because your answers are not stored on the computer you will need to complete the ERS in one session. The first section includes questions which you will answer with a five-point scale rating (from strongly disagree to strongly agree). The second section includes true or false questions and asks you to respond based on only the past six months. Remember it is best to not think too much on each question and just give the response that first comes to mind.

Do you have any questions regarding the ERS?
Appendix C
Interpreting the Client Feedback Report

In using the ERS Feedback Report with clients, it is important that you become comfortable integrating it into the sequence in which you usually talk with clients. If clients have a number of factors to address, we recommend that you focus only on the ones that they are to work on before you meet with them next, then set the expectation that they will come in and take the ERS again (if this is the case), and then you will see where they stand at that point.

Two things to keep in mind: First, generally clients are not interested at the outset in the longer term issue of Ongoing Career Management. So you can just give them a copy of the handout under that factor on “Helping Clients Get Employment Ready” on the website. Second, while some interventions do help strengthen Work History, we generally deal with Work History at the time that clients are looking for work in terms of coaching them on the type of work environment to look for.

Here is a quick four-step process for interpreting the Feedback Report with the client:

1. **Overall:** Take a quick look at how the client scored overall. In most instances, the ERS will be a reasonably accurate picture of their situation. But a few clients do believe it is important to impress others with how well they are doing and so they will score unusually high. So look for patterns like their being “ready” on all the factors even though they haven’t worked in years. If the ERS does seem unusually high, test the results with the client – “does this seem like a good picture of where you are?” or “hmmm, it looks like you’re completely ready to be working and that we really can’t help you.” If you can get their agreement that they were not realistic, then explain that employers don’t trust applicants who seem too perfect and are unwilling to admit where they might need some supervisory help. And then ask them to do the ERS again, being more realistic.

2. **Challenges:** Take a quick look at the Challenges at the bottom of the report. All of your clients will have some challenges. If they scored “high” on a type of challenge, ask them if there is anything in particular that they are concerned about and address that before going on with the rest of the Feedback Report. If clients are High on Personal Challenges, for example, they might have addiction issues that will need to be addressed up front. If they are High on Environmental Challenges, strengthening their support network will be particularly important.

3. **Strengths:** Always start with the “good news story,” *emphasizing what is important to an employer* – “and employers are looking for that” or “and that matters to an employer.” Keep in mind that you don’t need to mention every factor where they are high. Here are some examples of phrases you could use, depending on the factor(s) you choose to focus on:
   a. Self-efficacy:
This shows that you feel confident in your ability to succeed, which matters to employers.

b. Outcome expectancy
   This shows that you have a positive attitude and are willing to take responsibility, which matters to employers.

c. Social supports:
   This shows that you are willing to reach out to others for help and know where to turn, and employers want to feel confident that you can handle your personal life without missing work.

d. Career decision-making:
   This shows that you have a strong sense of career direction, and employers like that sense of focus.

e. Skills enhancement:
   This shows that you feel you have the skills you need, which is important to employers.

f. Job maintenance:
   This shows that you can work well with others, which matters to employers.

g. Work history:
   This shows that you have been successful at work in the past

h. Ongoing career management:
   This shows that you understand how to develop your career path and continue to be successful.

4. **Forming an Action Plan:** Then explain which areas you will be focusing on with them in forming an action plan and why, and set the expectation that they will retake the ERS once they have finished the activities you have recommended. If there is an appropriate intervention to help the client, make the referral. Or you can work with the client yourself using the guidelines in “Explaining the ERS Feedback Report.”

Below are examples of some of the Summaries (the short version for staff of the Feedback Report) you might see, with suggestions of how to talk about them with clients. Note that the focus is on the Supports and the Employability Dimensions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Client A</th>
<th>OK</th>
<th>OK</th>
<th>OK</th>
<th>OK</th>
<th>OK</th>
<th>Action Plan</th>
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<th>OK</th>
<th>OK</th>
<th>OK</th>
<th>OK</th>
<th>Action Plan</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Career decision-making</td>
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<td>Skills enhancement</td>
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<td>Job search</td>
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<td>Job maintenance</td>
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<td>Ongoing career mgmt</td>
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<td>Self-efficacy</td>
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<td>Outcome expectancy</td>
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<td>Work history</td>
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</table>

This is excellent. You clearly have a strong work ethic and a clear direction for your work life, as well as the skills and experience you need – and employers are looking for this.

As you look for work, let’s think together about ways to strengthen your support network. All of us run into difficulty from time to time, and we need to know where to turn for help. What are your main supports right now?...? And here is a handout on Ongoing Career Management to help...
You think ahead for work life success.

### Client B

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Career decision-making</th>
<th>Skills enhancement</th>
<th>Job search</th>
<th>Job maintenance</th>
<th>Ongoing career mgmt</th>
<th>Self-efficacy</th>
<th>Outcome expectancy</th>
<th>Social supports</th>
<th>Work history</th>
<th>Action Plan</th>
<th>OK Action Plan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

This is excellent. It shows that you already have a strong work ethic and a clear direction for your work life, as well as the skills needed – and employers are looking for this.

We can certainly work together on your Job Search skills, but first let’s talk about what will help you feel more confident as you go out looking for work. What would you say are some of your recent successes? ... And how could you have that same sense of success in your work life?

### Client C

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Career decision-making</th>
<th>Skills enhancement</th>
<th>Job search</th>
<th>Job maintenance</th>
<th>Ongoing career mgmt</th>
<th>Self-efficacy</th>
<th>Outcome expectancy</th>
<th>Social supports</th>
<th>Work history</th>
<th>Action Plan</th>
<th>OK Action Plan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

This is excellent. It shows that you have a good sense of direction for your work life, as well as the skills needed, and are able to work well with others – which are all things that employers are looking for.

We can certainly work together on your Job Search skills, but first let’s talk about how you can best manage the challenges that come up for all of us. What would be a good example of when you took responsibility to change a difficult situation ... And how can you be taking responsibility in your own job search? ...

As you begin looking for work, I’d like to give you some heads up. All of us need a network to fall back on and one of the ways we learn about possible jobs is through networking. So I’d like you to see how broad a network you can develop ... Also, you’ll want to evaluate job possibilities in terms of the amount of initial orientation and support you will get so that you can succeed.

### Client D

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Career decision-making</th>
<th>Skills enhancement</th>
<th>Job search</th>
<th>Job maintenance</th>
<th>Ongoing career mgmt</th>
<th>Self-efficacy</th>
<th>Outcome expectancy</th>
<th>Action Plan</th>
<th>OK Action Plan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

This is excellent. You clearly have a strong sense of work ethic and your own ability to be effective – which employers are looking for.

Before we look at any other issues, I’d like to help you get a stronger sense of what kind of work you want to do. We have a Career Exploration workshop ... When you finish that,
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social supports</th>
<th>Action Plan</th>
<th>I’ll have you come back and take the ERS again and we’ll see where you are at.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Work history</td>
<td>Action Plan</td>
<td>[Keep in mind that, until the client knows what they want to do, you don’t actually know if they have the skills to do it.]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Client E**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Career decision-making</th>
<th>Action Plan</th>
<th>OK</th>
<th>Action Plan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Skills enhancement</td>
<td>Action Plan</td>
<td>Action Plan</td>
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<tr>
<td>Job search</td>
<td>Action Plan</td>
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<td>Job maintenance</td>
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<td>Ongoing career mgmt</td>
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<td>Self-efficacy</td>
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<td>Outcome expectancy</td>
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<td>Social supports</td>
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<tr>
<td>Work history</td>
<td>Action Plan</td>
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</table>

I know this may look overwhelming, but the good news is that you are here ... we are exactly the right people to help you become successful. And your ERS shows that you have a positive attitude and are willing to take responsibility – which is something that employers are looking for.

In order to have success at work, it is critical that you have a strong sense of your own ability to be effective and to work well with others. So I like to begin by having you take our Life Skills ... Then, when you finish that, we’ll have you take the ERS again and go from there. Sound like a plan?

**Client F**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Career decision-making</th>
<th>Action Plan</th>
<th>Action Plan</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Skills enhancement</td>
<td>Action Plan</td>
<td>Action Plan</td>
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<tr>
<td>Job search</td>
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<td>Job maintenance</td>
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<td>Ongoing career mgmt</td>
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<td>Self-efficacy</td>
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<td>Outcome expectancy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Social supports</td>
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<tr>
<td>Work history</td>
<td>Action Plan</td>
<td>Action Plan</td>
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</table>

I know this may look overwhelming, but the good news is that you are here ... we are exactly the right people to help you become successful.

In order to have success at work, it is critical that you have a strong sense of your own ability to be effective and take charge of your work life. So I like to begin by having you take our Life Skills ... Then, when you finish that, we’ll have you take the ERS again and go from there. Sound like a plan?
Appendix D
Group ERS Debrief Script

Context: Make sure that everyone has a copy of their Feedback report. If you are debriefing a group of 10 or more, you can run the Starting From report (selecting clients for that date or program) so that you have a good sense of where the group is high or low and you can use that information to modify how you debrief the group.

[If debriefing with a young high school audience, start with something like the following: “We’re going to talk together about some issues that affect everyone in their work life. Some of these issues may not seem relevant to you right now, but paying attention to them can help you be successful in part-time or summer jobs and pave the way for you to do really well when you get out of high school, whether you go on to college or go right to work.”]

Sample Text for the Debrief:
The ERS Feedback report is intended to help you understand what will increase your chances of being effective in your work life. Of course, the scores you receive are based on how you see yourself and how honestly you responded. Each of the factors that it measures is explained in the Feedback Report, and I’ll show you that as we go along.

It’s actually easiest to start at the bottom of the report where it talks about the challenges that you face in your life. These challenges can cause stress and make it difficult for you to succeed at work.

In this report, we are concerned with three types of challenges, and they are defined for you at the very bottom of the report. You will see your own stress level score on those three types of challenges below the second graph and its explanation. Can everyone see the section that says Personal … Environmental … Systemic? [show them if they are having trouble finding the place]

Personal challenges are ones that are under your own control – like needing more education or needing to take care of health problems. If you scored Low here, then this is not an area that you need to focus on for now. If you scored High, then you will want to think about what personal issues could get in your way of being successful at work and talk with one of our counsellors about them.

Environmental challenges are responsibilities that you have that could interfere with your success at work if you are not managing them well or resources that you need but don’t yet have. For example, you may have children or aging parents for whom you are responsible. What if they get sick? What would you do? If you scored Low here, again this is not an area of concern at this time. But if you scored High, then please do talk with one of us about how best to manage these responsibilities.

Systemic challenges are issues that a whole community needs to address – like a poor transportation system or the lack of affordable housing near where you want to work or no recognition for your educational credentials. Your responsibility is to strategize about how to
succeed despite these difficulties. If you scored High here, again please talk with one of us about what you can do.

Any questions so far?

What we have found is that you can be very successful in your work life even if you have a high level of challenges as long as you have good personal supports to help you cope with those challenges. So let’s look next at these four personal support factors. They are defined near the bottom of your report [show where], and your scores are shown in that graph under Goals #2 and 3 – can you see it? [show them if they are having trouble]

In this graph, the grey vertical line represents where you go from scoring Low to scoring High. If your green bar is to the left of that grey vertical line, you have some work to do to become ready in this area. If your green bar is to the right of that grey vertical line, then that factor is a source of strength for you.

Let’s look first at Self-Efficacy. This represents your belief in your ability to perform well (a component of self-esteem). In other words, it reflects how well you feel you can manage your life overall. If it is Low (to the left of that line), then you probably don’t always feel that good about yourself and your ability to cope or succeed. It’s best to build up your belief in yourself first so that you find it easier to learn to perform well at work. We can help you with that, if you wish.

Outcome Expectancy, the next one, represents whether or not you feel you can succeed at whatever you try. If reflects your level of optimism or hopefulness about your future. It’s like whether you see the glass as half full or half empty. If it is Low, you probably have doubts about succeeding and may approach new options with a “yes, but...” attitude. This can interfere with your coping well with work-related decisions and, again, we can help you look at why you question the likelihood of success and plan ways to build that belief or hope.

Social Supports refers to whether or not you know where to turn for help. For example, if someone depending on you was sick, do you have an alternative other than missing work that day? If you are Low in this area, we can help you strengthen your network of support.

Work History represents your past experience with work, whether paid or volunteer. If you are Low here, you may not have confidence that you can succeed in a new work context. We will want to help you gain positive work experience (for example, making sure that you get good supervisory support in your next work setting).

Any questions?

Now let’s turn to the top graph in the report which represents the employability factors. Each of these is explained under the graph, and then you have a specific feedback message in a box for each one – can you see that?
Career Decision-Making refers to whether or not you know what you want to do in your work life – at least for the next several years. If you are Low here and don’t have a clear focus for your work search, it can make it difficult to find and keep a job. So we would want to help you clarify what is important to you.

Skills Enhancement refers to whether or not you have the skills you need for the work that you want to do. If you are Low on Career Decision-Making but high here, then you may not have a good sense yet of what skills you’ll need once you decide on a career direction. So we would want to help you first with career direction and then with assessing whether or not you need more training before you learn work search skills and go out on interviews.

Job Search refers to your ability to get a job – i.e., do you know how to put together a good resume, arrange for interviews, and be successful in interviews? Don’t be surprised if you are Low here because help with job search skills is probably at least part of why you are here.

Job Maintenance refers to your ability to keep a job once you get it. If you are Low here, we will want to work with you on the skills needed to succeed at work and work well with colleagues. After all, getting a job is just the beginning. It’s keeping a job that takes most of the work and where you find most of the rewards!

Ongoing Career Management refers to your ability to manage your work life in terms of getting promotions or changing jobs on your own. Again, don’t be surprised if you are Low here. We have a handout that can help you think through how to do this well.

Any questions?

So this feedback report summarizes for you the key factors in being ready to succeed at work and let’s you know which factors you will want to focus on improving to help your chances of success. If you were “Low” or “Not Self-Sufficient” on all of the supports and employability factors, please don’t worry. That just means that it is really good that you have come in to work with us so that you can become successful. Our staff are experts at helping people identify steps that are most helpful in becoming fully ready for work.

If you have specific questions, we would be pleased to talk with you individually.

[If you are having clients use the ERS Action Plan, then explain that process before closing.]
Appendix E

Employment Readiness Scale™
Definitions and Factors

Employment readiness is defined as being able, with little or no outside help, to find, acquire and keep an appropriate job as well as to be able to manage transitions to new jobs as needed.

The Employment Readiness Scale™ model is based on the assumption that becoming employment ready means achieving three interrelated goals:

**Goal #1 - Self-sufficiency in five employability dimensions:**
- Career decision-making, or clients knowing what type of work suits them
- Skills enhancement, or clients having the skills for the work they want
- Job search, or having the skills to find work
- Job maintenance, or having the skills to keep work once found
- Ongoing career management, or being able to manage career changes

**Goal #2 - Understanding the particular stresses or challenges one faces:**
- Personal challenges, which clients can address themselves
- Environmental challenges, which clients can manage with help
- Systemic challenges, which have to be addressed on a community basis

**Goal #3 - Coping effectively with the stresses or challenges one faces, drawing on four sources of strength:**
- Self-efficacy, or a sense of being able to perform well
- Outcome expectancy, or whether or not a client expects to succeed
- Social supports, or the client’s network and ability to get help
- Work history, or the client’s previous work success

Research shows that just being self-sufficient in the five employability dimensions is not enough. Most clients face a number of barriers or challenges that act as stressors and can be incapacitating if not managed well. Clients facing significant challenges without assistance in handling them are likely to fail at work even if they are successful in getting a job. So all three parts of the employment readiness model are equally important.

**Reliability and Validity**
The Employment Readiness Scale™ was developed based on extensive international research into the factors affecting employment readiness. The ERS has been field tested with a total of 758 clients who were on social assistance or employment insurance. Statistical analyses have demonstrated that the factors are valid, that the items can reliably measure client changes over time, and that 12-week employment outcomes can be predicted accurately four out of five times.
Appendix F
ERS Selected Client Site Text

Text from the initial screen:
Welcome to the Employment Readiness Scale™ (ERS)! This tool has been designed to assess people's strengths and challenges in relation to becoming successfully employed, identify the types of employment assistance that would be most helpful, measure changes as a result of interventions, and predict employment outcomes.

Privacy Guarantee:
Once you complete the ERS and save your answers, we will save and retain in our database your total scores on each of the scale factors, but not your responses to individual items. You will receive an analysis of your results by scale factor. A copy of this analysis will also be provided to your agency.

Text from the welcome screen on the secure site:
Success in finding and keeping work depends on many different things, and sometimes our background or situation keeps us from finding work easily. Please answer the items on the ERS as honestly as possible, selecting the option that is most true for you. Your answers will be used to refer you to programs and services that can help you prepare for and find work.

Once you have completed the ERS, you can click on "Feedback Report" to get a summary of your employment readiness status and then on "Action Plan" to help you plan your next steps.
Appendix G
Making Sure Your Client Can Access the ERS Website

Note: Because the ERS protects clients’ privacy by not saving the actual answers to individual questions, the program must have continuous access to the ERS Server while the ERS is being taken. Otherwise, the client has to start over again.

1. You will have adequate system resources if your system is a Pentium II or faster and has:
   a) At least Windows 95, ideally Windows 98 or higher.
   b) At least 64 MB RAM, ideally 128 MB RAM
   c) A faster Internet connection than dial up
   d) Internet Explorer 5 or higher; Netscape 4.79 or higher

2. While your client is taking the ERS:
   a) If the screen freezes, try holding down “Shift” and click on “Refresh” (on your browser’s toolbar).
   b) If the system is slow to go to the next item, try clicking “Stop” (on your browser’s toolbar) and then click “next” to move to the next item.
   c) Make sure that the client moves through the ERS in one session, without stopping for coffee or to chat, or else the connection to the Server will be lost. (It “times out” after 30 minutes if the system is not being actively used.)

3. If your access to the ERS website is slow in general, check how you are connecting to the Internet. If you are connecting through a LAN and other staff or clients are using the Internet as well, this may be slowing your access down.

4. If you cannot access the ERS website at all, check whether your computer is connecting correctly to the Internet: Test this by opening another browser window and trying to connect with www.microsoft.com. If you cannot get that site or it comes up very slowly, then there is a problem with your general Internet connection. Very occasionally, there may be a problem with the ERS’s DNS resolution, in which case you can use the site’s IP address: http://64.254.154.15

Please also check your default settings for Internet access to make sure that your browser continually “consults” the actual Server rather than simply bringing up cached pages. For Internet Explorer, this can be done by opening your browser and clicking on “Tools” on the top bar and then “Internet Options.” On the “General” tab, click on “Settings” and then for “Check for newer versions of stored pages,” click on “Every visit to the page.”

The only parts of the connection process that we can control are:
   a) Whether or not the Server with the ERS application is connected to the Internet.
   b) Whether or not the Server is up and running.
   c) Whether or not the ERS application is open and running.
To ensure peak performance, the Server and the ERS are monitored 24x7. If you do experience problems, please e-mail the message that comes up (e.g., “Page cannot display”) and the browser you are using (e.g., Internet Explorer 5, Netscape) to ERSinfo@EmploymentReadiness.com.