Supported Employment

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JMHCP National Training and TA Event:
Collaborating to Achieve and Communicate Positive Public Health and Public Safety Outcomes
Importance of Work for SMI

• Most SMI want to work, including SMI with criminal justice involvement
• Work provides socially approved, meaningful structure
• Work associated with modest reductions in symptoms and improvements in quality of life
• Work boosts self-esteem
Traditional Vocational Services: Typical Features

- **Stepwise**: Training, sheltered, or transitional work first
- **Work readiness criterion**: Clients screened for placement
- **Brokered**: Different agencies provide vocational and mental health services
- **Short-term**: Services reduced when job is found
Gary Bond’s 1992 Review

“Traditional psychiatric rehabilitation programs do not prepare clients for competitive employment, but instead help clients adjust to various agency-sponsored employment options.”
Supported Employment

• Place and train approach
• Adapted from developmental disabilities field
• Focus directly on competitive jobs
• Long-term supports
• Modifications for mental health clients based on ACT
Development of Individual Placement & Support (IPS)

- Adapted by Becker & Drake
- Integrated into routine treatment for SMI
- Standardized in manual
- Fidelity scale
Principles of Supported Employment

- Zero exclusion criteria
- Integration with clinical services
- Focus on competitive employment
- Rapid job search
- Follow-along supports
- Client preferences
- Benefits counseling
Eligibility

• No one is excluded who wants to participate in program

• Clients are not excluded because they are not “ready” or because of prior work history, hospitalization history, substance use, symptoms, or other characteristics
Integration of Work & Mental Health Treatment

• Employment specialists coordinate plans with the treatment team, including case managers, therapists, & psychiatrists
Focus on Competitive Work

• Emphasis on competitive work, rather than any paid work, defined as work:
  – Paying at least minimum wage
  – Integrated into community setting
  – Job is “owned” by client rather than agency
  – Job is not set aside for person with disabilities
Examples of Jobs

- Landscaper
- Machine Operator
- Photographer
- Receptionist
- Reporter
- Sales Clerk
- Security officer
- Welder
More Examples of Jobs

• Baker’s assistant
• Childcare Worker
• Data Entry
• Deli Meat Cutter
• Grocery Bagger/Carriage Attendant
• Housekeeper
• Dishwasher
Rapid Job Search

• Limited pre-employment assessment
• No formal prevocational skills training
• Job search usually begins within month of joining program
Follow-Along Supports

- Supported employment staff continue to stay in regular contact with client & (when appropriate) the employer without arbitrary time limits
Client Preferences

- Job finding is based on client preferences, strengths, & work experiences
- Preferences respected in terms of disclosure of psychiatric disability to employer
Structure of Supported Employment Programs

- Minimum of 2 full-time staff
- Staff devoted exclusively to SE
- Full-time leader/supervisor who also provides employment services
- Offices physically located in mental health center
Supported Employment Unit

- Individual caseloads, but help each other (with job leads, etc.)
- Caseloads of about 20 consumers or less
- Weekly team meetings + individual supervision
Primary Evidence for Supported Employment

• 6 day treatment conversion studies
• 16 randomized controlled trials of IPS model
• 2 correlational studies of fidelity of implementation
Day Treatment Conversions to Supported Employment

- Studies in 6 mental health centers
- Discontinued day treatment
- Reassigned day treatment staff to new positions in center
- Replaced with supported employment

Sources: Drake, 1994, 1996; Bailey, 1998; Becker, 2001
Similar Results in All 6 Day Treatment Studies

- Large increase in employment rates
- No negative outcomes (e.g., relapses)
- Consumers, families, staff liked change
- Overall, all former day treatment clients got out into community more
- Resulted in cost savings
Figure 1. Competitive Employment Rates in 16 Randomized Controlled Trials of Supported Employment
CT Supported Employment Study
(Mueser et al., 2004)
Magnitude of Supported Employment Effects

- 1.5-2 year program job tenures between 79-150 days
- Most employment is part-time
- Income: most in $3000-5000/year
- Almost all clients remain on disability
- Unsuccessful job endings are common
- Probably 20-30% work significantly
- Job supports continue to be needed
Integration of Vocational and Mental Health Services

• In 7 controlled studies, the more successful program was integrated, while comparison program was not

– Bond, 2004
People with Severe Mental Illness in Treatment

- No Employment services: 40%
- Already Employed: 10%
- Not Interested in Employment: 25%
- Ineffective Employment Services: 23%
- Evidence-Based Supported Employment: 2%
National EBP Project

- 5 evidence-based practices: SE, IMR, FPE, ACT, IDDT
- 53 sites in 8 states
- Programs studied for 2 years
Fidelity of SE Programs

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<th>BL (n = 9)</th>
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<td>4.2</td>
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Supported Employment Unit

- Director of SE services, carries reduced caseload
- At least 2 FTE employment specialists who provide only vocational services
- Employment specialists carry individual caseloads, but help each other (e.g., job leads, cover for illness and vacation)
- Caseloads of about 20 consumers or fewer
- Weekly team meetings + individual supervision
Service Structure

• Co-located at same agency as provider of mental health services
• Integrated records
• Frequent contact between employment staff and treatment team members
• Employment specialists participate in treatment team meetings
Other Implementation Issues

- Education of mental health staff about supported employment
- Informing consumers about supported employment program
- Support of agency director for supported employment program
- Monitoring enrollment in program and competitive employment rates
- Fidelity assessment
Special Issues for Consumers with Criminal Justice Involved (CJI)

- Legal obstacles to providing SE to CJI involved consumers
- Criminal background checks common for many jobs
- Reluctance of employers to hire people with CJI
- Lower expectations for work of consumers with CJI and SE staff
- Truncated social networks
Strategies for Dealing with Obstacles

• Intensive job development and social networking with employers
• Supporting consumers’ hope and self-efficacy
• Activation of consumers’ social networks to expand job identification
• Coordination with parole or probation officers
Differences Between CJI & Non-CJI Involved Consumers in SE

- Frounfelker et al. (2010) study of 154 consumers in SE, 47% with CJI
- Consumers with CJI more likely to be male and to have co-occurring substance use disorder
- Consumers with CJI took longer to engage in SE services
- Similar work outcomes for consumers with vs. without CJI
Conclusion

- Supported employment is an evidence based practice for improving vocational outcomes
- Strong evidence documents efficacy of supported employment in SMI
- Challenges to providing SE to consumers with CJI
- Research suggests SE is effective in consumers with SMI and CJI
Thank You

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