

# Evidence-Based Supported Employment

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HI, SAM. YOU  
IN TOWN  
FOR THE  
DOG SHOW?

NAH, I'M HERE  
FOR THE  
SYMPOSIUM  
ON GLOBAL  
WORMING.



**WORKING BREEDS.**

# Participant Introductions & Learning Objectives

# Definition of Competitive Employment

- A job in the competitive labor market that is performed on a full-time or part-time basis in an integrated setting; and
- For which an individual is compensated at or above the minimum wage, but not less than the customary wage and level of benefits paid by the employer for the same or similar work performed by individuals who are not disabled

# Principles of Supported Employment

- Participating in SE is based on each person's own choice
- SE is integrated with other mental health services
- Helping people obtain competitive employment is the goal

# Principles of Supported Employment

- Each person has access to good work incentive planning information
- SE helps people find real jobs soon after they start the program, not requiring lengthy assessments or job trials

# Principles of Supported Employment

- SE helps people to be successful at work through follow along supports
- Each person's goals and preferences re: work are honored

# Participating in SE: A Person's Own Choice

- SE services are provided to all people who identify themselves as having competitive employment as a recovery goal

# Low Expectations

Research about the *low expectations of mental health professionals in relation to people with mental health conditions* gaining employment is now very well documented. These expectations are often underpinned by concern about issues of risk, stress and relapse. *Such low expectations ... can result in them and their families receiving very cautious messages from mental health professionals about gaining employment.*

- Rinaldi, Miles, Killackey, Eoin; et al. First episode psychosis and employment: A review. *International Review of Psychiatry* (Submitted 2010)

# Participating in SE: A Person's Own Choice

- People are not excluded because of severity of symptoms
- People are not excluded because of staff's or program beliefs about people not being ready for employment

# “Work Ready”

“I was going to a day treatment program forever. I was waiting to be anointed by someone that I was ‘work ready’.”

- Maureen Marrin

**“I want to live my life not my disability”**

- **Pat Deegan**

# Participating in SE: A Person's Own Choice

## Things that Help:

- Active Agency Leadership
- Agency Focus on Value of Employment
- Sharing Information about other People in services who are working
- Accurate Data about referrals and work outcomes in SE program

# Supported Employment Is Integrated with Mental Health Treatment

- Each person in SE receives integrated mental health services. Their employment specialist works in a collaborative and coordinated way with the other members of the person's mental health treatment team (for example, case manager, therapist, psychiatrist, nurse, etc...).

# Supported Employment Is Integrated with Mental Health Treatment

What Helps:

- Integrated Services Benefit Everyone
- Successful Integration starts at the Top
- Agency Leadership
- Team Supervisors Lead Integration
- Employment Specialists are not left to do the work of Integration alone

# Competitive Employment Is the Goal

- Each person is helped to find their own competitive job, one that they own, where they receive the paycheck directly from the employer

# Self-Direction

Consumers lead, control, exercise choice over, and determine their own path of recovery by optimizing autonomy, independence, and control of resources ... the recovery process must be *self-directed by the individual, who defines his or her own life goals* and designs a unique path towards those goals.

# Competitive Employment Is the Goal

- People are not steered into accepting jobs in pre-arranged job slots
- People are not re-directed into sheltered workshops, lengthy vocational assessments or working in job enclaves

# Competitive Employment Is the Goal

- Employment opportunities are identified and sometimes developed to fit the goals, preferences, strengths, and talents of each individual person

# Competitive Employment Is the Goal

- Individuals are not groomed nor developed to fit into pre-arranged work slots
- Jobs are developed to fit each person's individual preferences

# Competitive Employment Is the Goal

## What Helps:

- Leadership Dedicates Resources for Competitive Jobs
- Leadership Embraces Recovery Orientation
- Agency Clearly Defines Competitive Employment
- Agency Collects & Regularly Uses Competitive Employment Data across all SMI Programs

# People Access Individualized Work Incentive Planning

- Each person in SE has access to good, accurate work incentive planning that is based on their individual situation
- Work incentive planning helps people to determine what role benefits will play in their recovery

# People Access Individualized Work Incentive Planning

- People are empowered to make their own choices about benefits and are not directed to “earn less than SGA”
- What works best for the person is their “perfect choice”

# People Access Individualized Work Incentive Planning

What Helps:

- Agency Understands SSDI & SSI are poverty income levels
- People access Certified Work Incentive Counselors for Individual Financial Planning
- Staying Under SGA is not the end game
- Good Partnerships with VR

# People Receive Timely Help Getting Jobs They Want

- When people start SE, their goals to obtain competitive jobs are respected
- People are not required to participate in pre-employment assessments, job-hardening activities, or trial work periods

# “What is being assessed?”

“They think that they are assessing my motivation to work by having me work here. That is not true. They are really assessing my patience and tolerance of doing something that is far below my skills and abilities.”

Michael, Person in agency work program in NH

# Applying for a job at IKEA



# Employed People Receive Follow-Along Supports

- The agency helps employed people to be successful at work by providing follow along supports for employment
- Follow along supports are based on each individual's unique situation and needs

# Employed People Receive Follow-Along Supports

## What Helps:

- Agency provides community based services
- Teaching people coping skills and relapse prevention (IMR, WRAP) for Work
- Integrated teams helping people
- Building natural supports

# Each Individual's Goals and Preferences are Honored

- 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

# Individualized & Person-Centered

There are multiple pathways to recovery based on an *individual's unique strengths and resiliencies as well as his or her needs, preferences, experiences* (including past trauma), and cultural background in all of its diverse representations.....

# Each Individual's Goals and Preferences are Honored

What Helps:

- Person Centered Planning
- Time for developing goals
- Motivational Interviewing
- Frequently reviewing & changing goals based on the person's changes
- Separating goals from “medical necessity”

# Trauma-Informed Services

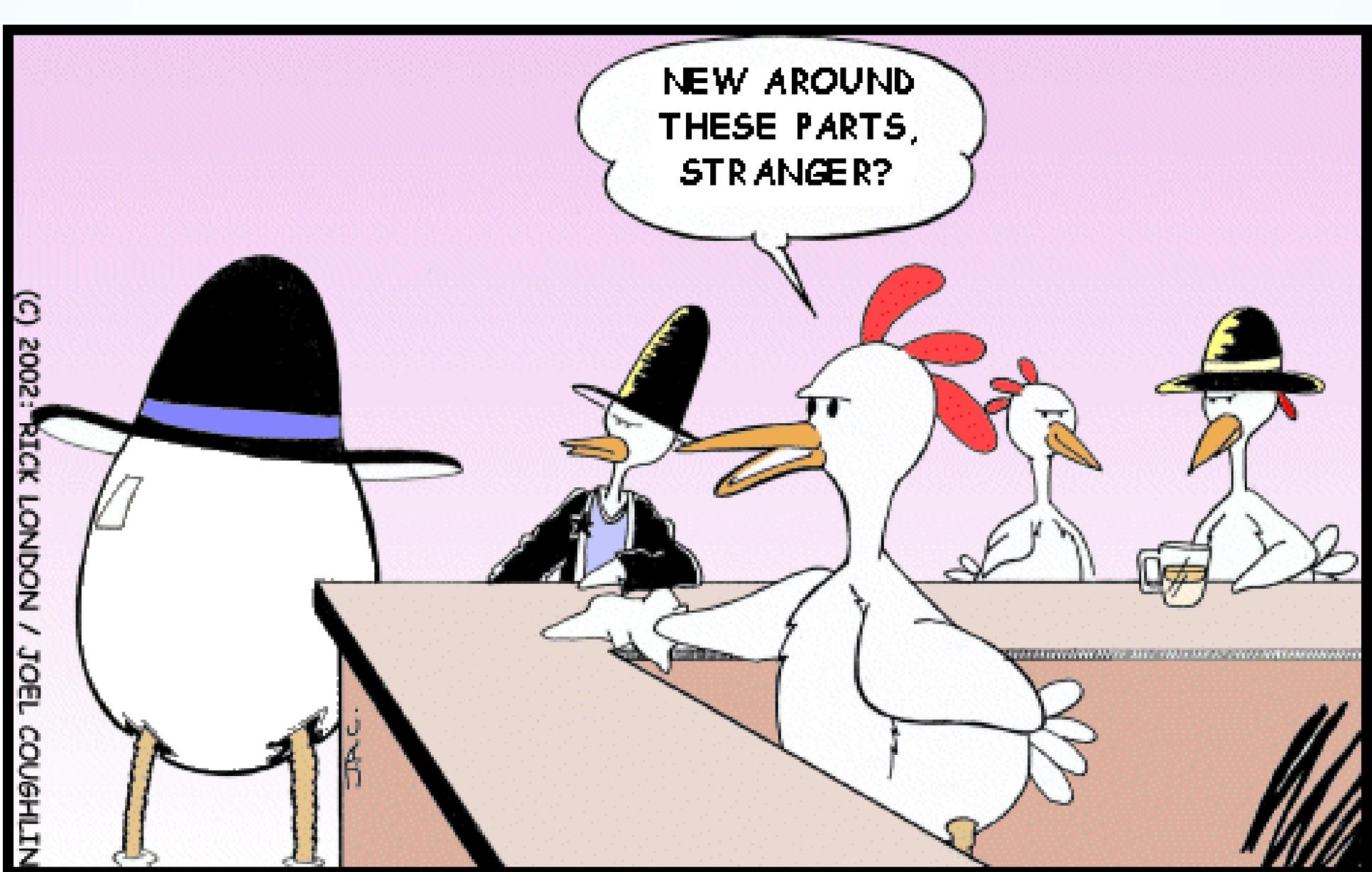
- Human service systems become trauma-informed by thoroughly incorporating, in all aspects of service delivery and the physical setting, an understanding of the prevalence and impact of trauma and the complex paths to healing and recovery.

# Key Principles of Trauma-Informed Services

- Safety
- Trustworthiness
- Choice
- Collaboration
- Empowerment
- Welcoming and Hospitable
- Avoiding trauma-related dynamics

# Is This You?

“Superior functioning in a wide range of activities, life's problems never seem to get out of hand, is sought out by others because of his or her many qualities. No symptoms.”



NEW AROUND  
THESE PARTS,  
STRANGER?

AND YET THE QUESTION REMAINED:  
"WHO CAME FIRST?"

**Is This You?**

**Competitively Employed?**

# Ability to Manage Employment Stress?

How many of us have managed the stress of...

- Poverty?
- Unemployment?
- Discrimination?
- Psychosis?
- Hallucinations?
- Involuntary inpatient treatment?

# Ability to Manage Employment Stress?

How many of the people we work with have managed the stress of...

- Poverty?
- Unemployment?
- Discrimination?
- Psychosis?
- Hallucinations?
- Involuntary inpatient treatment?

# Simple Stress Test

- The following is a picture of two *identical* dolphins

- If you are struggling with managing your own employment stress you will see *differences* in these two dolphins



# Cognitive Reframing

- Helping people that we work with to re-evaluate their experiences that they may view as “failures” to assess strengths, talents and abilities that will be helpful in education or work environments
- Wondering together with the people that we work with about what they want to do with their careers

# Recovery Lenses?



# Recovery Lenses?



**Supported Employment as  
an Evidence Based Practice  
for  
People  
with  
Serious Mental Illness**

# Evidence Based Practice Definition (mental health)

- Practice is manualized
- Practice has a fidelity scale
- Practice has demonstrated success helping consumers with their goals in repeated research trials
- Research trials have been done by more than one different person



**Extra, Extra**

**There is Scientific Evidence**

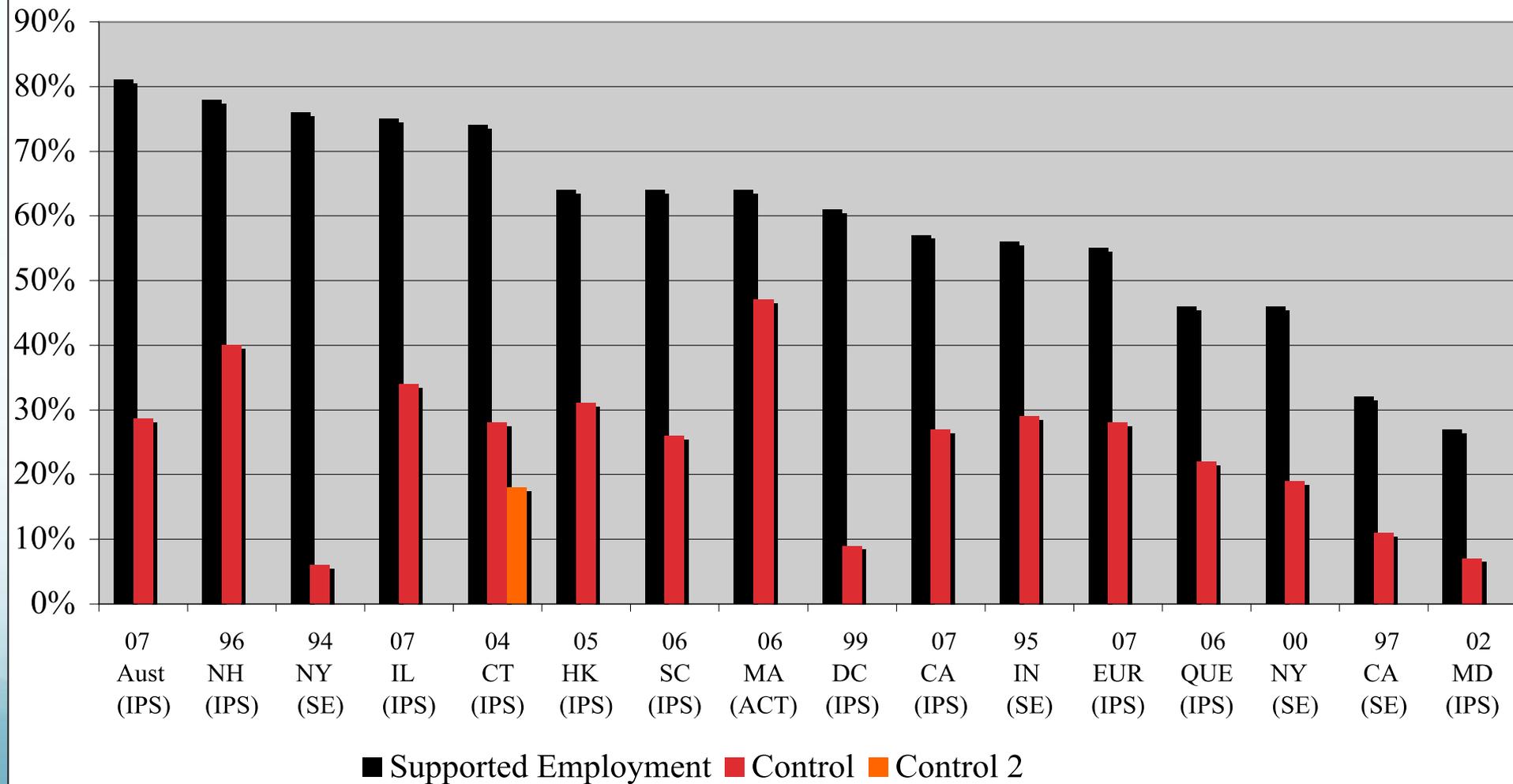
# 16 Trials of Supported Employment

- 4 conducted before Individual Placement and Support (IPS) model was developed
- 11 used full implementation of IPS
- 1 studied supported employment on an ACT team

# The Reasons This Won't Work Here

1. We have the worst economy
2. We have the greatest challenges with transportation
3. We have the most significant funding problems
4. We work with the most impaired consumers

# Figure 1. Competitive Employment Rates in 16 Randomized Controlled Trials of Supported Employment



# Supported Employment

## An Evidence-Based Practice



**EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICES**  
*Shaping Mental Health Services Toward Recovery*



SAMHSA'S

**National Mental Health Information Center**

*Center for Mental Health Services*

[www.samhsa.gov](http://www.samhsa.gov)

***Search Supported Employment Toolkit***

# Dartmouth's Supported Employment Website

<http://www.dartmouth.edu/~ips/>



# Evidence Based Supported Employment Fidelity Scale

25 point scale  
Revised 2008

**IMPOSTER!**



# **Staffing: Caseload size:**

**Employment specialists have individual employment caseloads. The maximum caseload for any full-time employment specialist is 20 or fewer clients**

# **Staffing: Employment services staff:**

**Employment specialists provide only employment  
services**

# **Staffing: Vocational Generalists:**

Each employment specialist carries out all phases of employment service, including intake, engagement, assessment, job placement, job coaching, and follow-along supports before step down to less intensive employment support from another mental health practitioner

# **Organization: Integration of Employment Services with mental health treatment thru team assignment:**

**Employment Specialists are part of up to 2 mental health treatment teams from which at least 90% of the employment specialist's caseload is comprised**

# **Organization: Integration of Employment Services with mental health treatment thru frequent team member contact:**

Employment specialists actively participate in weekly mental health treatment team meetings (not administrative meetings) that discuss individual clients and their employment goals with shared decision-making. Employment specialists' offices are in close proximity with their mental health treatment team members. Documentation of mental health treatment and employment services are integrated in a single chart. Employment specialists help the team think about employment for people who have not yet been referred to employment services.

# **Organization: Collaboration between employment specialists and Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors:**

The employment specialists and Vocational Rehabilitation counselors have frequent contact for the purpose of discussing shared clients and identifying potential referrals.

# **Organization: Vocational Unit:**

**At least 2 full time employment specialists comprise the employment unit. They have weekly client-based team supervision following the supported employment model in which strategies are identified and job leads are shared. They provide coverage for each other's caseload when needed.**

# **Organization: Role of employment supervisor:**

**Supported employment unit is led by a supported employment team leader.**

**Employment specialists' skills are developed and improved through outcome-based supervision. All five key roles of the employment supervisor are present.**

# **Organization: Zero exclusion criteria:**

All clients interested in working have access to supported employment services regardless of job readiness factors, substance abuse, symptoms, history of violent behavior, cognitive impairments, treatment non-adherence, and personal presentation. This applies during the course of supported employment services too. Employment specialists offer to help with another job when one has ended, regardless of the reason that the job ended or number of jobs held. If Vocational Rehabilitation has screening criteria, the mental health agency does not use them to exclude anyone. Clients are not screened out formally or informally.

# **Organization: Agency focuses on competitive employment:**

Agency promotes competitive employment through multiple strategies. Agency intake includes questions about interest in employment. Agency displays written postings (e.g. brochures, bulletin boards, posters) about employment and supported employment services. The focus should be with the agency programs that provide services to adults with severe mental illness. Agency supports ways for clients to share work stories with other clients and staff. Agency measures the rate of competitive employment and shares this information with the agency leadership and staff.

# **Organization: Executive Team Support for SE:**

*Agency executive team members (e.g. CEO, Chief Operating Officer, Quality Assurance Director, CFO, Clinical Director, Medical Director, HR Director) assist with supported employment implementation and sustainability. All five key components of executive team support are present.*

# **Services: Work Incentive Planning:**

All clients are offered assistance in obtaining comprehensive, individualized work incentives planning before starting a new job and assistance accessing work incentives planning thereafter when making decisions about changes in work hours and pay. Work incentives' planning includes SSA benefits, medical benefits, medication subsidies, housing subsidies, food stamps, spouse and dependent children benefits, past job retirement benefits and any other source of income. Clients are provided information and assistance about reporting earnings to SSA, housing programs, VA programs, etc., depending on the person's benefits.

# **Services: Disclosure:**

**Employment specialists provide clients with accurate information and assist with evaluating their choices to make an informed decision regarding what is revealed to the employer about having a disability.**

# **Services: Ongoing, work-based vocational assessment:**

**Vocational profile/assessment occurs over 2-3 sessions and is updated with information from work experiences in competitive jobs. A vocational profile form that includes information about preferences, experiences, skills, current adjustment, strengths, personal contacts, etc., is updated with each new job experience. Aims at problem solving using environmental assessments and consideration of reasonable accommodations.**

# **Services: Rapid job search for competitive job:**

**Initial employment assessment and face-to-face employer contact by the client or the employment specialist about a competitive job occurs within 30 days after program entry.**

# **Services: Individualized job search:**

Employment specialists make employer contacts aimed at making a good job match based on clients' preferences and needs rather than the job market (i.e. those jobs that are readily available). An individualized job search plan is developed and updated with information from the vocational assessment/profile form and new job/educational experiences.

# **Services: Job development - Frequent employer contact:**

Each employment specialist makes at least six (6) face-to-face employer contacts per week on behalf of clients looking for work. An employer contact is counted even when an employment specialist meets with the same employer more than one time in a week, and when the client is present or not. Client-specific and generic contacts are included. Employment specialists use a weekly tracking form to document employer contacts.

# **Services: Job development - Quality of employer contact:**

Employment specialists build relationships with employers through multiple visits in person that are planned to learn the needs of the employer, convey what the SE program offers to the employer, describe client strengths that are a good match for the employer.

# **Services: Diversity of job types:**

**Employment specialists assist clients in obtaining different types of jobs**

# **Services: Diversity of employers:**

**Employment specialists assist clients in obtaining jobs with different employers.**

# **Services: Competitive jobs:**

Employment specialists provide competitive job options that have permanent status rather than temporary or time-limited status (e.g. transitional employment slots). Competitive jobs pay at least minimum wage, are jobs that anyone can apply for, and are not set aside for people with disabilities.

# **Services: Individualized Follow-Along Supports:**

Clients receive different types of support for working a job that are based on the job, client preferences, work history, needs, etc. Supports are provided by a variety of people, including treatment team members (e.g. medication changes, social skills training, encouragement), family, friends, co-workers (i.e. natural supports) and employment specialists. Employment specialist also provides employer supports (e.g. educational information, job accommodations) at client's request. Employment specialist offers help with career development (i.e. assistance with education, a more desirable job, or more preferred job duties).

# **Services: Time-unlimited follow along supports:**

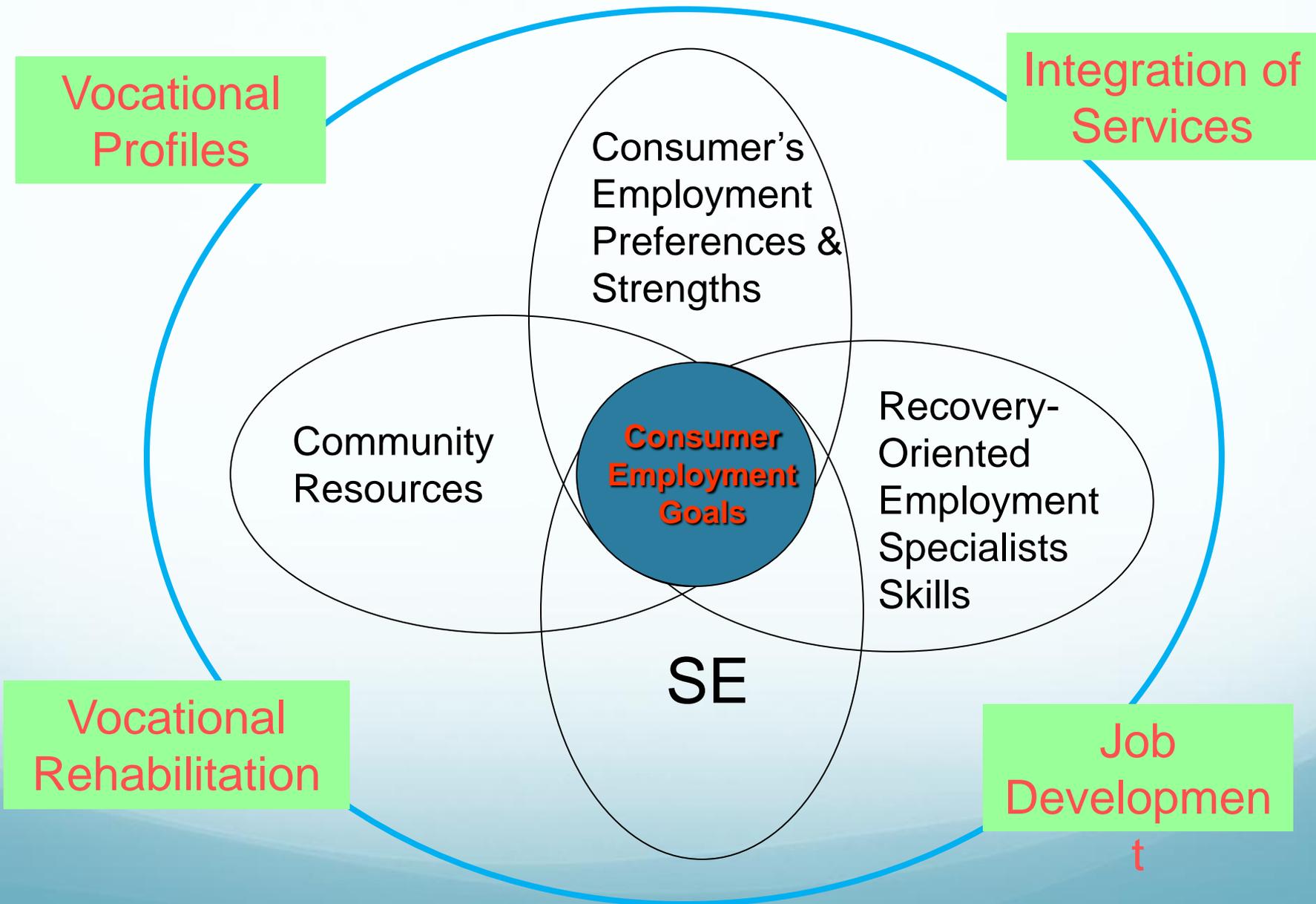
Employment specialists have face-to-face contact within one (1) week before starting a job, within three (3) days after starting a job, weekly for the first month and at least monthly for a year or more on average, after working steadily and desired by clients. Clients are transitioned to step down job supports from a mental health treatment team member following steady employment. Employment specialists contact clients within three (3) days of learning about the job loss.

# **Services: Community-based services:**

Employment services such as engagement, job finding and follow along supports are provided in the client's natural community settings by all employment specialists.

# **Services: Assertive Engagement and Outreach by integrated treatment team:**

Service termination is not based on missed appointments or fixed time limits. Systematic documentation of outreach attempts occurs. Engagement and outreach attempts are made by multiple team members. Multiple home or community outreach visits are provided, including coordinated visits by employment specialist with integrated mental health treatment team members. Connections are made with family members when applicable. Once it is clear that the client no longer wants to work or continue SE services, then the team stops outreach.



Vocational Profiles

Integration of Services

Consumer's Employment Preferences & Strengths

Community Resources

Recovery-Oriented Employment Specialists Skills

Consumer Employment Goals

SE

Vocational Rehabilitation

Job Development

t

# Individual Stages of Change



# Stages of Change

*Really Fast...*

# Newton's Laws

Non-Evidence Based employment practices that are funded tend to remain in practice unless an external force changes the funding.

# Newton's Laws

The relationship between a system's resistance "R" to change, its funding "F" and its history "H" is

$$R = F H$$

# Newton's Laws

• For every action to implement Evidence Based Supported Employment there is an equal and opposite reaction

# What helps?

GOAL: “I want to live independently and be able to be self-sufficient.”

1. Develop a vocational goal
2. Develop a vocational plan
3. Explore education and careers
4. Apply for disability income and entitlement programs

# The Stages

1. Precontemplation
2. Contemplation
3. Preparation
4. Action
5. Maintenance *(or sustaining, owning, etc)*

# The Stages Regarding Employment

- Precontemplation
  - Not “thinking” much about employment as an important change
- Contemplation
  - “Thinking” about employment, highly ambivalent

# The Stages Regarding Employment

- Preparation
  - Getting things in place to seek employment
- Action
  - Actively seeking employment
- Maintenance (*or sustaining, owning, etc*)
  - Working

# Change Takes Time



# Don't Argue



# People in Precontemplation Regarding Work

- What are your goals?
- Do you have goals related to employment or a career?
- What types of work have you done in the past?
- What types of hobbies do you enjoy?
- Have you thought about how employment may help you achieve some of your goals?

# Precontemplation

## What Helps?

- Developing a true strengths assessment (while keeping an eye open for work-related strengths)
- Cognitive Behavioral Reframing (exploring what coping skills the person already has in place)
- Providing Information about Employment Benefits

# Cognitive Reframing

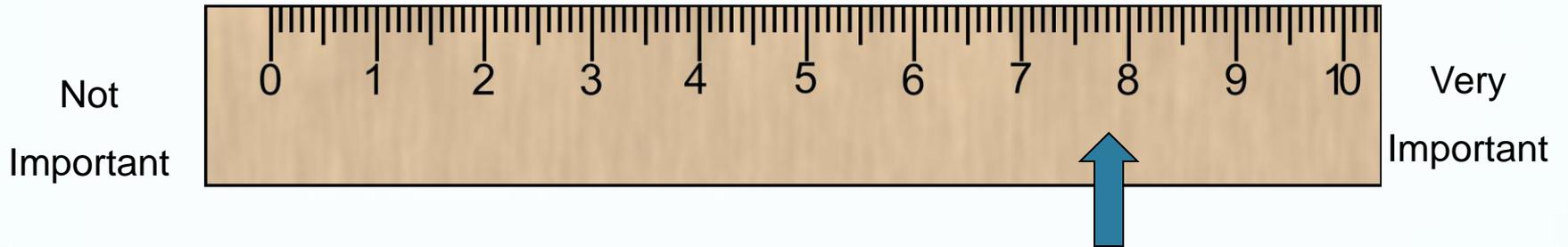
- Helping people that we work with to re-evaluate their experiences that they may view as “failures” to assess strengths, talents and abilities that will be helpful in a work environment
- Wondering together with the people that we work with about employment

# Contemplation

## What Helps

- What are the potential benefits or drawbacks to employment for you?
- Do you know that people who have symptoms are able to work?
- Do you know that work actually helps reduce substance use?
- What concerns about work can I help you with?

How important is it for you to get a competitive job that you like?



How confident are you that you will be able to get a competitive job with our assistance?



## Being Employed

## Being Unemployed

### Pros

More income

Keep my disability  
income

Feel better  
about myself

### Cons

Worried about  
benefits

Bored

Don't know what  
to say to co-  
workers

Don't like relying  
so much on  
others

# People in Preparation Regarding Work

- Is there any part of your job search process that would be helpful for you to have some help with?
- Remind me again of some of the reasons that you want to work?
- Let's take a look at the progress you have made with your search so far.

# People in Preparation Regarding Work

- Is there anything about the way you are job searching that you may want to consider doing differently?
- Review and understand community resources for employment including vocational rehabilitation services, work incentive programs, work incentive counseling, and supported employment programs

# Explore Natural Supports for Work

- Be culturally competent!
- Evaluate the meanings of work for the person within the context of their culture, their community and their family
- Assess for people who are, or who may become, good natural supports for people related to employment

# Explore Natural Supports for Work

- Offer to meet with some of the person's natural supports, if they are interested, to discuss the role that the person wants employment to play in their life and in achieving their goals

# People in Action Regarding Work

- Ask about how the job search process is going?
- Validate the stress and sometimes the anxiety of the job search process
- Ask the person if they would be interested in doing some role plays with you regarding employment interviews

# People in Action Regarding Work

- Carefully assess for areas where coping strategies and skills may be useful for the person
- PLAN for the first day of work together, help the person identify and use structured problem-solving to work out seemingly “little” things

# People in Sustaining Regarding Work

Ask “different” questions about how work is going frequently

- Best parts of the job
- Lunch time or break time strategies
- Medications and side effects during work
- Stressful situations
- Being assertive with supervisors
- Where and how to seek support

# People in Sustaining Regarding Work

- Develop a work specific plan for managing early warning signs & relapse prevention strategies
- Continue to ask about and help build natural supports
- Help the person to avoid loss of employment status in unplanned way

# People in Sustaining Regarding Work

- Think like an “Employee Assistance Program” (or better)
- Watch for concerns that may affect employment
- Watch for “high-risk” situations in the work place
- Ask what the person is learning about their own *Working Life*

# What Needs to Change to Promote Employment?

1. People in Services?
2. People Providing Services?
3. Agencies Providing Services?
4. State / County Mental Health Systems?
5. All of the Above?

# Expectations & Hope

“If people are treated as capable, they often surprise everyone and live up to expectations.”

- Ken Steele “The Day the Voices Stopped.”

# The 3 Phases of Job Development

- Phase I: First Impressions
  - What's Your Goal?
  - How Do You Prepare?
  - Follow-Up
  - Things to Consider

# The 3 Phases of Job Development

- **Phase II: Learning about the Employer's Needs**
  - What's Your Goal?
  - How Do You Prepare?
  - Follow-Up
  - Things to Consider

# The 3 Phases of Job Development

- **Phase III: Matching Client Characteristics with Employer Needs**

- What's Your Goal?
- How Do You Prepare?
- Follow-Up
- Things to Consider