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Assessing the Impact of Labour Market Information on Career Decision-Making

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**Assessing the Impact of Labour Market Information:
Report on Practice Impact
Resulting From Participation in the Research Project**

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Executive Summary

This research project was designed to address two questions: (a) To what extent is independent self-help a sufficient process in order for clients to use LMI effectively? and (b) To what extent does assistance by a service provider enhance the effective use of LMI? Supplementary research questions included: (a) To what extent is LMI an equally effective intervention for clients with career decision-making needs and clients with job search needs, and (b) What demographic factors (e.g., age, gender, job history, etc.) have a differential influence on the effectiveness of a LMI intervention? All questions were addressed in a context where client needs were assessed to determine whether LMI for career decision making or LMI for job search would be an appropriate intervention to address the client needs. LMI packages were developed to address each of those needs (one LMI package tailored to career decision making and a second LMI package tailored to job search). In both cases, the LMI packages contained lists of possible resources, instructions for accessing the information, and tips for interpreting and applying the information to a client's personal situation. Clients remained in the program for 3 weeks. Thus, this project isolated the use of LMI as a viable approach, independent of other interventions such as psychoeducational workshops or career counselling.

The research reported in this document is focused on the service providers who participated in the study. Specifically, we wanted to explore the extent to which participating in this research project had an effect on the way counsellors provided services to clients, and identify some of the reasons contributing to any impact on practice. To do that, we conducted a debriefing session with managers and counsellors who participated in the project 1 week after the project finished. To explore the maintenance of any reported changes, we conducted a second debriefing session 4 months after the project finished.

In general, 90% of counsellors and managers interviewed indicated that being involved in this study had changed their way of understanding and working with labour market information. Specifically, counsellors reported being more focused and more goal oriented in their interactions with clients, and noticed that clients developed more ability to work independently and demonstrated greater ownership for reaching their own goals. Most counsellors indicated that they had incorporated much of the research process into their interactions with clients who were not part of the study and also had shared what they were learning with colleagues. The comments during the 4 month follow up interviews indicated that the type of initial changes reported endured across time.

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Assessing the Impact of Labour Market Information: Report on Practice Impact Resulting From Participation in the Research Project

The current study for *Assessing the Impact of Labour Market Information on Career Decision-Making* had three phases. Phase One resulted in a State of Practice Snapshot of the current use of LMI in employment offices across the country. The information obtained in Phase One was used as a guide for developing the interventions used in Phase Two. Phase Two involved a comparison of two ways of delivering LMI to clients: a typical independent self-help process for accessing LMI, and an assisted self-help process for accessing LMI. Both delivery methods were used with adult clients who had job search or career decision-making needs. Phase Three involved a detailed exploration of the nature of the client's experience in using LMI through semi-structured telephone interviews with a subset of the participants from all treatment conditions. The interviews focused on the ways in which participants accessed and used LMI, focusing on the details of the client experience related to processing the LMI they accessed.

Our observations of what was happening in the field during Phase Two of the project, coupled with informal reports from the counsellors participating in the research, suggested that participation in the research project was having an effect on the normal way that counsellors were interacting with their clients. In other words, counsellors were reporting that some of what they were learning through participation in the research project was being used with clients who were not formally part of research study. In fact some of their own reflections on how they approached clients in the research project were being incorporated into their interactions with all of the clients they were seeing. Thus, an amendment to the original research project was proposed, and subsequently approved, part of which was to investigate the impact on the normal practices of counsellors that could be attributed to their participation in the research project. This report focuses on the results of an exploration into the types of changes in practice that counsellors and managers observed.

Methodology

Debriefing sessions were held with counsellors and managers 1 week after the end of the research project, and again, 4 months later. The sessions followed a semi-structured interview protocol and the same questions were asked each time. The one-week debriefing sessions were held by teleconference with each participating office. The four-month debriefing sessions were held face-to-face within each province. The interview protocol was sent out in advance so counsellors and managers could reflect on their experience ahead of the debriefing sessions. In the teleconference debrief, the researcher selected at random one participant to respond to the first question; following the response, all were asked to respond with any divergent experiences; following this, all were asked to add any additional comments to any of the responses to date. In this way, all participants had the opportunity to respond first. In the face-to-face debrief the same process was followed. See Annex A.

The debriefing sessions were co-facilitated by two researchers, who took independent notes on the comments made by the counsellors and managers. A content analysis of the facilitator notes was conducted by another researcher who did not participate in the debriefing sessions or the follow up interviews. The inter-rater agreement between the content of the two co-facilitator notes ranged from 95% to 100%. There were some stylistic differences in recording (e.g., one interviewer tended to summarize responses, while the other interviewer separated thoughts and several times recorded specific examples of what the interviewees said), however conceptually and substantively the two sets of records were virtually identical. Therefore the interviewer notes

can be taken as an accurate representation of the comments made by the counsellors and managers who participated in the debriefing sessions.

The content analysis focused on identifying predominating themes in the participant responses. A consensus building process was used to identify and label the predominating themes and then to assign the specific comments to the relevant theme. In the initial consensus building process that was part of the content analysis, inclusion criteria were identified to determine the most appropriate category for specific participant responses and subsequent validity checks produced a 100% inter-rater agreement between the researcher conducting the content analysis and the principle researcher for the study.

Participants

In the case of New Brunswick, nine counsellors and four managers participated in the debriefing sessions. All managers participated in both debrief sessions; seven counsellors participated in the one-week debrief and eight in the four-month. In the case of Saskatchewan, six counsellors, one Resource Centre officer, and three managers participated in the debriefing sessions. Five counsellors and two managers participated in the one-week debrief and three counsellors and three managers in the four-month debrief. Unfortunately a severe snowstorm precluded Prince Albert participants from attending the four-month debrief.

All of the counsellors had been working with clients who participated in the research study and all of the managers had been involved in coordinating the research in their respective centres.

Results

The results of the data analysis are presented below, organized according to the interview question that was being addressed. In each case, the remarks of participants in the 1-week debriefing sessions are given first, followed by the responses from the 4-month interviews.

Question 1. Has being involved in this study changed your ways of understanding and working with labour market information? If so, please specify.

In response to the question, 90% of participant responses indicated that being involved in the study had changed their way of understanding and working with labour market information. An additional 5% of the responses indicated that perhaps there was some change and an additional 5% indicated that there was no change as a result of being involved in the study. The reasons for the changes were grouped into three predominating themes: the structure of the research project, the nature of the research process, and other general factors. A sample of the responses are given in Table 1.

Table 1. Reasons contributing to changes in counsellor ways of understanding and working with LMI (1 week after project finished).

Response Category	Sample Responses
Structure of the research project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides specific information for specific kinds of clients. • A guide so clients could see the reason why they were doing tasks to meet goals. • More hands on tools to work with clients. • Resources we received were current, user friendly and effective. • Materials were specific to the employability dimensions.

Response Category	Sample Responses
Nature of the research process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear direction to both counsellor and to clients. • The project has helped us organize resources.
Other practice related comments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes, more confident working with Job Search. • LMI is more integrated in the counselling process. • Information was used by clients not in the project. • Other staff used the LMI in working with clients.

The 4-month follow up interviews confirmed the coding categories and provided some further details regarding the reasons contributing to changes in the way counsellors understood and worked with LMI. See Table 2.

Table 2. Reasons contributing to changes in counsellor ways of understanding and working with LMI (4 months after project finished).

Response Category	Sample Responses
Structure of the research project:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Because this was so structured and rigidly enforced, it forced me to really take what I learned in the orientation and apply it. Sometimes in training when you return to the office it's so busy you don't apply what you learn. • The Job Search package is a real practical concrete help. Used the package as a self-directed resource – and when clients return, they are more prepared. • Never really thought in terms of intake of clients as assisted or self-help – now is built into every intake interview. • Used Job Search guides a lot – giving it to them independently. I'm going to use this much more because I would see them coming back with real results. • Using the CDM was like trying to teach fishing versus giving them fish – trying to help clients acquire skills and ability to make own decisions.
Nature of the research process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The assessment process used in the research works in operational practice. • Realized client goals and plans are not mine, but they are owned by the client and the client is responsible for his/her goals. • I used to be maternal and would forget it was the client's decision and I got more involved. • This process really respected the employability assessment process that we should be following anyways, but sometimes don't.
Other practice related comments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We were the "police" before – now clients are capable and able – this project showed that clients were doing their own work and managing services by asking questions and asking for targeted help. • Now I know the LMI in depth and in detail. So, now I am following up in more depth. • Action plan ownership was given to the client – before it resided more with counsellor.

The above data suggest that participation in the research project was accompanied by important changes in the way counsellors understood LMI, the role that LMI played in service delivery, and ways in which counsellors used LMI with clients.

Question 2. You have worked with an employability assessment Protocol throughout this study. Has this changed your ways of doing Employability Assessments with clients? If so, how? Please specify.

In response to the question, 81% of participant responses indicated participation in the research process did change the way they approached Employability Assessment with clients. An additional 15% that perhaps it made a difference (mostly because it was similar to the way they normally approached this), 4% responded no. The types of changes are indicated in Table 3.

Table 3. Ways in which participation in the research changed counsellor approaches to doing employability assessments with clients. (1 week after project finished).

Response Category	Sample Responses
More focussed & goal oriented	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It provided a focus and goal oriented. • The focus on goals and little steps was very helpful. • The study material helped identify the client in the right dimension and offered a package as a guide for them.
Following the protocol	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reinforced how important all the steps are. • Keeps you on track. • The employability dimension wheel is useful because client could relate too.
Tightened up the timeframe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clients are now asking themselves all the time, <i>Where do you see yourself in 4 weeks?</i> [An indication of increased counsellor focus.]
Other practice related comments regarding future use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will continue to do it but now more consciously and intentionally. • Not as apt to make assumptions about how a client can manoeuvre with LMI. • This will be a good tool for orientation of new staff. • Will use the checklists in future.

The 4-month follow up interviews confirmed the coding categories and provided some further details regarding changes in the way counsellors approached employability assessment and the reasons for those changes. See Table 4.

Table 4. Ways in which participation in the research changed counsellor approaches to doing employability assessments with clients. (4 months after project finished).

Response Category	Sample Responses
More focussed & goal oriented	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarified goals and steps more explicitly – goals very clearly defined with time frames.

Response Category	Sample Responses
Following the protocol/ Training effects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The increased structure and explicit agreements make clients more accountable – clear goals with timelines – increased clarity regarding steps and expectations. • Would recommend that all counsellors follow the SND protocols for a good period of time, to reinforce the process. • Staff are being mentored by ones who participated in study. • When people hear LMI they think about employment. This study expanded it to personal assessment, labour market assessment etc. - beyond what skills employers need. Now LMI is integral to everything I do. I now know what I didn't know.
Tightened up the timeframe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are using follow-up phone calls more regularly now.
Other Practice Related Comments Regarding Future Use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Now I tend to define my role as an employment counsellor and their role much more clearly. • Most clients are overwhelmed and unclear re: federal & provincial roles and responsibilities. The approach in this study makes roles and expectations clearer.

The majority of counsellors indicated that the employability assessment process used in the research project helped them to be more clear about their roles and responsibilities and also helped clients be more clear about expectations. The assessment protocol helped counsellors be more focussed and helped to reinforce the importance of doing a thorough job with employability assessment.

Question 3. You have worked with an Advice and Information Session (AIS) Protocol throughout this study. Has this changed your ways of coaching clients? If so, how? Please specify.

In response to the question, 71% of participant responses indicated that participation in the study had changed the way they interacted with clients. An additional 14% of responses indicated that perhaps their way of interacting with clients had changed and 14% also indicated that it had not changed the way they interacted with clients.

Table 5. Ways in which working with the Advice and Information Session (AIS) protocol changed how counsellor work with clients. (1 week after project finished).

Response Category	Sample Responses
Nature of the protocol	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It gave me more structure, but I find it hard to only give advice and not do counselling. • It really fit well with some of the techniques I was using before the study, but it did provide more of a structure to follow. • For me, the AIS was too scripted and I was unable to elaborate.
Timeframe & Pacing of Sessions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It was a different pace but it worked out well. • Clients were not highly barriered so it worked well. • Made me aware that I can accomplish a lot in a short period of time. • Did not have time to establish a strong relationship but client seemed OK and found the service to be good.

Response Category	Sample Responses
Other comments related to practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most times we see clients when they have a need • CORS often do coaching and counselling: but when clients needed more, could not do it, this was the most difficult part for both • She had the clients lead more • Clients that followed through were very positive and very self-motivated

The 4-month follow up interviews confirmed the coding categories and provided some further details regarding changes in the way counsellors approached working with clients and the reasons for those changes. See Table 6.

Table 6. Ways in which working with the Advice and Information Session (AIS) protocol changed how counsellor work with clients. (4 months after project finished).

Response Category	Sample Responses
Nature of the protocol	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Question asking is much more direct and streamlined now. • Now much more concrete, assign specific tasks, follow up much more targeted and specific, not just how are you doing but have you completed x, y, z. • Consistent methodology helped focus on specific, targeted issues and action. Provided more details with respect to next steps and bring forwards.
Timeframe & Pacing of Sessions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Objectives one week to next are very clear, therefore very easy to measure progress. Helps to put back to client action and responsibility. • Important to note follow-up session, even if it is only 15 minutes, it mattered.
Other comments related to practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This has taken me to next phase of my counselling career, as I mentioned in Question #1 & #2. • Put responsibility back on the client. Clearer for clients that if they do nothing it will affect directly what they get back. • Also kept counsellor more focussed. Now she gives more tasks and homework – much more specific.

One of the underlying purposes of the larger research project was to isolate the impact of LMI, as separate from other interventions such as LMI used in an employment counselling context. Therefore, the AIS protocol stipulated a clear distinction between advising and counselling and required counsellors to stick with advising and not transgress into a counselling mode. From the above comments it seems that having a structured protocol to follow helped counsellors and clients be more focussed on the goals there were working on and made it easier to monitor progress. It also helped counsellors to be aware that many clients did not need intensive intervention, but that advising was sufficient. Some counsellors found that sticking to the structured protocol was quite restrictive, which we interpret as an indication that counsellors actually were adhering to the game plan outlined in the intervention guide.

Question 4. What are the differences you see between AIS interviews (as introduced in this research) and employment counselling interviews (which you normally do—both before this research and during the research with other clients not in the study)? Please specify.

The responses to this question indicate that the counsellors participating in the research project understood the differences between their normal way of doing business and the format outlined in the protocols for the project. In some cases, counsellors found the differences hard to accommodate (but they did it anyway) and in other cases counsellors found the differences beneficial. A summary of the responses is presented below in Table 7.

Table 7. Perceptions of the differences between AIS interviews and employment counselling as they did it previously. (1 week after project finished).

Response Category	Sample Responses
Perceived differences resulting from research requirements	<p>Differences related to process</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Getting down to business: Summarizing, clarifying, setting the next goal, and being highly focussed. • AIS helps to stay focused; More check marks; Nice to have the AIS as a helpful structure to clarify. <p>Differences related to materials</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The materials were helpful in focusing the AIS; discussing progress on the tracking sheet was effective. • In the project we had access to organized and specific resources. <p>Differences related to time</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Timeframe is different. • Recommended 20 min time frames were stressful, as some clients (immigrants with English as a second language) take longer to process information. <p>Differences related to client factors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clients who did not admit to not knowing how to use the computer, with a learning problems, and Immigrants, had trouble. • Clients can use information on their own with more direction. • Clients are very resourceful and we don't give them enough credit for being resourceful.
Differences related to normal practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More issues to be dealt with in normal practice. • In employment counselling, look at client as a whole and explore barriers more fully. • Prior we let the client lead the interview and in the project we directed them. • Some of the stress may have been from feeling "unnatural" – wanting to do too much of a good job.
Other practice-related comments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In counselling we can forget where they are going. Now I will focus more on what are next steps even in counselling and clarifying goals. This helped and will transfer into counselling practice. • Maybe we do too much and say too much, leading to more of a conversation.

The 4-month follow up interviews confirmed the coding categories and provided some further details regarding differences between the way counsellors previously approached their interactions with clients and the protocol they followed for the AIS interviews. See Table 8.

Table 8. Perceptions of the differences between AIS interviews and employment counselling as they did it previously. (4 months after project finished).

Response Category	Sample Responses
Perceived differences resulting from research requirements	<p>About Counsellors & the Research Process</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Made counsellors more accountable, e.g., a no-show was automatically followed-up and called. Sometimes that is all it takes to get the clients to re-connect and re-commit. Gave more empowerment to the clients – kept relationship going. • More structured, more specific, more targeted in focus, more time limited. Unitary focus on employment/career development issues. Got rid of all extraneous chat/discussion about how client feels, relationships etc. <p>About Time</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More intensive regular contact – every week – keeps momentum – can catch problems/barriers earlier. <p>About Clients</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clients felt more empowered
Differences related to normal practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Before felt I had to solve clients' problems. Now I am not as much this way. I can offer advice, but client is in charge. • Having to reflect and be careful to avoid counselling component was hard. Now I'm more conscientious about thinking about what the client needs; greater awareness of how far a client is going to go.
Other practice-related comments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some "liked" the structure (e.g., I am a consultant, a bank of information, as opposed to social worker. I like this.) • Structure. There were specific, ordered steps. Counselling interviews were more client directed/responsive before.

The above comments clearly indicated that counsellors understood the differences between the AIS interviews and the way they interacted with clients before the research study. The reaction was somewhat mixed, with some people finding the checklists and intervention protocols restrictive and others finding they had more focus and clients were more motivated and empowered. Some of the comments about the restrictive scope of the AIS interviews (not addressing all of a client's needs) can be attributed to the selection criteria for the study which focused on clients seeking help with career decision making or job search. However, generally speaking, the majority of the comments refer to increased focus, greater accountability for both counsellors and clients, and increased client motivation.

Question 5. What have you learned as a professional practitioner/manager from your involvement in this study?

It was our hope that participation in this research project would be an opportunity for professional growth for counsellors and managers. Tables 9 and 10 provide a summary of the types of learning and insight that counsellors and managers gained as a result of their participation in this research.

Table 9. Participant reports on what they learned from being involved in this study. (1 week after project finished).

Response Category	Sample Responses
The importance of client follow through	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I learned in order to have client commitment we need to respect the needs of the client. • The assisted group seem to be more involved in the process and sometimes with help they were better able to use and interpret labour market information.
Learning regarding appointments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liked an appointment in a week – especially the 1st one after – catch them before they get really stuck. The 2nd AIS was too soon and it was only 5-10 minutes long.
Learning about resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Steps to follow and specific tasks are very helpful from a manager's perspective. • We have resources and tools we can share with other staff in the Region. • We need LMI tailored to local information. • We learned where to find specific information and some alternative resources. • The project helped us organize the resources/materials in the resource room. • Learned about tools, how to use them, and how to adapt them to the needs of the person.
Learning about the research process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We learned a lot about research and what is involved in the process. • The project made current materials accessible to our clients in or out of the project. • A sense of pride that we were involved in a project that will move the profession forward and generate evidence based best practices. • Giving concrete information in accordance with their needs – they can do a lot on their own. • The structure would need to be adapted to different clients Sometimes counselling will be needed. • As we gained some very good employment results from the participants of this study, I will encourage all our staff to use the labour market tools from the study with their clients.
Other comments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We learned that following protocol does not always end up with everyone doing the same thing. • That positive results can happen with proper information and proper encouragement. • You need counselling and information together.

The 4-month follow up interviews indicated that a lot of the professional learning had persisted across time. A summary of the responses is provided in Table 10.

Table 10. Participant reports on what they learned from being involved in this study. (4 months after project finished).

Response Category	Sample Responses
The importance of client follow through	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With the right time and right tools, we can have impact on clients. • It is possible to use less time as long as you structure it up front. We don't always have time.
Learning regarding appointments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can have impact if have right tools even if don't have much time.
Learning about resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Really questioned whether client understood wording – some of wording was difficult for ESL levels.
Learning about the research process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater ability for client to self-help than we or government can imagine. • We need to use the employability assessment more deliberately.
Other comments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We created dependency • Clients are more self-sufficient than realized earlier. • Sometimes, we under-estimate the potential of clients. Many clients exceeded my expectations.

The most predominating theme expressed by counsellors and managers in response to this question centred around client self-sufficiency. There was a noticeable belief that when things are structured and resources are readily available, many clients are able to work in a self-sufficient manner.

Question 6. To what extent will the processes used in this study become a part of your regular practice when providing services to clients in the future?

Over half of the participants indicated that some of the resources and/or processes used in this research either had already become, or would become in the future, a part of their regular way of interacting with clients. A sample of the comments are highlighted below in Table 11.

Table 11. The extent to which the processes used in this research will become part of regular practice. (1 week after project finished).

Response Category	Sample Responses
Probably will be part of regular practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The processes used will have a significant impact in our regular practice. • Client binders are excellent and we will share them with clients and the staff in the office. • Continue to provide the LMI resource packages in the resource room to assist a client in managing his/her own journey. • Recommend to clients the systematic process outlined in the LMI binders. • The client tracking sheets are helpful and I will continue to use them. Generates good discussion on what resources they have used, what was helpful and what was missing. • I will use the Dimension Wheel, the Employability assessment Protocol as well as some of the AIS structure.

Response Category	Sample Responses
Possibly will be part of regular practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will incorporate the process within our own style so it does not feel so restrictive. • The packages themselves could be transferable even if maybe not the processes. • I anticipate having difficulty sticking to protocols to get results.
Other practice-related comments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We tend to fall into a routine but this process forced us to be more structured in our assessments and interviews. • When you are so busy it's easier to do it for the clients, rather than teach them to do independently. • Instead of jumping in to do it for them, I'm now encouraging people to learn and do it more on their own. • I will continue to use encouragement, but allow clients to be more self-directed. • The 'gem' of the LMI packages is giving clients a process, a way to navigate and be self-directed.

In the 4-month follow up interviews the main influences on practice were confirmed as being integrated into regular practice. See Table 12.

Table 12. The extent to which the processes used in this research will become a part of regular practice. (4 months after project finished).

Response Category	Sample Responses
Continuing to be part of regular practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having the LMI displayed, accessible, and having access to staff has been a big improvement. • Increased structure is continuing. Clients liked to know exactly what to expect in next 4 weeks. • We now schedule more regular, shorter appointments – 15 minutes initial needs assessment. • I'm using the career information centre more often – take clients out to introduce them to centre staff, show resources and computers.
Possibly will be part of regular practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May see further changes when the bigger packages roll out. • Caseloads don't always allow for this frequency of contact – enabled us to develop relationships more quickly with clients.

There was wide-spread agreement among counsellors and managers that many of the resources and the processes used in this study had a positive impact on the way counsellors interacted with clients. In particular, having the LMI resources easily available and organized for client use was helpful and should continue to be part of the service delivery systems. The structured process, including guide for self-exploration, the Employability Dimensions Wheel, and the client checklists, were explicitly mentioned as being valuable for clients and likely to see continued use by staff. One over-riding factor mentioned as a change in practice, pertained to providing a structure and an encouraging process to help clients become more self-directed with their career planning.

Question 7. What have been the major challenges in being part of this study?

In the interest of planning future research projects, we wanted to get feedback on any challenges that counsellors and managers faced and their suggestions related to improvements

for future research projects. The challenges faced by counsellors and managers are reported first, followed by their suggestions for how to deal with these types of challenges in future research.

Table 13. Reported challenges associated with participation in the research study. (1 week after project finished).

Response Category	Sample Responses
Time of year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The time of year added pressure. • It would have been better in fall or winter.
Time for the project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Managing other clients. • Feeling rushed trying to fit in my regular clients, i.e., balancing my regular work load and doing the study. • Was time consuming, needed a full day of staff training.
Client recruitment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruiting period was very short. • Recruitment of clients took a lot longer and required a lot more time and effort to get the number needed. • Pressure of recruiting the clients. Short time frame (3 – 4 weeks) to get them.
Research process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There was a lot to explain, a lot of information to cover, a lot of administrative stuff at the beginning. • It would have been beneficial to have the packages in their final state prior to the beginning of the study for review. • Materials arriving late (although well worth the wait). • Clients are not always in one or the other dimension – they are overlapping. • Getting documentation done in a timely fashion. • Found process initially difficult - did get easier with familiarity.
Personal challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Balancing workload and the project (i.e., time management). • Insecurities about following protocol-are we doing it right?

The 4-month follow up interviews confirmed the coding categories and provided some further details regarding changes in the way counsellors approached working with clients and the reasons for those changes. See Table 14.

Table 14. Reported challenges associated with participation in the research study. (4 months after project finished).

Response Category	Sample Responses
Time of year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summer timeframe. • Do it in Jan-Mar – extend time frame.
Time for the project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Between 1st and 2nd IAS – only 1 week in some cases – needed at least 2 weeks – same as between that and final often clients had nothing to say – too soon since last session. • A lot for client to wrap head around – not enough time.
Client recruitment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Part-time employee (80%) – found the recruitment demands very hard to fit in a reduced work week. • Struggling to find enough clients in the 2 categories.

Response Category	Sample Responses
Research process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AIS interviews. Recommend: 2 weeks/6 weeks between AIS interviews. • Instead of all full time – have more counsellors involved – spread clients out amongst more counsellors.
Personal challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clients who participated said they got excellent service • If I could have focussed solely on this – put pause on regular case load would be much easier. • Recommend modified case load – or have someone cover crises at least.

Question 8. What would you suggest be done differently in future studies?

Table 15. Suggestions for future research. (1 week after project finished).

Response Category	Sample Responses
Intake, recruitment, and timing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If this is to be part of natural flow, intake should have been over a longer period, and not in summer. • Increase the timeline for the study to allow for more time for recruitment.
Participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We understand that all our challenges resulted from workload and adding this project to an already high pressure situation.
Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An extra half day of training would have helped. • We should expect greater time commitment (hard to imagine when you start as to what is involved).
Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow clients to access both LMI packages. • Have the completed package well ahead of the start date of the study. • Use more regional sources of LMI.
Other comments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Found it a bit confusing – clients were at different stages and she (counsellor) had to review the protocols before. • The project itself was clear and provided the tools and support we needed. • If we did this all over we could do things PERFECTLY!

The 4-month follow up interviews reiterated many of the suggestions reported above. See Table 14.

Table 16. Suggestions for future research. (4 months after project finished).

Response Category	Sample Responses
Intake, recruitment, and timing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extend intake period. • In preparing us for protocols – way too rushed – needed another half day.
Participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hard for part-time staff to participate. • Minimum 2 to 3 counsellors per office. • Client numbers: 9-10 OK and full-time counsellors.

Response Category	Sample Responses
Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If there were more counsellors involved that would have helped – hard to be only counsellor in an office doing the study. • Orientation was too short. Information overload at orientation – needed lunch hour to process information.
Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider doing group exits – these worked very well and recommending it. • Did 4 individual interviews with people who missed the group session. Did 2 in groups – facilitated chance for the clients to talk.
Other comments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our manager wouldn't let us deviate from protocol at all – the group exit would have been so great.

The challenges reported above pertain mostly to situations that are inherent in any research study or outside the control of the research team. For example, assignment to treatment group will be part of any comparison study, and even where a careful group assignment process is used (as was the case here), there will be some clients who do not fit exactly (or completely) into one of the treatment categories. Also, it is important to remember that the project start date was later than intended due to delays in funding approval, and it was not possible to extend the completion date to accommodate the delay in start-up. Thus, some of the front end planning had to be truncated, which produced delays in developing the intervention packages, delays in training staff in the research procedures, and adjustment in the recruitment and intervention delivery timelines. Further, the initial vision was that the clients in this project would be part of the regular case load of the counsellors participating in this research, and therefore, the work demands on participating counsellors would be minimal. However, participating counsellors were very focused on recruiting exact numbers of clients into the study but also continued to receive new clients who chose not to enter the study. As a result, some participating counsellor caseloads grew disproportionately during the recruitment period. This had not been anticipated and could readily be avoided in future studies through regular caseload monitoring and adjusting.

Question 9. What suggestions would you have if we were going to try introduce the LMI packages and Resource Centre handouts to other offices across the province?

Dissemination of findings and introducing the interventions to the broader career development community were important considerations for the research team and also the field personnel involved in the research. Some useful observations regarding these matters were obtained from counsellors and managers who participated in the follow up interviews. Their responses fell nicely into two broad categories, which are described in Tables 17 and 18.

Table 17. Suggestions for dissemination of LMI packages and resource centre handouts. (1 week after project finished).

Response Category	Sample Responses
Sharing the research information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If counsellors had some feedback on the results, and they were positive, this would motivate others to adopt the package. • Would like the packages bookmarked according to the Employment Dimensions and in the Resource Centre for all to use. • This became a value added for clients and counsellors who all still continued to do their work. • Share the project results with the branch. Hopefully the study will provide a best practice model. • Would want central office staff involved. The information needs a context and a backup group. • Have a bulleted fact sheet as a summary.
Future resource development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Go over the LMI resources and tools in training. • Sometimes a refresher would be helpful. • Have materials in French. • Try and develop a package that would be more specific to the geographic area and have more visual information. • Develop a generic package that we could add to in order to make it more specific to our region. • I noticed some clients excelled with the package and others were lost. We may need to screen a little before giving such a package to certain clients.

The 4-month follow up interviews produced the same dominant themes. See Table 18.

Table 18. Suggestions for dissemination of LMI packages and resource centre handouts. (4 months after project finished).

Response Category	Sample Responses
Sharing the research information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resources Room people – what can we do for them – more resource packages • Surprised how little the \$100 meant to the clients – they were really excited about accessing the information, giving feedback.
Future resource development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Think through how to orient offices which have not been part of the pilot. • Allow each region to take the basic package and tailor it locally to integrate the tools.

Question 10. Would you volunteer to be part of a similar research study in the future? Why or why not? Please specify.

The above question was intended to tap the degree of balance between the additional work involved in conducting the research and the professional benefit that counsellors and managers derived through participation in the study. All participants indicated willingness to participate in a similar research study in the future. Two people said that they would not be interested in participating right away but would in the future, and one other person said that the timing of a future project would be a factor in taking part. Comments from the 4 month interviews did not

add any further information to those obtained from the 1 week interviews. The responses are summarized in Table 19.

Table 19. Willingness to be part of future research studies. (1 week after project finished).

Response Category	Sample Responses
Professional learning from the project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Several people said that they had learned a lot. • One manager said the counsellors learned a lot and it was possible to tell that because there was no complaining. • We now have the experience and understand the workload implications we would handle the pressure better. • When we signed up we didn't really know what we were getting into. It was a bit of a shock when packages started arriving.
Professional enhancement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We believed we would gain something professionally from being involved. • We want to see our profession move forward and have the data to prove what we do really does make a difference! • I believe that research is important to learning how to better serve our clients. • Made her a better employment counsellor.
Counsellor success experiences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It gave me good feedback from clients. • This research was refreshing and provided encouragement when I dealt with the people who successfully found employment; like planting a seed and seeing results. • The tools and resources provided us in the project are effective in the work we do. • I enjoyed working with a select group of clients and being able to focus on them and providing career services.

From the above responses, it seems that participation in this research project was perceived to be a worthwhile experience for counsellors and managers, both personally and professionally.

Question 11. Do you have other comments? Please specify.

To close the interviews, we gave people the opportunity to mention any further ideas or observations they had. There were no additional comments from those participating in the 4 month follow up. The responses from the 1 week interviews are summarized in Table 20.

Table 20. Other general comments pertaining to the research study. (1 week after project finished).

Sample Responses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommended use of a spread sheet to organize data. • The materials would be useful with youth. • Reflection time in between meetings gave ideas for what was missing, and ideas for the next session. • The protocols are useful as a guide, not as a rule. • Comments on impact on the clients and feeling that clients went away feeling served.

Summary and Conclusions

Taking the above results as a whole, it is clear that the interventions used in this research project not only had a positive impact on the clients who participated in the project, but the research process also had a positive impact on the normal way of offering services in the agencies where the research took place. Overall, 90% of the counsellors and managers said that being involved in this study changed their way of understanding and working with labour market information. The structure of the research project, especially tailoring the information to specific client needs, the checklists, and the clear directions provided for both counsellors and clients, helped counsellors feel more confident working with LMI, more focused in their interactions with clients, and more able to encourage clients to be self-directed. They found the Initial Employability Assessment to be particularly useful. Counsellors reported that many of the processes they used in the research project had been incorporated into their interactions with clients who were not part of the study and that overall the processes helped clients take responsibility for their goals and for their plans for follow up action. Counsellors reported being more focused and more goal oriented in their interactions with clients, and that the processes they learned in the research helped them keep on track and be more intentional in their interactions with clients. One counsellor remarked that participation in the research project had taken her to the next phase of her counselling career. The responses from the 4 month interviews, indicated that the changes in practice endured across time.

One predominating theme expressed by counsellors was that clients were more capable of working independently and being self-directed than was previously thought to be the case. One counsellor remarked that using the resources in the research project was like teaching clients fishing, rather than giving them fish: Clients ended up acquiring skills and greater ability to make their own decisions and being less reliant on counsellors for assistance.

For many counsellors, the difference between advising and counselling became more clear. It was clear from counsellor responses that they were being faithful to the intervention plan and not stepping over the line from advising into counselling. Some counsellors found it difficult to stay with the game plan (no counselling, only advising) for there was a sense that some clients needed more assistance. However, the dominant view was that counsellors were surprised that clients could accomplish so much in such a short time period. Moreover, counsellors felt they had become more accountable, more focused on client needs, assigning specific homework tasks, doing follow up telephone calls with clients, and being more willing to let clients take responsibility for reaching their goals.

The main goal in this research project was to isolate the impact of LMI on the lives of clients. We did not envision this as a staff training project, designed to change the way that counsellors interacted with clients. If influencing practice would have been a primary goal, then we would have built a more comprehensive training component into the project. However, the informal reports from counsellors and managers as the project unfolded suggested to the research team that participation in the research project was having an impact on the way counsellors were interacting with clients at a more generalized level. Therefore we proposed an extension of the project in order to explore the nature of the changes in practice that counsellors were experiencing. The results of that exploration are reported in this document. It is clear that the sort of applied research undertaken in this project can have a positive effect on the clients receiving services and also on the counsellors who participate in this type of research.

Annex A: Debriefing Session Protocol

Assessing the Impact of Labour Market Information on Career Decision-Making and Job Search

Name:	
Location:	
Date:	
Group:	

First of all, thank you so much for agreeing to take part in this research project and for taking the time to provide us with some feedback on your experiences pertaining to participation in this project. We have prepared a few questions to guide our debriefing, but those are only a guide for what we want to do over the next 40 minutes or so. What we really are interested in is getting your reactions, i.e., the thoughts and feelings you experienced, to participating in this research project and to see the extent to which this experience has influenced the way you interact with clients.

1. Has being involved in this study changed your ways of understanding and working with labour market information? If so, please specify.
2. You have worked with an Employability Assessment Protocol throughout this study. Has this changed your ways of doing Employability Assessments with clients? If so, how? Please specify.
3. You have worked with an Advice and Information Session (AIS) Protocol throughout this study. Has this changed your ways of coaching clients? If so, how? Please specify.
4. What are the differences you see between AIS interviews (as introduced in this research) and employment counselling interviews (which you normally do—both before this research and during the research with other clients not in the study)? Please specify.
5. What have you learned as a professional practitioner/manager from your involvement in this study?
6. To what extent will the processes used in this study become a part of your regular practice when providing services to clients in the future?
7. What have been the major challenges in being part of this study?
8. What would you suggest be done differently in future studies?
9. What suggestions would you have if we were going to try introduce the LMI packages and Resource Centre handouts to other offices across the province?
10. Would you volunteer to be part of a similar research study in the future? Why or why not? Please specify.
11. Do you have other comments? Please specify.

Annex B

Participant Responses to Debriefing Session

(1 week following study completion)

Assessing the Impact of Labour Market Information
on
Career Decision-Making and Job Search

Question #1. Has being involved in this study changed your ways of understanding and working with labour market information? If so, please specify

Summary. There was general agreement that the counsellors did change their ways. Of the original responses approximately 90% responded yes, 5% responded maybe, 5% responded no.

YES

Structure of the Research Project
<p>Counsellor/Client Related</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project has given us an opportunity to use the sites • Gave resources to a new person with no LMI training • Provided clients with clear picture, it does not overwhelm them • A guide so clients could see the reason why they were doing tasks to meet goals • Clients are getting more experience working directly with the material • Provides specific information for specific kinds of clients • Helpful for clients to leave with the package <p>Nature of the Material</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Material is contained and applicable as an effective tool for us • Materials were specific to the employability dimensions • Resources we received were current, user friendly and effective • Provided a roadmap • More tools that helped to explain where they were in their planning • More hands on tools to work with clients • Websites very helpful
Nature of the Research Process
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Structure in how it was presented to the clients • Process was helpful to clients • Clear direction to both counsellor and to clients • Group working together to implement the materials • The project has helped us organize resources • Is working differently • Very happy to have package all together and structured to engage client
Other Practice Related Comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes, more confident working with Job Search – Before tended to contract out • LMI is more integrated in the counselling process • Information was used by clients not in the project • Other staff used the LMI in working with clients • LMI used to seem overwhelming, but not now • Has not changed understanding but changed ways of working with it • Really enjoyed ALIS (Alberta/user friendly and easy)

- Yes has value when utilized properly
- Provided opportunity to think about how we use the LMI to assist clients
- The study confirms the importance of LMI
- Client's want and need for regional LMI when making a job search or career decision locally
- Prior to project, we were overwhelmed by the amount of information
- Has given a good start at organizing things

MAYBE/ NO

- Maybe ... opportunity to ask client what was working for them and what did not
- Maybe... more internet based but not anything I have not used with clients in the past
- No ... LMI info was information they would have accessed anyway Lots was not relevant or more – i.e. Saskjobs
- No ...The study did not change my way of using or understanding but reinforced the importance of this type of information and the need for accuracy in regards to the public and as well as employment counselling

Question #2. You have worked with an Employability Assessment Protocol throughout this study, has this changed your ways of doing Employability Assessments with clients? If so, how? Please specify

Summary. There was general agreement that the counsellors did change their ways of doing the assessments (of original responses approximately 81% responded yes, 15% responded maybe, 4% responded no).

YES

Focus - Goal Oriented
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It provided a focus and goal oriented • The focus on goals and little steps was very helpful • Management thought this more systematic • The study respects the true Employability assessment (follow the client where they feel they fit) • The study material, helped identify the client in the right dimension and offer a package as guide for them
Following the protocol
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reinforced how important all the steps are • Helps recall and reinforce, • Keeps you on track • Gave her (client) information on paper so she can go more in detail • A good orientation tool • The employability dimension wheel is useful because client could relate too
Tightened up the timeframe
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Now they are asking, <i>Where do you see yourself in four weeks?</i> all the time • Changed because of the timeframe for the study

Other Practice Related Comments Regarding Future Use

- We will continue to do it but now more consciously and intentionally
- Now will be more likely to focus on short-term goals, breaking down the long-range
- More clarifications on process
- Not as apt to make assumptions about how client can manoeuvre with LMI
- This will be a good tool for orientation of new staff
- Will continue to use visual tool,
- Will continue to share with other staff
- Will use the checklists in future
- Expectation is that this focus and further development will continue within the unit

MAYBE/NO

- Maybe ... our normal practice was already similar to the Employability Assessment Protocol
- Maybe ... there was pressure to recruit quickly again due to short timelines
- 2 said ... they liked using the employability dimensions, but the checklists were repetitive
- 1 No ... the Language was a challenge for some clients

Question #3. You have worked with an Advice and Information Session (AIS) Protocol throughout this study, has this changed your ways of coaching clients? If so, how? Please specify

Summary. There was general agreement that the counsellors did change their coaching to accommodate the research protocol (of original responses 71% responded yes, 14% responded maybe, 14% responded no).

YES

Nature of the protocol

- The AIS protocol was the most difficult and un-natural area for us
- We felt AIS was too scripted and we felt stressed following the script
- It gave her more structure, but she finds it hard to only give advice and not do counselling
- It really fit in well with some of the techniques I was using before the study but it did provide more of a structure to follow
- AIS too scripted – and was unable to elaborate)

Timeframe & Pacing of Sessions

- It was a different pace but it worked out well
- Clients were not highly **barriered** so it worked well
- The timing was off, appointments were too close, and sessions were not client need directed
- Was very nervous to keep appointment in 20 minutes
- Can accomplish a lot in a short period of time
- Did not have time to establish a strong relationship but client seemed ok and found service good
- Had one who only lasted 10-12 minutes but that was OK

Other Practice Related Comments

- Possible that we do not need to go deeply as CORS often do – worth thinking about
- Most times we see clients when they have a need
- CORS often do coaching and counselling: but when clients needed more, could not do it, this was the most difficult part for both
- With self-sufficient clients, she was taking more from clients and listening more to the client than would be her normal functioning
- She had the clients lead more
- Clients that followed through were very positive and very self-motivated

- Wondered if clients who did not come back needed more ...
- It was much more like business than regular practice (maybe 85% of her clients would have benefited from more counselling)
- *To accommodate the study, but ...* Not being able to address that (*i.e., personal information*) and having to stick to “information giving” only was very difficult, and I feel did not encompass a true career counselling session
- There is pressure to get something done before next appointment

MAYBE/NO

- *Maybe* Not sure it would change behaviour in the future
- *Maybe* Would not necessarily meet every week – so a different approach
- *Maybe* One client – needed Job Search – she felt she was letting her down so client came back for more and now she (*counsellor*) is more comfortable (*counsellor perception of flexing to client need*)
- *Maybe* If results show positive change for clients it would be difficult but I might be able to change even if it would not feel like counselling
- *No* Because it is time and task-driven whereas, in employment counselling, one will have more openness to exploring barriers
- *No* Do not think it has changed our ways of coaching clients
- *No* Did not change the way she worked
- *No* I don't treat anyone any different and always treat all people the same The protocol had a process to it is the only difference

Question #4. What are the differences you see between AIS interviews (as introduced in this research) and employment counselling interviews (which you normally do—both before this research and during the research with other clients not in the study)? Please specify

Differences Introduced in the Research

About Counsellors & the Research Process

- Getting down to business: Summarizing, clarifying, setting the next goal, and being highly focussed
- AIS (*i.e.,* Stays focused, More check marks, Nice to have the AIS as a helpful structure to clarify)
- Needs assessment was more in detail (timeframe and goal) than usual; giving the clients a sense of movement and enabling them to make more progress in the AIS

About Materials

- The materials were helpful in focusing the AIS discussing progress on the tracking sheet was effective
- Language in the checklist (action verbs link find) did not fit well to what we did which was discuss and encourage (Does ‘did’ in this sentence mean did in regular practice?)
- In the project we had access to organized and specific resources
- In the project felt restricted by protocol

About Time:

- Biggest difference was meeting clients weekly –
- Time of session is different – length in between
- Spent more time because of the research study It continued to develop rapport
- Recommended 20 min time frames were stressful as some clients (immigrants with English as a second language) take longer to process
- Timeframe is different
- Time constraint especially with immigrants presented difficulties

<p>About Clients</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clients who did not admit to not knowing how to use the computer, another with a learning problem, and Immigrants, those with Learning Disabilities, Computer challenged, Age and Computer Literacy • Clients can use information on their own with more direction • Clients are very resourceful and we don't give them enough credit for being resourceful • The clients who agreed to be a part of this study were very independent Most clients are not at that level of independent career planning or Job Search, and require interventions by staff of some sort
Differences Related to Normal Practice
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More issues to be dealt with (<i>in normal practice</i>) • In employment counselling, look at client as a whole and explore barriers more fully • Less task driven and less time constricted • Normally would be some weeks in between sessions • Prior we used a mix of coaching and counselling In the 2nd or 3rd interview clients are feeling frustrated and we would do more counselling (use emotional rollercoaster) • Prior we let the client lead the interview and in the project we directed them • Formality was challenging – she prefers less formality (<i>in regular practice</i>) • Some of the stress may have been from feeling “unnatural” – wanting to do too much of a good job • If she had to do the checklist regularly, she would be very uncomfortable • We have used the tools with clients not in the project (<i>assuming this happened while the research was in process</i>)
Other Practice Related Comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How much is therapeutic and how much is not needed (<i>Seems to be a key issue for the researchers</i>) • Counselling(i.e., Can forget where they are going Will now focus more on what are next steps even in counselling and clarifying goals This helped and will transfer into counselling practice) • Maybe we do too much and say too much, <i>leading to more of a conversation</i>
<p>Question #5. What have you learned as a professional practitioner/manager from your involvement in this study?</p>
About Client Follow-through
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clients will not necessarily follow-through on information given In four week follow-up made clear that self-managed clients had not done as much as AIS clients • We discovered clients not interested in participating because they did not trust the government's involvement and that their time was worth more than the \$100 honorarium • I learned in order to have client commitment we need to respect the needs of the client • The assisted group seem to be more involved in the process and sometimes with help they were better able to use and interpret labour market information
About Appointments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liked an appointment in a week – especially the 1st one after – catch them before they get really stuck 2nd AIS was too soon – was 5-10 minutes long • 1st AIS was really motivational – 2nd was disappointing
About Resources
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Steps to follow and specific tasks are very helpful from a managers perspective • We learned from the LMI package specifically effective websites • We have resources and tools we can share with other staff in the Region • We need LMI tailored to local information

- We learned where to find specific information and some alternative resources
- The project helped us organize the resources/materials in the resource room
- Learned about tools, how to use them, and how to adapt them to the needs of the person
- We have a lot to offer clients
- The tools were huge
- 2 counsellors spent a lot of time preparing and being fully confident in the materials
- Some resources (i.e., the websites) were not as user friendly as we assumed and clients became overwhelmed
- I have learned that our Saskatchewan based information was of particular value to our clients
- It may be a good practice to modify the tools to enhance Saskatchewan sources of information on labour market and tailor the tools provided by the study to meet the needs and wants of our clients

About the Research Process

- We learned a lot about research and what is involved in the process
- We had no idea the actual time commitment involved in the project
- The project made current materials accessible to our client in or out of the project
- Provided us an opportunity to work with 2 other offices on a common project
- A sense of pride that we were involved in a project that will move the profession forward and generate evidence bases best practices
- Explaining Counsellor role regularly
- Giving concrete information in accordance with their needs – they can do a lot on their own
- The structure would need to be adapted to different clients Sometimes counselling will be needed
- As we gained some very good employment results from the participants of this study, I will encourage all our staff to use the labour market tools from the study with their clients
- Concerned - doing best job for the client; local information in Sask. was of great value

Other Comments and Questions

- Further question - Can we come up with packages that “fit” with the client need?
- We learned that following protocol does not always end up with everyone doing the same thing
- Important to have clients leave with something in hand
- That positive results can happen with proper information and proper encouragement
- That I will continue to work as I have in the past with clients, as it is effective and meaningful
- You need counselling and information together
- Took list too literally – i.e., linking, not discussing or exploring

Question #6. To what extent will the processes used in this study become part of your regular practice when providing services to clients in the future? Please specify

Probable

- Want to share the binder and resources with the other CORS in the office
- Two people specified client binders as excellent-we hope to create a handout with the materials that can be given as tools for clients
- Use especially with Francophone clients Refers them to websites
- Agreed the processes used will have a significant impact in our regular practice
- Will keep the tools specifically the wheel and continue the focus on the employability dimensions
- We will continue to provide the resources in the resource room
- The client tracking sheet is helpful and will use Generates good discussion on what resources they have used, what was helpful and what was missing
- Tracking with the checklist
- I will use the Dimension Wheel, the Employability assessment Protocol as well as some of the AIS structure

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The availability of an LMI package in the resource room to assist a client in managing his/her own journey • Supporting client self-direction
Possible
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This practice may become more intentional with use • A photocopy of the material can be made available • Will incorporate the process within our own style so it does not feel so restrictive • The memory sticks were a very nice gesture and we would like to encourage this practice within our offices • We will consider how this can be expanded to the rest of the team • Anticipates difficulty sticking to protocols to get results • The packages themselves could be transferable even if maybe not the processes • There is info I might use
Not Possible
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A binder for every client is not possible
Other Practice Related Comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We tend to fall into a routine but this process forced us to be more structured in our assessments and interviews It helped to gather more information • Continue to use encouragement, but allow them to be more self-directed • This study showed that with encouragement people don't mind doing things on their own They still like to be encouraged or shown when the don't know • I do not feel the processes will become a regular part of my day to day work, unless it was something I was doing already • Instead of jumping in to do it for them, I'm now encouraging people to learn and do it more on their own • When you are so busy it's easier to do it for the clients, rather than teach them to do independently • The 'gem' of the LMI packages is giving clients a process, a way to navigate and be self-directed

Question #7. What have been the major challenges in being part of this study?

Time of Year
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The months of the research • Weather and time of year – would have been better in fall or winter • The time of year added pressure (spring forum, office planning day, vacations)
Time for Project
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Managing other clients • The time crunch • Another challenge was the changes made at the last minute • Was time consuming Needed a full day of preparation • Found the AIS timeframes challenging • When there was a line-up of people wanting assistance, it would take time to assist participants • Feeling rushed trying to fit in my regular clients i.e., balancing my regular work load and doing the study
Recruitment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pressure of recruiting the clients Short time frame (3 weeks to 4) to get them • Getting the numbers • I believe that a longer timeline for the study would have been beneficial to recruit clients • Recruiting period very short • Did three weeks of screening – usually do not do this regularly

- Recruitment and screening was challenging: knowing they were going to be in the self-management group
- Due to the volume of clients I relied a lot on my team members to cover me so I had more time to screen and recruit participants (in the Dieppe office)
- Hard to change scheduling and processing in order to recruit into the research
- Recruitment of clients took a lot longer and required a lot more time and effort to get the number needed

Research Process

- There was a lot to explain, a lot of information to cover, a lot of administrative stuff at the beginning
- Found process initially difficult - did get easier with familiarity
- It would have been beneficial to have the packages in their final state prior to the beginning of the study for review
- Materials arriving late (although well worth the wait)
- Protocol changing as we went along
- Client are not always in one or the other dimension – they are overlapping
- Even if at exploring stage, in subsequent interviews, looking at Job Search
- Keeping the co-workers in the office and unit understanding the project and what was involved
- Getting documentation done in a timely fashion
- The appointments were fast and furious
- A number of missed appointments and those who rescheduled
- Collect when finished – then do it weekly Had to do this every Friday Took a lot more time
- Procedures changed more than protocols – people went with the flow and made it work
- Documentation in their own office systems was an added responsibility

Personal

- Wanted to do a really good job
- One staff participating was 80% and that added to the work load pressures
- Balancing workload and the project (i.e., time management)
- Insecurities about following protocol-are we doing it right?
- The need to remain flexible did add some stress (i.e., when protocols changed)
- Felt guilty and could have been a bit biased (i.e., with self-management clients)

Question #8. What would you suggest be done differently in future studies?

Intake Recruitment and Timing

- May need to be longer
- If this is to be part of natural flow, intake should have been over a longer period
- If EI is about to run out, clients need jobs now and could not wait over the summer
- increase the timeline for the study to allow for more time for recruitment
- As the project evolves, being 'nimble and flexible' is not always easy
- Winter (or fall)
- January with recruitment longer
- May
- Summer - stay away from vacation time A longer timeframe might be better

Participants

- Spread the numbers among more CORS They were dropping their own clients in order to focus on this study
- We understand that all our challenges resulted from workload and adding this project to an all ready high pressure situation

Training
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2-day training was too short – they felt like the clients • An extra half day would have helped plus a few more people) • We should expect greater time commitment (hard to imagine when you start as to what is involved) • As the project evolves, being ‘nimble and flexible’ is not always easy
Process
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use the feedback from client • Allow clients to access both LMI packages • If in French, could have had many more clients • Have the completed package well ahead of the start date of the study • Make surveys similar (i.e., Initial survey – Yes/No; Final Survey – OK/Not OK) • Make it specific to region as information is different from region to region • Use more regional sources of LMI • Saskjobs was the most relevant site • Contacting clients prior to their appointment was helpful but that was not added to near the end of the project
Other Comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Found it a bit confusing – clients were at different stage and she had to review the protocols before • The project itself was clear and provided the tools and support we needed • I think we were able to meet the challenges and successfully fulfill expectations • If we did this all over we could do things PERFECTLY!

Question #9. What suggestions would you have if we were going to try introduce the LMI packages and Resource Centre handouts to other offices across the province?

Introducing/Sharing the Research Information
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If CORS had some feedback on the results, and they were positive, this would motivate others to adopt the package • Have a bulleted fact sheet as a summary • Share the project results with the branch Hopefully the study will provide a best practise model • This became a value added – for clients and CORS who all still continued to do their work • Involved the CECs from the project We can provide buy in as we know from experience the tools work • Would want central office staff involved – the information needs a context and the backup group • Would like the packages bookmarked according to the Employment Dimensions and in the Resource Centre for all to use
Future Development Possibilities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Go over the LMI resources and tools in training • Include the materials into the training • We believe we need to just start to use them • Sometimes a refresher would be helpful • Have materials in French • We may need to improve in a few areas of the binders • Try and develop a package that would be more specific to the area and have more visual information • Develop a generic package that we could add to in order to make it more specific to our region • I would also get rid of the Career DM Package, as I think the Job Search information is easier to navigate independently versus the CDM information

- CDM packages would be good for schools/students
- Ensure that the feedback from clients is used to further refine the packages before introducing across the province
- It will be a great tool for clients groups we cannot serve but could be self-served
- Depending on the client, very self-motivated people and clients capable of researching information will benefit from such a package
- I noticed some clients excelled with the package and others were lost We may need to screen a little before giving such a package to certain clients

Question #10. Would you volunteer to be part of a similar research study in the future? Why or why not? Please specify

Summary: All participants indicated willingness to participate in a similar research study in the future Two people said that would not be interested in participating right away, and one other person said that the timing of a future project would be a factor in taking part.

The reasons specified are summarized below:

Professional Learning from the Project

- Two people said that they had learned a lot/
- One manager said the counsellors learned a lot and could tell because there was no complaining)
- We now have more confidence working with protocol and within the research model
- We now have the experience and understand the workload implications we would handle the pressure better
- Learned a lot and might request \$100 or international conference

Professional Enhancement

- We believed we would gain something professionally from being involved
- We want to see our profession move forward and have the data to prove what we do really does make a difference!
- I believe that research is important to learning how to better serve our clients
- Made her a better employment counsellor

Counsellor Success Experiences

- It gave me good feedback from clients
- This research was refreshing and provided encouragement when I dealt with the people who successfully found employment; like planting a seed and seeing results
- These have been good tools
- The tools and resources provided us in the project are effective in the work we do
- I enjoyed working with a select group of clients and being able to focus on them and providing career services

Question #11. Do you have other comments? Please specify

- Recommended use of a spread sheet to organize data
- The materials would be useful with youth
- Reflection time in between meetings gave ideas for what was missing, and ideas for the next session
- The protocols are useful as a guide, not as a rule
- Raised concern regarding client presentation of *too rosy a picture* and the impact on the results of the research
- Comments on impact on the clients and feeling that clients went away feeling served
- The Job Search did not have as much impact on clients as the more complex Career Decision Making

Annex C

Participant Responses to 4 Month Follow Up Interviews

Assessing the Impact of Labour Market Information on Career Decision-Making and Job Search

Follow-up Saskatchewan: Interviewer #1, Interviewer #2, Both Interviewers

Follow-up New Brunswick: Interviewer #1, Interviewer #2, Both Interviewers

Question #1. Has being involved in this study changed your ways of understanding and working with labour market information? If so, please specify

Saskatchewan: 95% of the statements conceptually the same. Stylistic differences in record keeping exist, one interviewer tended to summarize responses, while other interviewer separated thoughts and several times recorded specific examples from the interviewees. But conceptually, 95% of the comments were identical.

New Brunswick: Recorded responses 100% were conceptually the same, with the same caveat as above.

Structure of the Research Project

Orientation

- Because this was so structured and rigidly enforced, it forced me to really take what I learned in the orientation and apply it. Sometimes in training when you return to the office it's so busy you don't apply what you learn (like alcoholic returning to their community).

Materials

- The Job Search package is a real practical concrete help. Used the package as a self-directed resource – and when clients return, they are more prepared
- Suggested Material Changes. Tailoring MRI packages for specific populations to be able to pull out specific tools to meet specific needs.

Applying the structure

- Never really thought in terms of intake of clients as assisted or self-help – now is built into every intake interview. The “categories” have stuck! (assisted/non-assisted).
- Using pieces of LMI didn't use before
- Telling clients that they need to use LMI to ensure their goal is realistic with regard to demand occupations.
- Much clearer re: reason why the client needs to know more and use LMI.
- Know yourself – am able to explain why this is important to the client.
- Not using our package but using the client's own package (i.e., Research Guide geared to training).

Assessment

- Need some better check on computer skills at intake.
- I don't use everything from research package but see that assessment has become more conscious.
- Used Job Search guides a lot – giving it to them independently. I'm going to use this much more because I would see them coming back with real results
- Checklists kept me focused and organized and focused on employability.
- With TSD, got into habit of assessing financial need rather than the employability dimensions.

- Study respected well the “real” assessment around employability dimensions.
- Using the CDM was like trying to teach fishing versus giving them fish – trying to help clients acquire skills and ability to make own decisions.
- In gathering data, we did not count the clients who didn’t not come back because they were helped. This is missing data.

Nature of the Research Process

Process

- The assessment process used in the research works in operational practice.
- Using the LMI in a more focused way, i.e. Guiding clients towards LMI and hooking it to their goal, making that connection more directly.

Client Choice

- Giving the explicit option to clients to work on their own at the beginning.
- Many clients choose to start alone. Then they come with questions and most clients have a good idea of what they want.
- Could see some clients could benefit from assistance but were randomly assigned to independent or vice versa

Client Goal Setting

- Sometime we wanted to hold clients’ hands – but we were forced to let them take charge
- Realized client goals and plans are not mine, but they are owned by the client and the client is responsible for his/her goals.

Counsellor Role Change due to Research Process.

- I used to be maternal and would forget it was the client’s decision and I got more involved.
- Now the client is responsible.
- I am a guide and there to give them resources they need.

Employability Assessment Process

- This process really respected the employability assessment process that we should be following anyways, but sometimes don’t.
- For example, when we are driven by training and skills development, we easily get into the habit of assessing financial eligibility of clients rather than assessing their employability needs.

Other Practice Related Comments

Counsellor Roles

- The biggest changes were in control, client ability, and self-management which is relatively new to the field.
- We were the “police” before – now clients are capable and able – this project showed that clients were doing their own work and managing services by asking questions and asking for targeted help.
- I’m better – before would just give client websites and hope for the best, now I’m much more familiar with the sites so I refer clients more frequently and am much more capable of following up with them regarding their use of the sites.
- Counsellor as Coach .For example, now opening up the LMI sites and demonstrating how to use – actually coaching much more – before were only showing. Now 2 hours information session
- Counsellor Change. More confidence – comfort zone – before vaguely could say I know LMI.
- Now I know the LMI in depth and in detail. So, now I am following up in more depth.
- The project forced counsellors to know the sites – this forced learning. Confidence and comfort zone with clients has increased
- This brought technology to the forefront for me – I relied on paper/pencil – this brought me to using technology and integrating it to my sessions with clients.
- Now I am more confident in using technology in my practice

Client Roles.

- Action plan ownership was given to the client – before it resided more with counsellor.
- Control, efficiency have now changed to give more responsibility to clients. (This is a new way of thinking about our role).
- **Changed client motivation.**
- Counsellor sensitivity to Individual differences Increased. Differences mentioned: people unable to use Internet (i.e., some older clients), English language competencies (i.e., some immigrant clients).
- Client Honesty. A self-managed client who cannot use computer – when asked them if had skills, would say yes – but then stuck in self-managed without supports. Had one client in this category – put into assisted and client called back and said it was helpful in building in computer skills.
- Really enjoyed ALIS site from Alberta – give it to every client – it is a one-stop shop. I learned about new tools.

Question #2. You have worked with an Employability Assessment Protocol throughout this study, has this changed your ways of doing Employability Assessments with clients? If so, how? Please specify

Summary. Agreement noted between recorders, same comments as for #1. Responses between sites are quite different.

Focus - Goal Oriented

- Gathering information and re past, where are they now, where do they want to go, develop action plan – don't use now
- Clarified goals and steps more explicitly – goals very clearly defined with time frames
- Career goal group session

Protocol (& Training Effects)

- Current recording system is very good.
- The 7 questions (in our handout and laminated sheer) – not currently in use very much. (Depends on client needs. Very subjective.)
- 2 like to use it; like ways they are phrased, one loved the end game, different than talking goals; two liked responsibility – what are they responsible for and others' responsibilities. (Adapting these to own style. Two favourite questions are end-game and responsibilities. Not using in totality or verbatim, but using in more subtle ways.)
- This increased structure and explicit agreements make clients more accountable – clear goals with timelines – increased clarity re: steps, expectations
- Training. Would recommend that all counsellors follow the SND protocols for a good period of time – to reinforce the process. Note, could also do this in a peer support way rather than wait for training. NB – one office is using the SND to train others fully –using the research protocols to do so. Study very parallel with what we already know we should do; every new counsellor should follow protocols for the 1st month of their employment to ensure it really is embraced and carried forward in their work
- Training. Staff are being mentored by ones who participated in study – doing this in Miramichi, so all staff have binders and employment assessment protocols – training all office staff, resource centre staff, 3rd party providers etc.
- Fits really well with Employment Service Delivery Model
- Training. Expect increased positive spin offs from this study – ex.: increased focus on LMI - increased use of LMI sites This will continue if we can train others in our offices.
- Training. LMI info sites – will perhaps be revised and updated. When people hear LMI they think about employment. This study expanded it to personal assessment, labour market assessment etc. - beyond what skills employers need, now LMI is integral to everything I do I now know what I didn't know.
- Training. Broader understanding of what LMI is – not just employment – used to think only about what employers need re: skills

Tightened up the timeframe
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In summer they do a fast flow of assessments. However, when the counsellors got these clients, discovered they had been in wrong employability dimension. The protocol helps prevent counsellors from taking shortcuts (in the summer?). • Using follow-up phone calls more regularly – initiating the call and structuring the follow-ups – i.e. we will meet in 2 weeks, leads to very good working relationship
Other Practice Related Comments Regarding Future Use
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This was pretty much what we're doing all along • Unless huge red flags, not going as in-depth into emotional issues • Majority of people ready to go • Impact of Role Clarification. Now I tend to define my role as an employment counsellor and their role much more clearly, confidentiality agreement much more explicit now – realize this is really important to client – co-located with Service Canada and important that clients know that you work together and this will not affect their benefits – clients feel more secure • Impact of Role Clarification. Most clients are overwhelmed and unclear re: federal/provincial roles and responsibilities – study make roles/expectations clearer • Thinks there will be positive spin-offs to the study: i.e.: Great tools for me as a new counsellor – step-by-step

Question #3. You have worked with an Advice and Information Session (AIS) Protocol throughout this study. Has this changed your ways of coaching clients? If so, how? Please specify.

Summary. Agreement noted between recorders, same comments as for #1. Responses between sites very different.

Nature of the protocol
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specific question – do you know where to find this information now? Show me where the information is. Always use this check now. • Question asking is much more direct and streamlined now • Now much more concrete, assign specific tasks, follow up much more targeted and specific – not just how are you doing but have you completed x, y, z • Consistent methodology helped focus on specific, targeted issues and action - more details with respect to next steps and bring forwards
Timeframe & Pacing of Sessions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Objectives one week to next very clear; therefore very easy to measure progress – lots of putting back to client action and responsibility • Important to note follow-up session – even if it is only 15 minutes, it mattered. A small phone call could help. Some clients were truly committed to the study and would go to great lengths to finish the project (even one from a hospital bed, really wanted to talk even though still struggling and in hospital)
Other Practice Related Comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This has taken me to next phase of my counselling career. Already answered in Question #1 & 2. • In the project, it was hard to not go further than AIS, was not enough – didn't like it, we always wanted to do more but we couldn't, was hard – very restrictive. Many had similar experiences – felt they needed to/should have stayed with clients on certain emotional issues. • Client came – find me a job – now what are you doing to find a job? Put responsibility back on the client. Clearer for clients that if they do nothing it will affect directly what they get back. • Also kept counsellor more focussed. Now she gives more tasks and homework – much more specific. Kept work focused on employment/career development issue – rather than focusing on extraneous issues. Small steps make progress more doable for clients. There is much more

focus on next steps.

- AIS sessions – age played a factor - more accountability with older clients-- much more able to come back and say this is what I did, this is where I am, these are my next steps. Younger clients much more likely to not have done work between sessions

Question #4. What are the differences you see between AIS interviews (as introduced in this research) and employment counselling interviews (which you normally do—both before this research and during the research with other clients not in the study)? Please specify

Differences Introduced in the Research
<p>About Counsellors & the Research Process</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • more follow thru – everyone accountable to do what said would do • Made counsellors more accountable – i.e. a no-show – automatically followed-up and called – sometimes that is all it takes to get the clients to re-connect and re-commit. Gave more empowerment to the clients – kept relationship going • More structured, more specific, more targeted in focus, more time limited –unitary focus on employment/career development issues – got rid of all extraneous chat/discussion about how client feels, relationships etc. • Less change – I am going back to previous approach to counselling – people requesting \$ - I need to do counselling to manage clients' expectations unless client has a very clear goal – then I will go to information only – otherwise I do counselling. • Not necessarily knowing information, but knowing where to find it. I don't have to be expert with all the info – I am person who can guide client where to find it <p>About Materials</p> <p>About Time:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More intensive regular contact – every week – keeps momentum – can catch problems/barriers earlier. • Regular contact important, normally wouldn't see client in 1 week for 4 weeks in a row <p>About Clients</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clients felt more empowered • Having LMI displayed and accessible and have CSIOs has helped clients
<p style="text-align: center;">Differences Related to Normal Practice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AIS is very structured – different time frame • Giving direct advice – “This is my recommendation re: what you should do next – it's up to you, but won't go onto next step toward funding unless done” More ammunition to say no to \$ • Before felt I had to solve clients' problems – now I am not as much this way – I can offer advice, but client is in charge • Having to reflect and be careful to avoid counselling component was hard – now more conscientious about thinking about what client needs; greater awareness of how far a client is going to go
Other Practice Related Comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some “liked” the structure (i.e., I am a consultant – bank of information – as opposed to social worker. I like this.) • Now that have better LMI we're getting better research back from clients – better case for giving \$ • Have already looked at work already done with client, so can go in with full awareness of background – need to be careful not to pre-judge based on information, but sometimes I can be more helpful knowing background – study has not changed my approach on this front. • I still feel a need to sometimes do some research/ social services screen, past involvement with Dept. etc. so that I can provide a best advice and guidance. • Structure – there were specific, ordered steps; counselling interviews were more client

directed/responsive before.

Question #5. What have you learned as a professional practitioner/manager from your involvement in this study?

About Client Follow-through
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The more information you can get the better – the better career choices you can make • With the right time and right tools, we can have impact on clients • Use less time as long as you structure it up front. Don't always have time
About Appointments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can have impact if have right tools even if don't have much time. • Clients came back excited about having used the tools independently.
About Resources
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Had increased numbers of immigrants – wondered about level of comprehension during IAS. • Really questioned whether client understood wording – some of wording difficult for ESL levels
About the Research Process
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater ability for client to self-help than we or government can imagine. • Use the employability assessment more deliberately.
Other Comments and Questions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We created dependency • Used to feel they needed me, Now I don't want them to need me – get what you want/need and get going • Clients are more self-sufficient than realized earlier. Clients easily misjudged • Sometimes, we under-estimate the potential of clients. Clients exceeded my expectations.

Question #6. To what extent will the processes used in this study become part of your regular practice when providing services to clients in the future? Please specify

Probable
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having the LMI displayed, accessible and having access to CSO's has been a big improvement • Increased structure. Clients liked to know exactly what to expect in next 4 weeks • Phone sooner if clients don't show (some, not all). Follow-up with clients by phone – more quickly. • Now schedule more regular, shorter appointments – 15 minutes initial needs assessment • Automatically book for appointment in first week with specific tasks for them to do in between • I'm using the career information centre more often – take them out to introduce them to centre staff, show resources and computers
Possible
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May when roll out bigger package will see further changes • Caseloads don't always allow for this frequency of contact – enabled us to develop relationships more quickly with clients
Not Possible
N/A
Other Practice Related Comments
Already covered. Nothing additional

Question #7. What have been the major challenges in being part of this study?

Time of Year
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Timing/time frame – getting clients signed up prior to summer - increased pressure; amount of time not enough • Summer timeframe • Do it in Jan-Mar – extend time frame • Would have helped to have extended timeframe from the beginning
Time for Project
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Part-time employee (80%) – found the recruitment demands very hard to fit in a reduced work week. Opportunity to work overtime – not fair as expected to do same as everyone else but in 80% of FTE • Managing with holidays • Between 1st and 2nd IAS – only 1 week in some cases – needed at least 2 weeks – same as between that and final often clients had nothing to say – too soon since last session • Clients were more ready for their second AIS interview where there was closer to 2 weeks in between • A lot for client to wrap head around – not enough time
Recruitment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Struggling to find enough clients in the 2 categories. Inconsistencies – some got more CDM clients and fewer JS; others the reverse • For consistency – fewer clients better in some ways
Process
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No more checklists was a great moment • AIS interviews. Recommend: 2 weeks/6 weeks between IAS interviews • Worried about presenting so much information and forms to complete during the first session – felt some clients were overwhelmed <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Getting the numbers – getting the right cells ○ Clients apparently got it. • Instead of all full time – have more counsellors involved – spread clients out amongst more counsellors
Personal
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • So glad when 1st 3 weeks over – there was increased pressure to get numbers across the different cells • Was stressful. Had scenarios where LMI counsellors were running ragged and others were not. • Clients who participated said they got excellent service • If I could have focussed solely on this – put pause on regular case load would be much easier. Insist on modified caseload in future • Recommend modified case load – or have someone cover crises at least

Question #8. What would you suggest be done differently in future studies?

Intake, Recruitment and Timing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extend intake period • Change the time and season – not summer • March/April would be a good time (in one region) • In preparing us for protocols – way too rushed – needed another half day • In AIS – presented in beginning as very restricted – by end realized could talk about much more • Started 2 weeks after orientation – material came late – so really didn't have enough time to go through the material (like a client would) before had to start using it with clients – needed this time. • Have time to go through materials in preparation for the project.
Participants
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hard for part-time staff to participate • Number of clients per counsellor ok • Minimum 2 to 3 per office • Client numbers: 9-10 OK and full-time counsellors • Resource centres unsung heroes in project – give them more binders! They haven't been plugged into results/bigger picture of this projects. They did careful screening and recruitment. Write letter (from CCDF) sharing results and thanking them
Training
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If had more counsellors involved that would have helped – hard to be only counsellor in an office doing the study. • Major challenge – separating counselling from advice; that was an awesome discussion → of everything, that really stands out to me • More time for the orientation process – and the post – pre and more time to separate AIS and counselling. • CCDF to be the models of counsellor behaviour. • Orientation was too short. Information overload at orientation – needed lunch hour to process information – by last hours of days not taking anything in
Process
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AIS was too extreme in the orientation • What I really took back from the orientation was Lynne in role play as a model – limited use to go in small groups as we really didn't know what we were doing • Assisted/self-assisted – wish we could have assigned clients based on own knowledge/assessment of them – random assignment was hard. After this research, go to choosing groups for client assignment. • Any support (CCDF/Manager) tools missing? No. • Client used LMI packages whether in project or not. • Cut down on time and fine for clients – all got exactly same information. Didn't ask any personal/private questions – it was awesome. This also allowed clients to share a little bit • Consider doing group exits – these worked very well and recommending it • Did ~4 individual interviews with people who missed the group session. Did 2 in groups – facilitated chance for the clients to talk.
Other Comments
<p>Our manager wouldn't let us deviate from protocol at all – the group exit would have been so great</p>

Question #9. What suggestions would you have if we were going to try to introduce the LMI packages and Resource Centre handouts to other offices across the province?

Introducing/Sharing the Research Information
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nothing further • Resources Room people – what can we do for them – more resource packages • RR personnel – they need a personal letter – and the results should be shared with them • NB – take up with managers how the Resource Centre Staff can be acknowledged • Surprised how little the \$100 meant to the clients – they were really excited about accessing the information, same with \$75 for 2 follow-ups: clients so eager to give feedback – told counsellor they couldn't wait for follow-up interview.
Future Development Possibilities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow each region to take the basic package and tailor it locally on – tailor package to integrate these tools – introduce to offices who haven't piloted it – will need orientation • Think through how to orient other offices to the project. • *** For French Pilot – NB for future, check on computer literacy before admitting clients into the project.

Question #10. Would you volunteer to be part of a similar research study in the future? Why or why not? Please specify

Summary: All participants indicated willingness to participate in a similar research study in the future Two people said that would not be interested in participating right away, and one other person said that the timing of a future project would be a factor in taking part

Learning Project
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unanimously yes – but with the reservations already mentioned • Yes unanimous.
Tools
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further Comment: NB the \$100 did not seem to make any difference. Not sure at all about whether the \$75 made any difference or not.
Professional Development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When 1st signed up didn't really know what we were getting into – a bit of a shock when packages started arriving.
Counsellor Success
N/A

Question #11. Do you have other comments? Please specify

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No further comments • Asked them what happened which resulted in the numbers in the cells being unbalanced • Only two commented --said that some were not able to come for the follow-up AIS interviews and/or decided that did not need the help. They went from initially being assisted to independent. |
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