

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Supported Employment liaison: _____

Phone: _____ Extension: _____

Email: _____

IF YOU WANT TO LEARN MORE ABOUT SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT OR OBTAIN ADDITIONAL RESOURCES PLEASE REFER TO THE FOLLOWING LINK AT THE DARTMOUTH PSYCHIATRIC RESEARCH CENTER.

<http://dms.dartmouth.edu/prc/employment>



Medical Prescriber Information For Supported Employment

"Work feeds the body and the soul. The value of work for a person is not only the physical or monetary rewards it may provide. Accomplishment in itself is a powerful reward. Work is therapeutic and scientific study supports this. Success in work not only suggests recovery from mental illness but helps to achieve recovery."

— Dale P. Svendsen, M.D.
Medical Director, Ohio Department of Mental Health

Evidence-based supported employment is a well-researched approach to helping people who are recovering from mental illness. Supported employment (SE) is effective with individuals of all ages and in urban and rural communities. In fact, regardless of the economy, people with mental illness are more likely to find jobs if helped by supported employment programs than any other type of vocational service. In 15 of 16 randomized controlled trials, supported employment had significantly better outcomes.

How is Supported Employment different from other approaches?

Psychiatrists and medication prescribers can be a positive influence regarding work.

- Talk about the positive benefits of work with clients and practitioners. Medication prescribers are extremely influential and can change the culture of an agency by expressing support for employment.
- Provide information for the employment plan. Share information about symptoms or side effects that may help the employment specialist make a better job match. For instance, a person who has disorganized thoughts might be more successful in a quiet work environment. Or a person who has had problems with substance abuse, even in the past, should probably avoid jobs where alcohol is served.
- Help with medication adjustments. Many clients report that one of the most helpful job supports they received was a medication adjustment to help with symptoms or side effects. Talk to working people about their jobs to find out whether a medication adjustment would help.
- Recognize success. While some people may choose to work many hours, for others a job working 10 hours per week may be just the right fit. Let clients know that you support their efforts to establish a working life.
- Keep in touch with the supported employment team. Feel free to call with questions about a client's work progress, to share the name of a client who has been talking about work, or to ask for more information about supported employment.

Evidence-based supported employment	Traditional vocational approaches
Supported employment is a well-defined model based upon research. Approximately 60% of clients who access these services will obtain jobs.	Traditional programs vary in their approaches and are not based upon research. About 20% of clients who access these services will obtain jobs.
Integration of mental health and employment services is important. Employment specialists are usually employed by the mental health agency and attend weekly meetings with clinicians to discuss cases.	Services are often brokered meaning that clients receive mental health services at one agency and vocational services at another.
All interested clients are eligible because motivation to work is an important predictor of success. Clients are not screened out due to substance abuse, symptoms, hospitalization history, treatment nonadherence, or other factors.	It is common for traditional programs to attempt to assess which clients are "ready" for employment and to screen out those who appear to have the most significant barriers to employment.
Clients are encouraged to meet with a person trained in benefits (i.e., Social Security, Medicaid, etc.) to learn how benefits would be affected by part or full-time employment.	Many traditional programs also offer referrals to benefit specialists.
Competitive employment is the goal. These are regular jobs in the community that pay at least minimum wage. The jobs are not positions created specifically for people with disabilities.	Some programs focus on competitive jobs, while others focus on sheltered jobs such as sheltered workshops or groups of clients working under the supervision of a staff person.
The job search is rapid. Clients are not asked to participate in vocational evaluation or work adjustment programs as these "pre-vocational activities" are not related to better employment outcomes.	Clients are frequently required to complete vocational testing, vocational adjustment programs or other pre-vocational groups before searching for a community job.
Client preferences are important. Client preferences may refer to type of work, job location, number of hours worked each week, work shift, disclosure of disability to employer, etc.	Some traditional programs offer only limited choices. This is problematic since, just like anyone else, clients tend to stay employed longer at jobs that meet their preferences.
Job supports are offered to working people on a continuous basis. The supported employment team provides long-term supports (typically at least one year) and mental health practitioners sometimes provide supports to people who have been working successfully for more than a year.	Follow-along supports are typically offered on a time-limited basis, often for 90 days.