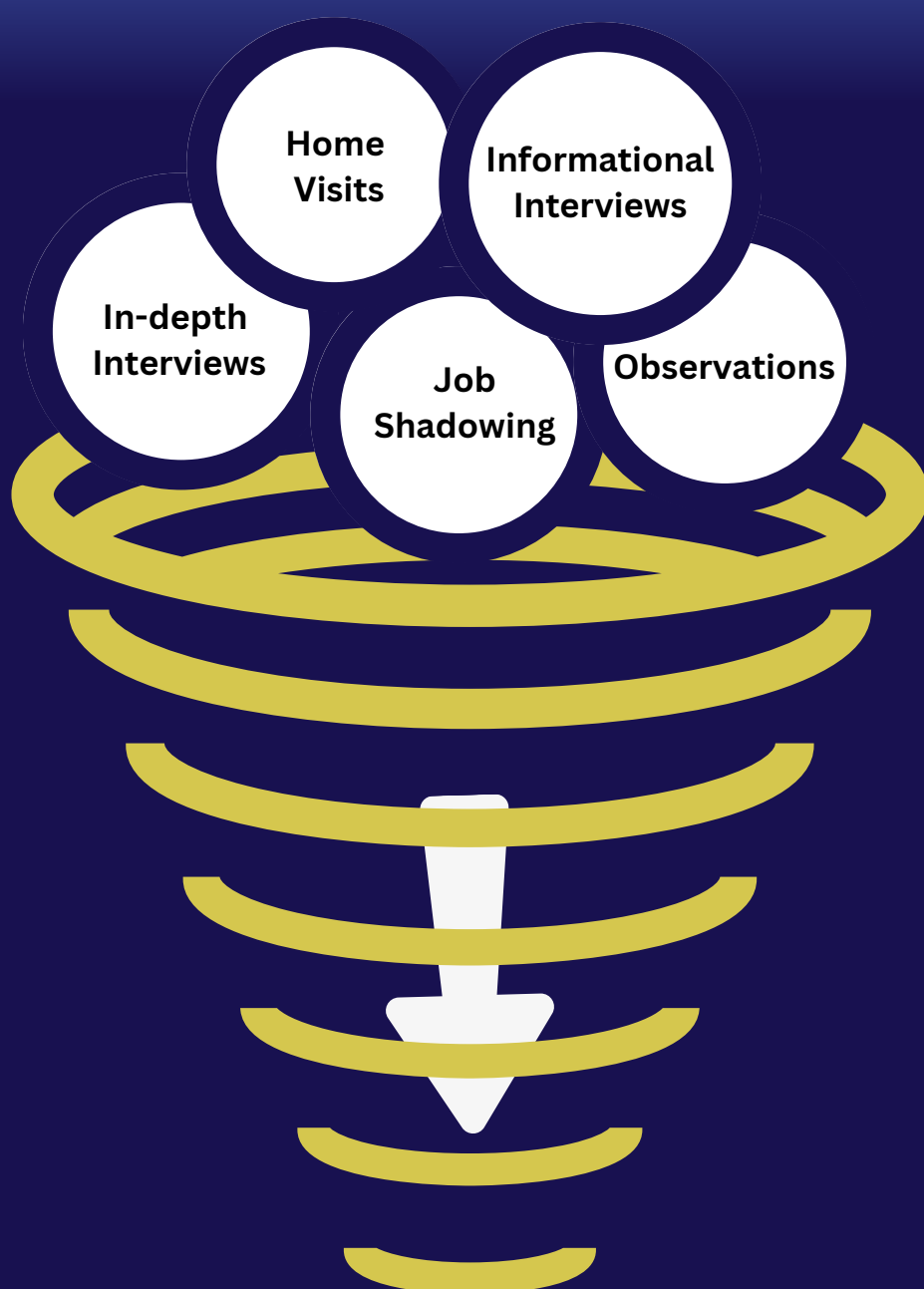


## **Customized Employment at a Glance**

Discovery may be visualized as a funnel. The employment specialist gathers information with the job seeker. The process begins by casting a “wide search net” to capture information at the top of the funnel and then gradually narrowing the search as vocational themes emerge.



### **Vocational Themes**

Discovery involves gathering information through direct observation, joining the job seeker in familiar and unfamiliar settings, conducting in-depth interviews and focus groups, and reviewing relevant documents and materials. Discovery uses these tools and other strategies to identify an individual’s strengths, interests, and preferences as well as support needs in order to assist the job seeker in gaining and maintaining employment.

Discovery is a descriptive process and does not include administering standardized tests or interest inventories. The purpose is to learn about the job seeker’s skills and preferences. This will lead to the identification of vocational themes. Discovery is capacity-based and does not focus on the job seeker’s disabilities and skill deficits. Discovery is the foundation of customized employment and is one of the elements that differentiate it from other employment services. It is a fluid process and is a necessary step before job negotiation.

# Core Values of Customized Employment



- Services are directed by the individual with a disability.
- Focus is placed on the individual's abilities and aspirations.
- Emphasis is placed on supports rather than the person's disabilities.
- Planning is individualized for the person.
- The outcomes are community participation/ competitive integrated employment.

## Customized Employment Practices



- Physically meet at a location of the individual's choice.
- Build rapport and get to know the individual.
- Mindfully listen to the person.
- Identify the individual's interests, skills, and abilities.
- Conduct in-depth interviews with family and friends concerning the person's interests, skills, and abilities.
- Observe the person in daily activities in a number of different community settings.
- Arrange for the job seeker to observe at local businesses that potentially match their job interests, skills, and abilities.
- Conduct informational interviews with employers at local businesses that are representative of the job seeker's interests, skills, and abilities.
- Observe the job seeker engaging in job related tasks.
- Assist the job seeker in identifying work experiences to refine and identify job interests, skills, and abilities.
- Collaborate with the job seeker, family, and friends in confirming the job seeker's job interests, skills and abilities.
- Negotiate a customized job description.

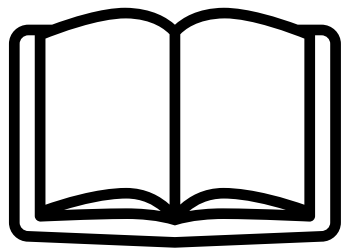


# Core Practices of Customized Employment

A number of practices have been identified as important to providing customized employment services. There is no specific sequence to completing these core practices, although there may be a logical order in assisting an individual in finding employment. For instance, meeting with the person is a logical first step to providing services as is finding out about the person's interests and skills. Some of these core practices occur throughout providing customized employment services such as mindfully listening to the person and building rapport. In addition, some of the practices may occur simultaneously such as observing a person in daily activities and conducting in-depth interviews with family and friends concerning the person's interests, skills, and preferences. Discovery is "individualized" and varies for each job seeker.

The customized employment practices listed here make sense when considering the benefits of individually negotiating jobs for people with disabilities. Individuals who need customized employment services usually cannot perform all the job duties of existing job descriptions. This usually results in their being excluded from most competitive integrated jobs because they can't compete with people who do not have disabilities. When negotiating job descriptions, employers may be more aware of how individuals with disabilities bring value to their business. In addition, customized employment has the potential for minimizing competition with other job seekers, since the outcome is a negotiated job description for a specific job seeker with a disability.

## More Information



For more information, read the following article:

Inge, K. J., Graham, C. W., Brooks-Lane, N., Wehman, P., & Griffin, C. (2018). Defining customized employment as an evidence-based practice: The results of a focus group study. *Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation*, 48(2), 155-166.

<https://worksupport.com/documents/jvr928.pdf>