



Information on Evidence-based Supported Employment for Practitioners

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, from young to older adults. It works in urban and rural communities. In fact, regardless of the economy, people with mental illness are more likely to find jobs if helped by a supported employment program than any other type of vocational service.



All interested clients are eligible.

Motivation to work is an important predictor of success. Therefore, clients are not screened out from receiving SE services due to psychotic symptoms, personal presentation, recent job losses, substance abuse, missed mental health appointments, or other reasons.

Mental health and vocational services are integrated.

The supported employment program is located in a mental health center. A "treatment team" meets weekly and may include a case manager, counselor, psychiatrist, employment specialist, Vocational Rehabilitation counselor, and others. The team shares information and solves problems together from a strengths-based perspective. The team also offers to include family members who can have an important role in identifying strengths and needed supports.

Benefit planning is comprehensive and ongoing.

Clients are provided with accurate and comprehensive information about the impact of earned income and work incentives specific to each client's circumstances. This information is discussed with each person and also entered into the clinical chart. Clients are offered ongoing help with benefits as their goals and jobs change over time.

Client preferences are important.

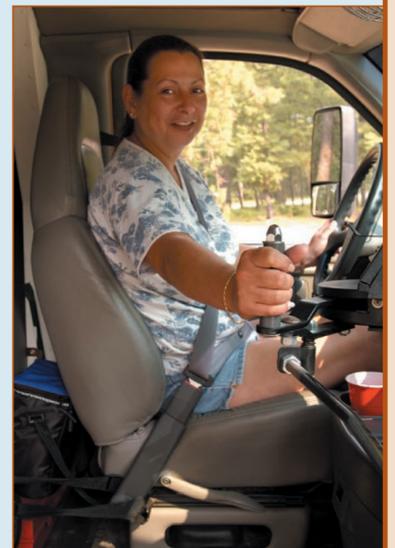
Client preferences may be related to the type of work, job location, hours of work, disclosure of disability, and other issues. Employment specialists honor preferences and spend time in the community getting to know each person as an individual.

Competitive employment is the goal.

Supported employment focuses on regular jobs in the community, not jobs created for people with disabilities. All jobs pay at least minimum wage and can be part-time or full-time.

The job search is rapid.

Clients are not asked to participate in vocational evaluation, work adjustment programs or prevocational groups. Instead, employment specialists help clients start a job search within a few weeks of the first SE appointment.



Follow-along supports are continuous.

Employment specialists meet with clients frequently to help them succeed in their jobs and move ahead in the world of work. They develop an individualized plan for follow-along services with clients, rather than offering a perfunctory "check-in" service. With a client's permission, they also provide support to employers. Finally, in some situations, after a client has been working successfully for a long period, a case manager or other practitioner may be chosen to provide ongoing support.

Clients are supported with job changes.

Employment specialists support client choice with regard to leaving jobs. When job loss occurs, employment specialists (and the mental health team) help clients learn as much as possible from the experience and offer to help with another job. Employment specialists also help with career planning and advancement.



For more information:

Dartmouth Evidence-Based Practices Center
<http://dms.dartmouth.edu/prc/employment>

Deborah R. Becker and Robert E. Drake, *A Working Life for People with Severe Mental Illness*.

New York: Oxford University Press, Inc., 2003.

SAMHSA Supported Employment Toolkit

<http://mentalhealth.samhsa.gov/cmhs/communitysupport/toolkits/employment/default.asp>