

# **INSPIRING ACTION FOR EMPLOYMENT**

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**Center for Practice Innovations<sup>SM</sup>**  
at Columbia Psychiatry  
New York State Psychiatric Institute  
*Building best practices with you.*

# Agenda

- Mental illness and poverty – the connection
- Connecting with people about employment
- Challenges and strategies

# Learning Objectives

Participants will:

- Recognize the link between poverty and mental illness as a way to activate individuals to seek employment.
- Identify and learn about challenges concerning inspiring people who haven't yet decided to work
- Identify and learn about strategies for addressing these challenges

# LABOR PARTICIPATION

## March 2023 Disability Employment Statistics

- **Labor Force Participation**
- People with disabilities: 34.8%
- People without disabilities: 77.9%
  
- **Unemployment Rate**
- People with disabilities: 11.1%
- People without disabilities: 4.4%

Close to 65% of people with disabilities are not working or in the Labor Force

From the Office of Disability Employment (ODEP)

# Poverty

The conditions of poverty can cause certain mental health disorders and that alleviating poverty can have positive effects on Adult & Children's mental health (Costello et al, 2003).

# Question

Approximately what percentage of individuals served in your setting are not yet interested in employment?

- Less than 10%
- Between 10% and 24%
- Between 25% and 49%
- Between 50% and 74%
- 75% or more

# Question

For those individuals who are not yet interested... why?

# Some Possible Challenges

- Engaging the individual and beginning the conversation
- Addressing the individual's lack of hope
- Dealing with the individual's concerns and fears
- Helping the individual to maintain motivation throughout the process
- Continuing concerns about COVID-19



# Strategies – Questions

## Engaging the individual and beginning the conversation

How have you approached engagement?

What have you found leads to successful engagement around employment?

What would you like to try?

# Strategies – Questions

## Addressing the individual's lack of hope

How have you helped individuals develop hope about employment?

Does the current availability of so many jobs help?

What would you like to try?

# Strategies – Question

## Dealing with the individual's concerns and fears

What do you do, or can you do, to address peoples' concerns and fears about employment?

# Strategies – Questions

Helping the individual to maintain motivation throughout the process

What can help people to maintain motivation?

What have you tried?



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# Strategies – Questions

## Continuing concerns about COVID-19

What concerns are you now hearing?

What approaches have you developed to help people use shared decision-making to decide whether or not to work?

# A Tool to Activate

**Benefits = Poverty**

**Benefits + Employment = Working Poor**

**Employment – Benefits = PRICELESS**



# Strategies

Develop interest by:

- Supporting commitment to change:
  - Increase belief that work is possible
  - Increase belief that work would be positive
  - Develop and provide support for employment
- Increasing awareness of employment options
- Increasing awareness of personal job preferences

(based on Boston University Psychiatric Rehabilitation Readiness Assessment)

# Strategies

Make employment an important part of the daily culture of your setting:

- Use visuals throughout your setting: promo video, motivational posters, employment literature
- Job fairs and employment celebrations
- Employment discussed during intakes, treatment plan reviews, other meetings
- All team members can/should be involved and have a clear role in IPS implementation



# Strategies

## Use the Employment Resource Book:

- Many of the topics in section 1 (Prior to Job Search) are designed for engagement
  - My decision to work
  - Talking with family and supports about work
  - My hopes and concerns about working
  - My personal strengths and job preferences
  - Important things to consider about my mental health
  - What if I have had legal problems?
  - Working and my benefits
  - Figuring out what I would like to do for work



# Strategies

Involve individuals who are currently working:

- Inspirational talks during groups and at meetings
- Engaging individuals in inspiring conversations
- Serving as hopeful role models

# Strategies

Make benefits counseling available long before someone has decided to work

- Provided individually, not in groups...
- Provide accurate information about the MYTHS of how getting a job can impact benefits (e.g., people typically don't "lose" their benefits; there are multiple safety nets in case things go wrong; etc.).
- Also, talk with other team members about the myths related to benefits to ensure the entire team is giving the same encouraging messages about the power of employment!

# Strategies

Used shared decision making to help individuals with continuing concerns about COVID-19 to make thoughtful personal decisions about working

# Questions/Answers/Discussion



***Thank You!***

# Contact Information

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