

# Attracting People to the Workforce

## Challenges and Opportunities hosted by:

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**We can't win the game  
if we're not playing in it.**



## September 2015 Disability Employment Statistics

- **Labor Force Participation**
- People with disabilities: 19.1%
- People without disabilities: 68.2%
  
- **Unemployment Rate**
- People with disabilities: 10.4%
- People without disabilities: 4.7%

From the Office of Disability Employment (ODEP)

# Getting in the Game

Activating Individuals toward Employment

# Challenges: A case study

- 37 y/o female with limited work history but high motivation to work
- She experiences significant mental and physical health barriers that affect her ability to get and keep a job
- Mental health symptoms include hearing voices, disorganized thoughts, flashbacks/dissociations, low self-esteem and confidence and limited coping skills.
- Physical health barriers include poorly controlled type II diabetes and sleep apnea
- Even with high motivation, this client is affected by multiple barriers at multiple points in time

# Challenges Continued

- She has not been able to keep a job for more than 3 weeks before being physically or psychiatrically hospitalized
- Our approach: keep trying, eventually things will fall into place!
- Constantly re-focus her on her goals, dreams, and ambitions
- Her dream is to one day be “off benefits”
- Help her find hope for her recovery and believe that work is possible
- Use work to facilitate recovery
- Remind her that there is no time like to present to begin to work

# Cultivate a Culture of Employment

- RSS Capital District PROS has been in operation since 3/11 and during the past two years our employment culture has solidified
- It took 2 years to develop a culture where ALL employees value work and where everyone believes that it is possible
- Discard the idea of readiness
- Empower your natural work champions

# Cultivation Continued

- Develop buy-in with your program director and managers- they facilitate buy-in with their staff during supervision and staff meetings
- Celebrate employment!
- Develop jobs within your program if possible. These can serve as ‘starter jobs’ for clients
- Make employment part of the conversation of recovery-  
“Have you tried getting them a job?”

# Cultivation Continued

- Encourage clients who have achieved employment goals to share their experiences with peers to encourage and empower them to try employment
- Coordination with employment services- shared staff meetings, employment as the focus rather than clinical/recovery issues, shared staffing between employment and PROS programs