



EVIDENCE-BASED
PRACTICES

KIT

Knowledge Informing Transformation

Training Frontline Staff

Supported Employment



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration
Center for Mental Health Services
www.samhsa.gov



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Training Frontline Staff

This four-part workbook, along with the Training Frontline Staff: Demonstration video, will help Supported Employment (SE) leaders teach employment specialists about the principles, processes, and skills necessary to deliver effective SE services. The workbook includes such topics as the following:

- Basic elements and practice principles of SE;
- Referral, engagement, and benefits counseling;
- Assessment and job finding; and
- Job supports and collaborations.

It also includes forms and checklists that employment specialists use to provide SE services to consumers. Use this workbook to train your SE team.

Supported Employment

This KIT is part of a series of Evidence-Based Practices KITs created by the Center for Mental Health Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

This booklet is part of the Supported Employment KIT that includes a DVD, CD-ROM, and seven booklets:

How to Use the Evidence-Based Practices KITs

Getting Started with Evidence-Based Practices

Building Your Program

Training Frontline Staff

Evaluating Your Program

The Evidence

Using Multimedia to Introduce Your EBP

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Training Frontline Staff

How Program Leaders Should Use This Workbook

Training Frontline Staff, used along with the *Demonstration video*, introduces Supported Employment (SE) staff to the basic principles and skills they need to deliver effective SE services.

Since being part of a team is an essential part of SE, we recommend that you conduct group training rather than simply giving employment specialists the workbook to read on their own.

To make the content easy to manage, we divided the training into four modules:

1. *Basic Elements and Practice Principles,*
2. *Referral, Engagement, and Benefits Counseling*
3. *Assessment and Job Finding, and*
4. *Job Supports and Collaborations.*

The ultimate purpose of this workbook is to have employment specialists understand the theory behind the SE model, how SE is delivered, and what skills are necessary to provide SE services. Working through these modules as a group creates an opportunity to discuss and master the practice principles and skills that are essential to effective SE practice.



To complete this four-session training . . .

- Arrange for your employment specialists to meet at least once a week for four weeks. You will cover up to one module each week.
- In this workbook, on the page before each module, you'll find *Notes to the facilitator and SE leader*. Review the notes to prepare for the training.
- Copy and distribute the module's reading materials so that employment specialists can read them before the training session. You'll find electronic folders for each module on the KIT's CD-ROM.
- Copy the exercises for each module so that you can distribute them during each training session. You'll also find them in the electronic folders on the CD-ROM.
- For each session, ask a different group member to facilitate.
- Begin each training session by showing the corresponding segments of the *Training Frontline Staff: Demonstration video*.
- Discuss the information in the DVD and workbook.
- Complete the suggested exercises for that module.



Prepare program-specific information

In addition to the materials in this workbook, prepare to give employment specialists information about SE policies and procedures. These include the following:

- Admissions and discharge criteria;
- SE referral form;
- Assessment procedures;
- Vocational Profile;
- Individual Employment Plan;
- Criteria upon which the program's fidelity to the SE model will be assessed; and
- SE outcomes that will be monitored.

Sample forms may be found in *Building Your Program* and *Evaluating Your Program* in this KIT.

Prepare agency-specific information

You should also develop a plan to train employment specialists about other policies and procedures that may be relevant to the agency in which the SE program operates. These might include the following:

- **Consumers' rights:** Employment specialists should be aware of the state and federal consumer rights requirements, especially the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). For more information, see www.DisabilityInfo.gov.
- **Billing procedures:** Employment specialists must know how to document their activities and bill for services.
- **Safety:** Many agencies with existing community-based programs will have materials about safety. If training in this area is not already available, plan for training in de-escalation techniques. You might also seek a local law-enforcement agency to provide training in personal safety and crime-prevention strategies.

- **Mandated reporting:** Employment specialists must know how to report suspected abuse and neglect. They must also know what to do if they know about illegal activity and threats of harm to self or others.
- **Other policies and procedures:** Consult your agency's human resource office to learn of other program, agency, or State policies that the staff should know.

Visit an existing team

After your SE team completes this workbook, we suggest that new employment specialists observe an experienced, high-fidelity SE program. If employment specialists are familiar with the materials in this workbook before their visit, the visit will be more productive. Rather than having to take time to explain the basics, the host program will be able to show the new employment specialists how to apply the basics in a real-world setting.

Arrange for didactic training

After using this workbook and visiting an experienced SE program, the employment specialists will be ready for a trainer who will help them practice what they have seen and read. Some SE leaders choose to hire an experienced external trainer to help employment specialists practice SE principles, processes, and skills. The initial training should take 2 to 3 days.

Recruit a consultant

Once your SE team begins working with consumers, you are responsible for ensuring that they follow the SE model. This task can be challenging.

You must facilitate a team development process, apply what employment specialists have just learned about SE in their own clinical work with consumers, and, at the same time, ensure through clinical supervision that team members follow the model.

It is very easy to stray from the SE model and do something similar to but not quite the same as SE. Sometimes this happens because employment specialists believe they are diligently following the SE model, but they miss some of the more subtle aspects of it. In other cases, SE services start well, but as more consumers are admitted to the program and pressure mounts, employment specialists revert to older, more familiar ways of working.

To ensure that your SE team follows the SE model, work with an experienced consultant throughout the first year of operation. A consultant can provide ongoing telephone and in-person support to help you with your challenging leadership role.



Cross-train

It is important that staff throughout your agency develop a basic understanding of SE. Cross-training will ensure that other staff members support the work that the SE team undertakes. Training is also an opportunity for employment specialists and advisory group members to become familiar with one another. Make sure that the advisory group members and employment specialists introduce themselves and that they are familiar with one another's roles.

To help you conduct SE training, we include these multimedia materials in the SE KIT:

- Introductory PowerPoint presentation;
- Sample brochure; and
- Introductory video.

Once trained, you or your employment specialists will be able to use these materials to present routine, in-service seminars to ensure that all staff members within the agency are familiar with the SE program.

As discussed in *Building Your Program*, we also recommend that you use these materials to train members of your SE advisory committee and Business Advisory Council. The more information that advisory group members have about SE, the better they will be able to support the SE program and its mission.

Notes to the facilitator and SE leader:

Prepare for Module 1:

- Make copies of Module 1. Your copy is in this workbook; print additional copies from the CD-ROM in the KIT.



- Distribute the material to those who are participating in your group training. Ask them to read it before meeting as a group.

- Make copies of these exercises:

- Explore the Benefits of SE*; and
- Improve Your SE Program*.



Do not distribute them until the group training. Your copies are in this workbook; print additional copies from the CD-ROM.

- Make copies of these forms:

- SE Fidelity Scale;
 - General Organizational Index (GOI);
- and



- SE outcomes developed by your agency, if available.

Do not distribute them until the group training. Information about these quality assurance instruments is in *Evaluating Your Program* in this KIT. You may also print the SE Fidelity Scale and GOI from the CD-ROM.

Conduct your first training session:



- When you convene your group, view the Introductory video and the introduction on the *Training Frontline Staff: Demonstration video*. Discuss the DVD and the content of Module 1.

- Distribute the following:

- SE Fidelity Scale;
- General Organizational Index;
- SE outcomes that your agency will monitor (if available); and
- Exercises for this module.

- Review the distributed materials and complete the exercises as a group.

Facilitating the dialogue: One of the roles of a facilitator and SE leader is to facilitate the dialogue during group training sessions. Some people have difficulty speaking in a group, perhaps because they are timid or soft-spoken. Others may feel professionally intimidated by those with more experience or higher degrees. Conversely, some employment specialists will be self-confident and outspoken and will need to learn to listen openly to what others have to say.

As you work together on each module, encourage those who are more withdrawn to express their views and make sure that more vocal group members give others a chance to speak.

Group training also provides the opportunity to assess the anxiety that employment specialists may feel about providing SE services. Use your group training time to explore and address issues openly.



Training Frontline Staff

Module 1: Basic Elements and Practice Principles

Most people who live with a serious mental illness want to work. Module 1 presents the basic elements and practice principles of Supported Employment (SE). This introduction to the SE model also includes a summary of the research evidence for the effectiveness of the SE model.

Why Supported Employment?

The goal of Supported Employment (SE) is to help people with serious mental illnesses find and keep competitive jobs. As illustrated in the following vignette, SE facilitates the recovery process by supporting consumers who are interested in working in their efforts to get on with life beyond illness.

Gabriel: Getting on with life beyond illness

Gabriel had his first manic episode during college where he was studying music and playing in a band. When he wasn't in the hospital with acute symptoms, he spent much of the next several years drinking and smoking marijuana with people he met while receiving services at the local community mental health center.

One day, Gabriel spelled out for his clinical case manager how terrible he felt about his life and berated himself for being "a mental

patient” and not working like his old high school and college friends. After assuring himself that Gabriel was not acutely suicidal, Gabriel’s case manager followed up on this expression of interest in work by introducing him to the team’s employment specialist.

While out for coffee the next day, the employment specialist asked Gabriel what his work life would look like after he had recovered from the demoralizing impact of his mental illness. Gabriel was surprised by the questions, but was able to say that he had always dreamed of recording his own music.

The employment specialist wondered aloud what steps Gabriel could take now that could lead to such a career. He also mentioned that he had just that morning seen an ad for a part-time job in the music section of a local bookstore.

Two years later, Gabriel is now working as the manager of the bookstore music section and playing guitar on weekends with a few musicians who are steady customers at the store. He stopped drinking and smoking marijuana completely.

Feeling better about himself, he has taken more initiative in managing his symptoms and has not been in the hospital since he took the job. He meets monthly with his employment specialist to sort out next steps in his career.

What Is Supported Employment?

SE is an approach to vocational rehabilitation for people with serious mental illnesses. SE emphasizes helping people obtain competitive work in the community and providing the supports necessary to ensure success in the workplace. SE programs help consumers find jobs that pay competitive wages in integrated settings (i.e., with others who don’t necessarily have a disability) in the community.

In contrast to other approaches to vocational rehabilitation, SE de-emphasizes prevocational assessment and training and puts a premium on rapid job search and attainment. The job search is conducted at a pace that is comfortable for consumers and is not slowed down by any programming prerequisites.

People with serious mental illnesses differ from one another in terms of the types of work they prefer, the nature of the support they want, and the decision about whether to disclose their disability to the employer or coworkers. SE programs respect these individual preferences and tailor their vocational services accordingly.

In addition to appreciating the importance of consumer preferences, SE programs recognize that most consumers benefit from long-term support after successfully attaining a job. Therefore, SE programs avoid prescribing time limitations on services. Instead employment specialists help consumers become as independent and self-reliant as possible.

The overriding philosophy of SE is the belief that every person with a serious mental illness is capable of working competitively in the community if the right kind of job and work environment can be found. Rather than trying to sculpt consumers into becoming “perfect workers,” through extensive prevocational assessment and training, consumers are offered help finding and keeping jobs that capitalize on their personal strengths and motivation. Thus, the primary goal of SE is not to change consumers but to find a natural “fit” between consumers’ strengths and experiences and jobs in the community.

As consumers succeed in working in the community, their self-perceptions often change, and they view themselves as workers and contributors to society. Furthermore, as people in the community see consumers working, consumers are less stigmatized for their mental illness and become more socially accepted.

Core components of Supported Employment

SE is a well-defined approach to helping people with mental illnesses find and keep competitive employment. Competitive employment means work in the community that anyone can apply for that pays at least minimum wage. The wage should not be less than the wage (and level of benefits) paid for the same work performed by people who do not have a mental illness.

Evidence-based SE incorporates the following points:

- **SE programs help anyone who expresses the desire to work.** Consumers are not excluded because they are not “ready” or because of prior work history, substance use, or symptoms.

- **Employment specialists help consumers look for jobs soon after they enter the program.** Instead of requiring extensive pre-employment assessment, training or intermediate work experiences (like prevocational work units, Transitional Employment Positions, or sheltered workshops), employment specialists and consumers begin the job search rapidly.
- **Support from employment specialists continues as long as consumers want it.** Participation in SE is not terminated unless requested by the consumer.
- **Jobs are seen as transitions.** Employment specialists help consumers find new jobs as needed.
- **SE programs are staffed by employment specialists who are a part of a clinical treatment team.** Employment specialists meet weekly and communicate frequently with team members.
- **SE is individualized.** All choices and decisions about work are based on consumers’ preferences, strengths, and experiences.

Active ingredients of Supported Employment

One of the unique features of SE is that the important characteristics of this evidence-based practice have been translated into program standards to help programs replicate SE.

An instrument called the SE Fidelity Scale summarizes the basic characteristics of SE. The fidelity scale is available to help quality assurance teams assess how closely their program follows the SE model (See Evaluating Your Program in this KIT).

Your SE leader will distribute this scale to you to review and discuss during training.

Basic characteristics of Supported Employment

- Employment specialists manage caseloads of up to 25 consumers.
- Employment specialists provide only vocational services.
- Each employment specialist carries out all phases of vocational service.
- Employment specialists are part of the mental health treatment teams with shared decisionmaking.
- Employment specialists function as a unit.
- There are no eligibility requirements to enter the SE program.
- Vocational assessment is an ongoing process.
- The search for competitive jobs occurs rapidly after program entry.
- Employer contacts are based on consumers' job preferences.
- Employment specialists provide job options that are in a variety of settings.
- Employment specialists provide competitive job options that have permanent status.
- Employment specialists help consumers end jobs when appropriate and then find new jobs.
- Individualized follow-along supports are provided to employers and consumers with no time limitations.
- Vocational services are provided in community settings.
- Assertive engagement and outreach are conducted as needed.

How we know that Supported Employment is effective

SE gets results. The SE model has been the most extensively studied model of vocational rehabilitation for people with serious mental illnesses. Culturally diverse consumers and employment specialists have used the SE model in a variety of settings.

A recent review of 17 studies consistently demonstrated that SE programs produced better vocational outcomes than comparison programs, such as prevocational programs, sheltered work, and Transitional Employment Positions.

Across these studies, 58 percent of consumers who were in SE obtained competitive employment compared to 21 percent in comparison programs (Bond, et al., 2001). Specifically, consumers in SE programs were more successful in obtaining competitive work, worked more hours, and earned more from competitive employment than consumers receiving other vocational services (Bond, et al., 2001).

No evidence of negative effects

Practitioners, consumers, and family members are sometimes concerned that competitive work will be a stressful experience that may increase the chances of relapses and rehospitalizations. However, the research on SE has consistently found that no negative effects are related to participating in an SE program.

Specifically, consumers who participate in SE programs do not experience more severe symptoms or higher levels of distress nor do they require more intensive psychiatric treatment, such as emergency room visits or psychiatric hospitalizations (Bond, et al., 2001).

Some research shows that when consumers succeed in finding competitive work, improvements may occur in symptoms, self-esteem, and satisfaction with finances (Bond, et al., 2001; Mueser, 1997). Most consumers in SE programs who obtain employment work part time and are able to keep their benefits (i.e., Social Security and health insurance). Work often becomes a meaningful part of their lives. (For more information about how work may affect benefits, see Module 2).

Practice principles of Supported Employment

SE programs are based on a core set of practice principles. These principles form the foundation of the program.

Principle 1: Eligibility is based on consumer choice

All consumers who want to participate in SE are eligible—no one is excluded. Consumers who are interested in work are not prevented from participating in SE regardless of their psychiatric diagnosis, symptoms, work history, or other problems, including substance abuse and cognitive impairment.

The core philosophy of SE is that all consumers can work at competitive jobs in the community without prior training, and no one should be excluded from this opportunity.

SE does not try to bring consumers to some preconceived standard of “work readiness” before they seek employment. Consumers are “work ready” when they say they want to work. Research shows that symptoms, substance abuse, and other consumer factors are not strong and consistent barriers to work when consumers receive assistance from an SE program. Therefore, no justification exists for excluding consumers who are interested in work from SE programs.

Practice principles of SE

- Eligibility is based on consumer choice.
- SE services are integrated with comprehensive mental health treatment.
- Competitive employment is the goal.
- Personalized benefits counseling is important.
- Job searches start soon after consumers express interest in working.
- Follow-along supports are continuous.
- Consumer preferences are important.

Principle 2: SE services are integrated with comprehensive mental health treatment

Closely coordinating SE services with other mental health rehabilitation and clinical treatment ensures that all mental health practitioners (not just the employment specialist) support consumers’ vocational goals. For this reason, it is important that you participate regularly in clinical treatment team meetings.

Participating in team meetings gives you a vehicle to discuss clinical and rehabilitation issues relevant to work, such as the following:

- Medication side effects;
- Persistent symptoms (e.g., hallucinations);
- Cognitive difficulties; or
- Other rehabilitation needs (e.g., skills training to improve ability to socialize with co-workers or self-assertion skills).

Moreover, regular contact with team members (phone or face-to-face meetings) also allows you to help consumers achieve vocational goals.

Principle 3: Competitive employment is the goal

SE helps consumers obtain competitive jobs. Competitive jobs have these characteristics:

- They are part-time or full-time jobs that exist in the open labor market;
- They pay at least a minimum wage; and
- They are jobs that anyone could have regardless of disability status.

Competitive jobs are not jobs that are set aside for people with disabilities. The wage should not be less than the wage (and level of benefits) paid for the same work performed by people who do not have a mental illness.

Competitive work is valued for several reasons:

- **Consumers express a strong preference for competitive work over sheltered work.** Consumers want to work in community settings.
- **Competitive work promotes integrating consumers into the community.** Involving consumers in normal activities reduces the stigma of mental illness.
- **Consumers' self-esteem often improves.** As consumers see that they are able to work competitively, that their work is valued, and that they can contribute to society, some experience improvements in symptoms and self-esteem.

Historically, many vocational programs have placed consumers into noncompetitive jobs, often paying subminimum wages, with only rare progression into competitive employment. Experience shows that consumers can successfully work at competitive jobs without previously participating in training programs or sheltered jobs.

Principle 4: Personalized benefits counseling is important

Fear of losing benefits (e.g., Social Security and health insurance) is a major reason that consumers may not seek employment. For this reason, it is vital that consumers who are interested in working obtain accurate information to guide decisions about work.

As an employment specialist, you should be able to communicate basic information about the impact of work on consumers' benefits. You are also responsible for ensuring that consumers access benefits counseling when they start SE services and when changes occur in their work status. For more information about benefits counseling, see Module 2.

Principle 5: Job searches start soon after consumers express interest in working

Rapid job search is crucial for several reasons:

- Beginning the search early demonstrates to consumers that you take their desire to work seriously and conveys optimism that multiple opportunities are available in the community to help them achieve their vocational goals.
- Looking for jobs soon after consumers have been referred to an SE program may also be important for consumers who want to work but who question their own ability. Fears and misconceptions about work can often be best confronted by helping consumers actually explore possible jobs.
- Seeking work immediately takes advantage of consumers' current motivation. Studies show that fewer consumers get jobs when the job search is delayed by prevocational preparations and requirements.

- As consumers begin identifying and exploring specific job possibilities, they (and their employment specialists) learn more about the type of work and work setting they desire. Similar to most people who become steady workers, consumers commonly try several jobs before finding one that they keep. Since many jobs may need to be explored before the right one is selected, beginning this process early increases the chances of eventual success.

To help direct the job search, complete a Vocational Profile and Individual Employment Plan with the consumer (See Module 3 for more information). Although you should complete these forms within a few weeks after consumers join the SE program, assessment is ongoing.

Help consumers explore job opportunities within 1 month after they start the SE program. Do not postpone the job search with requirements for completing extensive pre-employment assessment and training or intermediate work experiences (like prevocational programs, Transitional Employment Positions, or sheltered work). Instead collaborate with consumers to routinely update and revise the assessment and treatment plans based on their experiences in their competitive, community-based job.

Principle 6: Follow-along supports are continuous

Some consumers struggle with symptoms that persist or change over time. For this reason, despite their vocational success, consumers receiving SE services are never terminated unless they directly request it. Provide follow-along supports to consumers on a time-unlimited basis.

While follow-along supports are continuous, for many consumers, the extent of support gradually decreases over time. Help consumers become as independent as possible by teaching them to meet their own needs at work. For example, help consumers arrange for their own transportation to work, perform their own job tasks without coaching, build socialization skills, and develop skills for responding to supervisor feedback. Thus, the goal of employment specialists is to remain available to provide support and assistance while helping consumers become independent.

Principle 7: Consumer preferences are important

Consumers who obtain work that they find interesting tend to have higher levels of satisfaction with their jobs and longer job tenures. Thus, attending to consumer job preferences will make your work easier because consumers are more likely to remain on the job. Allow consumer preferences to guide the type of job that is sought, the nature of support you provide, and whether to disclose their mental illness to the employer.

Some consumers are willing to disclose their mental illness to prospective employers and will ask you to be involved in all aspects of work, including the following:

- Identifying jobs;
- Interviewing;
- Maintaining ongoing contact with the employer; and
- Offering onsite and offsite job support.

Other consumers prefer to keep their mental illness confidential and will look to you to provide “behind the scenes” support without direct contact with employers. Honor these preferences because it is crucial to listen to how consumers want to be supported in their pursuit of vocational goals. In addition, under HIPPA and other confidentiality laws providers are required to obtain a consumer’s consent to disclose.

In summary, seven practice principles guide SE services. These principles, corroborated by research, describe SE and differentiate it from other practices.

Exercise: Explore the Benefits of Supported Employment

Studies that have explored what makes a difference in whether practitioners adopt a new approach to treatment have found that practitioners are more likely to adopt a practice if it addresses an area in which they feel they must improve. With SE, it may not be so much a matter of whether individual practitioners need to improve, but of delivering services in a new way. Share your experiences about where the traditional service delivery system has been inadequate in dealing with consumers' vocational interests and activities. Identify aspects of SE that address those inadequacies.

Some experiences where the traditional service delivery system has been inadequate:

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How SE may address those inadequacies:


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Exercise: **Improve Your Supported Employment Program**

Distribute the criteria upon which the SE program will be evaluated (SE Fidelity Scale, General Organizational Index, and your agency's SE outcome measures). Review and discuss how the quality improvement instruments will be completed and how the information will be used to improve your program.

Notes to the facilitator and SE leader:

Prepare for Module 2:

- Make copies of Module 2. Your copy is in this workbook; print additional copies from the CD-ROM in the KIT. 
- Distribute the material to those who are participating in your group training. Ask them to read it before the group training.

- Make copies of these exercises:

- Identify SE Consumers;
- Introduce SE; and
- Tackle the Issues.


Do not distribute them until the group training. Your copies are in this workbook; print copies from the CD-ROM in the KIT.

- Make copies of these forms:

- Sample SE referral form;
- Sample SE brochure; and
- Any related policies and procedures that your agency has developed (i.e. admissions and discharge criteria).

Do not distribute them until the group training. For information about the sample SE referral form, see *Building Your Program* in this KIT. For information about the sample SE brochure, see *Using Multimedia to Introduce Your EBP* in this KIT. Use the version of these documents that your agency has adapted to complete the exercises.

Conduct your second training session:

- When you convene your group, view the first three segments on the *Training Frontline Staff: Demonstration video* (approximately 20 minutes): 
 - Referral;
 - Engagement; and
 - Benefits Counseling.
- Discuss the DVD and the content of Module 2.
- Distribute the following:
 - The exercises for this module;
 - The SE referral form;
 - The SE brochure; and
 - Any related policies and procedure that your agency has developed (i.e. admission and discharge criteria).
- Review the policies and procedures and complete the exercises as a group.

Training Frontline Staff

Module 2: Referral, Engagement, and Benefits Counseling

Module 2 introduces you to the first steps in providing SE services: referral, engagement, and benefits counseling. The information in this module will help you understand how SE principles are integrated into your referral process and how to engage consumers initially and routinely. Since fear of losing benefits is a major reason that consumers may not seek employment, this module describes how to use benefits counseling early during the engagement process so that consumers may be appropriately informed of how work may affect their benefits.

Referral

The principles of an effective SE referral process include the following:

- Using minimal eligibility criteria;
- Making the referral process simple; and
- Getting the word out about SE.

To make services accessible to as many consumers as possible, make your referral process simple by using

minimal eligibility criteria. Increase the number of consumers who are engaged in SE services by informing a variety of stakeholders (including consumers, practitioners, and family members) about the availability of SE and the process for receiving these services.

The following vignettes illustrate the components of an effective SE referral process. After reading the vignettes, think about possible strategies for solving the problems described in the vignette.

Using minimal eligibility criteria

This section describes issues related to determining who may benefit from SE, as illustrated by Caleb's story. After reading the vignette, think about what you would do if you were Caleb's employment specialist.

Caleb's story

Caleb is a 28-year-old man with co-occurring disorders of schizophrenia and substance use disorder. During a weekly team meeting, Caleb's case manager reported that Caleb has expressed an interest in getting a job.

The case manager described his concern about Caleb increasing his alcohol and marijuana use if he earns money. The past two urine screens have indicated that he continues to use substances.

Tackling the issues

Q: If you were Caleb's employment specialist, what would you do?

While there is no single correct answer for handling Caleb's situation, here are a few ideas:

In SE, consumers who express interest in working are referred directly to the SE program. They are not screened for abstinence, work readiness, or cognitive functioning, etc.

Employment specialists inform clinical treatment team members of the SE referral process and encourage them to make referrals. The criteria for receiving SE services should be kept to a minimum.

Typical eligibility criteria are—

- 1) consumers who are unemployed (or working noncompetitively) and want competitive work, or
- 2) consumers who are working but not receiving the employment supports that they would like.

As Caleb's employment specialist, you could educate his treatment team about how work may motivate him to manage his substance abuse. Suggest that a plan be developed with Caleb focused on managing his work earnings. When working with Caleb, consider jobs that are in substance-free environments.

Making the referral process simple

The following vignette illustrates the importance of having a simple referral process and the steps needed to engage consumers after a referral has been made. After reading the vignette, consider how you would address Sandra's interest and concerns about work.

Sandra's story

After 4 years of unemployment, Sandra approached her case manager to discuss the possibility of returning to the work world. At first, Sandra expressed concerns about her ability to deal with what she perceived to be the stress of working.

Tackling the issues

Q: If you were Sandra's employment specialist, what would you do?

While there is no single correct answer for handling Sandra's situation, here are a few ideas.

The process for referring Sandra to SE services should be as simple as possible, standardized, and widely known by all. Sandra's referral could be made either orally or in writing, with the critical information recorded on a simple form. (Your SE

leader will distribute your agency's SE referral form to you to review and discuss during training.)

Anyone on the treatment team could make Sandra's referral, as well as Sandra herself. Sandra's referral should be sent to the SE leader who will review it and assign an employment specialist. If Sandra were included on your caseload, you would notify your team members that she was assigned to you.

It would be important for you to meet with Sandra as soon as possible, preferably within one week after the referral. The purpose of this meeting is to confirm Sandra's interest in work and to begin the process of identifying work interests, background experience, etc. This meeting can occur as follows:

- With you and Sandra;
- With you, Sandra, and another practitioner; or
- With you, Sandra, and a family member or other supporter of Sandra's choosing.

Because of Sandra's ambivalence about working, it may be helpful to include the case manager in this meeting. Consumers who have difficulty establishing new relationships with practitioners may also benefit from having their case manager participate in initial SE meetings.

After you have met with Sandra and you have established an agreement to work together, notify and update your team members about her progress. At this time, with Sandra's permission, it would also be important to contact Sandra's mother and arrange a meeting to explain the nature and purposes of the SE program. Use this meeting to allay her concerns about the effects of work on Sandra's benefits and to develop a collaborative working relationship that is supportive of Sandra's vocational goals. The initial meeting with Sandra's family could also provide possible job leads.

Getting the word out about SE

The following vignette illustrates the importance of maximizing referrals by informing multiple stakeholders of the availability of the SE program. After reading the vignette, think about how you would help the staff at River Valley Mental Health Center maximize referrals.

River Valley Mental Health Center's story

A new SE program had been recently developed at River Valley Mental Health Center. At a team meeting, a supervisor commented that she had read research literature indicating that 70 percent of people with serious mental illnesses have a goal of working. She said that only 7 percent of the consumers at their center are working.

Several case managers said that consumers are not expressing an interest in going to work. To date, few consumers have been referred to the SE program.

Tackling the issues

Q: How would you increase the rate of referrals at River Valley Mental Health Center?

Q: How could River Valley Mental Health Center stimulate consumers' interest in work and increase referrals into their SE program?

While there is no single correct answer for handling this situation, here are a few ideas:

The overall goal is to encourage consumers to consider whether they want to work and to help them access SE services if this is their desire. SE programs can use many strategies to stimulate consumers' interest and encourage referrals.

Above all else, the expectations of staff at River Valley Mental Health Center are absolutely crucial. The staff should convey the optimism that consumers can recover from

mental illness to live full and meaningful lives and that, for many consumers, employment is a key recovery goal.

Employment specialists at River Valley Mental Health Center should educate team members about the SE program. Practitioners are often unaware that consumers place a high value on work. They may be unfamiliar with the principles of SE. Practitioners may also inaccurately perceive that work may be unduly stressful or they may mistakenly assume that certain consumers may be unable to work because of cognitive impairments, symptoms, or medication side effects.

To educate practitioners, River Valley Mental Health Center could arrange a session in which working consumers describe their experiences or invite an SE speaker to address practitioners' concerns. To help change any inaccurate perceptions, communicate the following:

- Work is valuable;
- Many consumers can work despite persistent symptoms or cognitive impairments; and
- Most consumers do not find that work increases stress—and some report that work decreases stress.

River Valley Mental Health Center could also conduct an in-service seminar on SE, make brochures available, and mount posters to inform

staff about SE services. The goal is to create a culture in which all practitioners provide hope and encouragement for consumers to consider working and realizing their dreams.

Another way to encourage referrals is to offer to meet individually with consumers who are interested in learning more about SE but who have not yet expressed a clear desire for competitive work. Rather than making contact contingent upon consumers' expressing a clear desire for SE services, employment specialists at River Valley Mental Health Center could meet with interested consumers to educate them about SE and to help them explore whether they might like to try it.

Referrals can come directly from consumers and their families as well as from other practitioners. Therefore, River Valley Mental Health Center could educate consumers about SE services in these ways:

- Through their case managers;
- Through consumer-related activities; or
- Through periodic information groups conducted either weekly or biweekly.

River Valley Mental Health Center could inform consumers who are new to the agency about the SE program during the agency's intake process. In some cases, SE services may be what interests consumers in receiving agency services at all.

In summary, an effective SE referral process has minimal eligibility requirements. You will increase the number of referrals received if you educate key stakeholders about the role that work can play in recovery from mental illness, tell them about the availability of SE services, and make it easy to refer consumers to the SE program.

Strategies for increasing referrals

- Inform key stakeholders of the SE referral process.
- Talk to consumers who may be interested in work to let them know about the SE program.
- Speak at your local consumer organization to educate consumers about work and SE.
- Speak at a National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) meeting to let families know about the SE program.

Engagement

Engagement is the first step toward developing a working alliance with consumers. It is through this working relationship that all SE services are provided.

Successful engagement involves enlisting the support, feedback, and involvement of people in consumers' support network. Thus, in addition to developing a working alliance with consumers, engagement includes developing a collaborative relationship with family members or other supporters and treatment team members.

The following vignette demonstrates key techniques of engagement:

- How to initially engage consumers;
- How to meet with family or other supporters; and
- How to keep consumers' treatment team involved.

After reading the vignette, think about possible strategies for engaging consumers, family or other supporters, and treatment team members.

José's story

José has been referred for SE and has not yet met his employment specialist. José is 34 years old and has schizophrenia. The last job he held was 7 years ago, when he worked for 3 weeks as a dishwasher before being fired for unexcused absences.

José's case manager told him about the SE program and he expressed some interest in it. José hears voices most of the time, and he and his case manager

thought that work might distract him from these voices.

After talking about the SE program with his case manager several times, José wants to give it a try but has a number of concerns. He is concerned that he will lose his disability entitlement if he works and that he will be unable to handle the stress of competitive employment.

José's parents, with whom he has regular contact but does not live, also have concerns. They think José needs something to do with his time, but are concerned about the stress of working.

Despite his concerns, José is interested in work for several reasons. He feels that work would give him something to do with his time. José would also like to have money to buy nice clothes, which he enjoys wearing. José's case manager contacts the employment specialist and refers José to the SE program.

Tackling the issues

Q: If you were José's employment specialist, what would you do?

While there is no single correct answer for handling José's situation, here are a few ideas:

As the employment specialist, you could arrange to meet with José to begin to get to know him, to learn about his work history, and to start exploring his vocational interests. Because the case manager has a good working relationship with José and it took a long time for him to warm up to the idea of SE, some of the early meetings with José should include the case manager.

You could arrange some of these meetings in the community. For instance, you could join José over a cup of coffee at a local coffee shop. Ask José where he prefers to meet. An advantage of meeting outside of the mental health agency is that consumers often reveal more about who they are in community settings than in office settings. Through conversations in community-based settings, you are more likely to learn about José's skills, experiences, likes, and dislikes.

In addition to engaging José, you may also find it helpful to meet with José's family. José's parents are concerned that the stress of working may cause him to have a relapse. You could explain how appropriate job selection and support could minimize the stress to which José is exposed and could even reduce his stress level by giving him something meaningful to do with his time.

To reinforce that work is an important goal for José, the meetings with José's relatives may be most effective if they take place in their home and if they include José. Before speaking with his parents, ask José to sign your agency's Release of Information Form.

Finally, inform team members of each step in the engagement process, including the initial meeting, contacts with family or other supporters, and possible job interests. If you encounter difficulties engaging José or addressing his parents' concerns, elicit feedback and advice from other team members. Teamwork ensures that everyone is supportive of José's goals and has input into pursuing them.

In summary, establishing a relationship with consumers creates a foundation for the rest of your work. It is critical to connect with consumers, family and other supporters, and treatment team members to create an environment that supports consumers' work interests and goals.

Benefits counseling

Fear of losing benefits (for example, Social Security income or health insurance) is a major reason that consumers do not seek employment. For this reason, it is important for all consumers to know how work may affect their benefits.

All consumers who are interested in working should receive benefits counseling to guide their plan for starting work. Once consumers are working, benefits counseling helps consumers manage their benefits and health care coverage as they increase hours and earnings. Some evidence shows that consumers who received benefits counseling earn more than consumers who did not.

You are responsible for ensuring that consumers access benefits counseling when they start SE services and when changes occur in their work status. Typically, a benefits specialist who has comprehensive information about benefits and work incentives provides benefits counseling. If your agency does not employ a benefits specialist, ask your SE leader to find one in your area. For more information, see *Building Your Program* in this KIT.

As an employment specialist, you should be able to communicate basic information about how work affects consumers' benefits. Expect to participate in additional training to become familiar with the following terms:

- Medicaid and 1619B Medicaid;
- Medicaid for the Working Disabled;
- Medicare;
- Supplemental Security Income (SSI);
- Social Security Disability Income (SSDI);
- Plan for Achieving Self-Support (PASS);
- Impairment-Related Work Expense;
- Substantial Gainful Employment (SGA);
- Ticket to Work;
- expedited reinstatement for benefits; and
- The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) mandatory earned income inclusion.

A variety of materials about work incentives that are relevant to benefits counseling and may be distributed to the consumers that you work with are also available though www.DisabilityInfo.gov.

In addition to providing basic information about benefits, tell consumers that they must submit work payment stubs to the Social Security Administration (SSA) after they become employed. Give them the tools (form letters) and supports to report regularly. Consumers can easily get into an overpayment status when they fail to report earnings.

Finally, work with team members to help consumers develop a household budget based on a weekly paycheck instead of a monthly paycheck. This may be especially important for consumers who have issues with current or past substance use. Careful planning will help consumers meet their personal recovery goals.

The following vignette demonstrates how questions about the impact of work on benefits may influence consumers' ability to work. After reading the vignette, think about possible strategies for reducing threats and perceived threats to consumers' benefits.

Sophie's Story

Sophie is a 28-year-old woman who has been receiving services from the community mental health center for about 5 years. Sophie receives Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits from the Social Security Administration (SSA) and is on Medicaid as a result.

Recently, she completed an associate's degree in accounting. She began a job search with the help of an employment specialist from the mental health center and her vocational rehabilitation counselor.

Her only previous work experience was a summer job during high school in which she cleaned offices for a veterinarian and walked the dogs. Sophie found a listing for a part-time accounting assistant position at an office for a group of physicians. Sophie interviewed for the position.

The following week Sophie excitedly reports to her case manager that she is starting work next Monday. The case manager tells Sophie that she is happy about the job offer but that she will have to decline because she will lose her Medicaid. Confused, Sophie contacts her employment specialist.

Tackling the issues

Q: If you were Sophie's employment specialist, what would you do?

While there is no single correct answer for handling Sophie's situation, here are a few ideas:

Give the case manager and Sophie general information about how work may affect her benefits. Then suggest that Sophie contact a benefits specialist to get a clear picture of her situation. In this example, Sophie's SSI check will be reduced if she accepts this accounting position, though, overall, she will be financially better off. Most important, Sophie will keep her Medicaid, even if she earns enough to zero out her SSI check (through the SSI 1619B program).

Once you and Sophie have specific information from the benefits specialist about how her benefits will be affected, convey that information to Sophie's team members during routine treatment team meetings. You may also meet individually with Sophie's case manager to discuss the details of Sophie's case.

Historically, practitioners have encouraged consumers to avoid work or limit work hours to protect their benefits. One role of a case manager is to help consumers apply for benefits that will help pay living costs, including medication costs. Generally, case managers and other practitioners may know that rules about benefits and earned income exist. But in most cases, their information is not comprehensive. The rules are complicated and

periodically adjusted, making it hard to stay on top of the information. For this reason, practitioners commonly express concerns about the impact of work on consumers' benefits. It is up to you and your agency's benefits counselor to address these valid concerns.

Never tell consumers that they will lose benefits if they go to work. Instead, find out the facts.

Typically, consumers are better off financially if they work and take advantage of available work incentives. Furthermore, for most consumers, a life spent on benefits means a life spent in poverty.

Exercise: Identify Supported Employment Consumers

Answer the following questions to help reinforce your understanding of your agency's SE policies and procedures.

1. What is your agency's SE admission policy?

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■

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2. How will consumers be referred to your SE program? (Review your agency's SE Referral Form.)

3. Under what circumstances would consumers be discharged from SE?

■

■

■



Exercise: **Introduce Supported Employment**

Review your agency's SE brochure. Select two members of your training group to play the roles of employment specialist and consumer, family member, or other practitioner. Role-play how you would use the SE brochure to describe your SE program and engage consumers, families, and other practitioners.

Exercise: Tackle the Issues

Review the vignettes in Module 2. As a group, discuss how you would respond to the issues around referral, engagement, and benefits.

Vignette	Issue		
	Referral	Engagement	Benefits
Caleb's story			
Sandra's story			
River Valley Mental Health Center's story			
José's story			
Sophie's story			

Notes to the facilitator and SE leader:

Prepare for Module 3:

- Make copies of module 3. Your copy is in this workbook; print additional copies for your team from the CD-ROM in the KIT.



- Distribute the material to those who are participating in your group training. Ask them to read it before the group training.

- Make copies of these exercises:

- Complete a *Vocational Profile*;
- Review a *Sample Individual Employment Plan*; and
- Tackle the *Issues*.



Do not distribute them until the group training. Your copies are in this workbook; print copies from the CD-ROM in the KIT.

- Make copies of these forms:

- Sample *Vocational Profile*; and
- Sample *Individual Employment Plan*.

Do not distribute them until the group training. For information about the forms, see *Building Your Program* in this KIT. For these exercises, use the forms that your agency has adapted.



Conduct your third session:

- When you convene your group, view the following two segments of *Training Frontline Staff: Demonstration video*:

- Assessment*; and
- Job Finding*.

- Discuss the DVD and the content of Module 3.

- One at a time, hand out the exercises and forms and complete them as a group.



Training Frontline Staff

Module 3: Assessment and Job Finding

Accurately assessing consumers' interests and work experiences is critical to finding a good job match between consumers and employers. In this module, we review the basics of putting together a Vocational Profile, developing a plan for finding work, and starting the job search process.

Assessment

While assessment plays an important role in SE, extended periods of assessment are initially avoided. Instead, employment specialists first complete Vocational Profiles to gather as much information as quickly as possible.

Gathering information should not slow the job search down if consumers want to begin quickly looking for a job. The goal is to help consumers explore job opportunities within 1 month after they start the SE program.

The Vocational Profile guides the job search. It is the first step of assessment and includes a review of consumers' work, preferences for type of work, and other background information. Information is collected from consumers, treatment team members, the clinical record, and— with permission—the consumers' family members and previous employers.

Although Vocational Profiles should be completed within a few weeks after consumers join the SE program, assessment is ongoing and continues for as long as consumers receive SE services. The employment specialist updates the profile with relevant information as consumers look for jobs and as they work.

Traditional vocational assessments use training, work adjustment activities, and intermediate work experiences such as prevocational programs, Transitional Employment Positions, or sheltered work experiences to assess consumers' work readiness. These pre-employment assessment methods violate the SE principles and should be avoided. In SE, consumers are not required to complete extensive pre-employment assessments or training before beginning the job search.

The following vignettes demonstrate the SE assessment process including the following:

- Gathering comprehensive information from a variety of sources;
- Completing a Vocational Profile;
- Developing an Individual Employment Plan; and
- Updating the Vocational Profile and Individual Employment Plan based on consumers' work experiences.

After reading the vignettes, think about how you would approach the SE assessment process for each consumer described.

Gathering comprehensive information

Darryl's story

Darryl has met with his employment specialist to learn about SE and now wants to begin talking about possible jobs. Darryl is a 29-year-old man with a diagnosis of bipolar disorder. He takes lithium for mood swings, which he says has helped him stay out of the hospital. He lives with his girlfriend who works full time as a paralegal in a large law firm. Darryl came to the U.S. from Mexico at age 12 with his two brothers to live with his grandparents.

Darryl's brothers are very successful vocationally. One owns a clothing store and the other is an accountant. They have both tried to help Darryl in the past but have become overwhelmed by his symptoms and his drinking.

Over the past year, Darryl has experienced increased periods of depression, has isolated himself in his apartment, and has begun to drink more. He has not worked in several years.

Darryl completed 3 years of college but dropped out when he was 20 and began experiencing symptoms. Darryl said his dream was to be an architect. Darryl reported that over the past several years he has secured two jobs (as a dishwasher and at a fast-food restaurant), but both times he did not show up for the first day of work.

Tackling the issues

Q: If you were Darryl's employment specialist, what would you do?

While there is no single correct answer for handling Darryl's situation, here are a few ideas:

You could further explore with Darryl the kinds of work he is interested in, his skills, and what he would like to do. Include questions about how the important people in his life see work, what types of jobs they have, and what their expectations are for him.

Darryl has expressed an interest in architecture. What kinds of things about architecture interest Darryl most? Would he like to work in the construction business? Is he interested in design? Is he interested in the materials used in building? Has Darryl ever done any work related to architecture?

In addition to talking with Darryl at greater length about his interest in architecture and related fields, you should ask about any specific skills Darryl might have that would help him land a job in his area of interest. Did Darryl take drafting courses when he was in school, learn about computer-assisted design, or learn other practical information that he could apply on a job?

Of course, it is possible that Darryl's interests have changed, and this would lead you to explore other, newer interests. Talking with other team members, such as the case manager, therapist, or psychiatrist, may reveal some of Darryl's other interests and talents that he hadn't mentioned to the employment specialist. Involving Darryl's girlfriend, brothers, or grandparents may help identify possible job leads and address some of the possible problems raised below.

Talking with Darryl about his job aspirations may result in his expressing pessimism about his ability to fulfill his dreams and may increase his sense of self-defeat, possibly fueling his depression and drinking. Explore why Darryl failed to show up for his two past jobs. Were they not interesting to him? Was the money not important for him?

If Darryl is still interested in architecture, you may need to encourage Darryl by helping him develop a plan in which he can take small but meaningful steps toward getting work in this area. Help him see that it is possible to find a job that interests him. Depending on how serious Darryl is about pursuing architecture, you might also discuss with him the long-term possibility of returning to school to complete his B.A. degree or to learn some specialty skills that he could apply in his field of interest (e.g., taking a programming class).

Finally, Darryl's depression and drinking have both worsened in the past year. Take these problems into account when considering possible jobs. Discuss with Darryl what kind of work he feels he could perform well despite the problems he has had in these areas.

It may also be important to talk with Darryl about whether his drinking may interfere with fulfilling his job responsibilities (such as showing up on time for work, being able to focus on work) and to arrive at some tentative solutions for how to minimize the effects of his drinking. Also, talk with the treatment team about how others are addressing his drinking to promote consistent and coordinated planning.

Updating assessment information

The following vignette describes Janice, who has recently ended a job and is now ready to begin meeting with her employment specialist to discuss looking for a new job.

Janice's story

Janice is a 44-year-old woman with obsessive-compulsive disorder. Janice has been working as a cashier at a local department store for the past 5 months and recently decided to quit her job.

Janice was a good and valued employee; she was reliable, accurate, and had no problems with the customers. However, Janice said she did not enjoy handling the money and, over time, found the work boring. Janice told her employment specialist that she thought being a cashier would be fun, but that once she had the routine down, no challenge was left.

Janice is interested in working in sales, and she has always enjoyed textiles and clothing. She is an avid knitter, and once worked as an assistant to a tailor. Janice likes working with other people, but she wants to be involved in some aspect of sales before the customer's decision has been made. Janice got along well with her employer, who was sorry to see her leave.

Tackling the issues

Q: If you were Janice's employment specialist, what would you do?

While there is no single correct answer for handling Janice's situation, here are a few ideas:

As her employment specialist, you can help Janice view her last job as a valuable learning experience. Although her last job was in sales, Janice found out that she did not enjoy doing a job that simply involved handling the final part of the sale. Janice would like to work in sales, possibly in clothing or textiles, but would prefer more meaningful interaction with customers. Some jobs in this area would involve being a sales clerk, working in a specific department, or developing more expertise about a specific line of products.

Janice's interest in textiles, including knitting, might be a clue to other possible jobs. Janice might enjoy working in the clothing department of a store (perhaps in the same department store where she had her previous job) or in a clothing store. Janice might want to pursue work in a store that sells textiles, handcraft work, or supplies for that industry.

You and Janice could obtain job leads from many possible sources, including the treatment team members, other employment specialists, and her family and friends. Does Janice belong to a knitting club or other group that shares an interest in textiles?

Her boss at the last job liked Janice's work and might have ideas about other positions in the store or in other stores. Based on Janice's experience in her last job, you and she know that the best job for Janice is one that involves sales in an area of interest (clothing or textiles) and not simply operating the cash register.

Revising Janice's Vocational Profile to update her strengths and interests will help you match Janice with a job that she is more likely to enjoy. Explore job opportunities that flow from Janice's interests and skills.

Job finding

The job search is where the "rubber hits the road" in SE. Guided by the Vocational Profile of consumers' work experience, job interests and preferences, personal strengths, unique challenges, and input from treatment team members and family, an energetic job search is crucial to finding the right job for consumers.

To maintain high levels of consumer motivation to work, finding a job should begin as soon as possible after the initial assessment has been completed, usually within 1 month after beginning the SE program.

Successful job searches involve extensive networking to identify potential job leads. Consider talking to these individuals and groups:

- Family members and other supporters;
- Treatment team members;
- Previous employers;
- Community groups such as churches;
- The Chamber of Commerce;
- The Rotary Club; and
- Businesses in the community.

While your role is to guide consumers through the process of finding a job, consumers make the final decisions. It is important for consumers to decide about the type of job in which they are interested, the job setting, and whether they should disclose their mental illness.

Successful job finding ...

- Begins soon after consumers enter the program
- Is based on consumers' preferences
- Involves networking to identify job leads
- Involves the ongoing support of the treatment team and family

The following vignettes demonstrate three aspects of job finding:

- Beginning the job search soon after entering the SE program;
- Initiating the job search for consumers who choose to disclose their mental illness; and
- Supporting the job search for consumers who choose not to reveal their mental illness.

List possible strategies for searching for jobs for the consumers described in the vignettes before continuing your reading.

Beginning a job search

The following vignette describes the story of Steve, who was recently referred to the SE program. Read the vignette and then consider how you would support his efforts to find work.

Steve's story

Steve is a 47-year-old man with schizophrenia who lives alone and has weekly contact with his family, including his mother, brother, sister, and their spouses. He was referred to the SE program 3 weeks ago. The employment specialist met with Steve four times to discuss the SE program and collect information about his job history and preferences. The employment specialist has also met with Steve's family to describe the program. The employment specialist and Steve are ready to commence looking for a job.

Steve's social skills are quite impaired; he tends to have poor eye contact and does not speak very clearly. He also has some delusions and hallucinations, but they have minimal impact on his behavior. Family members say that he talks to himself and laughs sometimes, but he does not do this when he is in public or interacting with others. Although Steve forgets to do things (such as taking medication), his cognitive functioning is otherwise good, and he has above average intelligence.

The Vocational Profile revealed that Steve became ill shortly after completing college, and he has never worked a regular job, either competitive or other. Steve is a musician who has received professional training as a drummer, and he has taught himself piano and guitar.

He has been in the local musicians' union since his early 20s, and occasionally (about once a year) gets paid work as a drummer. Steve spends most of his time alone, but he goes to the local psychosocial clubhouse once a week to jam with several other musicians.

For many years Steve rejected his case manager's suggestion that he enroll in a vocational program because he views himself as a musician and is not interested in clerical or service work. However, with a new SE program at the agency, Steve's interest in work was renewed by the belief that he could be supported in finding work in his area of interest.

Steve can read music and has an excellent fund of knowledge about music, especially jazz, blues, and rock. Although Steve's social skills are not great, he likes interacting with other people, especially around the topic of music. Steve said he would most like to play more music professionally, but that he would consider other possible jobs involving music.

Tackling the issues

Q: If you were Steve's employment specialist, what would you do?

Q: How might you network with others to identify possible jobs in Steve's area of interest?

While there is no single correct answer for handling Steve's situation, here are a few ideas:

Steve has a strong interest in music and identifies himself as a musician. He also has knowledge and skills related to music. Considering Steve's interest and preference for a job in the music business, it is critical that you focus with Steve on finding a job that matches this interest. Indeed, past efforts to motivate Steve to work were unsuccessful because they did not attend to his interest in work as a musician.

While finding work as a musician is Steve's primary vocational goal, such jobs can be very difficult to obtain and may take a long time to develop. You and Steve may begin the job search in these ways:

- Looking at public postings for bands that need a drummer;
- Checking the want ads of local papers for the arts; and
- Looking for job listings on the Internet.

However, finding work as a musician may require extensive networking. Valuable contacts may include Steve's family and other supporters, the treatment team, and the consumers with whom Steve plays at the clubhouse. You and Steve could consider these initiatives:

- Striking up conversations with band members playing at local venues;
- Talking with other consumers at the clubhouse about bands that need a drummer; or
- Meeting with a representative from the local musicians' union.

Contacts with these people could lead directly to jobs. These contacts could also result in new, unpaid opportunities for playing with other musicians that could, over time, lead to paid work through networking.

If Steve is unable to obtain work as a musician, it may be desirable to broaden his job search to include looking for jobs that involve music. Many such possible jobs exist and Steve's knowledge about music may be a strength in securing such a job. Examples of jobs involving music include the following:

- Working in a music store (selling CDs, tapes, etc.);
- Ushering at a concert hall or theater;
- Assisting a music instrument maker;
- Working at a radio station;
- Holding a position for a publication in the music business; or
- Working at a music school.

Steve views himself as a musician, and he may be reluctant to pursue work that does not directly involve this type of employment. You could explore with him the potential benefits of other kinds of work related to music. For example, by getting work in an area related to music, Steve might make valuable contacts that could eventually lead to work as a musician. Furthermore, in addition to increasing his income, Steve might find that a job involving music is interesting, helps to structure his time, gives him opportunities to interact with others, and boosts his self-esteem.

If Steve settles for a job involving music but still dreams of finding work as a musician, you should continue to help him pursue his goal. Encourage and support him to network, talk with other musicians, and learn more about music-related activities in his community. When you or Steve find a job as a musician that he is interested in pursuing, help him apply and make the transition into the new position so he can achieve his vocational goals.

Job finding with consumers who choose to disclose

This vignette describes Anita, who chooses to disclose her mental illness in the process of finding a job. Read Anita's story and then consider how you would support her efforts to find work.

Anita's story

Anita is a 30-year-old woman who lives with paranoid schizophrenia and an anxiety disorder. She has been meeting with an employment specialist for about 6 months. She had wanted to find her own job and not have her employment specialist involved directly with her employer. Anita wants to be treated as a regular worker and believes that she would be treated differently if her employer knows that she has a disability and an employment specialist assists her. She is sure that if she were to make mistakes on the job, they would be attributed to her mental illness.

Recently, Anita has changed her mind about disclosing her mental illness because she was unsuccessful getting a job on her own. Anita has decided to disclose her mental illness in her search for a seamstress position. She wants her employment specialist to help her find a part-time job. Anita and the employment specialist have discussed how the employment specialist would approach employers on Anita's behalf. The employment specialist contacted the owner of a small sewing and alterations business that she had used for her own clothing in the past. She introduced herself by saying,

My name is Janice Parker. I am a job developer for Orange County Health Services. My work involves finding good job matches for people seeking jobs and for employers and businesses that need good workers. I am helping a woman now who has work experience as a seamstress. She wants to return to this line of work part-time. I came to your business because I bring my clothes here for altering and always find the service to be of high quality. In addition, Anita is looking to find employment in a small business.

Tackling the issues

Q: If you were Anita's employment specialist, how would you introduce yourself to the employer and how would you present Anita?

While there is no single correct answer for handling Anita's situation, here are a few ideas:

Anita initially did not want to disclose to employers that she has a mental illness. But, like many people who have a serious mental illnesses, she changed her mind when she had difficulty finding a job. The advantage of being willing to disclose the mental illness is that you, as an employment specialist, can then talk directly with potential employers.

You must be very clear with consumers about what disclosure means. In many instances, you do not need to reveal any details of consumers' mental illness to employers because it is not pertinent to consumers' employability. Notice that Anita's employment specialist does not initially reveal any information about Anita's mental illness. Sometimes it helps for employers to get to know consumers as people before talking about their need for accommodation.

As an employment specialist, when you meet potential employers, you will give them your business card and a description of what you do. Doing so may automatically reveal that the employment seeker you are supporting is receiving rehabilitation-related services.

Restrict the disclosed information to that which is needed to make the job go well. Disclosing diagnostic labels is usually not helpful and is sometimes harmful, since most employers don't know enough about mental illness to use the information constructively. Employment specialists sometimes refer to consumers' mental illness in terms of a *mental health problem*, a *disability*, or a *psychiatric disability* because employers more readily understand these terms.

In addition, using the term *disability* with employers serves the purpose of establishing a legal status for consumers so that, if necessary, they may benefit from protections under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). By notifying the employer that the person has a disability, the employer is required to provide reasonable accommodations to help the person carry out the tasks of the job. For example, someone who has paranoid thoughts may feel more comfortable if her desk is placed so that people do not always walk behind her.

While you are deciding when to disclose to employers and the types of information you should disclose, remember to provide information only when it is likely to be helpful. For example, in Anita's situation, you might want to let the employer know at some point that she probably will work best at a private work station and not alongside a lot of people because she sometimes feels fearful around others.

In general, many employers are mostly interested in employees who will get the job done and are less interested in their personal backgrounds. Employers are also interested in potential employees who have been screened by an employment specialist as being a good fit with the job and work environment. They appreciate it when you offer them backup and support in the form of followup services, in case the employee has difficulties on the job.

You will be more successful in negotiating jobs if you present yourself professionally and confidently. Over time, you will become skillful in determining how much information to give prospective employers. You will find that some employers are very interested in offering opportunities to qualified people who have disabilities, and it is common for employers to have family members or friends who have a mental illness.

A key to job development is being prepared. Know how you are going to introduce yourself to employers. Employers will quickly detect if you are unsure and hesitant in your job. Rehearse your script many times before you use it with employers. If you engage employers confidently because you truly believe in an individualized job match that benefits both consumers and employers, you will have many successes.

Some consumers are willing to disclose their mental illness to prospective employers and, with these people, you can play a pivotal role in identifying and pursuing job leads. Others prefer not to disclose the psychiatric disorder and, with these people, your role is to support the consumer in the process of finding a job, while remaining "behind the scenes."

Job finding and nondisclosure

The following vignette describes the story of Cassandra, who chooses not to reveal her mental illness in the process of finding a job. Read the vignette, and then consider how you would support her efforts to find work.

Cassandra's story

Cassandra is a 23-year-old woman with bipolar disorder. She lives with her boyfriend and has regular contact with her parents and brother, who live in the same neighborhood.

Cassandra became ill 2 years ago, after graduating from college with a degree in accounting. Cassandra has been hospitalized twice for the treatment of manic episodes. Between these episodes, Cassandra often experiences mild to moderate symptoms of depression. This is associated with a lower energy level, which sometimes leads to a strain in her relationship with her boyfriend.

Cassandra worked at several part-time jobs in high school and college in child care and at fast food restaurants, but has not worked since the onset of her disorder. She is interested in working in the business field, possibly as an accountant or business manager. Cassandra has not applied for a job for 3 years, and she is apprehensive about talking with employers and going on a job interview.

Cassandra wishes to conduct her job search independently. She would like some guidance and support but does not want her employment specialist to contact potential employers.

Tackling the issues

Q: If you were Cassandra's employment specialist, how would you help Cassandra identify possible job leads in her area of interest?

Q: What would you do to help Cassandra prepare to go on "informational interviews" and job interviews?

While there is no single correct answer for handling Cassandra's situation, here are a few ideas:

As the employment specialist, you can review where to look for job leads with Cassandra. You may encourage her to return to the college where she earned her accounting degree to gather leads from the job placement office or talk with someone from the accounting department to find out about job leads.

Places people learn about job openings

- Family
- Friends
- Previous teachers and employers
- Newspapers
- Internet
- Job fairs
- Churches
- Community organizations

Also review the following with Cassandra:

- How to contact employers;
- How to develop a résumé if she does not have one; and
- How to prepare for an interview.

Role-play a job interview situation with her. Have her role-play the part of the job seeker and then the role of the employer. Experiencing the perspective of the employer may enlighten her about ways to present herself during the interview.

In summary, consumers vary by how much assistance they want. Sometimes consumers want to do the job search their own way but later ask for help if they are dissatisfied with their progress. If consumers choose to disclose their mental illness, you can meet with potential employers on their behalf, accompany them on interviews, and follow up with potential employers after the interview process. Although others may choose not to disclose, you can help them in many ways with various aspects of the job search behind the scenes.

Exercise: **Complete a Vocational Profile**

Review one of the following vignettes:

- Darryl's Story

- Janice's Story

Distribute a copy of your agency's Vocational Profile. Use one of the vignettes above or others based on your experience to complete a sample Vocational Profile. Discuss your responses as a group.



Exercise: **Review a Sample Individual Employment Plan**

Read the Sample Individual Employment Plan on the next page. As a group, discuss how the employment plan differs from treatment plans you have completed with consumers in the past.

After completing this exercise, review your agency's Individual Employment Plan and procedures for completing it.

Sample Individual Employment Plan

Individual Employment Plan	Name:		I.D. number	
	Employment Specialist:		Date:	
Overall vocational goal:	To work in a part-time competitive job (about 10 hours a week) in the computer field using my typing skills and interest in computers.			
Objective 1:	Seek a job that will use my skills and will have opportunities for computer work.			
Intervention:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Meet with (employment specialist) at least weekly to identify job leads. ■ Update résumé. ■ Attend job interviews as scheduled. 			
People responsible:	(employment specialist)			
Target date:	4/4/07			
Date objective achieved:	3/1/07 Employed at Miller and Associates for data entry. 10 hours a week at \$8.50 per hour.			
Objective 2:	Monitor medication side effects to be sure that they don't interfere with my ability to do the job.			
Intervention:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Attend medication group led by (case manager) and work group led by (employment specialist) at least 2 times a month each to discuss how medication affects my ability to work. ■ Meet with (case manager) and (psychiatrist) at least 1 time a month and discuss changes in medication schedule that may be needed for the job. 			
People responsible:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ (Psychiatrist) ■ (Case manager) ■ (Employment specialist) 			
Target date:	7/4/07			
Date objective achieved:				

Exercise: Tackle the Issues

Review one of the following vignettes from Module 3. List at least two possible strategies for searching for jobs. Consider how you would support their efforts to find work. Use the handout on the next page to guide your group discussion.

Note: When providing SE services, you may also use this handout. It is not necessary to complete every item or record every answer. It is intended to stimulate and facilitate discussions about key issues.

Possible strategies for searching for jobs		
Vignette	Strategy 1	Strategy 2
Steve's story		
Anita's story		
Cassandra's story		

Handout

Checklist for Conducting Job Searches

Identify job leads

- Family and friends
- Previous employers
- Previous teachers
- Community resource organizations
- Department of Employment Security (also called Department of Employment and Training)
- Libraries and universities
- Yellow pages in the telephone book
- Job fairs
- Openings on career-related web sites on the Internet
- Newspaper want ads and other sections of papers that advertise job openings
- Employers for informational interviews
- Connections to talk to someone employed in the same field

Notes:

Contact employers

- Ask to speak to the person responsible for hiring.
- Introduce yourself, state your interest in getting a job, and explain why you have contacted this specific employment setting.
- Ask about steps for getting more information and advancing in the hiring process, e.g., fill out job application, set up a job interview.
- If no openings currently exist, ask about other people and businesses to contact.
- Thank the person for taking the time to talk with you about job opportunities.
- Keep a record of whom you have contacted, the date, and the outcome.

Notes:


Prepare for job interviews

- Review common employer questions.
- Prepare responses to common employer questions.
- Develop questions to ask employer (e.g., what qualities are you looking for in the person you want to hire?)
- Prepare a statement about what you can offer in the position.
- Rehearse and role-play job interviews.
- Contact previous employers for references.
- Secure two forms of identification (e.g., birth certificate, Social Security card, state I.D. card).
- Fill out a mock job application so information is ready.
- Pick out clothes to wear to the interview.
- Know the location of the interview.
- Plan transportation to the interview and figure out the time required to get there promptly, allowing time for unexpected delays.
- Prepare a list of questions that you want answered related to
 - Job responsibilities
 - Work schedule
 - Supervision
 - Wages
- Ask employer when a hiring decision will be made.
- Remember to thank employer at the end of the interview.
- Send a brief thank-you letter after the interview.
- Call employer to ask if hiring decision has been made.
- If the position was filled, ask about other people and employers to contact.

Notes:

Notes to the facilitator and SE leader:

Prepare for Module 4:

- Make copies of module 4. Your copy is in this workbook; print additional copies for your team from the CD-ROM in the KIT. 


- Distribute the material to those who are participating in your group training. Ask them to read it before the group training.

- Make copies of these exercises:

- Practice Job Supports for Starting a Job;*
- Practice Job Supports for Doing a Job Over Time;*
- Role-Play Providing Job Supports for Doing a Job Over Time;*
- Practice Job Supports for Avoiding Crises;*
- Role-Play Providing Job Supports for Avoiding Crises;*
- Practice Job Supports for Ending a Job; and*
- Role-Play Providing Job Supports for Ending a Job.*

Do not distribute them until the group training. Your copies are in this workbook; print additional copies from the CD-ROM in the KIT.

Conduct your fourth training session:

- When you convene your group, view the last two segments of Training Frontline Staff: Demonstration video: 
 - Job Supports; and*
 - Other Critical Stakeholders.*
- Discuss the DVD and the content of Module 4.
- One at a time, distribute the exercises and complete them as a group.

Training Frontline Staff

Module 4: Job Supports and Collaborations

Teamwork among all possible stakeholders and good communication are keys to providing successful SE services. Module 4 outlines strategies for working effectively with consumers, employers, treatment team members, family members, and other supporters to help consumers meet their vocational goals.

Job supports

Job supports are designed to help people with serious mental illnesses sustain employment. As an employment specialist, your task is to provide appropriate supports to address specific job challenges that consumers face.

These challenges are specific to the consumer and differ depending on the consumer's employment status:

- Starting a new job;
- Doing a job,
- Having a crisis on a job; or
- Ending a job.

Rehabilitation theory

Job support is a form of psychiatric rehabilitation. The goal of all rehabilitation is to help consumers do their best in regular adult roles.

Job support interventions can be aimed ...

- At the consumer
- At the consumer's support network, including family, other supporters and their treatment team
- At the consumer's social and physical environment

For example, a person who is paralyzed from the waist down can include rehabilitation interventions aimed at the following:

- **The individual**—building arm strength and teaching that person how to transfer from a wheelchair to a chair;
- **Their support network**—teaching a spouse how to help the person dress; or
- **Their environment**—building a ramp into a building.

Similarly, psychiatric rehabilitation interventions can be focused on the following:

- **The consumer**—using role playing to teach a person the skill required to relate effectively to a boss and coworkers;
- **Their support network**—enlisting family to help wake the person up on time for work in the morning; or
- **Their environment**—advocating for a work environment that is not too noisy or chaotic.

On the following pages, vignettes illustrate consumers who can benefit from job supports during various phases of SE services:

- Starting a new job;
- Doing a job over time;
- Having a crisis on the job; and
- Ending a job.

After reading each vignette, list possible strategies for solving the consumer's dilemmas before continuing your reading.

Starting a new job

Mary's story

Mary worked as a secretary before becoming ill with recurrent depression 5 years ago. She misses working and, with the help of her employment specialist, had recently arranged to work part time again as a secretary.

Knowing Mary was anxious, the employment specialist made an appointment to check in with her after her first day of work.

Mary arrives late, with teary eyes and a disheveled appearance, saying,

I can't work. It is all too much for me. I got lost on my way, so I was late for my first day! And my boss made comments about how I look. She doesn't like me.

Mary reports that her mother, her case manager, and her psychiatrist have all cautioned her about working, saying it would be too stressful for her.

Tackling the issues

Q: If you were Mary's employment specialist, what would you do?

While there is no single correct answer for handling this situation, here are several approaches the employment specialist might take:

Interventions aimed at the consumer

The first few days on a new job are often stressful. As the employment specialist, you want to gather information about the difficulties Mary is experiencing, since assessing the problem will guide the intervention.

First, help Mary become calm by getting her a Kleenex and a glass of water. Help normalize the situation by saying that lots of people find the first day at a new job difficult but that initial problems are often solved.

Then ask Mary to describe what happened. You'll learn that Mary's boss had asked if Mary could begin working an hour earlier than had been originally arranged. Wanting to please her new boss, Mary said she could begin at the earlier time. However, on the first morning, Mary found it difficult to get her children off to school in time to run for the bus. She then got on the wrong bus and arrived late to work. During the bus ride, she became more and more worried about what her boss would think and began to seriously doubt her ability to do the job.

After understanding the situation, respond in a way that is consistent with Mary's coping strategies. For example, you may know from previous sessions or team meetings that Mary can become overwhelmed with worry, but that she responds well to direct, practical support.

If Mary still wants to work, she may realize it will be impossible for her to start at the earlier hour. You and Mary need to work out a plan that gives her the confidence to continue in the job.

The plan may include how Mary could talk to her new boss about her work hours. You and she could role-play the phone call. To provide support, offer to stay nearby while Mary makes the call.

When starting a new job, consumers can benefit from reviewing the transportation plan for getting to work. You and Mary may want to ride Mary's bus route to work together, timing how long the trip takes and writing out the bus changes on a card that Mary can carry as a reference.

Finally, congratulate Mary for staying at work through a hard first day. She reached out to you for support and assistance in problem solving in just the right way.

Interventions aimed at the consumer's support network

Consumers' support networks play an important role in providing effective job supports. As Mary's employment specialist, you'll want to update team members about what is happening and ask their views on the situation. Is everyone on the team supporting Mary's current work effort? For example, if the psychiatrist expresses concern about work causing stress, you might describe how others have achieved greater levels of independence by learning ways to deal with stressful work situations.

Addressing family concerns and enlisting their support helps consumers in their work efforts. With Mary's permission, call Mary's mother. What are her worries? You may learn that she believes you are pushing work on Mary when she believes Mary is not ready. Setting up a meeting with you, Mary, and her mother can give Mary a way to clearly communicate to her mother that she wants to work. Families can be very supportive, particularly if someone on the team addresses their concerns and gives them information about the advantages of SE.

Interventions aimed at the consumer's social and physical environment

The third area of support is the social and physical environment at the workplace. With the consumer's permission, you can speak directly with the work supervisor to problem-solve. Mary may want you to tell the boss about her struggles with anxiety and depression, but also to communicate her desire to succeed at the job.

What is the employer's assessment of the consumer's work performance? You may learn that Mary's boss had noticed that Mary had been late the first day but had thought that, generally, the day had gone very well and found she caught onto the routine quickly.

Through direct contact with an employer, you can learn what concerns the employer has. You may learn that the boss's only real concern is that Mary had not brushed her hair and did not look quite tidy enough for her position, which involves greeting the public.

Employment specialists guide and support employers and suggest ways to help working consumers improve their performance. When you meet with the employer, you might explain that Mary is anxious about returning to work after being away from work for 5 years.

You could encourage the employer to give Mary positive feedback about her ability to learn quickly and to regularly tell her when work is going well to try to overcome Mary's initial anxiety.

Let the employer know that you believe Mary's confidence will build in time. Employers often find it helpful to talk with employment specialists to better understand how to supervise and support employees.

In summary, starting a new job can be stressful for anyone. The process can be even more challenging for someone who is managing a mental illness and may not have worked for a while.

As an employment specialist, your job is to anticipate and try to head off job-start problems. You can make sure consumers have practical plans to address common concerns, such as waking up on time, wearing the right clothes, and traveling to work.

You can coach consumers to practice the workday routine ahead of time. You can also work with consumers' family, friends, and treatment team to be sure they have the support they need to get to and through the critical early days on the job.

Doing a job over time

Patrick's story

Patrick is a 32-year-old single male with schizoaffective disorder who has been receiving mental health services for 8 years. Today, Patrick shows up at the office saying he is hearing more voices and is having trouble sleeping.

Patrick says that he has recently been changed to the evening shift at the convenience store where he works. Patrick's employment specialist asks a few more questions about Patrick's situation and finds out that the evening shift is busy.

Often, there are long lines of customers who, at times, become irritated. On breaks, Patrick has been drinking lots of coffee, and after work he has been going out with coworkers to drink beer. He says that he does not want to go to the state hospital again.

Tackling the issues

Q: If you were Patrick's employment specialist, what would you do?

Q: How would you address supports related to Patrick, his network, and his workplace?

While there is no single correct answer for handling Patrick's situation, here are several approaches you might take:

Interventions aimed at the consumer

Changes in work schedule and work responsibilities can be stressful. Employment specialists must understand how consumers may respond differently to these changes.

What is stressful for Patrick? What would Patrick find most helpful? Patrick may ask for help in figuring out what to say when his coworkers ask him to go out for beer. He is glad for the friendships but remembers that he has had problems from drinking in the past.

Like Patrick, many consumers are motivated to change because they want to work. Reviewing with Patrick ways to say, "No," to invitations to drink gives him a response in these stressful situations.

Additionally, talk to Patrick about his increased symptoms and trouble sleeping. Is there a relationship between these difficulties and his drinking coffee during breaks? Finding alternatives to drinking coffee may effectively manage his sleep disturbances and voices.

Interventions aimed at the consumer's support network

Employment specialists should be in constant communication with the consumers' treatment team about how they are functioning in their jobs. In this example, you would communicate with Patrick's case manager who may give you more information that is helpful for problem solving. For example, the case manager would know that Patrick's last hospitalization began with a similar period of drinking and sleeping problems.

Patrick's case manager may also know that Patrick actively participated in a dual-diagnosis group at the center in the past and hasn't been drinking over the past year. When the case manager sees Patrick, he

can remind him of this achievement and ask him if he would like to rejoin the group. Group members are often glad to see one another and provide useful suggestions.

Interventions aimed at the consumer's social and physical environment

Evaluating how a consumer functions in the workplace can give you clues to what supports and accommodations would be helpful. You and Patrick might discuss what could be done differently at his worksite.

Is he able to manage the pace and tension of the evening shift? Helping Patrick identify the pros and cons of staying on the evening shift or requesting a return to the day shift is a way to bring clarity to the problem. At this point, if Patrick has not disclosed his mental illness to his employer, he may reconsider. Under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), people with disabilities who are otherwise qualified for the job can request an accommodation.

In summary, after a job gets under way, a consumer will be confronted by different challenges. Work may have an impact on many areas of consumers' lives including the following:

- Their daily schedules;
- Relationships with friends and family;
- Financial benefits;
- Substance use; and
- Medication needs.

Work may also bring consumers into new, and sometimes complex, social situations. Coping with these may require your support and assistance. Establishing and keeping contact with consumers and, when appropriate, employers, will keep you informed and available to both as the job continues.

Having a crisis on the job

Bonita's story

Bonita has been working as a mail distributor at a large company. She has a diagnosis of schizophrenia, but has not had a relapse since starting this job several years ago.

Yesterday she did not show up at work. Today, she is slapping the mail down on people's desks and muttering under her breath.

The employer calls her employment specialist saying he is getting calls from all over the building. He sounds frightened on the phone and wants to fire Bonita.

Tackling the issues

Q: If you were Bonita's employment specialist, what would you do?

Q: How would you address supports related to the Bonita, her network, and workplace?

While there is no single correct answer for handling Bonita's situation, here are several reasonable approaches that you could take:

Interventions aimed at the consumer

With a release of information, employment specialists can talk with employers when problems occur on the job. In this example, since you have Bonita's permission to speak with her employer, you could thank the boss for calling and provide some reassuring information.

Tell the employer that Bonita has lived with her illness for many years and has no history of aggression. Then offer to go over to the workplace to try to figure out what is going on. You may say,

It would be a shame if she lost her job after years of service, without looking into it first.

The offer of an onsite, immediate visit often helps calm employers in crisis situations. Visiting the worksite allows you to assess Bonita and the work situation. Is Bonita having increased symptoms, such as talking to herself and pacing in the cafeteria? How are other employees responding to her?

Assess whether another team member needs to evaluate Bonita. If Bonita is unable to return to work right away, arrange sick leave with her employer.

Interventions aimed at the consumer's support network

People in a consumer's support network may function positively or negatively in their supportive role. Assess the supports that Bonita is receiving. How are people in Bonita's support network affecting the crisis situation?

Find out what stressors are causing Bonita's symptoms to escalate. When Bonita feels ready to talk about the situation, ask her about stressors. In this case, she'll reveal that over the last month, her

ex-husband has been encouraging her to have more contact with her children, who live with him. He has also been asking her to contribute money to help meet the children's needs. Although Bonita has welcomed the additional contact and even, to some degree, the responsibility, the increased demands have disrupted her routine.

Knowing that Bonita's case manager has periodic contact with Bonita's ex-husband, ask her case manager about setting up a meeting with Bonita and her ex-husband. With the support of you and her case manager, Bonita can work out an arrangement with her ex-husband that is less stressful to her.

Interventions aimed at the consumer's social and physical environment

Assess whether Bonita is facing stressors at her workplace. What does she find stressful at her job? In this case, you'll learn that she finds delivering mail to a new floor stressful. Since her employer changed her route, she has to walk in front of a man who looks just like her uncle, who sexually

abused her as a child. She was able to manage for a few days, but then began to think that the man actually was her uncle and started to hear his voice in her head at work.

Even though she is no longer hearing voices, she is afraid to go back to work. She is also embarrassed that she became so sick at the workplace. She worries that now her boss will treat her differently.

One way to support Bonita is to facilitate communication between her and her boss. Suggest arranging a meeting with Bonita and her boss to talk over what happened and to see if he is willing to put her back on her old mail route.

At the meeting with her boss and employment specialist, Bonita says that she is ashamed about what happened and asks if she can go back to her old route, saying that she found the new route "too

stressful." The boss sees that she is back to her old self and welcomes her back to her old job.

In summary, symptom recurrence or substance abuse relapse may interfere with how well consumers are able to perform at work. Changes at work or in consumers' personal lives can also create problems at work.

While avoiding all crises may be impossible, you can reduce the risk by learning what has triggered difficulty in the past, helping consumers avoid situations that are high risk, and monitoring for early signs of a problem. If difficulties do occur, you can often keep a small problem from becoming a large crisis by responding quickly with problem solving and support.

Ending a job

Jack's story

Jack is a 44-year-old divorced man with bipolar disorder who has been working at the same janitorial job for 5 years. He is a good worker and has become a team leader, orienting and supervising others.

He has been grumbling about being sick of cleaning toilets but has taken no action to look for other employment.

Suddenly, he disappeared for three days, missing work and clinical appointments. When his employment specialist finally gets him on the phone, Jack tells her angrily that he does not want to work and hangs up on her.

Tackling the issues

Q: If you were Jack's employment specialist, what would you do?

Q: How would you address supports related to Jack, his support network, and workplace?

While there is no single correct answer for handling Jack's situation, here are several approaches that you might take:

Interventions aimed at the consumer's support network

Employment specialists are sometimes puzzled by consumers' behavior. In this case, Jack was a very quiet person who got along well with his employment specialist. His change in behavior was puzzling.

As Jack's employment specialist, you might want to talk with his treatment team who knows him well and could offer some answers. Jack's case manager, who has worked closely with him over time, can offer a different perspective. In this case, Jack's case manager would tell you that the difficulty is not with the global issue of work, but rather with the specific job he has now.

Consumers may not always want to tell their employment specialists what they are thinking in terms of a job. Jack opened up to his case manager that the boring nature of his job makes him feel that he is going nowhere in life. Jack shared with his case manager that he was angry with his employment specialist for encouraging him to stick with this job, not seeing how bad it makes him feel. In the conversation with his case manager, Jack says, for the first time, that he wants to go back to school to study human services. The case manager tells Jack that he is confident that his employment specialist will support Jack's goals.

The case manager then arranges to meet with Jack and his employment specialist to work out a plan that is consistent with Jack's preferences and goals.

Interventions aimed at the consumer

Gathering information from consumers' support network, including the treatment team and family and other supporters helps employment specialists better understand consumers' goals. After meeting with members of Jack's support network, you'll know more about what Jack wants; you can assure Jack that you support his vocational goals and that you will be honored to be able to help in the process. You might tell Jack about various programs you are aware of and show him how to research jobs on the Internet.

Interventions aimed at the consumer's work environment

Employment specialists help consumers end jobs in a good way. If at all possible, help Jack end his job on good terms with his employer so he can obtain a good job reference.

Jack might feel that he just cannot face his employer after 3 days of unexcused absence. You could then offer to explain the situation to Jack's employer. In the process, you'll find out that Jack's employer has been worried about him and is relieved to hear that he is safe. He says that if Jack really has to leave, he would like Jack to work for 2 more weeks, which will give him a chance to try to hire a replacement.

In summary, leaving a job may be a healthy decision for consumers. Exploring consumers' reasons for wanting to leave and investigating if any other options exist is useful before any final decision is reached.

Of course, the ultimate decision to leave is up to the consumer. If consumers decide to leave, your role is to be a resource for them so that they may leave the job in an informed and successful manner.

Working effectively with consumers

The overall aim of SE is to facilitate recovery. The idea of recovery may be new to you if you came of age professionally in an earlier era when the mental health field generally held low expectations for people with serious mental illnesses.

In the recovery framework, the expectation is that consumers can live a life in which mental illness is not the driving factor for their lives. Recovery means more than expecting people to simply cope with mental illness or maintaining people with mental illnesses in the community.

In a recovery framework, employment specialists follow

- Promote hope
- Support consumers in their efforts to take personal responsibility for health and life choices
- Help consumers get on with life beyond illness

The following approaches and related interpersonal skills will help you follow these recovery principles and work effectively with consumers.

Promote hope

You can enhance hopefulness in these ways:

- Voicing positive statements; and
- Expressing empathy.

Voice positive statements

Having gone through a lot, consumers sometimes lose track of their strengths. As part of developing a working relationship with consumers, you can build rapport by making positive statements. Positive

comments about consumers can address these characteristics:

- Motivation for work;
- Past efforts to find work;
- Prior job experiences;
- Social skills; or
- Any other attribute worthy of praise.

Expressing heartfelt positive statements to consumers may remind them of their strengths. The positive tone set by these comments early in the relationship can contribute to a sense of optimism and good will that helps the process of job search and maintenance.

Many people have a natural tendency to focus more on their negative qualities than their positive qualities. This tendency can be even greater in people with serious mental illnesses, due to personal setbacks they may have experienced and negative emotions such as anxiety and depression.

For example, when describing their work history, consumers may tend to focus more on their job failures and difficulties holding down a job than on personal successes. For another example, when describing how things are going at a current job, consumers may focus more on problems they are experiencing than areas in which they are successful.

Focusing only on the negatives and ignoring the positives can result in consumers' being discouraged and pre-occupied by their sense of "failure." By pointing out positive examples of personal strengths and job success, you can counter the natural tendency to focus only on the negative.

Pointing out positives can help consumers by creating a more balanced picture of the consumer, which can neutralize, or even make positive, consumers' overall impression of the situation. Pointing out positives can also help consumers become more aware of their personal strengths, which can be capitalized on to maximize job performance and functioning at work.

Examples of positive statements:

You've shown some real determination by going out and getting a new job each time you lost an old one.

I understand that you had to leave work early because you found the noise too loud to bear. I really think you were very responsible in talking to your supervisor about your difficulties before going home.

In addition to pointing out positives, employment specialists can elicit positive statements from consumers about themselves. Examples of questions to ask to elicit positive statements:

Can you tell me about some of the things that you think you did really well in the last job that you worked?

You've mentioned a few things that you are unhappy about in terms of your recent job performance. What are your strengths, and what do you do best at this job?

Express empathy

Many consumers report that the faith and caring of their employment specialist was critical to their vocational success. One way to communicate that you care about consumers you serve is through expressing empathy. Empathy involves conveying to consumers that you understand and feel what their experience is like. Empathy demonstrates an emotional understanding of another person and not just a factual understanding.

Typically, many consumers have experienced a range of setbacks in the process of pursuing their personal goals, and the memories of these "failures" may interfere with pursuing their vocational goals. In addition, consumers often experience a variety of obstacles to success in the workplace, including the following:

- The stigma of mental illness;
- Socializing with coworkers;

- Responding to criticism;
- Dealing with unclear assignments;
- Arranging for reasonable accommodations for their mental illness; and
- Concern about the adequacy of their job performance.

Empathizing with the difficult emotions consumers have experienced is a powerful way for you to show consumers that you care and to facilitate the human connection that is critical to providing effective SE services.

Sometimes expressing empathy may lead to problem-solving, but not at other times. Regardless of whether concrete steps are identified to deal with the feelings, showing empathic understanding facilitates the working relationship.

Examples of empathic statements:

- How difficult! How painful!
- How wonderful!
- How irritating! What a disappointment to lose that job after working so hard to get it.
- What a mess! How confusing to expect to do one job and to come in and be assigned a different task!
- You sure have put up with a lot!

Support consumers in their efforts to take personal responsibility

You can help consumers in their effort to take personal responsibility for health and life choices in these ways:

- Eliciting consumers' preferences by using open-ended questions;
- Respecting consumers' preferences; and
- Avoiding excessive advice.

Use open-ended questions

Open-ended questions are questions that cannot be answered with a “Yes” or a “No.” When interviewing consumers, asking open-ended questions often yields much more useful information than asking closed-ended questions. Open-ended questions are very useful for learning more about consumers, including their job preferences, work history, perceived difficulties on the job, and desire for support.

Examples of open-ended questions:

- I'd like to hear about the kinds of jobs you've worked in the past.
- What sort of things do you enjoy doing?
- When you think of the kinds of work you'd like to do, what types of work do you find most interesting?
- What types of problems have you encountered on your job?

Open-ended questions are better than closed-ended questions because they require consumers to elaborate in responding to the question, giving you more information about what they want or are thinking. By asking open-ended questions, you can also have a greater assurance that consumers understood your question. People can easily answer closed-ended questions with a “Yes” or a “No,” even without truly understanding the question, resulting in your incorrectly understanding consumers' preferences.

Open-ended questions are also helpful in checking the understandings you have with consumers. With some consumers, it is important to periodically establish that you mutually understand the conversation by pausing and asking open-ended review questions.

For example, you may say:

Let's go over what we're going to do together when we meet with the restaurant manager about a possible job. What is our plan going to be?

This type of question is more useful in checking consumers' understanding than asking a closed-ended question such as

Do you understand our plan for what we are going to do when we meet with the restaurant manager about a possible job for you?

In short, open-ended questions are useful for eliciting consumers' preferences and ensuring clear communication.

Respect consumer preferences

Respecting consumers' preferences is a core principle of SE (for SE core principles, see Module 1). Allow consumers' preferences to guide the type of SE services that you provide in these areas:

- The type of job that is sought;
- The nature of support you provide; and
- Whether to disclose consumers' mental illness to employers.

Respecting consumers' preferences is important for a number of reasons. Consumers who feel understood and respected are more likely to stay engaged in SE services. Consumers who obtain work that is interesting to them tend to have higher levels of satisfaction with their jobs and longer job tenures. Thus, attending to consumers' job preferences will make your work easier because consumers are more likely to remain on the job.

Furthermore, conflict can occur when consumers' preferences are not well understood or are not fully respected. Conflict occurs when tension arises between consumers and employment specialists, usually with respect to some aspect of consumers' vocational plan or problem experienced at work.

Distinguish conflict from disagreement. Consumers and employment specialists may have different perspectives on a problem and may disagree about it, without this disagreement leading to tension. It is best to avoid conflict with consumers at all times, since the emotional tension inherent in conflict

may jeopardize your working relationship and undermine your ability to provide support.

However, you need not avoid honest disagreements because they pose no threat to the working relationship if they are conveyed in a manner demonstrating mutual respect. When conflict exists, it is usually because an employment specialist strongly believes the consumer “should” do something (or not do something) and the consumer disagrees. The employment specialist actively tries to push the consumer in that direction.

Trying to make consumers do something that they do not want to do is contrary to the SE principle, which emphasizes respecting consumer preferences. It incorrectly implies that the employment specialist knows what is best better than the consumer.

Rather than trying to force consumers to do things that they do not want to do and creating conflict, it is better to try to understand consumers’ perspectives and to identify and deal with the obstacles that consumers perceive. If consumers refuse to do something that seems logical and straightforward to you, it usually means that they have a concern that has not yet been addressed. Direct your effort towards understanding and addressing the concern. It can also be helpful to involve someone else in resolving a disagreement, such as a case manager, family member, or other supporter.

Avoid excessive advice

It is easy to fall into the habit of giving advice. But excessive advice giving is contrary to the aim of supporting consumers’ efforts to take personal responsibility for their lives. Giving advice often sets up a dynamic in which the person giving the advice expects the other person to follow it. Furthermore, people receiving the advice usually assume that they are expected to follow the advice. This dynamic often complicates the working relationship between employment specialists and consumers by creating a possible tension when advice is not followed. In

addition, if consumers do follow your advice, they may begin to rely too much on you or to blame you if the advice does not lead to an effective solution.

It is best to avoid giving advice whenever possible. Instead, work collaboratively with consumers to identify solutions to problems and goals. By asking frequent questions, you can help consumers consider possible steps to achieving goals without directly giving advice. Furthermore, helping consumers identify and choose their own solutions develops ownership for those solutions and a greater sense of self-efficacy.

Occasionally, consumers will directly ask you for advice. In those cases, you must make a decision about whether giving the advice will be in the consumer’s best interest.

Sometimes consumers will ask for advice and then reject it when it is given. Sometimes consumers ask for advice because they lack confidence in their own abilities to identify and evaluate solutions. Other times they ask for advice because they have already considered many possibilities and are eager to entertain as many others as possible.

In determining whether to give advice, weigh the likelihood that the advice will be beneficial to consumers both in the short term and in the long term. More often than not, advice giving does not serve consumers’ long-term interest.

Examples of how to stay focused on consumer preferences when asked to give advice:

I agree that that is a tough decision you are facing. I am not sure what I would do if I were you. What are you considering?

Sounds like a very difficult situation. I’d hate to make it worse by offering you advice that might not be consistent with what you really want. Let’s put our heads together and try to sort it out.

How confusing! Let's list the pros and cons of this decision to get a clearer idea of what you want to do.

Help consumers get on with life beyond illness

SE services can directly help consumers get on with life beyond illness by supporting them within their role as employees. Being an employee involves devoting time to non-illness-related activities and often improves how consumers see themselves.

Help consumers get on with life beyond illness

- Focus interactions to promote job success
- Stay clear about the goal of the work
- Avoid unnecessary self-disclosure

Focus interactions

To be effective, interactions with consumers must focus on consumers' interests and what you need to know to help consumers pursue their work-related goals. You will be more likely to keep interviews focused if you have at least one or two objectives in mind when you meet with consumers.

Consumers may shift the focus of the interaction to another relevant topic. If this occurs, try to redirect them to the original topic while respecting their preferences. Professional encounters may naturally meander off topic, but it is your role to focus interactions to ensure that you accomplish the work that needs to be done.

Stay clear about the goal of work

The most important reason for keeping the interaction focused is to ensure that it promotes consumers' work goals. Conversations that meander off of the topic may be difficult for some consumers to follow and may mean that you do not get needed information.

While maintaining the focus of the interview, it is also important for the conversation to be comfortable and relaxed and to allow some deviations from the topic. Such deviations may give you useful information that you might not otherwise get.

As an employment specialist, you are a professional. In other words, you are paid to support the work life of consumers you serve. Meeting this goal involves being friendly to consumers while remembering that you are not being paid to be a friend. It is very important to keep your role firmly in mind because some consumers may lose track of it or not understand it, particularly when you meet in community settings such as consumers' homes, restaurants, and other public places.

While your role continues to be that of a professional, other activities that are ordinarily associated with friendship, such as having a cup of coffee or taking a walk, may take place. Consumers may interpret these activities as signifying that the relationship is a friendship and that could change the interaction away from a focus on consumers' work life. Be aware of these possible interpretations and work to maintain the distinction between professionalism and friendship, while striving to create a comfortable and effective working relationship.

Avoid unnecessary self-disclosure

It is important to avoid self-disclosure that turns the attention to you and away from consumers' work goals. Sometimes consumers' dilemmas, such as experiences with depression, anxiety, or conflicts on the job, remind you of something that you have struggled with yourself. In general, it is not helpful for you to use personal disclosure when working with consumers.

While careful, strategic self-disclosure may occasionally be helpful, in many cases such disclosure shifts the focus away from consumers and detracts from addressing the problem at hand.

In summary, SE services can play an important role in facilitating the recovery of consumers. Use the interpersonal skills described above to promote hope, support consumers in their effort to take personal responsibility for their health and life, and help consumers to get on with life beyond illness.

Harnessing the help of other critical stakeholders

Employment specialists need to involve as many stakeholders as possible in the process of exploring job possibilities, searching for work, and providing support after consumers find work. Stakeholders may include anyone with an important role in consumers' lives or anyone who is interested in playing a bigger role.

Potential allies in supporting consumers' work life

- Treatment team members
- Family
- Friends
- Community members such as clergy, teachers, or parole officers
- Community business leaders
- Employers (for working consumers)
- Vocational Rehabilitation staff

Maintaining good communication among all stakeholders and getting everyone's input ensures that all involved work together toward the same goal. Keeping everyone involved also increases the chances of identifying creative solutions to problems that interfere with achieving goals. A larger support network means more people and resources available to participate with problem-solving. Finally, teamwork minimizes the possibility that some excluded stakeholders will undermine consumers' work goals because they are perceived to be inconsistent with their own goals.

Specific strategies for talking with employers

Consumers who do not disclose their illness to employers

The strategies for communicating with employers depend largely on whether consumers want to disclose their mental illness to prospective employers. If consumers have chosen not to reveal their disabilities, your contacts with employers are naturally quite limited, and often you will have no contact with them at all.

For consumers who choose not to disclose their illness, you may have contact with prospective employers in the process of conducting generic job development. The focus of these contacts is on exploring with employers the nature of their expectations for different jobs, characteristics of ideal employees, and other information that may help a job applicant.

You can then pass job leads based on generic job development on to consumers who wish to not disclose their disability, who can pursue these jobs with the extra help of the information that you have gathered. Thus, in the case of consumers who choose not to disclose their illness, your contacts with employers are usually limited to the job development phase.

Of course, such consumers may choose to disclose their mental illness at some point after they have gotten the job. In this case, other opportunities may exist for you to have contact with employers to facilitate job support.

Consumers who disclose their illness to employers

For consumers who choose to disclose their illness to employers, your contacts with employers may greatly increase the success of helping consumers find and keep a job.

Features of effective communication with prospective employers

- Demonstrate good social skills yourself
- Keep your interactions with employers brief and to the point
- Follow through on your contacts with employers

Strive to demonstrate good social skills yourself. Communicating effectively on behalf of consumers will create a favorable impression with employers. These are examples of good social skills:

- Good eye contact;
- A firm voice tone;
- Responsiveness to questions and concerns raised by the employer;
- A firm handshake; and
- Professional dress that meets the specific employer standards.

In the business world, “Time is money.” Make sure your interactions with employers are focused and as brief and to the point as possible. This does not mean that conversations are devoid of some socially pleasant exchange, but rather that you are always mindful of your goals for the meeting and do not waste the employer’s time.

Follow through on your contacts with employers, including checking in to determine whether the employer is satisfied with the consumer’s work. Provide ongoing support. Many employers appreciate the support of employment specialists when hiring consumers. Even when consumers are doing well on the job, employers often appreciate occasional contacts.

Specific strategies for talking with treatment team members

To provide effective SE services, you must be a member of consumers’ treatment team and maintain communication with other team members. True integration of vocational and clinical services occurs when you and other team members regularly and freely talk about vocational and clinical issues.

Actively participate in team meetings rather than just passively listening. Just as with employers, your relationship with other members of the treatment team reflects true partnership. Sometimes, your perspective of consumers’ vocational or clinical functioning will be different from the perspective of other team members. In such cases, it is useful to listen carefully to other team members and to reflect your understanding to ensure your perception is accurate. Then, you can try to close the gap by offering alternative vantage points.

During such discussions, keep consumers’ vocational goals at the forefront to focus on your role as the consumer’s employment specialist. In addition to being an active team member, it helps if you also enjoy a good relationship with each team member and that you have at least some regular contact with consumers’ case manager, psychiatrist or therapist, nurse, and residential worker. Keep consumers informed of the nature of team efforts and ongoing collaborations.

Specific strategies for working with family members

The involvement of family members can help in many ways:

- Supporting consumers in pursuing jobs;
- Providing possible job leads;

- Providing support once consumers have gotten work; and
- Solving problems regarding obstacles to work or difficulties encountered on the job.

If consumers have certain responsibilities at home, such as childcare, involving family members may also be useful in negotiating how and when these responsibilities will be fulfilled and in addressing concerns about whether work will interfere with these responsibilities.

To involve family members, the first step is to get consumers' permission to contact relatives. Many consumers readily agree to involve their family members in SE; however, some express concerns. The most common concerns are that involving relatives will either result in increased stress on consumers or will be a burden to family members.

Address concern about increased stress on consumers by assuring them that you will strive to make meetings with family members positive, upbeat, and helpful and that those meetings may actually reduce stress rather than increase it. Address concern about being a burden to families by explaining that one of the purposes of involving relatives is to reduce possible stress or burden on them by considering their perspectives and ensuring that SE services are consistent with their own needs and values.

Similar to collaborating with employers and other team members, collaborating with family members is a partnership that requires ongoing communication and mutual respect. Tell family members about the nature of the job search so they can support consumers and network to provide possible job leads.

Address concerns that family members may have about consumers' search for work, such as the effects of work on entitlements. If other members of the treatment team already have a good working relationship with family members, have these team members attend your initial meetings with the family.

Once consumers have found a job, maintaining communication with family members can help for several reasons:

Family members can help detect problems at work, based on their close relationships with consumers;

When problems are identified, family members can problem-solve with consumers to address the difficulties or they can alert you; and

Identifying and responding to problems early may avert unnecessary job terminations.

Maintaining contact with family members can also help track the satisfaction consumers derive from work. Often, early after obtaining a job, consumers experience a range of positive feelings, including increased self-esteem and enjoyment of life. Nevertheless, these benefits sometimes evaporate over time as the drudgery of work sets in, and consumers become less satisfied with their jobs.

Ongoing communication with family members can help detect these shifts in mood and apparent benefits of work. Feedback from family members can cue you to begin addressing these with consumers (e.g., exploring the possibility of job advancement or other jobs, pursuing education to get more satisfying work).

If consumers are not present for the contact that you have with their families, update them regularly. Sharing information with consumers about collaborations builds an understanding of the team approach.

Specific strategies for working with other agencies

It is a good idea to include on the treatment team any practitioner from another agency who provides services to consumers. For example, consumers with physical health problems may receive assistance from a nurse from the Visiting Nurses Association. In this case, it would be important to collaborate with the nurse. Agencies

that do not provide clinical services may collaborate with external clinics to provide integrated care to consumers receiving SE services.

To do so, invite practitioners from other agencies to be part of the treatment team and to attend team meetings. While schedules may not permit these practitioners to attend all meetings, frequent communication through telephone calls, voicemail messages, and e-mail are helpful.

Many agencies also collaborate with the Rehabilitation Services Administration (also known in some states as the Office of Rehabilitation Services or Vocational Rehabilitation) to provide SE services. Vocational rehabilitation and mental health agencies share the goal of helping people with disabilities return to work and increase their independence.

Historically, the two state systems have not always collaborated in a way that provides seamless and coordinated services for consumers. If your agency is in the process of building a more collaborative relationship with your local vocational rehabilitation office, communication and commitment are two essential ingredients that promote an effective working relationship.

Mental health agencies must educate their vocational rehabilitation partners about mental health services and vocational rehabilitation counselors must educate their mental health partners about their services. Understanding the guidelines and practices of each other's system will close the gaps that have formed barriers and create new ways of working together to provide more effective services for consumers.

Collaborations with your local Vocational Rehabilitation Office may bring added resources and services. For example, vocational rehabilitation counselors may provide the following:

- Training;
- Additional job shadowing;
- Job-related equipment and supplies;
- School tuition;
- Planning assistance; and
- Assistance with placement and support.

Agencies with effective relationships with their local Vocational Rehabilitation Office communicate regularly with vocational rehabilitation counselors. Often a counselor may be included on the consumer's treatment team. The counselor can purchase services, identify external resources, arrange services from other agencies, and provide guidance.

Remember that different agencies have different policies and procedures for service delivery. The goal is to work out the barriers as much as possible so that consumers receive seamless services and are not caught between agencies and systems.

In summary, establishing and maintaining allies among stakeholders is extremely important in supporting the work lives of consumers. The skills reviewed above will help you work effectively with consumers, families, employers, team members, and practitioners from other agencies. It is important to seek their perspectives early and often in the process and communicate regularly.

Exercise: **Practice Job Supports for Starting a New Job**

Review the vignette, *Mary's story*, from this module. Use this vignette or others from your experience to complete the Employment Specialist Checklist, *Planning for Success: Starting the Job*, on the next page.

Note: You may also use the checklist to prepare for your meetings with consumers. It is not necessary to complete every question or record every answer. The checklist is intended to remind you of key issues to discuss with the consumers you serve.

Supported Employment Employment Specialist Checklist

Planning for Success: Starting the Job

First-day worries

Does she know it is natural to have worries about the first day of a new job?

- Yes
 No

Does she have a plan for managing any worries that come up the night before?

- Yes
 No

What will she do if she cannot sleep the night before?

Would it help her if you meet her for breakfast before work starts?

- Yes
 No

Would a phone call before work help?

- Yes
 No

Are her family or friends informed about her starting work?

- Yes
 No

Would it be useful to check with her family to see if they have questions about her first day?

- Yes
 No

Does she know how to contact you on the first day if she needs to?

- Yes
 No

Is another team member available to her on the first day if you are not?

- Yes
 No

Does she know whom she can ask questions of at work?

- Yes
 No

Is there anyone she can call after her first day of work?

- Yes
 No

Notes:

Family and friends

Are her friends and family aware of her job plans?

- Yes
 No

Have you discussed the value of positive support with her support system?

- Yes
 No

Do her family and friends know how to contact you if necessary?

- Yes
 No

Have you discussed Releases of Information with her so you can speak with her family and friends?

- Yes
- No

Are her family and friends aware of your role and the ways you may help as the employment specialist?

- Yes
- No

What is her plan for child care during working hours?

Notes:

Workday schedule

What is her schedule for going to bed before workdays?

Does this allow for adequate sleep?

- Yes
- No

How will she awaken on time for work?

What are the tasks she needs to do before going to work?

Has she planned for eating before going to work?

- Yes
- No

Has she allowed enough time to do these things?

- Yes
- No

Has she practiced this plan to see how well it works?

- Yes
- No

What will she do if she gets behind schedule getting to work?

Does she have the means to contact you or her employer from home?

- Yes
- No

What is her plan for taking medications on workdays?

Has the psychiatrist or nurse reviewed this plan?

- Yes
 No

How will she take medications at work if she needs to?

What is her plan for food or drinks for breaks or lunchtime?

Notes:

Public transportation

Is she aware of the public transportation routes?

- Yes
 No

Does she know where to get on and off the public transportation?

- Yes
 No

Does she have a copy of the schedule and stops?

- Yes
 No

Has she practiced using this transportation?

- Yes
 No

Does she need you to accompany her?

- Yes
 No

What is her plan for transportation fares?

Does she need a transportation pass?

- Yes
 No

What is her plan for getting back home?

What will happen if she is late getting out of work?

Does she know whom to call if she has transportation problems?

- Yes
- No

Notes:

Private transportation

Who will provide private transportation?

Does she know where she will be picked up?

- Yes
- No

Does she know what time she will be picked up?

- Yes
- No

Will she be driving?

- Yes. Has she driven the route?
 - Yes
 - No

Does she know where to park?

- Yes
- No
- No

What will she do if her ride does not arrive on time?

Does she know whom to call if she has transportation problems?

- Yes
- No

Does she know where she will be picked up after work?

- Yes
- No

Does she know what time she will be picked up after work?

- Yes
- No

What will she do if her ride home from work is not there?

Notes:

Getting ready for work

What are her grooming habits?

Are they appropriate for the job?

- Yes
- No

Does she have what she needs for grooming (toiletries, facilities, etc.)?

- Yes
- No

Has she allowed enough time for hygiene and grooming?

- Yes
- No

What will she wear the first day at work?

Is this clothing appropriate for the job?

- Yes
- No

What is her plan for having clean clothes for work?

What is the quality of her nutritional habits?

Will she eat enough of the right foods to last for her workday?

- Yes
- No

Notes:

Arriving at work

Is she aware what time she should arrive at work?

- Yes
- No

Where will she enter the worksite?

To whom does she report on the first day?

Does she need you to meet her at work when he starts?

- Yes
- No

Will anyone at work show her around?

- Yes
- No

How will she introduce herself to her coworkers?

Exercise: **Role-Play Providing Job Supports for Starting a New Job**

Review the vignette, *Mary's story*, from this module. Select two members of your training group to play the roles of Mary and the employment specialist. Use the handout, *Planning for Success: Starting the Job*, on the next page to practice how you might help Mary plan for her second day of work.

Note: When providing SE services, you may also use this handout. It is not necessary to complete every question or record every answer. The handout is intended to stimulate and facilitate discussions about key issues. _____

Planning for Success: Starting the Job

First-day worries

What is my plan for managing the natural worries that come before starting a new job?

Do I want extra support to get through my first day successfully?

- Yes
- No

Notes:

Friends and family

Have I explained my work plans to my friends and family?

- Yes
- No

Do they support my plans?

- Yes
- No

Do they have any questions or concerns that I can answer?

- Yes
- No

Notes:

Workday schedule

What time do I need to go to sleep the night before work?

_____PM

What time do I need to get up to be ready for work?

_____AM

How will I wake up during workdays?

What is my plan for taking medications on workdays?

What is my plan for food and drink during work breaks or lunch?

Notes:

Transportation

How will I get to and return from work?

Whom should I call if transportation problems occur?

Notes:

Dressing for work

How neat do I have to be for the job?

What do I have to do to get cleaned up for work?

What will I wear to work?

Do I have the right clothes for the job?

Yes

No

Notes:

Arriving at work

Where do I go when I arrive at work on the first day?

To whom do I report?

How will I introduce myself to others on the job?

What do I do for breaks and lunch for the first day?

Exercise: **Practice Job Supports for Doing a Job Over Time**

Review the vignette, *Patrick's story*, from this module. Use this vignette or others from your experience to complete the Employment Specialist Checklist, *Planning for Success: Doing the Job Over Time*, on the next page.

Note: You may also use the checklist to prepare for your meetings with consumers. It is not necessary to complete every question or record every answer. The checklist is intended to remind you of key issues to discuss with the consumers that you serve.

Supported Employment
Employment Specialist Checklist

Planning for Success: Starting the Job

Wages and benefits
(income, insurance, housing)

Have you reviewed all the benefits (income, insurance, and housing) he is currently receiving?

- Yes
- No

Has he participated in developing a benefits plan?

- Yes
- No

Does he understand how his work income will affect his benefits?

- Yes
- No

Have all the work incentive plans been explored?

- Yes
- No

Who will report his earnings to the appropriate programs or agencies?

Has he signed a Release of Information for these if needed?

- Yes
- No

Have his family and friends been informed of the benefits counseling and plan?

- Yes
- No

Has the rest of the treatment team been told of this plan?

- Yes
- No

Do his family and friends know how to contact you with benefits questions?

- Yes
- No

Would it help if you called his family about the benefits plan?

- Yes
- No

Does he understand when he will be paid and for what time period?

- Yes
- No

What is his plan for when he receives his first check?

Does he have a bank account or place to cash his check?

- Yes
- No

Does he need you to help him when he receives his first check?

- Yes
- No

Notes:

Disclosure of mental illness

Have you reviewed the idea of disclosing a mental illness with him?

- Yes
- No

Is he aware of the pros and cons of disclosing a mental illness?

- Yes
- No

Have you discussed the best ways and reasons for disclosure?

- Yes
- No

If he wants to disclose his mental illness, how will you help?

What is the plan for when and how to disclose his illness?

Are you and he aware of the Americans with Disabilities Act and how it relates to disclosure and accommodation?

- Yes
- No

Is he aware of the pros and cons of telling coworkers about his mental illness?

- Yes
- No

Has he signed a Release of Information for you to discuss his mental illness with his employer if he needs you to?

- Yes
- No

Are his family and friends aware of the disclosure plan?

- Yes
- No

Notes:

Accommodations and support

Must part of the job be modified so that he can be successful?

- Yes
- No

Have you and he discussed how to ask for these modifications or accommodations?

- Yes
- No

What is the plan for requesting modifications or accommodations?

Does he need you to be present when he does this?

- Yes
- No

Would it help to role-play this ahead of time?

- Yes
- No

Is he aware of the supports that you and the rest of the team make available to him?

- Yes
- No

What is the plan for meeting with him and his employer?

Does he understand that he can ask for your help in such a meeting?

- Yes
- No

What is his understanding of how to contact you during workdays?

Does the employer know how to contact you?

- Yes
- No

Is the employer aware of the ways you can be supportive to him and the consumer?

- Yes
- No

Notes:

Work tasks

What is his understanding of his duties at work?

Is this consistent with your understanding of the job?

- Yes
- No

Is he unsure about any job duties?

- Yes
- No

How will he ask for help with these?

Does he need your assistance in asking for help?

- Yes
- No

How will he receive feedback about how he is doing at work?

How does he usually respond to criticism or praise?

Does he need your help in discussing how he is doing at work?

- Yes
- No

If he has a strong response to criticism, have you discussed this with his employer?

- Yes
- No

Would it help to role-play how to discuss his job performance with his boss?

- Yes
- No

Notes:

Social skills

What is the quality of his social skills?

How comfortably and effectively is he communicating with his boss?

How can you help in this area?

Is he content with his relationships with his coworkers?

- Yes
- No

Does he participate in conversations at breaks or lunch?

- Yes
- No

Does anyone at his worksite intimidate or worry him?

- Yes
- No

Has he spoken with anyone about this?

- Yes
- No

Would it help to discuss any coworker concerns with his boss?

- Yes
- No

How can you support him about working relationships?

Is specific skills-teaching available through his treatment team?

- Yes
- No

How will he deal with friends who visit him at work?

Is there a workplace policy for dealing with visitors?

- Yes
- No

Notes:

Family support

How involved is his family in supporting his work efforts?

Does he feel he receives positive support from his family?

- Yes
 No

Has he shared his work experiences with his family?

- Yes
 No

Does he call any family members to share good things about work?

- Yes
 No

How can you help him explain the value of this to his family?

Are they aware of how you can help them and the consumer?

- Yes
 No

Notes:

Money management

What is the quality of his money management skills?

How well has he met his needs with money in the past?

What is his plan for managing his paychecks?

Does he have a budget?

- Yes
 No

Does he need help adjusting or developing a budget for his wages?

- Yes
 No

If he abuses substances, how will having more money affect this issue?

Does he have a plan to address the urges that can come with money?

Yes

No

Notes:

Exercise: **Role-Play Providing Job Supports for Doing a Job Over Time**

Review the vignette, *Patrick's story*, from this module. Select two members of your training group to play the roles of Patrick and the employment specialist. Use the handout, *Planning for Success: Doing a Job Over Time*, on the next page to practice how you might help Patrick address some common work-related concerns.

Note: When providing SE services, you may also use this handout. It is not necessary to complete every question or record every answer. The handout is intended to stimulate and facilitate discussions about key issues.

Supported Employment
Employment Specialist Checklist

**Planning for Success:
Doing a Job Over Time**

Wages and benefits (income, insurance, housing)

What will happen to my benefits?

What is my plan about reporting income changes to agencies such as Social Security, Medicaid, and others?

Have I shared this plan with everyone who needs to know?

- Yes
- No

How will I be paid?

When will I receive my first paycheck?

What period will it cover?

Notes:

Disclosure of mental illness

Is it a good idea to tell my boss about my mental illness?

- Yes. How will I do it?
- No

What information about my mental illness would be helpful for my boss to know and

Will my employment specialist help with this?

- Yes
- No

Accommodations and support

Are there parts of my job that I may need to have modified?

- Yes
- No

How do I ask for this?

How do I get in touch with my employment specialist?

Notes:

Work tasks

What tasks do I do at work?

How do I ask for help with these, if needed?

How will I know if I am doing a good job?

People at work

How well am I getting along with my boss?

How well do I get along with my coworkers?

What can I do to get along better with my coworkers and boss?

Notes:

Family and friends support

Who can I call after work?

What do my family and friends think about my working?

Notes:

Money management

What is my plan for the money I earn at work?

Do I have a bank account?

Yes

No

Notes:



Exercise: Practice Job Supports for Avoiding Crises

Review the vignette, *Bonita's story*, from this module. Use this vignette or others from your experience to complete the Employment Specialist Checklist, *Avoiding a Crisis*, on the next page.

Note: You may also use the checklist to prepare for your meetings with consumers. It is not necessary to complete every question or record every answer. The checklist is intended to remind you of key issues to discuss with the consumers that you serve.

Planning for Success: Avoiding a Crisis

The person

What types of mental illness does she experience?

What does the treatment team notice about warning signs of increased symptoms?

How might this show up at work?

What does the treatment team describe as her history of alcohol or substance use?

What work-related problems might occur with alcohol or substance use?

Does she sometimes stop or change her medications without the knowledge of the treatment team?

- Yes
- No

How will the treatment team keep you informed of any medication changes?

When she experiences increased symptoms, does she tell people or does she isolate herself?

- She tells people.
- She isolates herself.

Is there anyone on the treatment team with whom she works best when in crisis?

- Yes
- No

According to her treatment team, what has helped in managing crises recently?

What other crisis causes, strategies, or ideas does the treatment team have about her?

How does she usually react to increased stress?

How does she usually react to changes in her routine?

Does she have strong reactions to certain people (e.g., women, older men, etc.)?

- Yes
 No

Notes:

The work environment

Are there situations at work that have become bothersome to her that may grow into a crisis?

- Yes
 No

Do any coworker relationships bother her?

- Yes
 No

How can you help her address either of these?

Is it useful for her employer to notify you before any upcoming work changes?

- Yes
 No

Has she, or will she, experience changes in:

...routine?

- Yes
 No

...coworkers?

- Yes
 No

...boss?

- Yes
 No

...job duties?

- Yes
 No

...job location?

- Yes
 No

...job schedule?

- Yes
 No

What have been successful ways for her to manage change in the past?

How will she contact you if she feels a crisis coming at work?

Can her employer contact you if she is having a crisis at work?

- Yes
 No

Who is the backup person if you are unavailable for a work crisis?

Has she signed a Release of Information for you to communicate with her employer in case of a work crisis?

- Yes
 No

What is the plan for working with the treatment team to evaluate and help manage a crisis?

What types of emergency services are available in case of a work crisis?

Notes:

The personal environment

Has she, or will she, experience stress or changes in:

...using alcohol or drugs?

- Yes
 No

...interpersonal conflicts?

- Yes
 No

...medications?

- Yes
 No

...her living situation?

- Yes
 No

...seasons or difficult times of the year?

- Yes
 No

...family members, friends, or pets?

Yes

No

...members of her treatment team?

Yes

No

How does she handle increased personal stress?

Does she use her support network or her treatment team?

Yes

No

Does she know she can contact you if it will affect her work performance?

Yes

No

Does she know how to contact emergency services in her area?

Yes

No

What is the plan for working with the treatment team about personal stress or changes?

Do you have a signed Release of Information to communicate with her family?

Yes

No

Does her family know how and when they can contact you?

Yes

No

Notes:

Exercise: **Role-Play Providing Job Supports for Avoiding Crises**

Review the vignette, *Bonita's story*, from this module. Select two members of your training group to play the roles of Bonita and the employment specialist. Use the handout, *Planning for Success: Avoiding a Crisis*, on the next page to practice how you might help Bonita avoid a crisis at work.

Note: When providing SE services, you may also use this handout. It is not necessary to complete every question or record every answer. The handout is intended to stimulate and facilitate discussions about key issues.

Planning for Success: Avoiding a Crisis

Knowing yourself

What warning signs show you that you may be having increased symptoms?

How might these warning signs show up at work?

What is your plan if these signs show up at work?

Do you use alcohol or drugs?

- Yes
- No

How do alcohol or drugs affect your ability to do your job?

Who can you contact if you feel you are experiencing a crisis and need immediate help?

Your work environment

What has happened at work that has been stressful?

What did you do to manage the situation?

Would you do anything differently in the future?

- Yes
- No

Are there small problems at work now that could turn into big problems?

- Yes
- No

Can your employment specialist do something to help you?

- Yes
- No

Notes:

Your personal environment

What things in your personal life increase, or might increase, stress (change in living arrangements, family disagreements, alcohol or drug use)?

How will you know if these are affecting your work?

What is your plan for managing these?

How can your employment specialist and your team help?

Notes:

Exercise: **Practice Job Supports for Ending a Job**

Review the vignette, *Jack's story*, from this module. Use this vignette or others from your experience to complete the Employment Specialist Checklist, *Planning for Success: Ending a Job*, on the next page.

Note: You may also use the checklist to prepare for your meetings with consumers. It is not necessary to complete every question or record every answer. The checklist is intended to remind you of key issues to discuss with the consumers that you serve.

Planning for Success: Ending A Job

Leaving

What are his reasons for wanting to leave his job?

How long has he been thinking about leaving?

Has he tried to discuss these reasons with his employer?

- Yes
- No

How can you help if he wants to discuss his reasons with his employer?

Would modifications or changes at work change his mind about leaving?

- Yes
- No

If possible, would a break from work help with his reasons for leaving?

- Yes
- No

Have you discussed the pros and cons of leaving his job?

- Yes
- No

Is he making an informed decision about leaving or staying?

- Yes
- No

Is he aware that leaving is his decision to make, not yours?

- Yes
- No

What length of notice does the employer expect before he leaves?

Does he understand the benefits of giving an appropriate notice?

- Yes
- No

Will he want to use this employer as a reference in the future?

- Yes
- No

If he leaves, does his current position fit the desires of another consumer?

- Yes
- No

Does he have another job to go to? It is often easier to find a job if you are already employed.

- Yes
- No

Have his family and friends been told about his decision to leave?

- Yes
- No

Has the treatment team been told about his decision to leave?

- Yes
- No

What is the plan for notifying benefits programs or agencies

How can you help him so that he may leave his job successfully?

Notes

Working again

Does he know how to get a reference from his employer?

- Yes
- No

What has he learned about working from the job he is leaving?

What, if anything, would he do differently in his next job?

What is his plan for working again in the future?

Is this plan realistic?

- Yes
- No

Have you reassessed his job skills and preferences based on the job he is leaving?

- Yes
- No

What are the pros and cons of his future work plan?

Pros

Cons

Have his family and friends been told about the new work plan?

- Yes
- No

Has the treatment team been told about the new work plan?

- Yes
- No

How can you help develop and share his new work plan?

Notes:



Exercise: **Role-Play Providing Job Supports for Ending a Job**

Review the vignette, *Jack's story*, from this module. Select two members of your training group to play the roles of Jack and the employment specialist. Use the handout, *Planning for Success: Ending a Job*, on the next page to practice how you might help Jack address the challenge of ending a job.

Note: When providing SE services, you may also use this handout. It is not necessary to complete every question or record every answer. The handout is intended to stimulate and facilitate discussions about key issues.

Supported Employment
Employment Specialist Checklist

Planning for Success: Avoiding a Crisis

Leaving

What are your reasons for thinking about leaving this job?

What are the pros and cons about leaving this job?

Pros

Cons

Have you discussed your reasons for leaving with your employer?

Yes
 No

Have you discussed your reasons for leaving with your employment specialist?

Yes
 No

Is there anything that can be changed so that you will stay at this job?

Yes
 No

If possible, would some time off change the situation for you?

Yes
 No

How much notice does your employer feel is appropriate before leaving?

What is your plan for leaving?

Are your family and friends aware of your plan to leave this job?

Yes
 No

Notes:

Working again

Do you want to use this employer as a reference in the future?

- Yes
- No

What have you learned about yourself and work from this job?

What is your plan for working again after you leave?

Have you discussed your future work plans with your employment specialist?

- Yes
- No

Are your family and friends aware of your future work plans?

- Yes
- No

Notes:
