

# Self-determined decision-making in the context of the budget for work (BfA): An inclusive approach to counselling and support for people with special educational needs

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**Background and aim:** The Budget for Work (in German: Budget für Arbeit (BfA)) is a regular benefit for participation in working life that has been introduced in Germany since 2018 and aims to increase the transition of people with disabilities to the general labour market. Despite the benefits, such as a wage subsidy of up to 75% for employers and funding for guidance and support in the workplace, the number of cases is still low. Despite these benefits, the number of cases is still low.

**Method:** The content of the counselling concept is based on a qualitative interview study with N = 108 people, including experts, employers, people with disabilities and parents, to identify inhibiting and promoting factors. To identify professional values and interests, n = 14 people with intellectual disabilities were interviewed.

**Results:** The analysis of the interviews showed several inhibiting and promoting factors for the utilisation of BfA, which concern the process steps (exploration phase, empowerment). In particular, it became apparent that the values and individual needs of people with disabilities play a key role in counselling. Topics such as self-determination, individual life goals and the importance of appreciation should be focussed on in future counselling sessions in order to meet the specific needs of the target group.

**Conclusion:** The study shows that a multi-perspective approach to counselling is essential in order to promote the using of BfA. People with (intellectual) disabilities should be seen as experts in their own vocational interests and goals. The research results provide valuable information for the development of effective psychoeducational interventions and contribute to the participation and empowerment of people with disabilities.

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