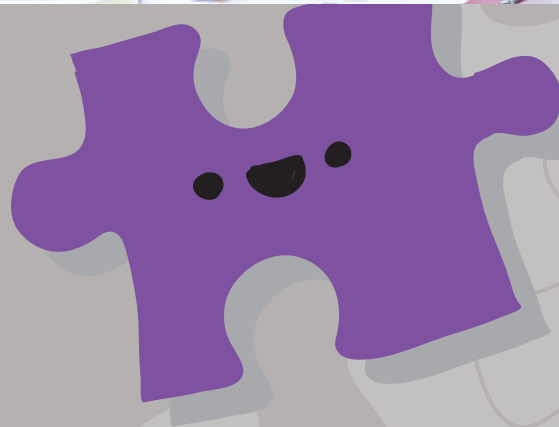


VALUES BASED RECRUITMENT TOOLKIT

VBRT

MODULE 5

USING A VALUES BASED APPROACH IN SIMULATION EXERCISES



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USING A VALUES BASED APPROACH IN SIMULATION EXERCISES

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INTRODUCTION

Simulation exercises have been used by some organisations in the disability sector in the past to evaluate applicants; however, their use has not been widespread. Sometimes known as 'day in the life' activities, these exercises closely replicate and evaluate an applicant's response to situations that a jobholder would be likely to encounter at work. Simulation exercises may be used for individuals or groups of applicants. There are a variety of exercises that can be used to assess different capabilities defined as a requirement for the role.

In values based recruitment (VBR), these exercises provide the opportunity to evaluate an applicant's demonstration of values through observable behaviours. NDS has, in consultation with the disability services sector, developed five values that demonstrate a commitment to person-centred practice. These are used throughout this Toolkit and defined in the "Module 1: Introduction and overview". Simulation exercises are considered a valuable component of VBR practice in providing information to build a better picture of an applicant's suitability for the role.

BENEFITS OF SIMULATION EXERCISES

The use of simulation exercises in VBR includes the following benefits.

Valid predictors of performance

Techniques such as interviews and psychological assessments rely on reports of behaviours from candidates. However, simulation exercises provide applicants with the opportunity to provide 'real life' demonstrations of these. Valid assessments can be made about whether applicants are likely to demonstrate these behaviours when actually performing in the role.¹

Objective and standardised evaluations

The design of exercises provides a standardised setting in which assessors are able to observe candidates' behaviour. Like other assessment techniques, evaluations are objective and use evaluation criteria that are standardised for all applicants. The ORCE technique described in Module 5 demonstrates this approach. This is a more objective approach than just noting casual observations of how they interact with others in less structured situations.

Fairness

Simulation exercises offer applicants who may perhaps perform poorly in other assessments (such as those lacking good interview skills) the opportunity to more directly demonstrate their suitability for the role. Exercises can be designed to not only assess technical skills of those with previous experience, but also relevant behaviours and values that may be transferable to the role. In this way, applicants who are new to the sector have an opportunity to display their strengths and suitability for the role.

Assessing values through simulation exercises

While simulation exercises can be used to assess a variety of applicant qualities, such as knowledge and skills, they are primarily used in VBR to assess values driven behaviours relevant to the sector, organisation and people they support. As noted, this Toolkit recommends using the values that show a commitment to person-centred practice. Table 1 presents two examples of the potential behaviours that can be used to assess these values. This table is based on a customised simulation exercise developed for this Toolkit using the scenario of a peer meeting (see below).

Table 1: Behavioural demonstration of values

VALUE	BEHAVIOUR
Respectfulness	Takes time to hear and consider what their peer says; doesn't interrupt.
Integrity	Encourages confidentiality by discussing it and any other ground rules at the beginning of the meeting.

Simulation exercises can be used individually, or they can be paired with other assessment techniques. To build a broader understanding of an applicant's potential performance, exercises can benefit from being complemented with activities that more directly assess an individual's internally-held values (such as interview questions and psychological assessments). In this way, interviews and psychological assessments provide applicants the opportunity to report their intentions of behaviour (values) and simulation exercises can be used to confirm the application of these. One way in which these assessment methods can be combined is through use of assessment centres (see "Module 6: Using a values based approach in assessment centres")

TYPES OF SIMULATION EXERCISES

Simulation exercises may use a variety of activities to re-enact the types of situations that people find themselves in at work. Commonly used exercises in VBR of relevance to disability are detailed below.

Group exercises

Group simulation exercises incorporate a number of applicants (usually four to eight) into a single simulated task that often requires them to reach a consensus, make a collective decision, or work as a team. They allow the opportunity to evaluate an applicant's behaviour when interacting with others and can be more time-efficient in allowing multiple applicants to be evaluated at once.

Group exercises vary in whether there are unassigned or assigned roles. In exercises without assigned roles, applicants are free to choose or nominate the focus of their contribution. In this approach there is the risk that applicants may work so collaboratively that they do not have the opportunity to demonstrate negotiation skills if encountering a difference of opinions. In exercises with assigned roles, each member of the group is designated a set position or agenda for completing the task. Applicants are individually debriefed on the background of the situation beforehand or have constrictions placed on their character. For example, in an exercise of reaching a consensus, one candidate might be put in charge of the financial considerations, and another candidate put in charge of customer satisfaction.

Individual role-play exercises

Individual role-play exercises are used to evaluate applicants without the presence of other applicants. This provides the opportunity to evaluate the ability to deal with work encounters independently and without the influence of others. Applicants are typically exposed to a scenario or task involving a role played client, peer, manager or other relevant stakeholder. They are evaluated on the behaviours that align with values relevant to the sector, organisation and role. For example, an applicant may be presented with a scenario of a peer requesting confidential information. The applicant may be evaluated on the value of integrity, based on whether they discuss their requirement to maintain confidentiality.

Presentation exercises

In presentation exercises, applicants are required to prepare and deliver a short (typically five to 20 minute) presentation on a chosen or designated topic. Applicants can be evaluated on their ability to carry out tasks in an impromptu manner, to structure information in an organised manner, their confidence in delivery, and their ability to communicate points clearly and concisely. It is critical that evaluation of presentations is based on the demonstration of values or qualities relevant to the role.

Situational judgement

Situational judgement tests usually present a series of work based scenarios that could be faced by someone working in the position. Applicants are asked to identify the most appropriate response, usually through selecting multiple choice options, or ranking the responses in the order that they feel would be most effective. Scenarios can be presented in a variety of modes, such as in text, or through video or audio recordings. Through these assessments, the values of applicants can be accessed through their chosen response options.

SIMULATION EXERCISE EXAMPLES

NDS has worked with an organisational psychologist to design two full simulation exercises specifically for use in the recruitment of support workers in the disability sector. They have been designed in consultation to evaluate the values demonstrating a commitment to person-centred practice. Access to these exercises is available at no cost for service providers (see below). The exercises include:

An individual simulation exercise: peer meeting



Applicants role play the position of a newly hired support worker. They are presented with the scenario of meeting face to face with a peer as a part of a peer support program. Applicants are provided a number of objectives for the meeting, which include establishing a relationship with their peer and handling any issues that may arise during the meeting.

A group simulation exercise: community fair group meeting



A group of applicants (four to eight) are presented with the exercise of providing some input on the planning of a community fair. They are provided an array of objectives for this activity including generating ideas for promoting accessibility to families and people with disability as well as the consideration of hosting a stall, fundraising activities, and sponsorship opportunities. Applicants are required to negotiate their recommendations for carrying out the task with their colleagues.

The simulation exercises include the following resources:

- For both exercises
 - Administrator and assessor instructions
 - Information for applicants
 - Assessor rating forms
- For the individual simulation exercises
 - Role player guide
- For the group simulation exercises
 - Observation form

The simulation exercise score sheets and instructions are available from NDS. These have been provided separately to avoid the risk of potential applicants accessing the content of the exercises before assessment.

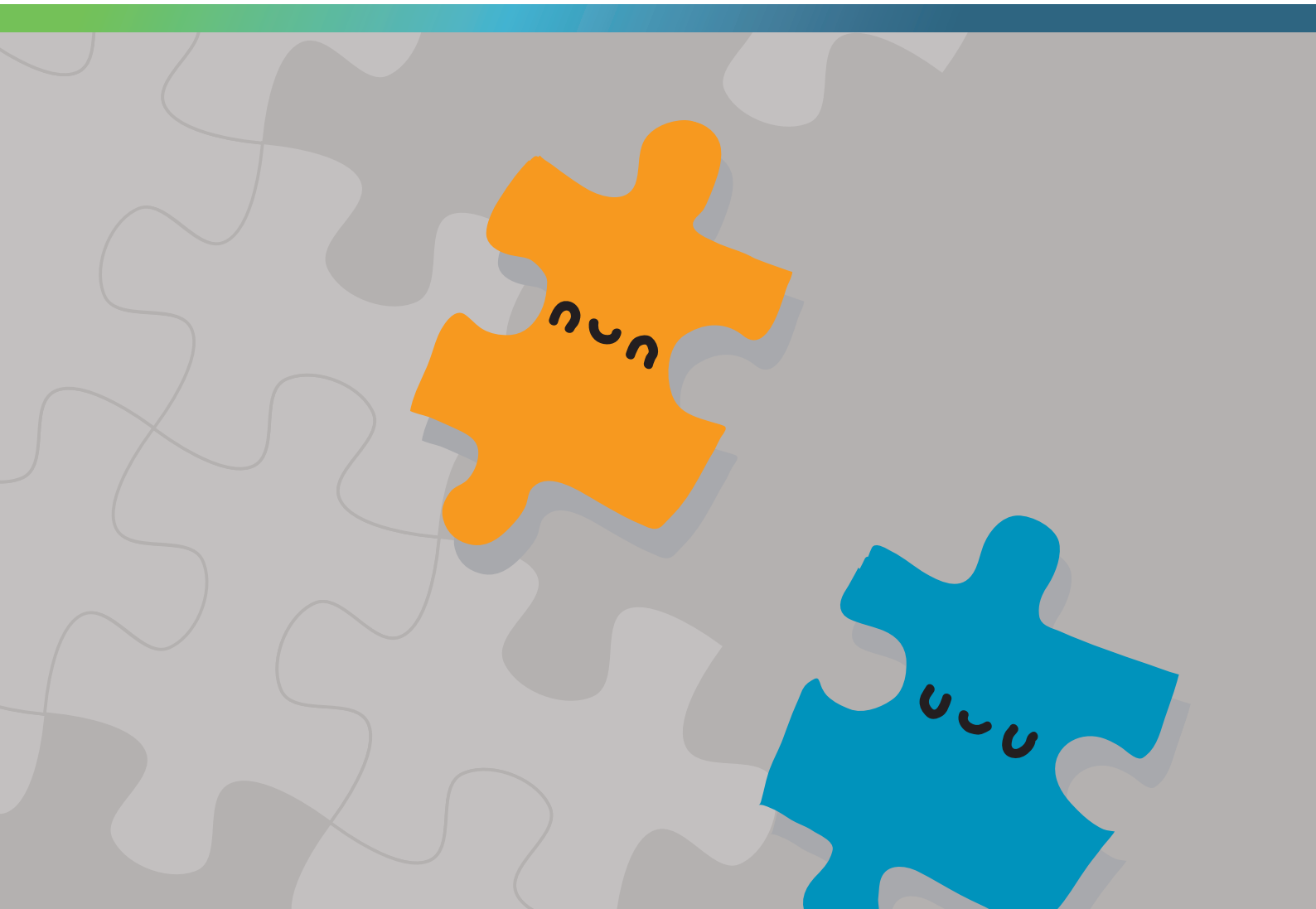
Contact NDS using the details at the front of this Module or click on the VBR Tools button on the VBR web-page www.nds.org.au/value-based-recruitment

SUMMARY

The use of simulation exercises as a part of VBR provides the opportunity to evaluate an applicant's response to real-life work scenarios and thereby assess their suitability for the role. Exercises can be used to evaluate different qualities, and thus will take different forms. People acting or role playing different positions may be required to create more realistic scenarios. Irrespective of the type used, all simulation exercises rely on standardised evaluation criteria that is strongly based on criteria necessary for the role. It is critical that both those involved in role playing positions and assessors are trained in the importance of creating and carrying out fair assessments. It is recommended that simulation exercises are combined with other assessment techniques (such as interviews and psychological assessments) in order to capture a full picture of candidates.

END NOTES

1. Robertson, L. T., & Kandola, R. S. (1982). "Work sample tests: Validity, adverse impact and applicant reaction". *Journal of Occupational Psychology*, 55, 171–183.



VALUES BASED RECRUITMENT TOOLKIT

VBRT VBR TOOLKIT MODULES

DISABILITY SECTOR