

## **Book Review**

**Shanasarian, M. (2015). *Assessment of Earning Capacity*. Tucson, AZ: Lawyers & Judges. (ISBN: 978-1-936360-35-2)**

I. *Assessment of Earning Capacity* was published in 2015 by Michael Shahnasarian, PhD. This book is a fourth edition. It is currently available in a hardback copy via lawyersandjudges.com. The Review attained the book via complimentary copy.

II. Aesthetically, *Assessment of Earning Capacity* has a tan hardback cover (3 previous editions were all different colors with the same design). The book is aesthetically appealing to professionals providing vocational expert services and lawyers involved in loss of earning capacity claims. There is a table of contents, preface, 12 chapters divided into 3 sections, and a bibliography. The book is well manufactured and the pages are sturdy and are appropriate for studying and general wear and tear.

III. Related to organization, *Assessment of Earning Capacity* has 12 chapters divided into 3 sections and 334 pages (including bibliography, index, and an about the author section). The chapters are divided into 3 parts with the following titles; Foundation Issues, Conducting Vocational Assessments, and Forensic Practice Issues. Also included are numerous graphs, charts, pictures, and samples of vocational expert documents. At the end of each chapter Dr. Shanasarian includes samples of documents discussed in the chapter which allow the reader to visualize the said documents esthetically.

IV. This publication is an important work in the field of vocational expert services as it promotes and offers the latest techniques on offering scientifically based opinions in loss of earning capacity claims. This review will discuss each of the 3 sections in the text and touch on the highlights of each.

### **Part 1: Foundation Issues:**

This first section of Dr. Shanasarian's text covers the following topics; vocational expert consultation, logistical & contextual considerations, expert evidence, processes undergirding the assessment of earning capacity, and earning capacity & loss of earning capacity. In discussing vocational expert consultation, Dr. Shanasarian touches on different types of litigated matters in which a vocational expert would be hired to provide expert testimony. Also discussed is the need for an expert to have a systematic process for assessing an individual's earning capacity. The difference between an individual's earnings and earnings capacity is described, which the review found informative as many individuals unfamiliar with assessment of earning capacity may not be clear on this. The scope of vo-

cal expert's services is discussed and the difference between a consulting expert and testifying expert is discerned utilizing tables.

In discussing logistical and contextual considerations, Dr. Shanasarian takes the reader through the litigation phases (presuit, discovery, trial). Expert retention is discussed including maintaining integrity in the litigation environment. Dr. Shanasarian also covers how vocational experts are selected and how they formulate their opinions on assessment of earning capacity. Pictures of a vocational evaluation in which the plaintiff attorney setup video recording equipment are provided. Also included in this section are sample of various forms including a jury verdict form, sample retention letter, etc. As a vocational professional who has little experience in forensics, I found these visual samples useful in understanding litigated matters.

In the section on expert evidence, Dr. Shanasarian discusses methodologies that experts use to formulate opinions on earning capacity and gives examples of different models. The presenting of expert evidence is also included such as expert interrogatories and affidavits. The steps involved in assessing earning capacity are covered such as; records review, subject examination, clinical interview, etc. Again samples are given for the clinical interview, client intake form, testing materials, etc. Dr. Shanasarian lists factors affecting career development and earning capacity and the use of the ECAF-2. Vocational handicaps, drives, motivation, etc are included in this section.

Chapter 4 covers the processes undergirding the assessment of earning capacity. Dr. Shanasarian goes through the multiple steps involved in forming an opinion on earning capacity including; subject examination, and the clinical interview. Samples of the components of the clinical interview are provided along with examples. Chapter 5 covers earning capacity & loss of earning capacity. Dr. Shanasarian begins with a discussion of the ECAF & ECAF-2 which he wrote with Leiteten in 2008 and 2010 respectively. The ECAF & ECAF-2 were developed as tools to assess earning capacity. Chapter 5 covers factors affecting career development including inhibitors and drivers. Samples and examples are given at this end of this section.

### **Part 2: Vocational Assessments:**

This second sections covers the actual administration of vocational evaluations that experts use to assess earning capacity in several different types of situations including; cases of acquired disabilities, cases involving the Americans with Disabilities Act, employment law cases, family law cases, and cases of long-term disability insurance. Samples and examples are given for conducting evaluations in each of these different types of scenarios. Examples of life

care plans are also provided for different types of cases.

### **Part 3: Forensic Practice Issues:**

This last section deals with forensics and discusses each step of a vocational expert witness's testimony all the way through trial. Dr. Shanasarian closes with several case studies which aid in giving the reader a clear picture of a vocational expert's role in several different types of cases.

*Assessment of Earning Capacity* (4th ed.) is well written as are the earlier editions. Dr. Shanasarian shares his expertise with the reader in a clear, easy to follow format. As a vocational rehabilitation professional who works in the State-Federal VR system, I found this book informative as well as enjoyable to read. The review would recommend this book to anyone interested in the topic of the assessment of earning capacity.

*Reviewed by Kathleen Ceaser*