



Indiana
**VOCATIONAL
REHABILITATION**
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VIRTUAL DISCOVERY SERVICES

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION
PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK ON
INVOLVEMENT IN VIRTUAL
DISCOVERY SERVICES DURING
COVID-19 RESTRICTIONS

March 2023

VIRTUAL DISCOVERY SERVICES DURING COVID-19

BACKGROUND

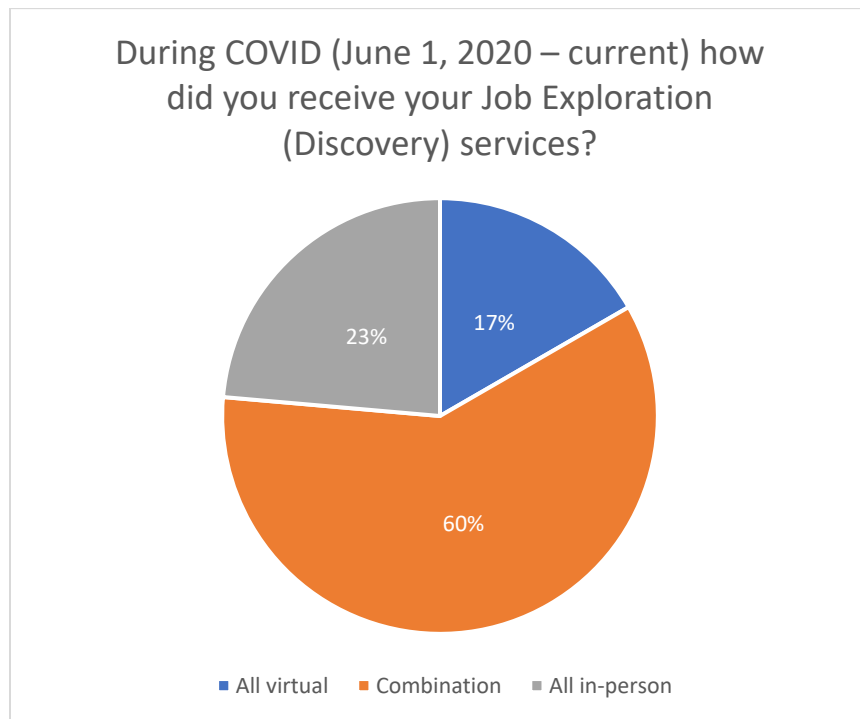
The COVID pandemic brought with it many challenges to the provision of Discovery services . In the face of these challenges, there was an emergence of unique and creative methods to provide Discovery services utilizing technologies to conduct services virtually.

A survey was conducted to better understand the nature, scope, and barriers faced from a VR participant perspective of experiencing virtual Discovery services. Prospective respondents were identified by participating employment services providers and were given a link to the survey. As some participants may not have been familiar with the term Discovery services, for purposes of the survey, the term Job Exploration Services was used. The identified VR participants were asked to provide responses to a series of questions based on their experience with Job Exploration services provided to them from June 2020 to December 2020. 72 VR participants responded to the survey.

This report reviews the findings from the participant survey and concludes with suggestions on best practices and tips for successful remote service delivery.

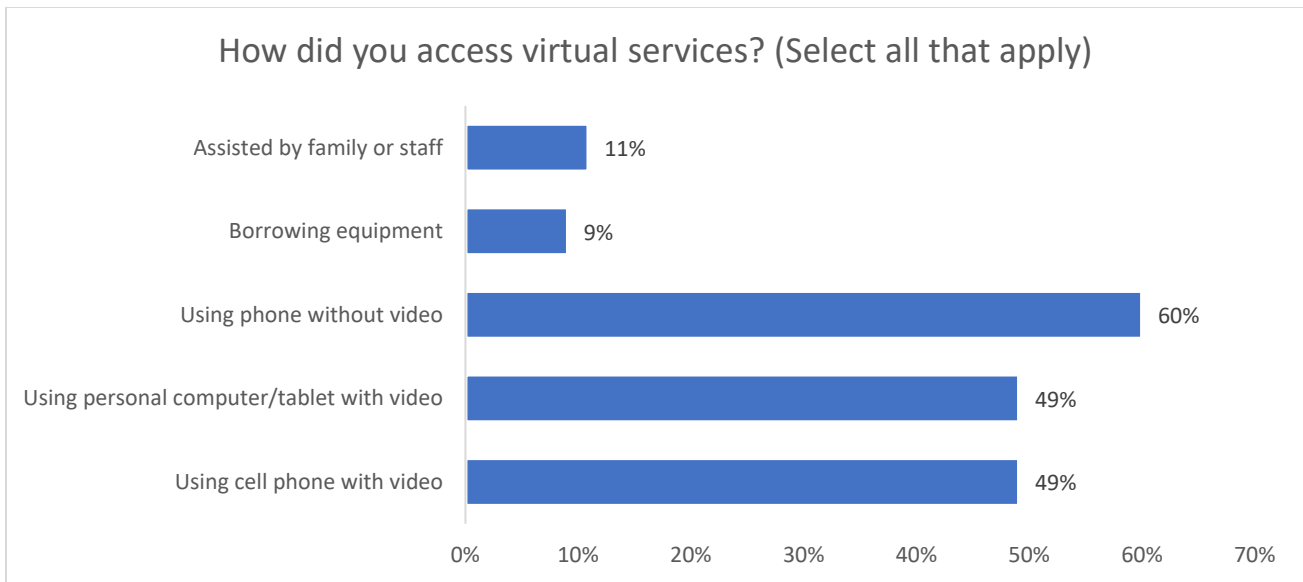
PARTICIPANT SURVEY RESULTS

QUESTION 1:



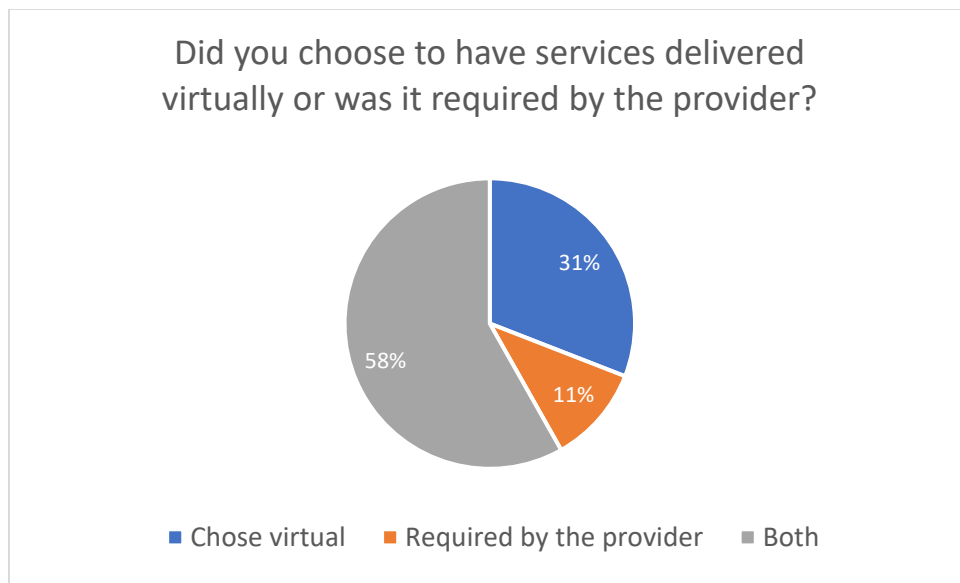
The majority of respondents (43), representing 60% of all respondents, indicated that they received a combination of virtual and in-person job exploration services during the time period. 17 respondents, representing 23% of all respondents, indicated they received all job exploration services via an in-person format with 12 respondents, representing 17% of all respondents, indicating they received all job exploration services via a virtual format. Respondents who indicated that they received all of their services in-person did not complete the remainder of the survey.

QUESTION 2:



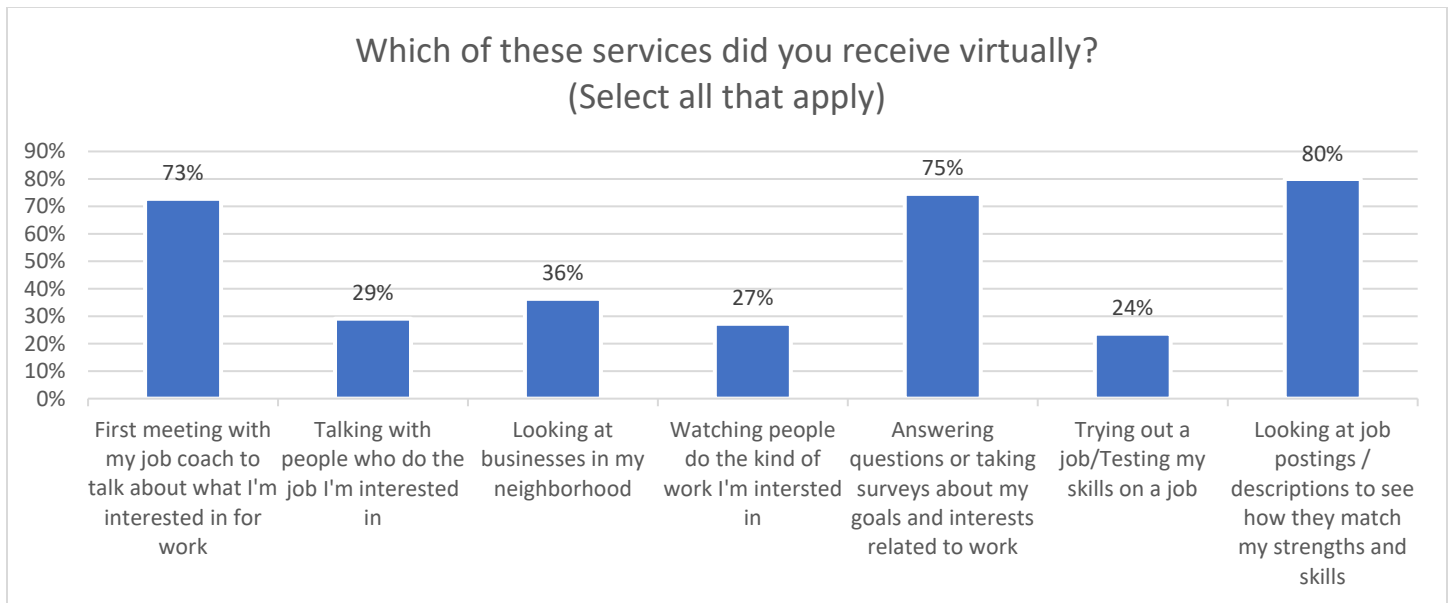
The majority of respondents (33) representing 60%, indicated that they utilized their cell phone without video when receiving job exploration services. There were 27 respondents representing 49%, who indicated they used a cell phone with a video feature when receiving job exploration services. There were an additional 27 respondents, representing an additional 49%, that indicated they received job exploration services utilizing a personal computer or tablet with video. 6 respondents, representing 11%, indicated they were assisted by a family member or a staff person to receive job exploration services. There were 5 respondents, representing 9%, who indicated they borrowed equipment from a library, family member, or a provider staff to receive job exploration services.

QUESTION 3:



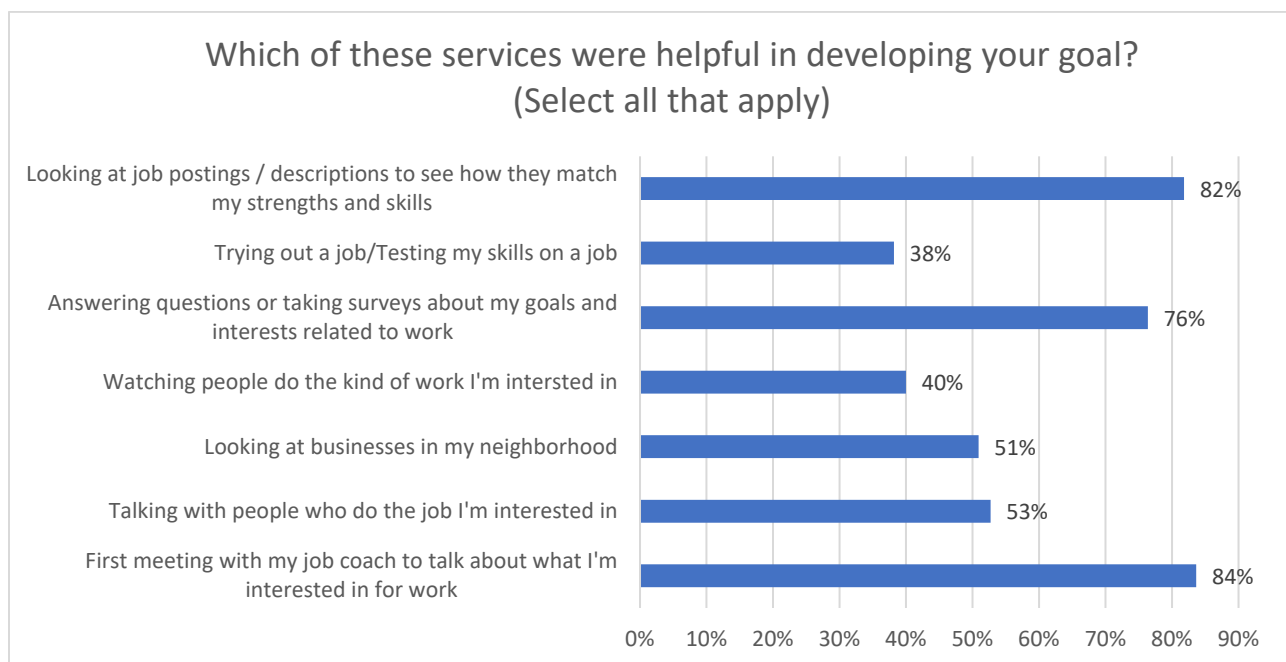
The majority of respondents (32), representing 58% of all respondents indicated that virtual job exploration was both required by the provider and that they as the participant chose to have services provided on a virtual format. 17 respondents, representing 31% of all respondents indicated that they chose to receive their job exploration services using a virtual format. A small number of respondents (6), representing 11% of all respondents, indicated that their provider required them to receive job exploration services using a virtual format.

QUESTION 4:



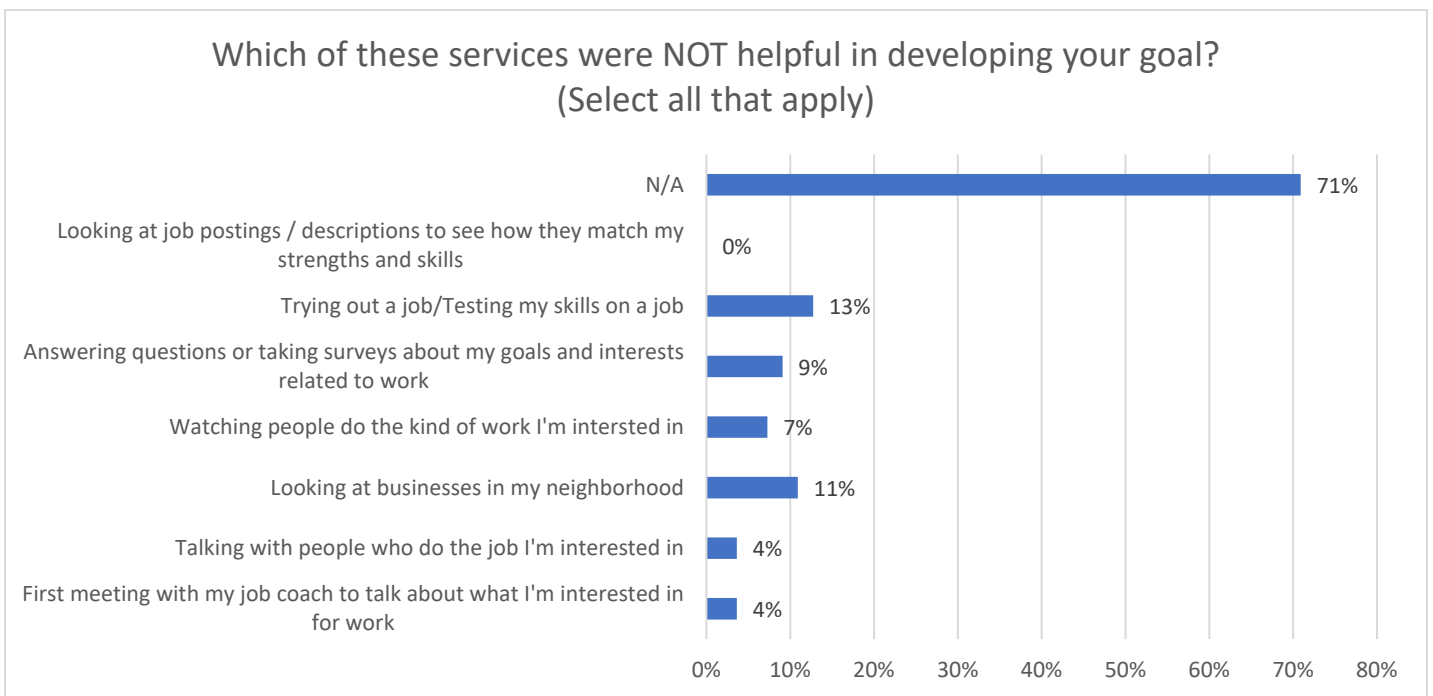
44 respondents, representing 80% of all respondents, indicated that they met with their provider to review job postings to determine if their strengths and skills matched the job requirements. 41 respondents, representing 75% of all respondents, indicated that they answered questions or took surveys about their goals and interests related to work. 40 respondents, representing 73% of all respondents indicated, that their initial job exploration meeting was conducted using a virtual format. 20 respondents, representing 36% of all respondents, indicated that they looked at businesses in their neighborhood. 16 respondents, representing 29% of all respondents indicated that they talked with people who are employed in the job they are interested in. 15 respondents, representing 27% of all respondents, indicated that they watched people perform the work they are interested in. 13 respondents, representing 24% of all respondents indicated that they tried out a job or tested their skill on a job in the virtual format. Respondents were asked to choose all activities that applied.

QUESTION 5:



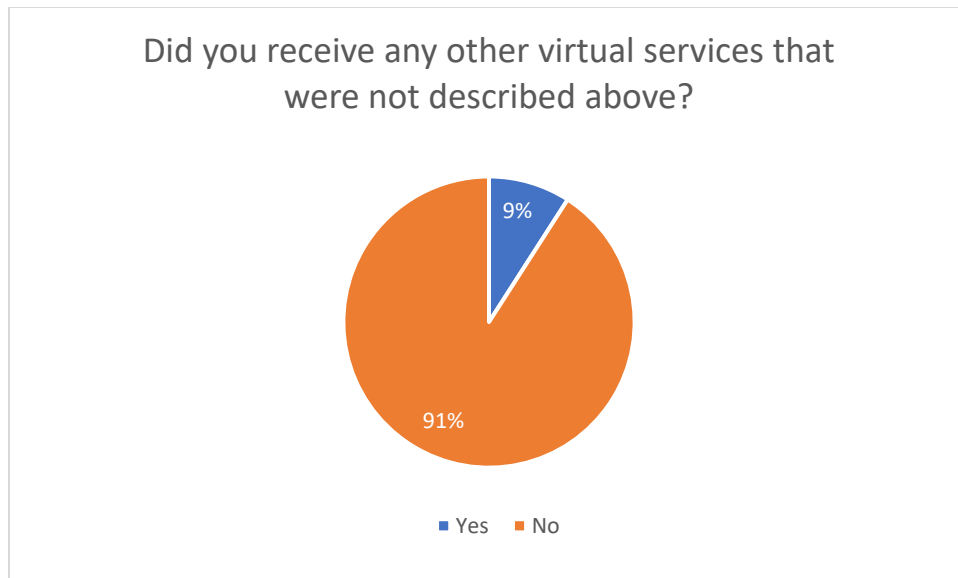
46 respondents, representing 84% of all respondents, indicated their first meeting with their job coach to talk about their work interests was helpful. 45 respondents, representing 82% of all respondents, indicated that looking at job postings/descriptions to see how they matched the individual's strengths and skills was valuable. 42 respondents, representing 76% of all respondents, indicated that answering questions or taking surveys about their goals and interests related to work was helpful. 29 respondents, representing 53% of all respondents, reported that talking with people who do the job they are interested in was beneficial. 28 respondents, representing 51% of all respondents, indicated that looking at businesses in their neighborhood was a worthwhile activity. 22 respondents, representing 40% of all respondents, indicated that watching people perform the kind of work they are interested in was helpful. 21 respondents, representing 38% of all respondents, reported that trying out a job or testing their skills on a job was helpful. Respondents were instructed to select all activities that applied. One limitation of this measure is that individuals who were not involved in a particular activity would not have been in a position to respond regarding the perceived benefit of that activity.

QUESTION 6:



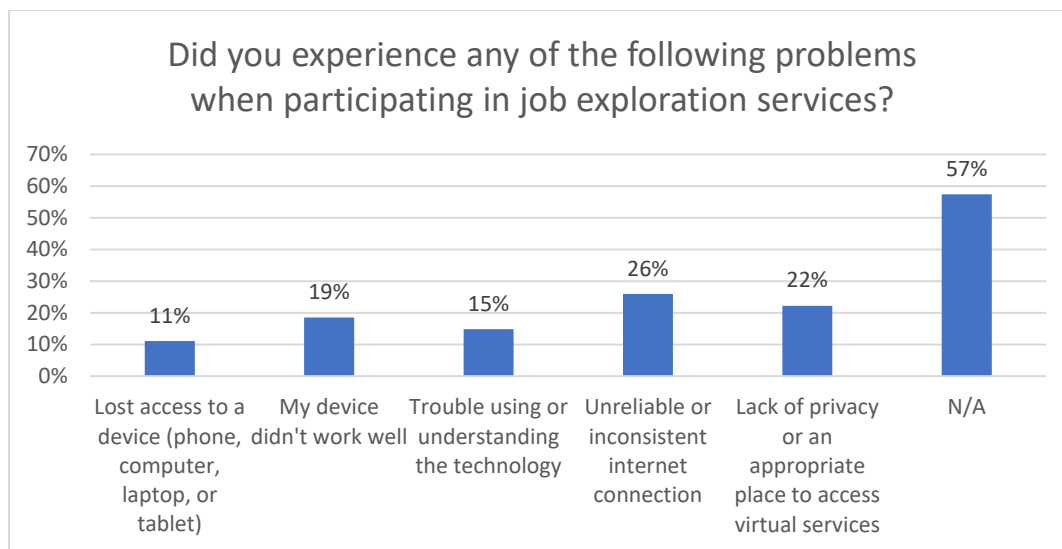
39 respondents, representing 71% of all respondents, did not identify any activity that was not helpful in developing their employment goal. 7 respondents, representing 13% of all respondents, indicated that trying out a job or testing their skills on a job was not helpful. 6 respondents, representing 11% of all respondents, indicated that looking at businesses in their neighborhood was not helpful. 5 respondents, representing 9% of all respondents, indicated that answering questions or taking surveys about their goals and interests related to work was not beneficial. 4 respondents, representing 7% of all respondents indicated that watching people do the kind of work they are interested in was not helpful. 2 respondents each, representing 4% of all respondents respectively, felt that both talking with people who do the job they were interested in and holding their first meeting with their job coach to talk about the work they were interested in was not helpful.

QUESTION 7:



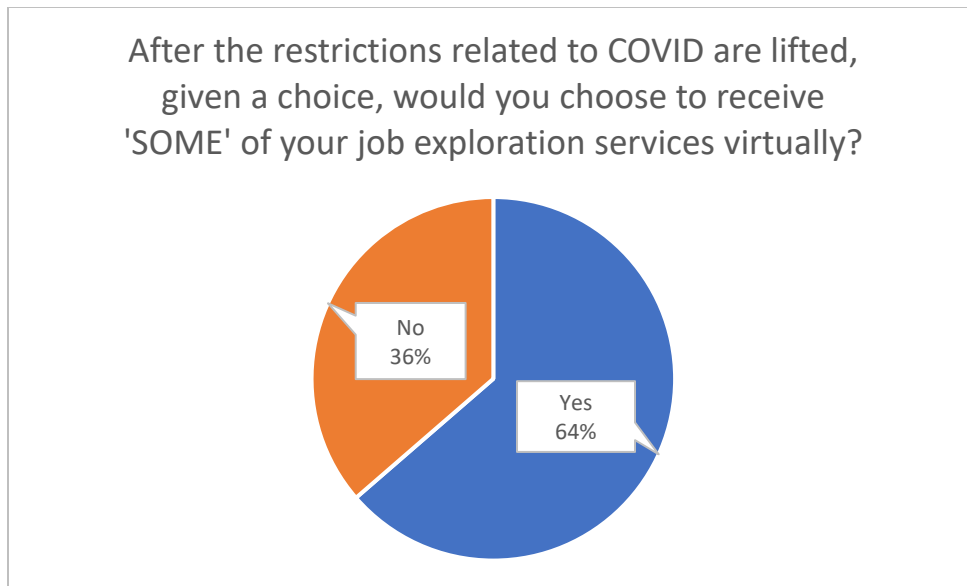
50 respondents, representing 91% of all respondents, indicated that they did not receive any other virtual services beyond those described in the survey. 5 respondents, representing 9% of all respondents, indicated that they received services that were not described on the survey. Examples provided include virtual job shadows, interview question preparation, and other assessment activity.

QUESTION 8:



31 respondents, representing 57% of all respondents, indicated they did not experience any problems accessing virtual Job Exploration services. 14 respondents, representing 26% of all respondents, indicated they experienced unreliable or inconsistent internet connection. 12 respondents, representing 22% of all respondents, experienced lack of privacy or an appropriate place to access virtual services. 10 respondents, representing 19% of all respondents, indicated that their device didn't work well. 8 respondents, representing 15% of all respondents, had trouble using or understanding the technology. 6 respondents, representing 11% of all respondents, said they lost access to a device (phone, computer, laptop, or tablet).

QUESTION 9:



35 respondents, representing 64% of all respondents, reported that they would choose to receive some Job Exploration services virtually after COVID restrictions were lifted. 20 respondents, representing 36% of all respondents, indicated that they would not choose to receive some Job Exploration services virtually after COVID restrictions were lifted if given the choice.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, of the limited number of participants who responded, many reported some benefit to virtual services. A majority of those who took the survey and indicated they received some virtual services did indicate that they would choose to participate in virtual Job Exploration activity after COVID restrictions were lifted, given the choice. Some challenges to receiving virtual services were noted.

Survey participants were asked for additional thoughts or suggestions that they would like to share about Job Exploration services. A relatively small number of respondents provided additional thoughts or suggestions in a written response. Responses were as follows:

- In-person is more effective.
- A checklist of things I will need for when I return to the world of work.
- I want all services done virtually from now on.
- Since I use a communication device to talk, most of my interactions have always been, to a degree, virtual.
- The virtual experiences were boring. I did not feel excited about looking for a job this way.
- It has been good so far.
- I have a medical condition that renders my immune system from functioning properly. Even without covid I could become susceptible to other illness. I would always choose to utilize virtual services even after covid to keep me from becoming sick from any other health issue.

TIPS FOR VIRTUAL ACTIVITIES:

As indicated by the participant responses, carrying out Job Exploration activities in a virtual format will largely be dependent upon the individual you are working with. There are circumstances when using the virtual format could help an individual discover skills that they will be able to use in various employment settings. However, virtual delivery of employment services may not be appropriate for every participant. There is no “one-size-fits-all” approach.

When facilitating virtual Job Exploration services, keep these tips in mind:

- Be sure you are familiar with facilitating a virtual meeting prior to your scheduled online appointment. For example, practice sharing your audio while sharing your screen so that the participant can both see and hear videos you may share. Review the settings options for the video conferencing program you plan to use.
- Hold a practice session for participants who may be unfamiliar with virtual meetings.
- If a participant may use their virtual meeting skills in a job interview or informational interview, provide coaching on virtual meeting etiquette such as making eye-contact and being mindful of their body language.
- Allow the participant to work at their own speed. If the participant needs to take a minute to process a question, encourage them let you know.
- Let the participant know prior to the meeting what tasks will be performed so they can obtain needed items and have appropriate supports available.
- Utilize a task list or agenda to outline the meeting objectives for the participant and ES to reference. Check off each item as it is completed.
- Assign an activity that the participant can perform independently to engage the participant in the Job Exploration process. Example: watching a demonstration about how to access a job board with the ES, then having them share job openings of interest that they have found.
- Be creative! Utilize what resources are available and think about different ways to have participants demonstrate their skills. Example: Reviewing a Microsoft tutorial and then having the participant demonstrate their skills to provide you with insight into their skills, abilities, and interest.
- Have fun! Let the participant dictate what they want to talk about or share with the ES to encourage relationship development.