

Employment Works!



This issue focuses on learning from consumer advocates and consumer providers.

Supported Employment *Never Having to Say You Are Sorry*

Maureen Marrin, Mental Health Consumer/Survivor Network of Minnesota

The theory at the time I was introduced to employment services for people with mental illness was that work was addressed *after* some level of recovery was attained. For me that was incredibly confusing as it became apparent to me that my desire to work was not part of the theory. The mental health service delivery system seemed to treat those of us living with a psychiatric diagnosis as if we needed protection from failure. Of course, the problem is that when, with the best intentions, we attempt to protect individuals we are actually preventing the normal life experiences that we all need to find out who we are, includ-

ing the type of work we want to pursue.

I ended up apologizing for all my attempts to obtain and maintain employment. I would say I was sorry when I called my vocational worker to inform her that I had found a job on my own. I felt even worse when I had to inform her that I did not keep the job. How the job was lost was irrelevant; I was humiliated if fired and contrite if it was voluntary. If I turned down a job, I felt almost criminal; "I don't want to do that" was unacceptable justification. I felt



Maureen Marrin

that all this failure was because my fundamental core-being was inadequate.

I realize now, and realized then, that this was not about cruel, malicious providers. This is entirely a statement of what we, as a society, believed about people with a mental illness. The issue that

led to unsuccessful employment was not my mental illness directly. It was about what I, and others, accepted to be true regarding work and those of us with a diagnosis. My primary responsibility or "job" was to first "get better"; that is what I was taught and my rejection of that is why I continued to say "I'm sorry."

Once I began to get real supported employment and was allowed to experiment (which meant sometimes changing my mind), I was able to see myself in the same tenor as others: to acknowledge my fear and have those fears considered normal. I was not afraid, unsure, or confused because I have a diagnosis. Those

continued on page 5

In This Issue

- 1 **Supported Employment - Never Having to Say You Are Sorry**
- 2 **The Importance of Teaching Skills**
- 3 **Peer Employment Specialists: One Person's Experience**
- 3 **Impact of Follow - Along Support on Job Tenure in IPS Programs**
- 4 **Johnson & Johnson - Dartmouth Program**

The Importance of Teaching Skills (or Teach a Person to Fish)

Peggy Swarbrick and Jay Yudof, Institute for Wellness and Recovery Initiatives
Collaborative Support Programs of New Jersey

“We should consciously aim to minimize or eliminate the person’s dependence on services.”

People living with psychiatric disabilities want to work and sometimes seek practitioner help in finding all of the things it takes to start, resume, and maintain a career. They have strengths, which we are taught to maximize, and challenges, which are the result of their conditions, the treatment of their conditions, and the after-effects. In the best traditions of fidelity to IPS supported employment, we serve everyone who identifies a desire to go to work, and do not weed people out due to cognitive challenges or any other challenges.

We want not only to help people over specific barriers, but to develop *skills and a sense of self-efficacy* so they do not become depend upon us. We all know the proverb, “give a person a fish, you feed him for a day; teach a person to fish, you feed him for a lifetime.” Research demonstrates that people who use IPS learn skills for finding and keeping a job by working with an employment specialist and/or from their own job experiences. But, as effective IPS workers we should consciously aim to minimize or eliminate the person’s dependence on services so they can perform skills independently.

Two important parts of the **practitioner’s skill set** are analyzing skills needs and providing skills training.

Analyzing skills needs includes:

1. Identifying the challenge or barrier. For example, Jay has very limited computer skills, and cannot complete the online job application.
2. Identifying the range of options for teaching and learning the skill, or else options for getting around the barrier. These options come from our analysis and the input of the person served. We could work through the process with Jay at a computer, or Jay could take a computer basics class at the local adult learning school, and then come back and apply for the job, or we could prepare the application, or Jay could forget about getting any job with a computerized application.
3. Determining the likely challenges to the learning process. Does Peggy have significant cognitive barriers which might mean that it would take months of intensive teaching to get her able to enter her own job application?
4. Ruling out inadvisable options. If we prepare the application with Peggy looking over our shoulder, then she would learn nothing about this needed skill. The next time she needs to prepare an application on the computer she would be just as lost. In addition, we might enter things on the application which are not true or which Peggy might not be able to support in the interview. If Peggy passes on any job requiring a computer application she limits her range of jobs, might miss out on a good job, and might be forcing herself into lower pay, lower skills jobs.
5. Presenting the options to the person in a form that he/she can understand, helping the person through the decision process, and then proceeding with his/her chosen course of action.

continued on page 5

Staying positive

Peer Employment Specialists: One Person's Experience

Interview with Dominic Pallazola

How did you decide to become an employment specialist?

Dominic: The idea of making a positive change in the world by helping one person at a time has always held a strong appeal to me. Through Oregon Vocational Rehabilitation Services, I became involved in a program designed to help people find entry-level positions in human services. I interned and was employed by a mental health service agency. Years later I took a part-time job as a Disability Navigator. As the months went by, though, I began to miss the challenge, fulfillment and benefits of a full-time role. That's when I applied for a position at Laurel Hill Center, where I was hired as an employment specialist. My education, experience, and training have all led to this position. This is the right fit.

How has your own experience with mental illness enhanced your ability to work as an employment specialist?

Dominic: I know what it is like to deal with symptoms and what it is like to make a commitment to recovery. I understand that for many people, living in poverty while searching for employment can be a very uncomfortable experience. I have learned to be patient and understanding with others as they go through their personal processes of recovery. I know about the emotional adjustment required to transition from unemployment to working, particularly when starting a full-time job. As someone who has received services from vocational rehabilitation, I can also guide the people I serve as they develop relationships with their vocational rehabilitation counselor and develop their employment plan.

How and when you disclose to clients your lived experience?

Dominic: I do not disclose my psychiatric disability unless I feel it could benefit the person I service in some way. I prefer to disclose in a natural

and relaxed manner. I might say something like, "Yeah, I'm being treated for anxiety myself. Isn't it an uncomfortable feeling? How do you deal with it yourself?" I've learned

continued on page 5

Impact of Follow - Along Support on Job Tenure in IPS Programs

Gary R. Bond & Marina Kukla

Background: The effectiveness of the Individual Placement and Support (IPS) model in helping clients with severe mental illness to work in competitive jobs is well established. However, one IPS model component, *ongoing support for clients who obtain employment*, has not been adequately specified or empirically validated. We hypothesized that frequency of employment specialist contact would be positively correlated with duration of employment.

Methods: Employment specialists at four IPS sites provided monthly data on 142 clients over a two-year period after each client started a job, including data on subsequent jobs held during follow-up. Measures included frequency and type of employment specialist contact and competitive employment outcomes.

Results: Over the 2-year follow-up, clients held an average of 1.92 jobs. They averaged 10 months job tenure in their initial job and 12.9 months of employment across all jobs. Employment specialists averaged 1.72 contacts per month; over 75% of all contacts were face-to-face and were made at a variety of locations. A total of 100 clients (70%) received IPS services for 24 months. A prototypical pattern of support was weekly contact immediately after a job start, reduction to monthly contact within a few months, and continuing monthly contact for the remainder of follow-up. Mean frequency of employment specialist contact was modestly positively correlated ($r = .27$) with total months worked during follow-up, supporting the study hypothesis.

Conclusion: In IPS programs, employment specialists typically provide support for a year or more after clients begin employment. Ongoing support from employment specialists promotes continued employment. Future research should identify characteristics of effective employment specialist interventions, optimal timing of interventions around job transitions, and the complementary roles for mental health treatment and nonprofessional support in promoting job tenure. ♦

Note: An hourlong webcast presenting the study findings with a downloadable PowerPoint can be accessed at: www.worksupport.com/training/webcastDetails.cfm/169

This study was supported by subcontract to the first author from Virginia Commonwealth University Rehabilitation Research and Training Center (National Institute of Disability and Rehabilitation Research Grant # H133B040011)

J & J-Dartmouth Program *Updates*

Welcome Wisconsin.

Wisconsin is the 13th state in the Johnson & Johnson-Dartmouth Community Mental Health Program.

Annual Meeting: In May 2010, representatives from each of the 13 states met in St. Paul, Minnesota to discuss strategies for state and family leadership teams to advocate for IPS supported employment, strategies to utilize all available funding streams for IPS supported employment, and to include consumers in service provision and training.

Two provider agencies won awards of \$10,000 and an engraved bowl for superior employment outcomes. Diane Erkens accepted the award for the collaboration between Functional Industries, Wright County Human Services, Minnesota DEED/VR, and Central Minnesota Mental Health Center. Sarah Sirna accepted for Transitions Mental Health Services and Illinois Division of Rehabilitation Services.

The **Supported Employment Website** is a rich source of information and tools to facilitate the implementation of evidence-based supported employment. This site will allow you to download a variety of materials including the 2008 fidelity scale, posters, videos, pamphlets and newsletters. In addition, you can subscribe to our newsletter, **Employment Works!**, and order additional books and materials.

Visit our website at
<http://www.dartmouth.edu/~ips/>

Justice System Involvement Learning Project



Twelve employment specialists from the J&J – Dartmouth program participated in a project to learn more about employers' hiring practices in regards to people with justice system involvement. The specialists gathered with Dartmouth trainers to discuss surveys of 128 employers. A summary of their project can be ordered from our website. Back row, l to r: Stephanie Kruger, Tania Morawiec, Andrea Wigfield, Sandy Reese, Sarah Swanson, Janet Dickerson, Crystal Ganat, Tim Dunn. Front row, l to r: Kristin Tracy, Susan Klunk, Peggy Wolfe, Tammy Mitchell, Kevin Kearns.

Dartmouth Online Course for IPS supported employment.

A 13-week online course for IPS supported employment is available for employment specialists and supervisors through Dartmouth Psychiatric Re-

search Center. Openings for the fall course are no longer available, but it is possible to sign up for the course beginning January 24, 2011. Please check our website for more information. ♦

Please watch our website
<http://www.dartmouth.edu/~ips/>
for more information about these projects.

Supported Employment... continued from page 1

feelings were simply normal manifestations of doing something new – of change. I was able to learn how to discern between symptoms and my normal.

Our society measures value by work: good or bad, right or wrong, it just is. Those of us with a psychiatric diagnosis come from the same population pool as everyone else. As human beings we want and need to be valued contributing members of society, and

work is essential. It is not abnormal to have a diagnosis and work; that would be like saying it is abnormal to be human and work. It is however incongruous to treat a population based on an illness as if that desire is different or to measure success through a different lens.

The seminal event in my employment journey was when I was able to say – “I want a job” and it was not prefaced with “I’m sorry.” ♦

The Importance of Teaching Skills... continued from page 3

Skills training will vary with the nature of the skills, the available learning/teaching resources, and the learning needs/challenges of each person. In all cases we seek the solution that **minimizes** reliance on us and **maximizes** natural supports.

Teach skills using time-honored processes.

1. Orient.
2. Demonstrate each step.
3. Allow the person to demonstrate his/her mastery of each step.
4. Allow the person to demonstrate mastery of the integrated process.
5. Provide plenty of positive and constructive feedback.
6. Answer (or help the person get answers to) any questions.

7. Be patient. If the skill came naturally to the person, they would not be seeking our help in the first place.

We have all mastered many skills in our lives that allow us to live, learn, work, and socialize in the most effective manner. Very few of us, as adults, need to rely on someone else to tie a shoe, scramble an egg, or make a bed. We learned these activities of daily living because someone taught us the skill in a way that allowed us to practice and maintain it on our own. The people we serve deserve nothing less. If we teach a person to fish they are able to feed themselves for a lifetime. ♦

The full version of this article can be found at our website under the Newsletter tab.

Peer Employment Specialists... continued from page 3

that it’s best to be brief with my disclosure and to return the focus to the person.

What can IPS teams do (or avoid doing) to help peer employment specialists feel like every other member of the team?

Dominic: Peer employment specialists should be encouraged to think of themselves like any other teammate rather than as a token employee hired because of the disability. They should be prompted to consider the disability as a natural part of life and part of what makes them a valued teammate. Except in cases of reasonable accommodation, the person with a disability should be expected to work and produce results just like anyone else. If not, the peer may end up being type-

cast, and ultimately resented, as someone who is not expected to perform like the others. Having a disability should be considered an enriching part of life, something that develops many character strengths, such as insight, sensitivity and compassion for others.

What can agencies do?

Dominic: I suggest that agencies, through their hiring practices, remember that hiring persons with psychiatric disabilities will benefit their service provision rather than be a hindrance to it. For instance, a typical way to integrate more peers into the staff would be to mention in job postings, “Persons with psychiatric disabilities are strongly encouraged to apply.” ♦

Evidence-based supported employment is also known as individual placement and support (IPS). These are the same practices and use the same procedures, scales and approaches. Often the term “supported employment” is used in a generic sense and is not synonymous with evidence-based supported employment or individual placement and support.

Employment Works!

Dartmouth College
Dartmouth Psychiatric Research Center
Rivermill Commercial Center
85 Mechanic Street, Suite B4-I
Lebanon, NH 03766

NON-PROFIT
ORGANIZATION
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
BEREA OH
PERMIT #333

Dartmouth Supported Employment Materials

Order Form at: <http://www.dartmouth.edu/~ips/> Click Order Form Tab

BOOKS

- Supported Employment: A Practical Guide for Practitioners and Supervisors. (Swanson, S.J., Becker, D.R., Drake, R.E., Merrens, M.R.)
- A Working Life for People with Severe Mental Illness. (Becker, D.R., Drake, R.E.) Order directly from Oxford University Press (www.oup.com/us).
- Justice System Involvement & Employment (Prepared by the J&J – Dartmouth Expert Employment Specialist Group, 2009-10)

SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT POSTERS

(sold as a set)

- Supported Employment for Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors
- Information on Evidence-based Supported Employment for Practitioners
- Supported Employment Practice Points for People with Co-occurring Disorders
- Have you thought about getting a job? (Client Information)
- ¿Ha pensado usted en conseguir un empleo? (Client Poster in Spanish)
- Employment Supports for Clients with Co-Occurring Mental Illness & Substance Abuse: Myths & Facts

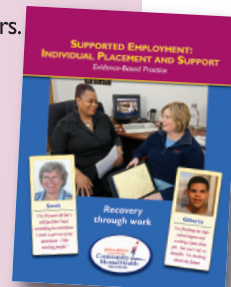


DVDs

- A set of 2 discs of supported employment demonstrations. Disc 1 contains seven brief videos that provide an introduction to supported employment for different stakeholder groups, including employers, families, state leaders, practitioners, and clients. Disc 2 illustrates many of the skills and components for implementing evidence-based supported employment.
- "Supported Employment: Strategies That Work" This training video demonstrates the skills for conducting job searches, developing the vocational profile, and working with clients with co-occurring disorders of mental illness and substance abuse.
- "Successful Supported Employment Fidelity Reviews." This video provides a series of modules that include demonstrations on how to conduct a supported employment fidelity review. The video also illustrates practice skills of evidence-based supported employment
- We have added English and Spanish subtitles to two of the videos (*3 Faces*, *3 Lives* and *It's My Business*). Both videos are included on this DVD. The non-subtitled videos are on the D. I set.

BROCHURES

- Information on supported employment for medical prescribers.
- Information on supported employment for policy makers.
- Supported Employment: Individual Placement & Support (English).
- Empleo Apoyado: Colocación Individual Y Apoyo.
- Advocacy Handout: Recovery From Mental Illness through a Job



FIDELITY

- Complete Supported Employment Fidelity Kit (including 2008 revised fidelity scale, video, manual, sample review questions and chart review form, sample reports and sample fidelity action plan).