

# How Does Providing Evidence-based Supported Employment Impact Social Determinants of Health?

Missouri

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# What is the connection between employment and health?

**“Employment is a critical mental health intervention.”**

**Drake and Wallach (2020)**



# Social Determinants of Health

- Access to quality healthcare
- Access to quality education
- Social and community context
- Neighborhood and built environment

CDC for Disease Control and Prevention

CDC 24/7: Saving lives, Protection People



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# Social Determinants of Health

- Economic stability:

The connection between the financial resources people have - income, cost of living and socioeconomic status – and their health. This area includes key issues such as poverty, employment, food security and housing stability.

CDC for Disease Control and Prevention

CDC 24/7: Saving lives, Protection People

# Mortality rate for people with mental illness

- According to the World Health Organization, people with serious mental health disorders die 10-25 years earlier than the general population.
- The vast majority of deaths of people with serious mental illness are preventable.

# Higher risk of illness

People with mental illness have increased risk of heart disease and other preventable conditions due to:

- Poverty, social isolation and trauma
- Lack of access to quality health care
- Psychopharmaceutical effects
- Substance use
- Tobacco
- Obesity

SAMHSA: What Health Providers and Organizations Need to Know About Wellness



# How might employment reduce risk factors for preventable illnesses?

- Reduce poverty, social isolation and trauma: Earned income and a sense of contributing and belonging to the community.
- Improve access to quality health care: Employer paid benefits.
- Psychopharmaceutical effects: IPS team works closely with the person's prescriber in order to coordinate treatment.

# How might employment reduce risk factors for preventable illnesses?

- Substance use: Employment gives people a sense of purpose, a reason to get up in the morning and reduces substance use.
- Tobacco: Most employers do not allow smoking on the job.
- Obesity: Employment fills in for boredom and sedentary time.



# Discussion

- How do you see employment impacting health risk factors for people with behavioral health conditions?

# Positive Impact of Competitive Employment for People with Mental Illness

**Benefits of work for people with mental illness similar to those for general population:**

increased self-esteem, improved financial security,  
reduced mental health symptoms, less social isolation,  
reduced substance use, and reduced health care costs

(Drake, 2020; Gibbons, 2019; Luciano, 2014)

**If employment is good, why is there such a large disparity between statewide employment rates and the numbers of people with mental health conditions working?**

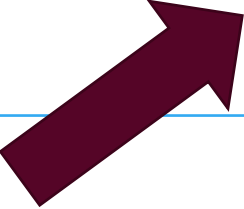


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This is the 2022 Uniform Reporting System (URS) Output Tables for Missouri. The URS state reporting system is collected annually to support the Community Mental Health Services Block Grant program. State Mental Health Authorities report on National Outcome Measures (NOMS), evidence-based practices, and utilization measures providing an overview of state mental health delivery systems.

	General Population	People with Mental Illness	Difference
Employment Rate in United States	96.3%	21.7%	74.6%
Employment Rate in Missouri	96.7%	20.6%	76.1%

Target group for IPS services!



**There's probably a lot of people with mental illness who want to work, but may need help to reach their goal**



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# Need for Employment Services

- Over 60% of people with serious mental illness want to work, but less than 20% employed.
- Only 2% of people who could benefit have access to effective employment services.

## Expressed Interest in Employment Reported in 11 Surveys

Study	%	Survey Population
Rogers (1995)	71%	statewide survey of people with mental illness
Bedell (1998)	69%	sheltered workshop participants
Mueser (2001)	61%	study of family intervention
McQuilken (2003)	55%	clubhouse members
Drebing (2004)	53%	veterans in a VA-sponsored vocational program
Woltmann (2009)	70%	clients in psychiatric rehabilitation program
Frounfelker (2011)	72%	clients with co-occurring substance use
Ramsay (2011)	78%	young adults experiencing early psychosis
Wescott (2015)	77%	community survey of people with schizophrenia
Knaeps (2015)	45%	psychiatric inpatients
Livermore (2017)	48%	SSDI/SSI beneficiaries with mental illness
<b>Mean</b>	<b>63%</b>	

# Question:

- If work is so good for people, then why isn't it seen (along with housing) as a central focus of the public mental health system?



# Funding Employment Services

- There typically is not one source of funding for employment services but instead a need to braid funding.
- Medicaid
- Medicaid Waivers
- Vocational Rehabilitation
- State Block Grant \$



# Leadership Buy-in for IPS

Successful implementation of IPS and other evidence-based practices depends upon strong leadership for the new program, as demonstrated by the National Evidence-Based Practices Project.

# Provider Misinformation

- Lack of understanding about SSI/SSDI benefits planning.
- Many providers were taught that “work is too stressful.”
- What comes first mentality “we are not saying that people shouldn’t work but they need to be housed or in treatment first.”



# People are their own best judges of when they are ready to work

- Research has demonstrated that desire to work helps people overcome many different barriers to employment.
- Most of us are unable to reliably predict who can work.
- Employment is a human right.
- Effects of poverty are terrible– people live on the fringes of their communities, poorer health, less self-esteem, depression, legal problems, more substance use.



# When we don't ask people about employment, does that send a message? What message?



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# Since we know that work is good for overall health, what can we do?

- Self examination: What message do you give staff and clients about the importance of employment? Has leadership communicated how employment (IPS) supports the mission of the agency and helps clients with their recovery.
- Include questions about interest in employment on agency intake and treatment plans.
- Display written postings (e.g., brochures, bulletin board, posters) about working and IPS employment services in the lobby and other waiting areas.
- Ensure that people being served are offered assistance in obtaining comprehensive benefits counseling.

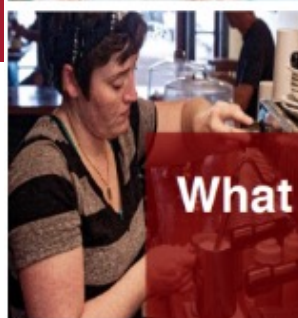


# Have You Thought About Getting a Job?

## What Do You Want To Do?

- ✓ Further Your Education
- ✓ Pursue Work
- ✓ Build a Career
- ✓ Live Life

Ask About  
IPS Supported Employment



"Life has a certain momentum to it. When I am not working I am not moving. Work is important because it keeps me moving."



"I feel that employment is critical for my son. Next to a cure for his illness, work has as much impact as anything."

"The money is nice but I feel good telling my son that I have to go to work tomorrow."

"Since starting a job, my family member has blossomed! Of course, the money is nice, but even nicer are the compliments she gets from her boss and the friendships she has developed. Those are priceless."



## IPS Supported Employment

[www.ipsworks.org](http://www.ipsworks.org)



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@ipsworks2002



# Support ways for people being served to share work stories with other participants and staff

- Kickoff event with agency leadership, staff, people that receive services, Vocational Rehabilitation, and funders.
- Provide opportunities for participants to share their back to work stories in agency groups, social events, staff events, and other gatherings.
- Have an employer come to the agency to share about their workplace and what they look for in candidates.



# Recovery From Mental Illness Through A Job

## Clark's Story

"My name is Clark. There was a time when I was living in a group home on a rent-free basis and working as a volunteer. But I didn't feel as good about myself and I didn't have the money to do the things that I enjoy. For me,

- Work is a morale booster
- It helps me feel equal with other people
- I want to pay rent and pay taxes

When I met with someone from the Individual Placement and Support (IPS) supported employment program, she asked about the kinds of jobs that I would like to have. Working at a regular job, not a job for people with disabilities, was important to me. My background is in acting and I like my job in the theater. Even though I'm part of the house staff, seeing those performers up on stage and hearing the applause is great!"

## About IPS Supported Employment

Research tells us that 60-70% of people with serious mental illness want to work. However, fewer than 15% of these individuals are employed. These figures are troublesome because having a job helps people manage their symptoms, rejoin their communities and decrease their reliance on the social service system.

The good news is that this evidence-based approach helps people with serious mental illness to find and keep regular jobs in their communities. There are many types of vocational programs for people with mental illness; however, **people who participate in IPS supported employment programs are almost three times more likely to gain employment** than those who engage in other types of vocational programs.

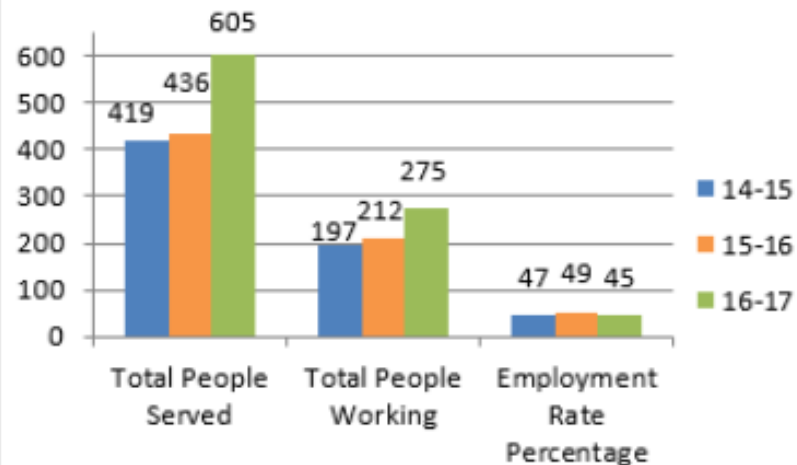


*My name is Clark.*

To learn more visit the IPS Employment Center website:

<http://www.ipsworks.org>

## Yearly Comparison



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The thing about being unemployed was that I was isolating myself and not getting out in the world. The work picks me up...

Bob's Story



## Employer Spotlight: Wendy's



**Wendy's General Manager Juan Martinez and Employment Specialist Martin Pacheco: Supporting great employees and sharing a love for Wendy's vanilla Frostys.**

Two years ago, Voc Program Employment Specialist Martin Pacheco walked into Wendy's at 23969 Mission Blvd in Hayward looking for a job opportunity for one of his clients who lived nearby. He immediately connected with General Manager Juan Martinez, and they have maintained a strong partnership since. Juan shares that he appreciates Martin's responsive communication whenever he needs something, and Martin praised Juan's empathy and patience with teaching new employees their job tasks.

Currently, Wendy's employs one person from the Voc Program, and Juan remarked, "He is doing a great job. He's such a hard worker and I like him a lot. He makes chili, Frostys, cleans the grill, restocks the front line, and cleans the restaurant inside and out."

Juan Martinez has worked at Wendy's for 23 years, his whole career so far. He moved from Mexico after high school and started on the grill, then moved to fries, sandwiches, cashier, and crew leader. He's been the general manager in Hayward for 12 years and takes great pride in treating customers and employees well. His current favorite sandwich at Wendy's is the spicy chicken sandwich and he and Martin agree that vanilla is the superior Frosty flavor. Thank you, Juan, for being an excellent employer partner!

# Collect and Report Data

- Agencies can track how many people are working and analyze annual trends.
- IPS programs can share information on numbers of people enrolled in IPS, people working, in school, how many job starts, etc.
- Data can be shared with mental health teams, vocational teams, agency leadership, State and regional MHDS, Vocational Rehabilitation, and other stakeholders.

# Guard against the tyranny of low expectations

- Does leadership pay attention to low expectations (what would you do if your son or daughter came home and told you that they could no longer work)?
- Are there conversations about helping people to create exit plans?
- What is your definition of recovery for people with behavioral health conditions?

# How do we fund IPS employment services

- The key is to partner and collaborate across silos.
- Get all stakeholders (e.g., Vocational Rehabilitation, Medicaid, State and Regional MCO's), to sit down at a meeting and discuss a state plan to support IPS services.

# Provide strengths-based services

- The strengths-based approach was developed in response to the predominantly deficit-based medical model in mental health. Rather than seeing people with mental illness as permanently deficient, the strengths-based approach highlights people's assets and potential for recovery. Focusing on people's strengths improves the client-specialist relationship and vocational outcomes.

# What can mental health staff do to promote employment?

Sometimes, mental health practitioners ask all of their clients about work, but are unsure what to do if a person says “No.”

Think about a variety of ways to ask how employment might fit into the person’s life.

- How would your life be different if you worked? What would be some good things about being employed? The not so good things?
- How would a job affect your relationships with other people?
- What are your skills and strengths?

# Mental Health Practitioners could also ask:

- Would you like to learn more about our employment services?
- Would you like me to introduce you to one of our employment/education staff?
- Would you like to hear how your benefits would be impacted by returning to work?



# Change program services to accommodate working people's schedules

- Are psychiatrists available after 5 p.m.?
- Are support groups and counseling sessions available after 5 p.m.?



# What can mental health staff do to promote employment?

- If employment is a person's treatment plan goal, it's everyone's business to help them, not just the employment staff.
- Be creative and brainstorm good job matches according to the person's strengths, skills, and previous employment history.
- Keep your eyes open for potential jobs and share leads with the employment staff.



# Quotes From IPS Participants

- “When you are working, you are part of the real world. You feel connected. Having a job gives me stability. I have something to look forward to every day.”
- “In the past, people might have used labels to describe me such as ‘homeless,’ ‘mentally ill,’ and ‘welfare mother.’ Now my titles are ‘financial administrator,’ ‘college student,’ and ‘working mom.’”

# Questions



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# Thank You

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[www.ipsworks.org](http://www.ipsworks.org)



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