

## **FIT for the long-term unemployed**

FIT has been shown to benefit individuals psychologically, and also to be a powerful change agent for those in employment, but what about those in very difficult circumstances? It is notoriously difficult to achieve positive change in terms of work outcomes for the long-term unemployed. In particular, it has been found that any positive changes that are wrought are not necessarily long-lasting. For example, whilst Cognitive Behavioural Therapy has been shown to be somewhat effective in this area in terms of achieving employment, there was no long-lasting effect for those who failed to find employment. And yet this is vital in terms of achieving success for the long-term unemployed. In this study FIT Training was made available to a group of long-term unemployed to examine whether it could improve the chances of individuals re-entering employment or undertaking long-term retraining programmes?

The people who took part in the following study had been unemployed for anything from six months to more than two years. This is a notoriously difficult and challenging group to work with and achieve change. The participants were obliged to take part in a short-term government-implemented training programme to improve their chances of getting a job. However, in addition to this, FIT Training was given to half the group in order to see whether such an intervention would offer additional benefits such as enabling them to address the demands of getting a new job and making the most of the training they were being offered over the following three weeks.

### **Participants**

In total 318 clients took part in the government training. From this group 158 also undertook FIT training whilst 160 comprised a control group. Ninety percent were men and the average age was 38. The average age of the FIT group was, at 40, significantly older than the control group at 35. Length of unemployment varied with 30% unemployed for 6-12 months, 32% unemployed for between 1-2 years and 38% had been unemployed for over two years.

## Training

All clients received the government-provided training in such things as personal presentation, preparing a curriculum vitae, interview skills, etc. However, half of the clients also received the following FIT training at the beginning:

- a full day's FIT training
- telephone contact over the following four week period
- participation in the Do Something Different (DSD) programme
- completing a DSD task per week from a selected list

## Outcomes

Evaluation of the FIT programme measured changes in clients' intentions and potential to get back into employment. These were assessed by the Training Providers who rated all the clients on the following measures at the beginning of the training and at four and eight weeks post-training:

- Potential to get a job (Time 1 to Time 2/3)
- Intention to get a job (Time 1 to Time 2/3)

Post-training evaluation also took into account whether the client was in full-time employment, suitable long-term training or no longer on the unemployment register.

### Pre- and post-training evaluations

Group	Work Potential		Work Intention	
	Pre-training	Post-training	Pre-training	Post-training
<b>FIT Group</b>	2.7	3.6	3.2	4.0
<b>Control</b>	3.0	3.5	3.2	3.1

As the above table indicates, despite having a lower pre-training Work Potential score as would be expected in an older unemployed status group, the addition of FIT

training increased both the FIT group's post training Work Potential and Work Intention significantly. Moreover these results were reflected in practical terms. Table 2 shows the results on their employment changes. Eight weeks after the training took place 11% more of the FIT group than the control group were in training or in a job. This difference increased slightly at 12 weeks post-training to 12%. Statistical analysis showed that this difference could be attributed to the FIT Training.

**The effects of FIT training on job/training outcome at 8 and 12 weeks later**

	<b>Not in Job/Training</b>	<b>In Training/Job</b>
<b>FIT Group - 8 weeks</b>	29%	71%
<b>Control Group 8 weeks</b>	40%	60%
<b>FIT Group 12 weeks</b>	42%	58%
<b>Control Group 12 weeks</b>	54%	46%

FIT Training can result in tangible, practical benefits – it offers a way of changing people's behaviour and attitudes with positive outcomes even in very difficult situations. Moreover it demonstrates the benefits of using the FIT Profiler as valid measure in terms of assessing individuals, for example in recruitment and selection, and as a means of measuring change.