

Adapting to Change: The NVAB Program. Patsy Edwards, Los Angeles, CA: Constructive Leisure (contact publisher at NVAB@aol.com), 1997.

The software program, *Adapting to Change: The NVAB Program*, is designed to help individuals adapt to frequent change within one's workplace, personal life, or leisure situations. The acronym, *NVAB*, represents the four primary elements of the software program: *Needs, Values, Attitudes, and Behavior*. Through this interactive program, adults or older adolescents can examine the ways in which their needs, values, and attitudes affect their behavior for the purposes of increasing self-awareness and adopting more flexible, positive behaviors in response to change. In this review I will describe the basic structure of the software program, discuss the program's strengths and limitations, and assess the practical application of the program for therapeutic recreation specialists and other leisure professionals.

This software program is organized around the four main program components: *Needs, Values, Attitudes, and Behavior*. A respondent is guided through a series of questions related to each of these categories. The respondent may answer questions independently, or the program may be administered under the supervision of a counselor. Within each category, several items are presented to the respondent who rates each item on a Likert-type scale according to the personal importance of the item or the person's level of agreement with the statement.

The first component of the program, *Needs*, is defined as "personal deficiencies that interfere with your inner and outer well-being and comfort until they are fulfilled." The program asks how essential it is that various needs (e.g., independence, helping others, social prestige, belonging to a group) be met to achieve a sense of well-being. The underlying premise is that one's needs control one's life and, the more plentiful and inflexible one's needs, the more difficult it may be to fulfill them and consequently, the more apt the person may be to behave in rigid ways. With increased understanding of one's needs, the program suggests, one may consciously moderate the importance of certain needs in order to simplify one's life and strengthen one's ability to respond more flexibly to situations.

The next section, *Values*, represents "the fundamental principles of your life that you follow in order to fulfill your needs." There are two parts to this section: *personal impressions* and

choice factors. In the first part, the respondent is asked to rate his or her concern with the impression he or she projects to other people. Various elements (e.g., well-dressed, well-informed, cooperative, sense of humor) are rated regarding one's workplace, social situations, and interactions with family or friends. The respondent is then asked to rate the traits (e.g., good-natured, entertaining, reliable, loyal, optimistic) she or he values in other people. The second part of this section, *choice factors*, addresses the value one places on conditions related to work (e.g., salary, fellow workers, variety, prestige, job security) and leisure (e.g., make new friends, relaxation, physical conditioning, adventure, creativity). This section is designed to build awareness of the work or leisure conditions that give the person the most satisfaction. With this knowledge, the respondent may subsequently reexamine priorities and align work and leisure conditions to correspond more closely with one's values.

Attitudes, the program suggests, derive from one's values and include "feelings and opinions about a certain fact, matter, condition, object, or person, including yourself." The author maintains that one's attitude prompts one to act or to not act in a certain way. Actions may be compatible with one's circumstances and the people in one's life, or they may be in conflict with them. In this section, the respondent is required to rate his or her attitude toward tangible assets (e.g., honors, money, real estate, leisure materials), leisure and work as a combined aspect (e.g., you keep work and leisure activities separated, leisure is a state of mind that can appear at any time), and various miscellaneous aspects (e.g., you respect people who can control their feelings, you dislike people who prevent you from getting your way). This assessment is intended to reveal how strongly a person feels about the various aspects and to encourage the person to reflect on how these feelings manifest themselves through behavior.

In the final section, *Behavior* is defined as "what you choose to do or say and what you choose not to do or say." The logic presented here is that behaviors stem from attitudes that result from the values one develops in response to fulfilling particular needs. If one's behavior is inappropriate, the program advises, one may "reverse" the NVAB sequence to identify the attitude, value, and need that caused the behavior. Retracing these steps is intended to help the respondent understand his or her underlying motivations, how they influence behavior, and whether it is advisable to alter internal drives and modify behavior.

After completing the assessment, the respondent receives a score and an interpretation for each category. Scores for the *Needs*, *Values*, and *Attitudes* scales fall within a low (0–39), middle (40–80), or high (81–100) range. Scores in the middle range generally indicate the person is flexible, well-adjusted, and maintains a sense of equilibrium. Respondents who score in the low and high ranges, on the other hand, are asked follow-up questions to further analyze the roots of their needs, values, and attitudes. The score for the *Behavior* scale is presented in five categories: *Action*, *Self*, *Work*, *People*, and *Leisure*. These categories denote the person's orientation to life, the highest score indicating the person's primary orientation. A respondent is then given the option of printing out a long form (26 pages) or a short form (14 pages) of interpretation and follow-up questions for reflection or discussion.

As I worked through the program, which I accessed on a 3½-inch floppy disk (the program is also available in CD-ROM format), I found the narrative portions of the program to be well written and the directions clearly presented. The amount of text presented on each screen was appropriate, and the format and colors were pleasing. The amount of time to complete the program was accurately assessed at 50 minutes. Overall, I found the program to be engaging and interesting to self-administer, and I believe it has potential to stimulate insight into one's needs, values, attitudes, and behaviors. The program has several shortcomings, however.

Two issues are of primary concern, both from an academic and a practitioner perspective. First, no conceptual framework for the development of the program is provided. No theories or

review of literature are presented to add credibility to the identification of the four program components, the individual items within scales, nor the ways in which needs, values, attitudes, and behaviors are purported to interrelate. Without this theoretical basis, a respondent would naturally doubt the authority of the program's underlying logic and dispute the accuracy of the scoring and analysis. Second, the validity and reliability of the instrument need to be sufficiently addressed. Testing methods that defend content, construct, and predictive validity all need to be described. The stability of scores (i.e., test-retest) and the internal consistency of item measures need to be substantiated and presented. Documentation should also be provided for field-testing the instrument, beyond the review by "counseling specialists and professional people around the United States," as noted in the printed material that accompanies the software.

Other issues need attention as well. For example, the basis for scoring and interpreting scores should be explained more fully. On the surface, the middle range (i.e., 40–80) appears so large that one doubts that many people would fall outside this "well-adjusted" range. From a computer technician's perspective, there is no capacity for the user to change his or her answer after entering it into the system. The respondent is assured that "one incorrect score won't affect the total results"—a claim that further undermines the validity of the test results. A feature that allows the user to move back and forth between screens would also be convenient, rather than the current version that only allows the user to proceed.

Additionally, an introductory, professionally developed pamphlet or booklet should accompany the software. Currently, only five pages (two of which are order forms) are included that provide operating instructions, a brief overview of the software in the form of an advertisement, and short sections on author background, program development, and utility of printouts. A more comprehensive booklet would include information on the following topics: overview of software, conceptual basis, reliability and validity, field-testing, operating instructions and troubleshooting, guidelines for administering the instrument, facilitation guidelines for counselors, resource materials, and recommendations for practical application (e.g., populations, settings, techniques).

Leisure professionals should be aware that issues specifically related to leisure are but a small portion of the content of the program, as described in the Values, Attitudes, and Behavior sections above. The primary focus of the program is self-awareness, which, of course, is an important element of leisure education. Further, leisure professionals should note that the program identifies counselors as the primarily facilitators of the program (rather than therapeutic recreation specialists) and to competently address the more complicated personal questions and issues that the program could raise, training in counseling techniques would be advisable.

No recommendations are given about the kinds of populations that would benefit most from the *Adapting to Change: The NVAB Program*. Individuals would generally need to have fairly high levels of cognition and reasoning ability to complete this assessment. Appropriate settings to administer this program might include mental health, substance abuse programs, juvenile or adult corrections, and agencies that serve at-risk youth. The program may also be useful for any individual who wishes to take more responsibility for his or her actions.

In summary, *Adapting to Change: The NVAB Program* has the potential to stimulate reflection and develop awareness of one's needs, values, attitudes, and behavior. However, without a well-conceived conceptual basis and proper documentation to ensure the validity and reliability of the instrument, the program cannot legitimately uphold the claim, as stated in the printed materials, that it "shows how to understand and modify needs, values, and attitudes to result in flexible behavior."

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