

Fighting for our livelihoods:

Developing good and sustainable job opportunities for economic self-sufficiency

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EMPLOYMENT AND MENTAL ILLNESS: THE BACKSTORY

- *“They don’t want to work”*
- *“The can’t work”*
- *“They can work when we control the jobs”*
- *“They CAN work competitively... but not sure they can hold jobs for long.”*
- **BUT WHO ARE “THEY”?**
 - People today receiving mental health services
 - The universe of people who have received mental health services

WORK IS GOOD

➤ **Emotional**

➤ **Functional**

➤ **Income**

- **Basic needs**
- **Independent community living**

LOW WORK RATES FOR PEOPLE DIAGNOSED WITH SERIOUS MENTAL ILLNESSES

- **Labor force participation** **25%**
 - **III**
 - **Disability insurance**
 - **Give up looking**
- **Unemployment** **32-61%**
- **Underemployment**
 - **70% of people with SMI who have college degrees making less than \$10/hr.**

DO THESE RATES HAVE TO BE THIS LOW?

Yes

No

If they can be higher, then by how much?

Can we do something about this?

Should we spend time doing something about it?

EBPing it: SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT

- Competitive employment is the goal.
- Eligibility is based on consumer choice.
- Consumer preferences are important.
- Job search starts soon after consumers express interest in working**
- Services are integrated with comprehensive mental health treatment.**
- Personalized benefits counseling is important
- Follow-along supports are continuous.*
- Employment specialists systematically develop relationships with employers based upon their client's preferences*

Evidence based practice for helping people get part-time, low paying jobs that typically last months*

Whom does it work for?

BARRIERS TO SUSTAINED WORK

- Personal challenges, such as anxiety & learning disabilities... fears about losing benefits (SSI)
- Family pressures
- **Nature of the position**
 - **Match**
 - **Clarity**
 - **Complexity**
- **Workplace culture and practice [Organizational social capital]**
 - **Supervision**
 - **Other workers**
 - **Stigma, discrimination**
 - **Wellness, promoting psychological capital**
- Health and health care access

Are we aiming too low?

Are aiming in the wrong direction?

AIMING TOO LOW: WHAT IS THE GOAL... OR INTENDED OUTCOME?

- **Working**
- **Competitive working**
- **“Sustainable jobs”**
 - **Decent paying**
 - **Full time**
 - **Benefits**
- **Working and developing**
 - **Internships**
 - **Entrepreneurship**
 - **Self-employment**
- **Careers**
 - **Education**

AIMING IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION: CAPITAL THEORY, A MORE HOLISTIC PERSPECTIVE

- ❖ Human
- ❖ Cultural
- ❖ **Psychological**
 - ❖ Resilience
 - ❖ Persistence
 - ❖ Confidence
- ❖ **Social- personal**
- ❖ **Social- workplace**
 - ❖ Supervision
 - ❖ Other staff



Delman, J., & Klodnick, V.V. (2016). Factors Supporting the Employment of Young Adult Peer Providers: Perspectives of Peers and Supervisors. Community mental health journal, 1-12.

SOCIAL CAPITAL

- Collective value of one's social network connections and resources that generate instrumental, informational, and emotional support
- *Personal social capital* includes ties with “natural supports” and “formal supports”
 - Dis/encouragement,
 - Advice
 - Professional connections
- *Organizational-social capital*: Social relations within the organization-
 - Staff
 - Employment practices that stabilize employee relationships and clarify roles and policies, such as reasonable pay and clear job descriptions.
- Significant predictor of job satisfaction and productivity

Career
Development

Competitive
Employment

Education/Training

Sustainable
employment

*Job
specialist*

Internships

Employer

- Other workers
- Supervision
- Stigma/Discrimination
- Health supports

DEMAND SIDE, EMPLOYER-BASED STRATEGIES

- **Focus on the interests, attitudes, and capacities of organizations that employ people with SMI**
 - **Strategies**
 - **Incentives**

KEY BEST PRACTICES CATEGORIES

- **Job description**
- **Supervision**
- **Health promoting**
- **Addressing stigma/discrimination**
- **Employees as individuals, flexibility**
- **Disclosure and reasonable accommodations**
- **Human Resources**
- **Transparency**

EXISTING BEST PRACTICES LAWS AND PROGRAMS NOT FULLY LEVERAGED

FMLA

- **Employment Assistance Plans (EAPs) and the like**
- **ADA and state related laws**
- **Short term disability insurance (STDI) and Return to Work (RTW) strategies**
- **Addressing Stigma-person/person, education, training**
- **Health care- Peer jobs, Recovery coaches**

How are these programs
underutilized in terms of people
with SMHC

ADA- DISCRIMINATION

- **Hiring**
- **All aspects of employment, including social events**
- **Includes hostile workplace**
- **Reasonable Accommodations**
- **Hostile workplace**
- **Addressing stigma and discrimination**
 - **Contact**
 - **Education**

ACCOMMODATIONS

- **Reasonable Accommodations:**
Modifications or adjustments to ordinary business operations toward supporting a *qualified* employee with a disability perform *essential* job functions.
- **Mental Disability**
 - Impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities of an individual.
 - **assessed without regard to mitigating measures, including medications**
 - A record of such an impairment.
 - Being regarded as having such an impairment

KEY ASPECTS OF RAS

❖ When to take action:

- Request or other notice of needing help
 - No particular communication method required of employee
- **“Other obvious”**

❖ RA Threshold Standards

- Reasonableness: Is the suggested accommodation reasonable?
- Undue Hardship: Will the suggested accommodation put *undue hardship* on the organization (productivity, quality, impact on other staff)?
- Interactive process

Working Well® process for addressing job difficulties and developing RAs (Toolkit chapter 7)

I. Questions to be addressed in order:

1. What are the job's primary functions/tasks?
2. What primary functions/tasks is the peer having difficulty with?
3. What are the challenges and barriers to successful execution of these functions/tasks?
4. What [type(s) of] accommodations might help the peer to perform these functions/tasks?
5. What is the most effective and reasonable accommodations(s)?

II. Independent preparation by employee and/or supervisor:

- Review of questions and
- Information gathering

III. Co-party Interactive Dialogue, Elements:

- ADA rules of interactivity
- Principles of solution focused negotiation
- Strengths/Needs analysis

IV. Establish RA

- Implement RA
- Monitor and change as needed
- Evaluate process

ACCOMMODATIONS ARE PREPARATION AND PROCESS!

- ❖ Interactive dialogue between YA TPM, supervisor, & 3rd party
- ❖ One size does not fit all
- ❖ Generate multiple solutions
- ❖ Agreement is established & written down



Created by Nikolay Nechevlin
from Noun Project

Questions to Foster Discussion:

- ❖ What is the likelihood that the accommodation(s) will be effective? How will we know they are effective?
- ❖ How long will the accommodation(s) last? When will the impact be reviewed?
- ❖ What will the short- & long-term impact of the accommodation(s) be?
- ❖ What accommodation(s) are less burdensome & likely to be effective?
- ❖ What has worked here in the past for ?
- ❖ What has worked in the past for *this* employee?
- ❖ Why is a accommodation being requested? Or suggested?
- ❖ Undue hardship?

*Working Well software

INFRASTRUCTURE FOR EMPLOYING PEOPLE WITH SMI

- **Top management to endorse and actively participate in the development of a corporate culture that supports the employment of people with SMI**
- **Communications, e.g., Champions**
- **HR**
- **Training, orientation**
- **Toolkits that organize instructional materials for businesses to support employees**
- **Prominent disability/inclusion offices**

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE FOR EMPLOYING PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

[DOL, Office of Disability Employment Policy \(ODEP\)](#)

[WOIA, Implementation, Program guides](#)

- Work-based learning opportunities- Apprenticeships
- One-stops

JAN (Job Accommodation Network)

• ADA centers

• [Source America- Pathways to Careers](#)

• SAMHSA/NIDILRR TA centers- [Transitions RTC](#), [BUCPR](#)

Toolkits (e.g.,

https://www.umassmed.edu/globalassets/transitionsrtc/publications/effectivleyemployingyoungadultpeerproviders_a_toolkit.pdf)

• Technical Assistance Collaborative- JD

INCENTIVES

(BEYOND THE PURE BUSINESS CASE)

- Tax Credits
- [Apprenticeships](#)
- ADA and state anti-discrimination laws
- Regulatory provisions released in 2013 require federal contractors to set a seven percent workforce utilization goal for the employment of individuals with disabilities, though direct incentives have yet to be developed
 - encourages employers to set strategic goals, including the development of tools to track the number of employees with disabilities.
- Talent maximization

EMERGING PLAYERS FOR EMPLOYING PEOPLE WITH SMHC

- Employers of all sizes and types
 - HR
 - Disability diversity department
- State Disability Rehabilitation offices

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