

# CRC Continuum

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## Serving the Needs of Individuals with Disabilities and Those Who Care for Them

Case Management

Advocacy

Diagnostic and  
Evaluation  
Services

Section 504 Plans

Guardianship Planning  
and Support

Continuum of Care Plan

Into the Future Plan

Special Needs Research

Disability Management

Cost of Care Assessment

Assessment of Home and  
Work Modifications

Care Provider  
Recommendations

Advocacy at Individualized  
Education Plan Meetings

Vocational Evaluations and  
Job Placement Assistance

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## Veterans to Get Help Through Comprehensive Rehabilitation Consultants, Inc.

Comprehensive Rehabilitation Consultants, Inc. (CRC) is pleased to announce its new contract to provide case management, vocational rehabilitation, and employment services to servicemen and women.

"It can be tough to transition into civilian life. It's even tougher to adjust after a serious injury, as some of these veterans have," says CRC's Executive Vice President, Patricia Evans, who made the announcement for the company.

CRC's Veterans Assistance Project Director Heidi Caplan Feder said, "We are looking forward to helping these soldiers who have given so much. We hope our involvement will provide them and their families with the tools to obtain good jobs as they enter and readjust to civilian life -- especially in these difficult times."

Ms. Feder points out that case management is a crucial component of



"Our employees participating in this contract underwent a stringent background check as well as comprehensive training," says Ms. Evans.

CRC's founder, Lawrence Forman, is pleased, "We're delighted that our depth of experience in helping people prepare for and get appropriate employment will be extended to our veterans. We are gratified to be part of this vital process." □

CRC's services. "Our Project case manager, Cyndi Kovacs, brings her years of experience to this effort."

Services are provided under a contract with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Services include: vocational rehabilitation, vocational / educational guidance counseling, case management, independent living, and strategies for veteran success in college.



From left: Project Director Heidi Caplan Feder, Case Manager Cyndi Kovacs, and Executive Vice President Patricia Evans

## Who's Who at CRC: Katrin Balaban, Case Manager and Client Needs Analyst

Katrin Balaban has worked as a client needs analyst and case manager at Comprehensive Rehabilitation Consultants, Inc. for 20 years. She's helped many parents of children with developmental disabilities and/or catastrophic injuries plan for their children's present and future medical, therapeutic, educational, support care and vocational needs.

Her passion, both personal and professional, centers on securing the best possible quality of life for children with special needs.

Katrin earned her undergraduate degree in Early Childhood Education from Brooklyn College, Brooklyn New York and received her master of education degree from McGill University, Montréal, Québec.

In addition to her three daughters and six grandchildren, Katrin Balaban has a nephew who has Down Syndrome.

"I continue to learn so much about strength, creativity, de-

termination, ingenuity and love from the many families that I've worked with over the years and from my nephew, Robert," says Katrin. □



Katrin Balaban and Robert Abraham

# Communicating with Your Doctor

By Ronnie B. Londner

## Getting Information From Your Doctor

Here are some suggestions for ways to learn more from your doctors:

### Ask

Sometimes we are hesitant to ask, and just hope that the doctor will impart information. Go in the office with a written list of questions, or bring a small recorder.

Write down or record the answers as they are given to you. Ask follow-up questions if the answers are unclear.

If your doctor recommends a treatment, procedure or test, you should find out:

- Why is the test needed?
- How will the test results change treatment? (If they won't, then why do it?)
- How is it carried out?
- What is the patient's financial responsibility?
- What are possible side effects?
- What other choices are there?
- What are the specific goals for the treatment?
- How will the response to treatment be followed or monitored?
- How effective and/or accurate is the treatment or diagnostic test?
- How risky is it?
- Is there an alternative?
- Who is going to do it?
- Where will it be done?
- How long is recovery expected to take?

## Read Medical Records and Letters

You should have copies of medical records, including discharge summaries for hospitalizations, the letters physicians dictate after an office visit, and reports of lab work and medical imaging. The information contained can often be useful.

But beware of believing everything you read. Inaccuracies can sometimes be found. For example, my son was described in one doctor's letter as *hypotonic* (loose muscle tone) when he was actually *hypertonic* (too tight or spastic muscle tone) and another letter listed his sex, age and skills incorrectly. You may wish to bring these errors to the attention of the doctors.



### Take Notes

Write down what the doctor tells you. Better yet, bring a friend or relative to do that, so you can focus on listening.

If you have vision or mobility limitations, other approaches may be needed to keep track of the information. For example, the instructions may be recorded on tape, or a handheld mp3 player or cell phone (use the voicenotes option if available).

## Getting Information To Your Doctor

### Be Prepared

Have a list of questions and concerns ready. Try to stick to the facts and avoid going into irrelevant details.

Be ready with the details of current medications, recent test results and medical history of the patient and family.

## Don't Downplay Problems

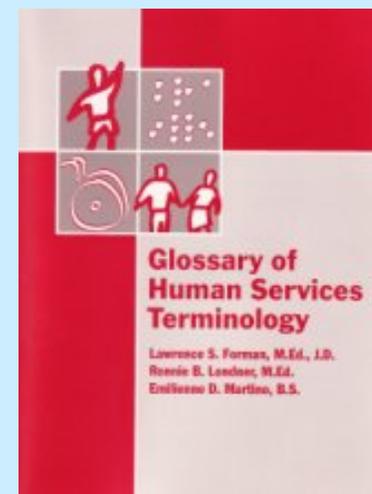
Don't minimize the symptoms or situation. Remarks like "it was just a little cough," or "my mother being up all night really isn't a problem," might lead your doctor to the same conclusion. If your real fear is that your sister's lung cancer started with a similar cough, let the doctor know. If Mom's being up all night is preventing you from getting any sleep, say so. A few reassuring words, an appropriate test or as-needed sleeping medication can put your mind at ease, or start the search for a solution. □

### Want to Know More About Terms Doctors and Others Use?

Health care professionals, HMOs and government agencies often use terms and abbreviations that are less than crystal clear.

CRC has published a book that will help: *Glossary of Human Services Terminology*. It covers pharmaceutical abbreviations, assistive technology, disability terms, education, government agencies, legal, medical and more. It is designed to be used by professionals, families and individuals.

To order a copy of this useful guide contact Elliott & Fitzpatrick, 800-843-4977 or [www.elliottfitzpatrick.com](http://www.elliottfitzpatrick.com) □



## The Voc Folk: What Do CRC's Vocational Evaluators Do?

By Heidi Caplan Feder, M.S., CRC, CCM, MSCC, QRP

My colleagues and I help people to identify their abilities and aptitudes, career interests and other characteristics that may be required for employment. We work with people who have a variety of disabilities - emotional, mental, and/or physical - to help them choose and initiate appropriate career goals.

We meet with people to learn more about their education, previous work experience, if any, and any limitations that may be barriers to employment. We review the individual's medical and other relevant records. We evaluate and determine appropriate testing and assessment tools, including aptitude, interest inventories, and academic achievement. Career counseling is a vital part of this process.

We match the individual's level of functioning with job requirements by gathering detailed information about physical and other requirements of a job. We might visit the job site to assess an individual's skills and abilities, or to meet with an employer to determine what it takes to work in a particular job.

We are knowledgeable in a wide range of careers, the job market, employment trends, training programs, and other services that might be needed to help a person prepare for employment.

Two of my colleagues are Gary Fannin and Christina Morrison.

Gary Fannin, M.S., CVE, CCM, QRP, has worked as a vocational specialist since 1972. His expertise includes vocational testing, labor market analysis, earning capacity analysis, transferable skills, job placement and job analysis.

Christina Morrison M.H.S., CRC, CVE, QRP, has been a practicing vocational consultant since 2000. Her specialties include Workers' Compensation, Social Security, labor market analysis, and divorce.

### What Do the Initials After Our Names Mean?

There are many degrees and certifications vocational evaluators can earn. All are important indicators of the education and professionalism of the recipient. Here's a definition of two: QRP and CVE.

QRP —

Qualified Rehabilitation Provider

A rehabilitation nurse, rehabilitation counselor, vocational evaluator, rehabilitation facility, or agency approved by the Florida Department of Education as qualified to provide reemployment assessments, medical care coordination, reemployment services, or vocational evaluations.



CVE —

Certified Vocational Evaluator

Vocational evaluators analyze the skills and interests of their clients and match these skills to appropriate employment, training or educational opportunities. A person who meets the educational and experiential qualifications can apply for certification through the Commission on Certification of Work Adjustment and Vocational Evaluation Specialists. A person who has successfully attained certification is designated as a Certified Vocational Evaluator (CVE).

### Services CRC Offers:

Here's a partial listing of our vocational services:

- Initial assessment, evaluation, testing
- Case management

- Rehabilitation services
- Education and vocational counseling
- Job coaching, placement
- Job site analysis
- Post-placement services
- Resume development; help completing applications
- Transferable skills analysis
- Functional capacity evaluation
- Self-employment business plan evaluation
- Neuropsychological evaluation
- Assistive technology evaluation and training
- Financial counseling

### What Do the Terms Mean?

Here is a brief definition of a few of the many terms related to vocational counseling:

#### Physical capacity assessment:

Provides the objective measurement of an individual's existing and potential functional work abilities. It evaluates the person's work performance against identified work-related criteria.

**Transfer skills analysis:** A set of tests to determine what positions a person may fill if they have no current job or cannot do their last job because of an injury. Transferable skills are determined by analyzing past accomplishments or experience.

**Job development:** The process of connecting referred individuals to jobs in the community that match their strengths, abilities, interests and support needs. Job developers help employers put in place reasonable accommodations, that promote success for employees with a disability.

**Placement follow-up:** Supportive assistance during the initial stage of a new job or program.

**Job modification:** A reasonable adjustment to the work environment or the manner in which a job is customarily performed, will allow a qualified person with a disability to perform the essential functions of that position, so long as it does not create an undue hardship or burden to the employer. □



## Checklist for When To Call the Doctor for a Person Who Cannot Communicate

When a person has difficulty communicating, it can be difficult to tell when he or she needs to see a doctor.

Examples include: bleeding, fever, gross blood in the stool, irregular pulse or respiration, high or low blood pressure, an open wound, and bruising.

People with difficulty communicating may not be able to articulate their symptoms – that is, to complain. But if you observe closely and know the person well, you can pick up clues to his or her inner state.

Here are some things to look for:

- Fever
- Decrease in appetite, or refusal of food
- Changes in mood or behavior such as agitation or lethargy
- Changes in appearance
- Changes in bladder or bowel habits
- Changes in breathing
- Pain not relieved by over-the-counter medications.

When in doubt, call the doctor.

## Difference between Signs and Symptoms

People with good communication skills can easily report their *symptoms*. A symptom is a departure from normal function or feeling noticed by a person, which could indicate the presence of disease or other abnormality. A symptom is subjective – that is, felt by the individual, and not readily measurable. Examples include: pain, malaise, loss of appetite, anxiety, weakness and nausea.

*Signs*, on the other hand, are measurable indicators that can be felt, heard, seen, or measured by a person other than the affected individual.

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