

Supporting Employment: Helping People with Employment Recovery Goals

David W Lynde, MSW

Mental Health Consultant & Trainer



Missouri Department of Mental Health

The Missouri Department of Mental Health . . . is committed to enhancing community employment options for persons we serve. The Department believes that all individuals who want to work CAN work and contribute to their community when given opportunity, training, and supports that build on an individual's strengths.

<https://dmh.mo.gov/about/employment-services>



World Health Organization

People living with mental health conditions have a right to participate in work fully and fairly. The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities provides an international agreement for promoting the rights of people with disabilities (including psychosocial disabilities), including at work

<https://www.who.int/news-room/factsheets/detail/mental-health-at-work>

World Health Organization

WHO recommends three interventions to support people with mental health conditions gain, sustain and participate in work:

1. Reasonable accommodations at work adapt working environments to the capacities, needs and preferences of a worker with a mental health condition

World Health Organization

WHO recommends three interventions to support people with mental health conditions gain, sustain and participate in work:

2. Return-to-work programs combine work-directed care (like reasonable accommodations or phased re-entry to work) with ongoing clinical care to support workers in meaningfully returning to work

World Health Organization

WHO recommends three interventions to support people with mental health conditions gain, sustain and participate in work:

3. Supported employment initiatives help people with severe mental health conditions to get into paid work and maintain their time on work through continue to provide mental health and vocational support.

Employment & Recovery

Did you ever wonder why for the overall population of our country we report and track the unemployment rate?

February 2023 US Unemployment rate = 3.6 %

And for people with a mental illness, we track and report the employment rate

Employment rate \approx 10 %

<https://www.rutgers.edu/news/poor-physical-health-barrier-job-seekers-serious-mental-illness>

Employment & Recovery

What would happen if we reported both rates the same?

Employment Rate (general population) = 96.4%

Employment Rate (people with mental illness) = 10%

Unemployment Rate (general population) = 3.5 %

Unemployment Rate (people with mental illness) \approx 90%

Employment Matters

For thousands of people whose lives are affected by mental illness, employment, a job, a career, work income, being part of the community through employment matters.

For hundreds of people who are in mental health services at any community mental health center, employment matters.

Employment Matters

Even when an agency or a mental health system does not provide Individual Placement & Supports / Supported Employment services, employment still matters to the People in Services.

Signs Employment Matters at a Mental Health Agency

What does the agency website say about mental illness and employment?

What does the agency mission statement say about recovery and employment?

What does the agency executive leadership publicly say about mental illness and employment?

How does the agency measure and report the employment rate of People in mental health services?

Signs Employment Matters at a Mental Health Agency

“You can’t improve what you don’t measure”

“You are what you measure”

-Peter Drucker Business Consultant

Signs Employment Matters at a Mental Health Agency

How frequently and how accurately does the agency count employment rate of People in Services?

How frequently and how accurately does the agency share employment rate of People in Services by Teams

How frequently and how accurately does the agency employment rate of People in Services by Individual Providers

Signs Employment Matters at a Mental Health Agency

How does the agency recognize People in mental health services who are employed as part of their recovery?

How does the agency recognize Providers of mental health services who actively support People in pursuing their employment-related recovery goals?

What roles do People with Lived Experience play in supporting People pursuing their employment-related recovery goals?

Signs Employment Matters at a Mental Health Agency

How does the agency provide employment outcome data to teams and mental health providers about the employment rate of People in services?

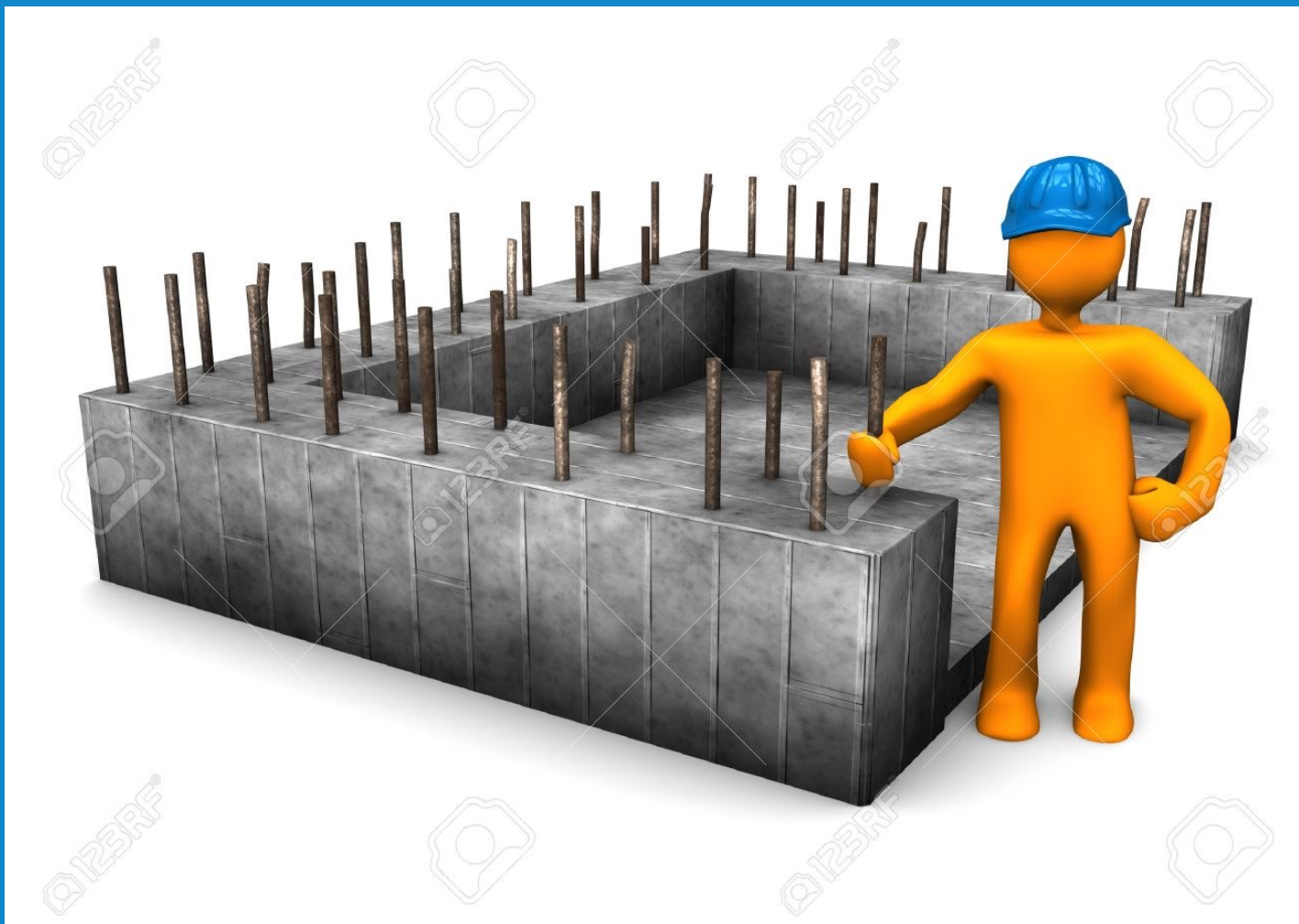
How many providers have “support People in services with their employment-related goals” in their job descriptions?

Signs Employment Matters at a Mental Health Agency

How does the agency assure that People in services have access to good accurate information regarding work incentives for People with disability benefits?

How does the agency help employed People in services to share their own narrative about with other People in services who are thinking about pursuing employment goals?

Sometimes We Forget about the Foundation



Some things are important to
and employment in the mental
health workforce

Foundational Philosophy for Employment

RECOVERY

Foundational Skills for Employment

Peer Support Services

First Episode
Psychosis Services

Co-Occurring
Disorders Services

Person Centered
Planning

Wellness Recovery
Action Plan

Illness Management &
Recovery

Foundational Skills for Employment

Community-Based
Services

Strength-Based
Services

Motivational
Interviewing

Stage-wise Services

Real World Outcome
Oriented Services

Trauma Informed
Services

Things from
Supported Employment
Practice Principles
to Support People in Services
who have
Employment Recovery Goals

Practice Principles of Supported Employment

Practice Principles of Supported Employment

1. Participating in SE is based on each person's own choice
2. SE is integrated with other mental health services
3. Helping people attain competitive employment is the goal

Practice Principles of Supported Employment

- 4. Each person has access to good work incentive planning information
- 5. SE provides a rapid job search not delayed by pre-vocational or other assessment

Practice Principles of Supported Employment

6. SE services provide access to a network of employers through systematic job development services
7. SE helps people to be successful at work through follow along supports
8. Each person's goals and preferences re: work are honored

“True Choice” Regarding Employment

All People who are interested in employment have it as one of their specific recovery goals

People are encouraged to think about employment, careers and financial independence as part of their recovery process frequently



“True Choice” Regarding Employment

All Providers understand
the value of employment in
the recovery process

All Providers ask People in
Services about their
thoughts related to
employment regularly

Employment Goals and Services Based on each **Person's** Choice

For all service providers, it should be their expectation that many People in services have interest in employment



Employment Goals and Services Based on each Person's Choice

Providers do not attempt to decide who will and who will not be successful with attaining and maintaining employment.

Providers offer genuine hope and encouragement that all People in services are capable of achieving their employment goals.

Providers regularly ask about, listen to and respect the choices of anyone who is interested in Employment as a Recovery Goal



Employment Goals and Services Based on each Person's Choice

People with Lived Experience presenting to Providers about Employment as part of recovery

People with Lived Experience presenting to Peers about Employment as part of recovery

People with Lived Experience presenting to Agency Leadership about Employment

Employment is Integrated with Other Mental Health Services



Employment providers collaborate with the Person's other service Providers

The Person's other service Providers collaborate with employment providers

Employment is Integrated with Other Mental Health Services

Team Leaders and Supervisor regularly monitor
collaboration with Employment providers

Team Leaders and Supervisors regularly improve
collaboration with Employment providers

Employment is Integrated with Other Mental Health Services

Leadership & Supervisors actively work on Integrated Services to facilitate Meaningful Recovery Outcomes

Leadership & Supervisors actively endorse Employment as a Meaningful Recovery Outcome

Employment is Integrated with Other Mental Health Services

The process of actively uniting providers in unified service delivery to help People in Services achieve their desired employment-related recovery goals

Employment is Integrated with Other Mental Health Services

Team Leaders use team meetings to assure that each team member clearly understands their respective next steps and responsibilities with each Person who is pursuing employment recovery goals to help individuals make progress

Employment is Integrated with Other Mental Health Services

Successful Integration starts at the Top and finishes
with the Person in Services

Leadership and Supervisors are Responsible for
Developing, Monitoring and Improving Integration

Employment is Integrated with Other Mental Health Services

“Recovery is everyone’s business”

“Employment is everyone’s business”

Employment is Integrated with Other Mental Health Services

The whole team uses a strength-based approach to help People in Services to problem solve challenges related to developing employment goals, searching for employment, obtaining employment and being successful with employment

Strength Based Services

Peter is treatment compliant

Stephanie has constant suicidal ideation

Carlos is manipulative

Jackie spends too much time going to movie theatres
all over the city

Strength Based Services

Jada has been homeless for the past 12 months

Brandon used to live in Oregon before moving here without a plan last month

Serenity wants to work but does not want to stop using drugs or alcohol

Jeremiah spends all day on internet chat rooms without cleaning his apartment

Employment is Integrated with Other Mental Health Services

All involved providers of services are recognized
when a Person attains employment



THANK YOU

*Thank You for your
support of Angelo's recovery
progress with obtaining
employment*

Working with Vocational Rehabilitation Services



Working with Vocational Rehabilitation

State Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) agencies have strong working partnerships with Community Mental Health Centers and Services across the country

Developing a working collaboration with Local Vocational Rehabilitation services benefits everyone including People in Services and Employers

Working with Vocational Rehabilitation

Providers develop a working understanding of VR eligibility and the overall VR process before referring People

Providers actively support each person in engaging with VR services if the Person chooses

Working with Vocational Rehabilitation

Providers participate in local VR office orientation meetings whenever possible

Providers provide accurate information to VR counselors regarding specific Mental Health services that support People with their Employment Goals

Working with Vocational Rehabilitation

Providers understand what information is required for a VR referral and establish a method to get this information to the VR counselor in a timely manner

Providers share information about the types of services that are provided to People in services to support them in actively and successfully pursuing employment

Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor in Georgia

“Before joining this integrated team, I used to worry about lots of things regarding work for people with a mental illness. Now I understand how many different mental health and employment services are provided to help people with those concerns. I feel much more confident working with people with a mental illness who are getting Supported Employment services.”

Real Jobs



Each person is helped to attain a competitive job, one that they own, where they receive the paycheck directly from the employer

Competitive Employment

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) defines competitive integrated employment as work that is performed on a full-time or part-time basis for which an individual is:

- (a) compensated at or above minimum wage and comparable to the customary rate paid by the employer to employees without disabilities performing similar duties and with similar training and experience

Competitive Employment

- (b) receiving the same level of benefits provided to other employees without disabilities in similar positions;
- (c) at a location where the employee interacts with other individuals without disabilities; and
- (d) presented opportunities for advancement similar to other employees without disabilities in similar positions

Real Jobs

People are not steered
into accepting jobs in
pre-arranged job slots

People are not steered
into sheltered
workshops, lengthy
vocational assessments
or working in job
enclaves



Real Jobs

Providers have a working understanding of
Competitive Employment

Providers understand and endorse the Benefits of
Competitive Employment

Real Jobs

People in Services are not groomed nor developed to fit into work preparation pre-vocational programs

Each Person's own unique Employment Goals and Preferences are honored and respected

Work Incentive Counseling



People in services have access to accurate work incentive counseling that is based on their individual situation

Work incentive counseling helps people to determine what role benefits will play in their own financial planning

Work Incentive Counseling

Providers understand that concerns about disability benefits is one of the biggest concerns and sources of ambivalence regarding work for People in Services

Missouri Disability Benefits 101

<https://mo.db101.org>

People Receive Supports for Informed Decisions Regarding All Benefits

People in Services are empowered with accurate information and decision supports to make their own choices about benefits

People in Services are not steered by Providers or the “agency benefits counselor” to “earn less than SGA (Substantial Gainful Activity)”

Financial Recovery

Leadership understands that SSDI & SSI incomes are poverty income levels

People have access to People with Lived Experiences to discuss disability benefits

People have supported access to Disability Benefits 101

Financial Recovery

People have supported access Individual
Financial Planning

People have supported access to to Certified
Work Incentive Counselors

Person Centered Employment Planning

When people start employment services, their goals to obtain competitive jobs are honored and respected

People are not required to participate in pre-employment assessments, job-hardening activities, or trial work periods



Person Centered Employment Planning

Not Requiring Pre-Vocational or Para-Vocational Assessments

Not Requiring “Demonstration of Readiness”

Not Requiring the Person to be “In Recovery” or “Symptom Free”

Person Centered Employment Planning

Listening Carefully to People regarding their Stage of Change in the Employment Process

Providing Supports consistent with the Person's Stage of Change

Providing Job Development services when the Person is Ready for them, not when the Provider believes the Person is ready

Job Search Supports

There are numerous ways to search for employment opportunities

Some People in Services have experience and skills for job searching

Some People in Services have no experiences, or skills, or confidence in job searching

Some People in Services will benefit from extensive assistance in the job search/job development process

Job Search Supports

What, if any challenges do you have in attracting and finding qualified candidates that meet your business needs?

When you are hiring, how do you find (qualified) workers?

What do you look for in your employees? Describe a good employee for your business.

- <https://disability.workforcegps.org/resources/2018/09/14/13/52/Cohort-Application-Resources>

Job Search Supports

Job Development

If providers do job development, they understand the “Dual Customer Model;” one is the Person in Services the other are potential employers in the community

If providers do job development, they focus on matching each the strengths, talents, abilities and interests of the Person in Services with the employer’s needs

Job Search Supports

Job Development

If providers do job development, they develop relationships with employers based upon People's individual employment goals

If providers do job development, they learn about the work environment and the employers' work needs

Job Search Supports

People with Lived Experience are actively involved in all phases of employment supports including but not limited to "Job Development."

Job Search Supports

Providers understand that People in Services have a wide range of strengths, experiences, skills and challenges in attaining employment

Providers actively work to provide or facilitate access to multiple pathways to successful employment

Job Search Supports

Providers understand that the initial contact with a potential employer might be a significant challenge for some People in Services

Job Search Supports

Providers understand that they can all be helpful with the employment process, including helping People locate and communicate with potential employers

Providers acknowledge that talking with a potential employer can be stressful

Job Search Supports

If providers do job development, sometimes they do better in pairs instead of individually

Help People Be Successful at Work

Providers help
People who have
been hired to identify
and use their
strengths and
resources at work

Supports for working
People are
individualized



Help People Be Successful at Work

Providers ask about Supports a Person might need for keeping employment before they are searching for jobs

Providers focus on People's individual strengths and resources regarding employment.

Help People Be Successful at Work

All providers of services are informed when a Person starts employment.

All providers embrace an active role in helping employed People to be successful with work

People with Lived Experience are involved in helping People who obtain employment to be successful at work

Help People Be Successful at Work

All providers of services help People in services to identify people (natural supports) and resources in their life who might be supportive to them regarding employment

Help People Be Successful at Work

Providers of services help People in services to identify and learn techniques for managing unpleasant stuff (i.e., coping skills, relapse prevention strategies) using WRAP or IMR

People with Lived Experience facilitate a worker's support group for employed People in services

Person Centered Employment Planning

People are helped to find work that matches with their individual preferences, strengths, and work experiences

People are not directed into readily available jobs to prove they really want to work



Workplace Values Checklist

Use this list of work values as you begin your job search. Rate each item on the scale below. Then review your list to see which items you feel most strongly about. Your values relate directly to the working conditions in each company or occupation you research. Pay close attention to the list as you pursue your goals.

Rating: 1=Not important, 2=Somewhat important, 3=Moderately important, 4=Very important

Benefits

Clear expectations and rules

Freedom from pressure/stress Independence

Involvement in decision making

Power and influence

Public contact

Salary

https://www.careeronestop.org/TridionMultimedia/tcm2441169_WorkvalueslistPDF.pdf

Person Centered Employment Planning

Providers assure there is enough time and resources for People to develop their own meaningful Employment preferences and goals

People with Lived Experience involved in all phases of the employment process including meeting with People to help them think about employment

Person Centered Employment Planning

Providers embrace and explore “ambitious” employment goals instead of discouraging them

Providers help People in services to develop employment preferences as well as employment goals

Providers record People’s employment goals in their own language

Employment Goals & Preferences

Virtual options

Transportation

Job tasks

Degree of contact with other employees

Degree of contact with customers

Employment hours

Weekend hours

Employment Goals & Preferences

Level of physical effort required

Indoors or Outdoors

Supervisor's style

Type of Employer

Similar age coworkers

Employment perks

Person Centered Employment Planning

Helping People to understand clear concrete steps to reach their Employment “Goals”

Helping People track their progress towards Employment Goals

Acknowledging and Affirming People’s Progress towards their Employment Goals

Person Centered Employment Planning

Sharing People's Employment Goals with all mental health services providers

Identifying Specific Ways other Providers can help with all phases of the employment process

Thank You for What You Do



MENTAL HEALTH