

Oregon Vocational Rehabilitation

VR Victory

September 15, 2023

VR gave Kevin the mental health support he needed to achieve his dream job

"This is the best fit I could ever have imagined. I directly attribute my success with going through the VR program." – Kevin Glenn

When Kevin Glenn came to [Vocational Rehabilitation](#) (VR) in 2011, his life was in a shambles, personally and professionally.



He struggled to hold jobs and have healthy relationships. For a few years he didn't have stable housing and slept on friend's couches and in a van.

"I was at rock bottom. I didn't know what to do," he said.

He had no idea he was living with mental health conditions that were affecting his life. VR helped him get a diagnosis, which put him on the path toward stability.

Over a decade later, at age 48, he is a manager for a large, international company.

"This job is the best fit I could ever have imagined. I directly attribute my success with going through the VR program," said Kevin from his home office in Eugene.

The diagnoses that changed Kevin's life

Kevin learned about VR through the local WorkSource office. An advertisement said services were available for anyone with a disability that caused barriers to employment.

He lives with epilepsy, and that diagnosis prevented him from getting a job that required a Commercial Driver License (CDL). He came to his appointment with the rejection letter in hand.



More than a decade after receiving services, Kevin Glenn thanks his VR Counselor Katy Schutz for helping him achieve his dream job.

During his appointment, VR counselor Katy Schultz learned the rejection was just the latest setback in a long list. Kevin shared that he struggled to follow through on tasks and had bursts of intense, violent anger. He coped by walking out on jobs to avoid an outburst. He handled relationships the same way.

“Cut and run was the management tool to use in times of crisis,” he said.

Schultz listened to his story and suspected there was more to his diagnosis than epilepsy. She suggested a psychological evaluation. VR was able to pay for the appointment.

“Well, that doctor was probably one of the most compassionate and thorough people I’ve met, and his involvement in my life set me on a course that changed my entire life,” Kevin said.

He learned he had mental health conditions that were contributing to his struggles to keep jobs. He got medication and started seeing a counselor who helped him learn tools to manage his anger.

Slowly, Kevin started to regain control of his life. Today, anger no longer rules him.

“Occasionally I’ll get angry, but that is ok,” he said. “There isn’t anything wrong with being mad. It’s the response and cascading stories attached to the anger that were the issue.”

Employment help for people with mental health conditions

Schultz said people don’t realize that having a mental health condition can qualify someone for VR, if that condition is causing a barrier to work.

There are many ways VR can help people with mental health conditions reach their employment goals. Examples include referrals to therapists or specialists, short-term treatment, help asking for accommodations and help discovering what type of jobs would be a good fit.

For example, given Kevin’s struggles with anger, Schultz helped him look for jobs that would allow him to work independently and did not include customer service.

She said Kevin’s story is one of many examples of positive outcomes for VR clients with mental health conditions.

“I think we’re a hidden gem that nobody knows about,” she said. “You could be suffering in silence and you’re missing so many resources that I can easily plug you into.”

Kevin lands his dream job

When Kevin showed up for his first meeting with Schultz, he was nervous.

“I went into the office, and I was so scared to ask for anything,” he said. “I had a hard time accepting help. I didn’t think I was worth it.

“[Katy] made me feel so comfortable. She built me up. She made me feel supercharged, and she made me believe that she believed in me and that she would advocate for me.”

Kevin set a goal to become an appliance technician that would provide more job opportunities and higher pay. VR paid for his tools and other gear as well as an online appliance technician certification course.

“It was better than Christmas,” he said of his shopping spree at Sears. “I went in there and I grabbed ratchets, I grabbed tape measures, I grabbed safety equipment. It was amazing. I felt like a king.”

When Glenn exited VR in 2012, he continued to jump around to different maintenance technician jobs for several years.

Then, in November of 2017 he got an email from a recruiter for an international company looking for a maintenance technician for a chain of department stores. He got the job. Three years later, he was promoted to his current position as District Facility Manager. He manages six technicians who respond to facilities issues at 30 stores in the Northwest.

For the first time, Kevin feels confident and successful. He has a fulfilling job and is able to maintain healthy relationships with others, including his two adult children.

“I am living my best life,” he said. “And it is because Vocational Rehabilitation gave me the opportunity to correct the situation that I didn’t even know existed.”

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