

**MOVING BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES
TOWARD RECOVERY**

WORK AS AN EXPECTATION

**SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT
AS AN EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICE**



A GUIDE FOR EMPLOYMENT SPECIALISTS



**STATE OF ALASKA
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES
DIVISION OF BEHAVIORAL HEALTH**



WORK AS AN EXPECTATION

MOVING BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES TOWARD RECOVERY SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT AS AN EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICE

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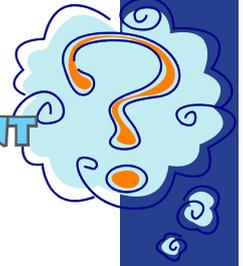
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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION TO SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT

MOST PEOPLE WHO LIVE WITH A SEVERE BEHAVIOR DISORDER WANT TO WORK.

PURPOSE OF THIS WORKBOOK

This guide is designed to introduce you to the principles and strategies you will need to be an effective employment specialist. As an employment specialist you will have an opportunity to make a meaningful positive impact on the lives of others.

SO WHAT IS SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT?

Supported employment is an approach to vocational rehabilitation for individuals with disabilities that emphasize helping people obtain competitive work in the community, and providing the supports necessary to ensure success at the workplace. The emphasis in supported employment programs is on helping individuals find jobs paying 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, supported employment de-emphasizes prevocational assessment and training, and puts a premium on rapid job search and attainment.

Individuals with disabilities differ from one another in terms of the types of work they prefer, the nature of the support they want, and the decision whether or not to disclose their disability to the employer or co-workers. Supported employment programs respect these individual preferences, and tailor their vocational services accordingly. In addition to appreciating the importance of individual preferences, supported employment programs recognize that most individuals with disabilities benefit from long-term support after successful job attainment. Therefore, supported employment programs avoid imposing unrealistic time limitations on services, while focusing on helping individuals become as independent and self-reliant as possible.

The overriding philosophy of supported employment is the belief that every person with a disability 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 the individual into becoming the "perfect worker" through extensive prevocational assessment and training, individuals are offered help finding and keeping jobs that capitalize on their personal strengths and motivation. Thus the primary goal of supported employment is not to change the individual, but to find a natural "fit" between the individual's strengths and experiences and a job in the community. As individuals 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 individuals with disabilities working, individuals are less stigmatized for their severe behavior disorder and they become more socially accepted. Supported employment is a successful approach that has been used in various settings by culturally diverse individuals, employment specialists, and practitioners.

WHY SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT?

- The goal of supported employment is to help people with severe behavior disorders find and keep competitive jobs. Supported employment facilitates the recovery of work-interested individuals by supporting them in their efforts to get on with life beyond illness. Many individuals are experiencing recovery from mental illness by acquiring employment. Supported employment

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programs offer individuals assistance in their work efforts. Evidence-based supported employment incorporates the following points:

- Supported employment is a well-defined approach to helping people with severe behavior disorder find and keep competitive employment. “Competitive employment” means work in the community that anyone can apply for and pays at least minimum wage. The wage should not be less than the normal wage (and level of benefits) paid for the same work performed by individuals who do not have a severe behavior disorder. Supported employment is a successful approach that has been used in various settings by culturally diverse individuals, employment specialists, and practitioners.
- Supported employment programs are staffed by employment specialists who have frequent meetings with the treatment team (i.e., practitioners who provide services, such as case manager, therapist, psychiatrist) to integrate supported employment with mental health treatment.
- Supported employment programs help anyone who expresses the desire to work. People are not excluded because they are not “ready” or because of prior work history, substance use, or symptoms.
- Employment specialists help people look for jobs soon after entering the program, instead of requiring extensive pre-employment assessment and training, or intermediate work experiences (like prevocational work units, transitional employment, or sheltered workshops).
- Support from the employment specialist continues as long as individuals want the assistance. The help is often outside of the work place and it can include help from other practitioners, family members, coworkers, and supervisors.
- Jobs are seen as transitions. People commonly try several jobs before finding a job they want to keep. Employment specialists help individuals find further jobs when they leave jobs.
- Finally, evidence-based supported employment follows the philosophy that all choices and decisions about work and support are individualized, based on the person’s preferences, strengths, and experiences.





CHAPTER 2: EVIDENCE ON SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT

SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT GETS RESULTS

Supported employment has been the most extensively studied model of vocational rehabilitation for persons with psychiatric disabilities, and ample evidence supports its effectiveness. At last count, 9 different research studies involving random assignment of individuals to either supported employment or a comparison program, have been conducted to evaluate the effects of supported employment programs. In each study, the supported employment program has been found to produce better vocational outcomes than the comparison program or programs. In these studies, individuals in supported employment programs are more successful in obtaining competitive work, they work more hours, and they earn more wages from competitive employment than individuals receiving other vocational services.

NO EVIDENCE OF NEGATIVE EFFECTS

Practitioners, individuals, and family members are sometimes concerned that competitive work will be a stressful experience that may increase the chances of relapses and re-hospitalizations. However, the research on supported employment has consistently found that there are no negative effects related to participating in a supported employment program. Specifically, individuals who participate in supported employment 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.

COST ISSUES

Only a limited amount of research has examined the cost of providing supported employment services. This research indicates that when a supported employment program is added to an existing psychiatric rehabilitation program, overall costs of services (that is, the combined treatment and employment program costs) increase. However, when a supported employment program replaces another rehabilitation program, such as a day treatment program, the overall treatment costs remain the same. Some programs have found the cost ranges from two to four thousand dollars per client per year (Clark, 1993).

In summary, extensive research on supported employment shows that it improves vocational outcomes more than other programs while not causing any negative effects. Modest benefits in areas of non-vocational functioning may occur when people obtain competitive work, such as in the areas of symptom severity and self-esteem. Supported employment programs may either increase overall treatment costs or not affect treatment costs, depending on whether the services added or substitutes another service in a rehabilitation program.



CHAPTER 3: PRINCIPLES OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT

Supported employment programs are based on a core set of principles. These principles form the foundation of the program, and they are critical to ensuring that services are available to all individuals, that program staff are respectful of individual choices, and the program is effective in achieving and sustaining the goal of competitive work in the community. These principles are listed below, and are subsequently elaborated upon. Learn them; Memorize them; Believe in them!

LIST OF SIX CORE PRINCIPLES

CORE PRINCIPLES OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT

1. Eligibility is based on the individual
2. Supported employment is integrated with treatment
3. Competitive employment is the goal
4. Job search starts soon after a individual expresses interest in working
5. Follow-along supports are continuous
6. Individual preferences are important



PRINCIPLE ONE: ZERO EXCLUSION

NO ONE IS EXCLUDED

Individuals who are interested in work are not prevented from participating in supported employment, regardless of their psychiatric diagnosis, symptoms, work history, or other problems, including substance abuse and cognitive impairment. The core philosophy of supported employment is that all persons with a disability can work at competitive jobs in the community without prior training, and that no one should be excluded from this opportunity. Supported employment does not attempt to bring individuals to some preconceived standard of “work readiness” before seeking employment. Individuals are “work ready” when they say they want to work. Research on which individuals are most likely to succeed in supported employment programs indicates that symptoms, substance abuse, and other individual factors are not strong and consistent predictors of work. Therefore, there is no justification for excluding individuals who are interested in work from supported employment programs.

PRINCIPLE TWO: INTEGRATION OF VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION AND MENTAL HEALTH

VOCATIONAL AND MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES ARE INTEGRATED

Vocational rehabilitation and mental health treatment should be integrated at the team level by the different providers of these services. It is best when employment specialists function as members of individuals’ treatment teams and participate regularly in team meetings. Close coordination of supported employment with other rehabilitation and treatment services ensures that the individuals’ vocational goals are given a high priority by everyone involved in providing services, and not just

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the employment specialist. Participation of employment specialists in team meetings provides a vehicle for discussing clinical and rehabilitation issues relevant to work, such as 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). Regular meetings between employment specialists and other team members also give other practitioners the opportunity to help and have input into assisting the individual achieve his or her vocational goals.

PRINCIPLE THREE: COMPETITIVE EMPLOYMENT

COMPETITIVE EMPLOYMENT IS THE GOAL

Supported employment emphasizes helping individuals obtain competitive jobs, paying competitive wages. “Competitive jobs” are jobs that exist in the open labor market. A job that anyone could have regardless of their disability status, rather than jobs set-aside for persons with disabilities, and pay at least minimum wage. The wage should not be less than the normal wage (and level of benefits) paid for the same work performed by individuals who do not have a severe behavior disorder.

Competitive work is valued for several reasons. First, individuals express a strong preference for competitive work over sheltered work, and a desire to work in community settings. Second, competitive work promotes the integration of persons with psychiatric disabilities into the community through their involvement in normal activities, which will reduce the stigma of severe behavior disorder experienced by these individuals. Third, individuals’ self-esteem often improves as they see they are able to work competitively, that their work is valued, and that they can contribute to society. Last, historically, many vocational rehabilitation programs have placed individuals with disabilities into non-competitive jobs, often paying sub-minimum wages, with only rare progression onto competitive employment. Experience shows that individuals can successfully work at competitive jobs without prior participation in training programs or non-competitive jobs.

PRINCIPLE FOUR: RAPID JOB SEARCH

THE JOB SEARCH STARTS SOON AFTER EXPRESSING INTEREST IN WORKING

The process of looking for work begins soon after an individual begins working with an employment specialist, and is not postponed by requirements for completing extensive pre-employment assessment and training, or intermediate work experiences (like prevocational work units, transitional employment, or sheltered workshop experiences). Rapid job search is crucial for several reasons. As individuals begin the process of identifying and exploring specific job possibilities, they (and their employment specialists) learn more about the type of work and work setting they desire. Beginning the search process early demonstrates to individuals that their desire to work is taken seriously, and conveys optimism that there are multiple opportunities available in the community for the individual to achieve their vocational goals. Looking for jobs soon after an individual has been referred to a supported employment program may also be important for individuals who are ambivalent about work, and whose motivation may be tenuous. Fears and misconceptions about work can often be best confronted by helping individuals actually explore possible jobs. Seeking work immediately takes advantage of the individual’s current motivation. Studies show that fewer people obtain employment when the job search is delayed by prevocational preparations and requirements. Finally, rapid job search is critical because many jobs may need to be explored before the right one is selected, and beginning this process early increases the chances of eventual success. Similar to how most people become steady workers, individuals commonly try several jobs before finding one that they keep.

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To help direct the job search the employment specialist draws up a vocational profile that includes a review of the individuals' work, preferences for type of work, and other background information. Information is collected from the individual, service providers, and with permission from the individual from family members and previous employers. This profile can be completed within a few days of the individual joining the vocational program. However, rather than assessment being static and occurring only before obtaining a job, assessment is ongoing, without a defined beginning and end. Employment specialists, in collaboration with individuals, are constantly in the process of updating and revising their evaluation of individuals' strengths, challenges, and areas of support, and critical environmental factors that influence work and adjustment at the workplace based on their competitive, community-based job experiences.

PRINCIPLE FIVE: TIME-UNLIMITED SUPPORT

SUPPORT IS PROVIDED OVER TIME, AS LONG AS INDIVIDUALS WANT IT

The assistance provided to individuals receiving supported employment services needs to be given on a time unlimited basis. Some individuals struggle with psychiatric disabilities that persist over time so their optimal treatment and rehabilitation requires a long-term commitment. Thus, individuals receiving supported employment services are never terminated from these services, despite the extent of their vocational success, unless they directly request it. While support is provided on a time unlimited basis, for many individuals the extent of support gradually decreases over time as employment specialists teach and facilitate the ability of individuals to meet their own needs for success at the workplace (e.g., arranging own transportation to work, ability to perform the job without coaching, socialization skills at work, skills for responding to criticism from a supervisor). Thus, the goal of the employment specialist is to help the individual become as independent as possible in his or her vocational role, while always remaining available to provide support and assistance.

PRINCIPLE SIX: ATTENTION TO INDIVIDUAL PREFERENCES

JOB CHOICE FOLLOWS INDIVIDUAL PREFERENCE

Individual preferences play a key role in determining the type of job that is sought, the nature of support provided by the employment specialist, and the decision about whether to disclose the person's psychiatric disability to the employer. Individuals who obtain work in their area of interest tend to have higher levels of satisfaction with their jobs, and have longer job tenures. Thus, attending to individual job preferences can often make the work of the employment specialist easier because individuals are more likely to remain on the job. Individuals differ in how they want to be supported by their employment specialists, and these preferences are given close attention. Some individuals are willing to disclose their disability to prospective employers, and want their employment specialist involved in all aspects of work, including help in identifying and obtaining jobs, maintaining ongoing contact with the employer, and providing on-site and off-site job support. Other individuals prefer to keep their psychiatric disability confidential, and look to their employment specialist to provide "behind the scenes" support, but not to have direct contact with employers. These preferences need to be honored, as it is crucial to listen to how individuals want to be supported in their pursuit of vocational goals.



CHAPTER 4: REFERRALS

This chapter describes how individuals who may benefit from supported employment are identified and referred to these services.

Making individuals and practitioners aware of the goals and practices of supported employment, and implementing a simple referral process, is crucial to linking people to the supported employment program. To make services accessible to as many individuals as possible, minimal criteria must be used. Informing different stakeholders about the availability of supported employment, and the process for receiving these services, increases the potential number of individuals who may be engaged in supported employment.

In the sections that follow are the principles of an effective referral process for supported employment services, including:

1. Eligibility criteria
2. Making the referral process simple
3. Getting the word out about supported employment



REMEMBER:

An effective process for referring individuals to supported employment:

- imposes minimal exclusion criteria
- is simple
- involves multiple stakeholders

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

RECOMMENDED CRITERIA FOR ENTRANCE INTO SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT

The criteria for receiving supported employment services should be kept to a minimum, and are best limited to the following:

1. The individual is unemployed (or working non-competitively) and wants competitive work, or
2. The individual is working but not receiving employment supports, and he/she wants such support.

GETTING THE WORD OUT

Research literature indicates that 70% of people with severe mental illness have a goal of working. It also shows that only about 7% of individuals nationally are working.

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TACKLING THE ISSUES

GETTING THE REFERRALS COMING CAN TAKE SOME WORK AT FIRST.

There are many strategies the supported employment programs can use to encourage referrals of individuals to the program. As an employment specialist, you should educate team members about your supported employment program, and actively seek referrals by exploring with team members potentially appropriate individuals during team meetings. Mental health practitioners often are not aware of the high value placed on work by individuals, and may be unfamiliar with the principles of supported employment. Practitioners may also inaccurately perceive that work may be unduly stressful, or that certain individuals may be unable to work because of cognitive impairments, symptoms, or medication side effects. Arranging a session in which working individuals describe their experiences or inviting a supported employment speaker to address practitioners' concerns are helpful ways to educate practitioners. Communicating the values of work, the fact that many individuals can work despite persistent symptoms or cognitive impairments, and the fact that most individuals do not find that work increases stress (and some report that it decreases it) would help to stimulate referrals. Conducting an in service on supported employment, making brochures available, information sheets for different stakeholders, and mounting posters at the Center are additional strategies for informing staff about the program. The goal is to create a culture of work. All practitioners provide hope and encouragement for individuals to consider working and realizing their dreams.

Another way of encouraging referrals is to offer to meet individually with individuals who are interested in learning more about supported employment, but have not yet expressed a clear desire for competitive work. Rather than making contact with you contingent upon the individual expressing a clear desire for these services, you can meet with interested individuals to educate them about supported employment, and to help them explore whether they might like to try it. Making it clear to the other team members that you are willing to meet with individuals who have not yet decided to participate in the program can increase the chances that individuals will become interested and choose to pursue supported employment.

Motivation for referral can come directly from individuals and their families as well as from other practitioners. Individuals can be educated directly about supported employment services, either by their case managers, through individual-related activities (such as a peer support program or resource center), or through "information groups" conducted periodically (e.g., weekly or biweekly). Highlighting the supported employment program during the agency's intake process informs individuals who are new to the agency. In some cases, the supported employment program may be what interests people in receiving agency services at all. Similarly, family members can be informed about the availability of supported employment services through practitioners who have regular contact with them or by means of local support groups, such as local chapters of The National Alliance on Mental Illness.





CHAPTER 5: ENGAGEMENT

Engagement is the first step towards developing a working alliance with the individual. It is through this working relationship that all supported employment services are provided, ranging from gathering vocational profile information to job finding to support. In addition to developing a working alliance with the individual, successful engagement also involves enlisting the support and involvement of people in the individual's support system (such as family members), keeping other practitioners informed, and soliciting their feedback in pursuing the individual's vocational goals. Thus, engagement is the critical step towards developing a collaborative relationship including the individual, members of the individual's support system, and other practitioners.

WHO DO I TALK TO?

1. Initial engagement of the individual
2. Meeting with family, friends etc.
3. Keeping the treatment team involved



REMEMBER:

ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES:

1. focus on developing a working alliance with the individual
2. take place in the community
3. involve connecting with the family and other supports
4. are culturally sensitive

Establishing a relationship with the individual creates a foundation for the rest of your work. Of most importance is connecting with the individual you are serving as well as his or her professional and community supports. Creating a coordinated team around supporting the work interests of the individual will pay off over time.





CHAPTER 6: ASSESSMENT

An accurate assessment of the individual's interests and work experience is critical to finding a good job match between the individual and the employer. While assessment plays an important role in supported employment, extended periods of assessment are avoided. Instead, the employment specialist gathers as much information as quickly as possible to begin the job search process at a pace set by the individual. The gathering of information should not slow down the process if the individual wants to begin the job search quickly. The profile information helps to guide the planning process. Rather than assessment all occurring at the beginning of the program, assessment is ongoing. The employment specialist updates the profile with relevant information as the individual looks for and works in jobs. Traditional vocational assessment using sheltered job experiences, work adjustment activities, and testing, are avoided.

The components of completing a vocational profile and developing an employment plan:

1. Gathering comprehensive information from a variety of sources
2. Developing an employment plan
3. Revising and updating the assessment and employment plan based

Establishing a profile of an individual's strengths and interests will help you to match the person with a job that they are more likely to enjoy. Explore job opportunities that flow from an individual's interests and skills.

Assessment and employment planning strategies:

- find out about the individual's job interests and work experience
- explore how important people in the individual's life see work
- explore job possibilities with the individual by walking around the community together and visiting possible workplaces
- develop a plan with the individual for finding a job





CHAPTER 7: JOB FINDING

The job search is where the “rubber hits the road” in supported employment. Guided by the profile of individuals’ 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 the individual. In order to maintain high levels of individual motivation to work, job finding should begin as soon as possible after the initial assessment has been completed, usually within one to two weeks of beginning the supported employment program. Successful job searches involve extensive networking to identify potential job leads. Talking to family members, friends, other practitioners on the team, previous employers, community groups, and active exploration of businesses in the community. While the employment specialist takes the lead in guiding the individual through the process of finding a job, the decisions themselves, ranging from the type of job to the job setting, to determining whether to disclose one’s severe behavior disorder, are made by the individual.

COMPONENTS OF JOB FINDING:

1. Beginning the job search soon after entering the supported employment program
2. Individualizing job finding based on individuals’ strengths, preferences, and experiences
3. Networking to identify job leads
4. Involving the treatment team and family to maintain support

Challenge yourself by listing possible strategies for searching for jobs that the individual seems to have interest in.

REMEMBER:

SUCCESSFUL JOB FINDING:

- begins soon after entering the program
- is based on individual preferences
- involves networking
- requires the ongoing support of the treatment team and family



CHAPTER 8: JOB SUPPORTS

JOB SUPPORTS FACILITATE SUCCESSFUL COMPETITIVE EMPLOYMENT

Job supports help facilitate the vocational lives of people with severe behavior disorders. The task of an employment specialist is to provide appropriate supports for the specific job challenge facing an individual.

REHABILITATION THEORY

Job support is psychiatric rehabilitation. The goal of all rehabilitation is to help people do their best in regular adult roles. Rehabilitation interventions can focus on the individual, on the individual's social network, or physical environment. In a general medical example, the rehabilitation of a person who is paralyzed from the waist down can include interventions aimed at the individual, like teaching the person how to transfer from a wheelchair to a chair, or interventions aimed at the environment, such as building a ramp into a building. Likewise, psychiatric rehabilitation interventions can be focused on the individual, such as using role-playing to teach a person the skills required to relate effectively to a boss and co-workers, or they can focus on the person's support system, such as enlisting family members to help wake a person up on time for work in the morning, or advocating for a work environment that is not too noisy or chaotic.

Individuals can benefit from job supports when:

1. Starting a new job
2. Doing a job over time
3. Having a crisis on the job
4. Ending a job

Remember job support interventions can be aimed at:

- The individual
- The individual's support network, including friends, family, and practitioners
- The workplace social and physical environment



STRENGTHENING THE INDIVIDUAL'S SKILLS AND ABILITIES

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

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What is the employer's assessment of the individual/employee's work performance? You may learn that the individual's boss had noticed that they had been late the first day but had thought that, generally, the day had gone very well. 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 the individual had not brushed her hair and did not look quite tidy enough for her position, which involves greeting the public.

Employment specialists provide guidance and support to employers and suggest ways to help individuals/workers improve their work performance. When you meet with the employer you might explain that your client is anxious about returning to work, after being away from work for five years. You could encourage the employer to give positive feedback about her ability to learn quickly and to regularly tell her when work is going well to try to overcome initial anxiety. Employers oftentimes find it helpful to talk with employment specialists to better understand how to supervise and support employees.

DISCUSSION OF JOB STARTS

Starting a new job can be stressful for anyone. The process can be even more challenging for someone who is managing a severe behavior disorder 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 a individual has practical plans to address common concerns, such as waking up on time, wearing the right clothes, and traveling to work. You can coach the individual to practice the workday routine ahead of time. You can also work with a individual's family, friends, and treatment team to be sure the individual has the support needed to get to and through the critical early days on the job.

STRENGTHENING THE INDIVIDUAL'S SKILLS AND ABILITIES

Changes in work schedule and work responsibilities can be stressful. Employment specialists need to understand how people respond differently to these changes. What is stressful? What would be most helpful? Many are motivated to change because they want to work. Employment specialists need to consult with the psychiatrist or nurse about increased symptoms and troubles sleeping. They may recommend an adjustment in medications to effectively manage his sleep and voices.

STRENGTHENING NETWORK AND TEAM SUPPORTS

Employment specialists need to constantly communicate with case managers and other team members about how individuals are functioning in their jobs. The case manager may provide more information that is helpful for problem solving. Arranging Workplace accommodation and providing support

Evaluating how the individual functions in the workplace can provide clues to what supports and accommodations could be helpful. You might discuss what could be done differently at the work site. Is the individual able to manage the pace and tension of the evening shift? Helping the individual identify the pros and cons of staying on the evening shift or requesting the day shift is a way to bring clarity to the problem. At this point individuals who have not disclosed their disability status to their employer may reconsider. Under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) people with disabilities who are otherwise qualified for the job can request an accommodation.

DISCUSSION OF DOING A JOB

After a job gets underway, an individual will be confronted by different challenges. Work may have an impact on many areas of an individual's life including his daily schedule, relationships with friends and family, financial benefits, substance use, and medication needs. Work will also bring him into new, and sometimes complex, social situations. Coping with these may require your support and assistance. Establishing and keeping contact with him and, when appropriate, his employer, will keep you informed and available to both of them as he continues to do the job.

DOING A JOB OVER A PERIOD OF TIME

A job after time can bring other challenges, from reactions to a change in routine or maybe to a gradual outgrowing of the job. Employment specialists need to reinforce to the individual that this is a natural, normal growth pattern in the everyday workforce. It is OK to react to changes or to want to challenge oneself. Show how this is a part of the recovery process.

With a release of information, employment specialists can talk with employers when problems occur on the job. The offer of an onsite, immediate visit often helps calm the boss in a crisis situation.

VISITING THE WORK SITE ALLOWS YOU TO ASSESS THE SITUATION.

People in an individual's network may function positively or negatively in providing support. As the employment specialist, you want to find out which stressors are causing escalation.

Employment specialists need to find out what causes stress for people at the workplace. One way employment specialists provide support is facilitating communication between the individual/worker and the boss.

DISCUSSION OF CRISIS ON A JOB

Symptom recurrence or substance abuse relapse may interfere with how well an individual is able to perform at work. Changes at work or in an individual's personal life can also create problems. While avoiding all crises may be impossible, you can reduce the risk by learning what has triggered difficulty in the past, helping an individual 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.

Strengthening networking and team support

Employment specialists are sometimes puzzled by someone's behavior. You might want to talk with someone else on the team who knows him well and could offer some answers. Case managers, who work closely with individuals over time, can offer a different perspective. Individuals may not always want to tell their employment specialist what they are thinking in terms of a job. Gathering information from the individual's support network, which includes other practitioners and family and friends, helps employment specialists understand more clearly an individual's goals. Once you know more about what the individual wants, you can support his vocational development and be able to help in the process.

ENDING A JOB

Employment specialists assist individuals in ending jobs in a good way. Leaving a job may be a healthy decision for an individual. Exploring her reasons for wanting to leave, and investigating if there are any other options is useful before any final decision is reached. Of course, the ultimate decision to leave is up to the individual. If at all possible, you want to help the individual end a job on good terms with the employer in order to obtain a good job reference. Supporting the work effort of people with severe behavior disorder is a creative process. Some problems can be anticipated. Others must be addressed as they arise. Often, there are numerous possible solutions to each challenge. As an employment specialist, you assess each situation, then, support the individual and her environment so that the job works out.





CHAPTER 9: SKILLS: WORKING EFFECTIVELY WITH INDIVIDUALS

CHAPTER OVERVIEW

There are some specific interpersonal skills that will help you to support the work life of the individuals you are serving.

The aim is to facilitate recovery, which involves:

- Promoting hope
- Helping individuals in their effort to take personal responsibility for health and life choices
- Supporting individuals in getting on with life beyond illness

PROMOTING HOPE

Hopefulness can be enhanced by:

1. Voicing positive statements
2. Expressing empathy



VOICING POSITIVE STATEMENTS

Having gone through a lot, individuals sometimes lose track of their strengths. As part of developing a working relationship with an individual, you can build rapport by making positive statements. Positive comments about the individual can address the individual's appearance, motivation for work, past efforts to find work, prior job experiences, social skills, or any other attribute worthy of praise. Expressing heart-felt positive statements to an individual may remind the individual 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.

POSITIVE STATEMENTS ARE IMPORTANT OVER TIME

There is a natural tendency among many people to focus more on their negative qualities than their positive qualities. This tendency can be even greater in individuals with psychiatric disabilities, due to personal setbacks they may have experienced, and negative emotions such as anxiety and depression. For example, when describing one's work history, an individual may tend to focus more on his job failures and difficulties holding down a job than personal successes. For another example,

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when describing how things are going at a current job, an individual may focus more on problems she is experiencing than areas in which she is being successful.

Focusing only on the negatives, and ignoring the positives, can result in individuals being discouraged and pre-occupied by their sense of “failure.” By pointing out positive examples of personal strengths and job success to individuals, you can counter the natural tendency to focus only on the negative. Pointing out positives can be beneficial to individuals by creating a more balanced picture of the individual, which can neutralize, or even make positive, the individual’s overall impression of the situation. Pointing out positives can also help individuals become more aware of their personal strengths, which can be capitalized upon in order to maximize job performance and functioning at work.

EXAMPLES OF POSITIVE STATEMENT

- “You’ve showed 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.”

ELICITING POSITIVE STATEMENTS

In addition to pointing out positives, employment specialists can elicit from individuals in their own words positive statements about themselves.

EXAMPLES OF ELICITING 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?”
- Expressing empathy

Many individuals report that the faith and caring of their employment specialist was critical to their vocational success. One way to communicate that you care about the individual you are serving is through expressing empathy. Empathy involves the process of conveying to another person that a person understands, and feels what another person’s experience is like. Empathy demonstrates an emotional understanding of another person and not just a factual understanding.

Expressing empathy is an important skill for enhancing the working relationship between the employment specialist and the individual. Typically, many individuals 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, individuals often experience a variety of obstacles to success in the workplace including the stigma of severe behavior disorder, socializing

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with co-workers, responding to criticism, dealing with unclear assignments, arranging for reasonable accommodations due to their psychiatric disability, and concern about the adequacy of their job performance. Empathizing with the difficult emotions individuals have experienced either in the past or currently, is a powerful way for you to show the individual you care, and to facilitate that human connection that is critical to the process of supported employment. Sometimes expressing empathy may lead to problem solving, but not 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!” or “How painful!” or “How irritating” or “How wonderful!”
- “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!”
- “Lord knows you’ve put up with a lot!”

HELPING INDIVIDUALS IN THEIR EFFORT TO TAKE PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR LIFE CHOICES

You can help individuals in their effort to take personal responsibility for life choices by:

1. Eliciting individual preferences through the use of open-ended questions
2. Respecting expressed preferences
3. Avoiding giving excessive advice

USING OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS

Open-ended questions refer to questions that cannot be answered with a “yes” or a “no.” When interviewing individuals, asking open-ended questions often yields much more useful information than asking closed-ended questions that can be answered yes/no. Open-ended questions are very useful for learning more about individuals, 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 and would most prefer?”



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- “What types of problems have you been encountering on your job?”

Open-ended questions are superior to close-ended questions because they require the individual to elaborate in responding to the question, thereby giving you more information about what the individual wants or is thinking. In addition, by asking open-ended questions, you can have a greater assurance that the individual has understood the question, since the response must make sense given the question asked. Closed-ended questions can be easily answered yes/no even without truly understanding the question, resulting in an incorrect understanding of individual preference.

In addition to open-ended questions being useful for obtaining basic information and preferences from an individual, these types of questions are also helpful in checking the understandings you have with an individual. With some individuals, it is important to periodically establish that you have a mutual understanding of the conversation by pausing and asking open-ended review questions. For example, asking the open-ended question, “Let’s go over what we’re going to do together when we meet with the manager of this restaurant about a possible job. What is our plan going to be?” is more useful in checking a individual’s understanding than asking the closed-ended question, “Do you understand our plan for what we are going to do when we meet with the manager of the restaurant about a possible job for you?”

RESPECTING INDIVIDUAL PREFERENCES

Respecting individual preferences is a core principle of supported employment. Conflict can occur when individual preferences are not well understood or are not fully respected.

Conflict occurs when tension arises between the individual and employment specialist, usually with respect to some aspect of the individual’s vocational plan or problem experienced at work. Conflict should be distinguished from disagreement. The individual and employment specialist 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 the individual at all times, since the emotional tension inherent in conflict may jeopardize their working relationship and undermine the employment specialist’s ability to provide support. Honest disagreements, on the other hand, need not be avoided, as they pose no threat to the working relationship, provided they are conveyed in a manner demonstrating mutual respect.

When conflict exists, it is usually because the employment specialist strongly believes the individual “should” do something (or not do something) whereas the individual disagrees, and the employment specialist is actively trying to push the individual in that direction. Trying to make an individual do something he or she does not want to do is contrary to the emphasis on individual preferences in supported employment, since it implies that the employment specialist knows better than the individual does what is best for that person. Rather than trying to force individuals to do things that they do not want to do, creating conflict, it is better to try and understand the individual’s perspective, and to identify and deal with the obstacles perceived by the individual. If the individual refuses to do something that seems logical and straightforward to the employment specialist, it usually means that the individual has a concern that has not yet been addressed, and an effort needs to be directed towards understanding and addressing the concern. Involving someone else in resolving a disagreement, such as a case manager or family member, can be helpful.

RISKS OF GIVING EXCESSIVE ADVICE

Giving excessive advice is contrary to the aim of supporting individual efforts to take personal responsibility for life but it is easy to fall into the habit. Giving advice often sets up a dynamic in which the person giving the advice expects the other person to follow it, and the person receiving the advice often perceives it as expectation. This dynamic often complicates your working relationship with the individual by creating a possible tension when unrequested advice is not followed. In addition, when advice is followed, the advice giving can lead the individual 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, and to seek to work collaboratively with the individual to identify solutions to problems and goals. By asking frequent questions, you can help individuals consider possible steps to achieving goals without directly giving advice. Furthermore, helping individuals identify and choose their own solutions to problems and goals creates more ownership for those solutions by the individual, and a greater sense of self-efficacy.

Occasionally, individuals will directly ask you for advice, in which case you must make a decision as to whether providing the advice will be in the best interest of the individual. Sometimes individuals will request advice and then reject it when it is given. Sometimes individuals request advice because they lack confidence in their own ability to identify and evaluate solutions. Sometimes advice is requested because the individual has already considered many possibilities, and is eager to entertain as many others as possible. In determining whether to give advice, you need to weigh the likelihood that the advice will be beneficial to the individual both in the short-term and in the long-term. More often than not, directly providing advice to individuals does not serve their long-term interest.

EXAMPLES OF AVOIDING GIVING EXCESSIVE ADVICE

Examples of ways to keep focused on client preferences when asked to give advice

- “I agree 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 out the pros and cons of this decision to get a clearer idea of what you want to do.”

SUPPORTING INDIVIDUALS IN GETTING ON WITH LIFE BEYOND ILLNESS

Supported employment can directly help an individual get on with life beyond illness by helping him or her with the healthy adult role of worker. Being a worker involves devoting time to a non-illness related activity and often improves how an individual sees him or herself. As there is always a lot going on in people’s lives, supporting employment takes real focus.

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You can support individuals in getting on with life beyond illness by:

1. Focusing interactions so that they succeed in developing the work life of each individual
2. Staying clear about the goal of the work
3. Avoiding self-disclosure that shifts the topic of discussion to you

FOCUSING INTERACTIONS ON THE WORK GOALS OF INDIVIDUALS

To be effective, interactions with individuals need to be focused on what the individual is interested in and what you, as the employment specialist, need to know to help him or her pursue work-related goals. You will be more likely to keep the interview focused, if you have at least one or two objectives in mind when you meet with an individual. Individuals may shift the focus of the interaction to another relevant topic, in which case you may either proceed to a change in topic or steer the individual back to the original topic. Professional encounters may naturally meander off the topic, but it is your role to keep bringing the individual back to the topic at hand in order to accomplish the work that needs to be done.

The most important reason for keeping the interaction focused is to ensure that it promotes the work goals of the individual. Conversations that meander a great deal off of the topic may be difficult for some individuals to follow, and may mean that you do not get the needed information. While maintaining the focus of the interview, it is also important for the conversation to be comfortable, relaxed, and to allow some deviations from the topic. Such deviations may provide you with useful information that you might not otherwise get.

STAYING CLEAR ABOUT THE GOAL OF THE WORK

REMAIN FRIENDLY

As an employment specialist you are a professional. In other words, you are paid to support the work life of the individuals you are serving. Meeting this goal involves being friendly to individuals while remembering that you are not being paid to be a friend.

As an employment specialist it is very important for you to keep your paid role firmly in mind because some individuals may lose track of it or not understand it, particularly when you are meeting in community settings such as individuals' homes, restaurants, and other public places. While your role continues to be that of a professional, other activities may take place ordinarily associated with friendship, such as having a cup of coffee or taking a walk. Individuals may interpret these activities as signifying that the relationship is a friendship, and could change the interaction away from a focus on the individual's work life. You need to 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. Discussion of how to do this optimally is a great topic for regular supervision.

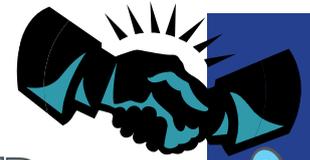
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AVOIDING DISTRACTING SELF-DISCLOSURE

Sometimes an individual's dilemma, such as experiences with depression, anxiety, or conflicts on the job, reminds you of something that you have struggled with yourself. In general, it is not helpful for you to use personal disclosure when working with individuals. While careful strategic self-disclosure may occasionally be helpful, in many cases such disclosure shifts the focus away from the individual to the employment specialist, and detracts from addressing the problem at hand.

Supported employment can play an important role in facilitating the recovery of a individual. This chapter introduced some interpersonal skills that can be used to promote hope, help individual in their effort to take personal responsibility for life choices, and support individuals get on with life beyond illness. The interpersonal skills required to be a more effective employment specialist (such as communicating empathy and staying focused on the goal of helping the individual obtain and maintain competitive employment) can be learned and practiced.





CHAPTER 10: SKILLS: HARNESSING THE HELP OF OTHER CRITICAL STAKEHOLDERS

Teamwork among all possible stakeholders and good communication are keys to successful supported employment. This chapter introduces some specific strategies for working with employers, other practitioners, and family members to meet the individual's work goals.

Employment specialists need to involve as many stakeholders as possible in the process of exploring job possibilities, searching for work, and providing support after work is obtained. Stakeholders may include anyone with an important role in the individual's life, or who is interested in playing a bigger role, including family members and close friends, other members of the treatment team, other potential support persons in the community (e.g., a member of the clergy), and (for working individuals) employers.

OTHER STAKEHOLDERS

POTENTIAL ALLIES IN SUPPORTING AN INDIVIDUAL'S WORK LIFE

- Family members
- Close friends
- Other members of the treatment team
- Community members such as clergy or teachers
- Community business leaders
- Employers



COMMUNICATION

Maintaining good communication among all stakeholders, and getting everyone's input, ensures that all people involved are working together towards the same shared goal. Keeping everyone involved also increases the chances of identifying creative solutions to problems that interfere with achieving goals, as there are more people and more resources available to participate in the problem solving. Finally, teamwork minimizes the possibility that some excluded stakeholders will undermine the individual's work goals because they are perceived to be inconsistent with their own goals.

SPECIFIC STRATEGIES FOR TALKING WITH EMPLOYERS

INDIVIDUALS WHO DO NOT DISCLOSE THEIR ILLNESS TO EMPLOYERS

The strategies for communicating with employers depend foremost on whether the individual has elected to disclose his or her psychiatric disability to a prospective employer. If the individual has chosen not to reveal his or her disability, your contacts with employers are naturally quite limited, and often there is no contact at all. For individuals to choose not to disclose, you may have contacts with prospective employers in the process of conducting generic job development. The focus

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of these contacts is on exploring with employers the nature of an expectation for different jobs, characteristics of ideal employees, and other information that may be helpful to a job applicant. Job leads based on generic job development can then be passed on to individuals who wish not to disclose their disability, who can pursue these jobs with the extra help of the information gathered by the employment specialist. Thus, in the case of individuals who choose not to disclose, your contacts with employers are usually limited to the job development phase.

Of course, such individuals may choose to disclose their psychiatric disability at some point after they have obtained the job, and there may be other opportunities for you to have contacts with employers to facilitate job support. For individuals who choose to disclose, your contacts with employers are crucial to the success of helping individuals find and keep jobs. There are three features of effective communication with prospective employers. First, you must strive to demonstrate good social skills yourself, as it will make you a more effective communicator on behalf of the individuals and will create a favorable impression with the employer.

DISPLAY SOCIAL SKILLS

EXAMPLES OF GOOD EMPLOYMENT SPECIALIST SOCIAL SKILLS

- Good eye contact
- A firm voice tone
- Responsiveness to questions and concerns raised by the employer
- A firm handshake
- Dress professionally to match standards of employer where the job is being sought

SHOW RESPECT FOR EMPLOYER'S TIME

Second, employment specialists need to be focused in their interactions with employers, recognizing in the business world that “time is money” and keeping their interactions as brief and to the point as necessary in order to get the job done. This does not mean that conversations are devoid of some socially pleasant exchange, but rather that the employment specialist is always mindful of not wasting the employer’s time and of achieving a specific goal during the interaction.

FOLLOW UP ON CONTACTS

Third, employment specialists need to follow through on their contacts with employers, including checking in to determine whether the employer is satisfied with the individual’s work and being available to provide ongoing support. Many employers appreciate the help and support of an employment specialist when hiring an individual and value the partnership with the specialist. Even when the individual is doing well on the job, occasional contacts are often appreciated.

SPECIFIC STRATEGIES FOR TALKING WITH OTHER PRACTITIONERS ON THE TEAM

PARTICIPATE ACTIVELY ON THE TEAM

Being a member of the individual's treatment team, and maintaining communication with other team members, are crucial for supported employment services. True integration of vocational and clinical services occurs when you and the other practitioners have regular and free exchange about vocational and clinical issues on an ongoing basis. During team meetings, you should be an active participant rather than a passive listener. Just as with employers, your relationship with other members of the treatment team reflects true partnership.

YOU WON'T ALWAYS AGREE

Sometimes, you will have a different perspective than other team members on individuals' vocational or clinical functioning. In such cases, it is useful to listen carefully to the perspectives of other team members, and to reflect back your understanding to ensure your perception is accurate. Then, efforts can be made to close the gap in perspectives by offering alternative vantage points. During such discussions, it is always crucial to keep the individual's goals at the forefront of the discussion in order to avoid losing the focus on helping that person achieve his or her goals.

GOOD PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS HELP PROFESSIONAL INTERACTIONS

In addition to being an active team member, it is helpful if the employment specialist also enjoys a good relationship with each individual member of the team, and has at least some individual contact on a regular basis with the other members, including manager, doctor, nurse, residential worker, and so on. While striving to maintain the team approach, individuals should be kept aware of the nature of team efforts and the on-going collaboration.

SPECIFIC STRATEGIES FOR WORKING WITH FAMILY MEMBERS

FAMILIES CAN HELP A LOT

The first step to involving family members is to obtain the individual's permission to contact relatives. Involving family members can be useful in supporting individuals in pursuing jobs, providing possible job leads, providing support once an individual has obtained work, and problem-solving around obstacles to work or difficulties encountered on the job. If the individual has 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 addressing concerns about whether work will interfere with these responsibilities.

ADDRESSING CONCERNS ABOUT INVOLVING FAMILIES

Many individuals readily agree to involve their family members in supported employment. However, some express concerns. The most common concerns are that involving relatives will either result in increased stress on the individual or will be a burden to the family members. Concern about increased stress on the individual can be addressed by assuring the individual that you will strive to make meetings with family members positive, upbeat, and helpful, and that such meetings may actually reduce stress rather than increase it. Concern about being a burden to families can be addressed by explaining that one of the purposes of involving relatives is to reduce possible stress or

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burden on them by taking their perspectives into account and ensuring that supported employment services are consistent with their own needs and values.

Similar to collaboration with employers and other team members, collaboration with family members is a partnership that requires ongoing communication and mutual respect for different perspectives. Family members need to be informed about the nature of the job search so they can support individuals and network to provide possible job leads. Concerns that family members have about the individual's search for work, such as the effects of work on entitlements need to be addressed. If other members of the treatment team already have a good working relationship with family members, these team members can be used to facilitate the employment specialist's relationship with those members.

ONGOING CONNECTION IS HELPFUL

Once a job has been obtained, maintaining communication with family members can be helpful for several reasons. You can explore with relatives ways they can continue to encourage and support the individual in his or her work. Family members can be very helpful in detecting problems at work, based on their close relationships with the individual. When problems are identified, they can use problem-solving with the individual to address the difficulties or alert you. By identifying and responding to problems early, unnecessary job terminations may be averted. Maintaining contact with family members can also be useful in tracking the satisfaction individuals derive from work. Often, early after obtaining a job, individuals experience a range of positive feelings, including increased self-esteem and quality of life. However, these benefits sometime evaporate over time as the drudgery of work sets in, and individuals become less satisfied with their job. Ongoing communication with family members can help detect these shifts in mood and apparent benefits of work, and can cue you to begin addressing these with the individual (e.g., exploring the possibility of job advancement or other jobs, pursuing education in order to obtain more satisfying work). Because all stakeholders need to work together, communication with family members need to be shared with individuals (if the individual was not present) and the treatment team.

SPECIFIC STRATEGIES FOR WORKING WITH OTHER AGENCIES SUCH AS VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION (VR)

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION COUNSELORS ENHANCE THE EMPLOYMENT PROCESS

Some practitioners on the team may work for other agencies. For example, the VR counselor from the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation is sometimes a member of the team. The VR counselor brings added resources and services. For example, training, job-related equipment and supplies, school tuition, planning assistance, and support are available for people with a psychiatric disability and have a work goal.

Any practitioner from another agency who provides services to an individual should be included on the treatment team.

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REGULAR COMMUNICATION AMONG ALL PRACTITIONERS IS ESSENTIAL

Practitioners from other agencies are invited to be part of the treatment team and attend team meetings. While schedules usually do not permit these practitioners to attend all meetings, frequent communication through telephone calls, voicemail messages, and email are helpful. Be sure to keep in mind 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 the individual receives seamless services and is not caught between agencies and systems.

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SAMPLE REFERRAL FORM
SAMPLE EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM REFERRAL

Date referral received: _____

Assigned to: _____

First meeting with employment specialist: yes _____ (date _____)

Employment Plan completed: yes _____ (date _____)

Client's Name: _____

Date of Referral: _____

Referral Source: _____

Client ID #: _____ Telephone: _____

Medications and side effects, if any, that might interfere with work such as shaking, memory impairment, drowsiness, etc.:

Substance Use: (substances, current use)

Job suggestions and recommendations for work environments:

Criminal history(if any):

Please include any information you feel would be helpful in assisting this individual in reaching his/her employment goals:

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SAMPLE VOCATIONAL PROFILE

This form is to be completed by the employment specialist within the first few weeks from the time of referral. Sources of information include the individual, the treatment team, the clinical record, family members and previous employers (with the individual's permission). In parentheses are suggested probes when interviewing the individual for some of the information. Add information to the form as it becomes available over time.

WORK GOAL

- individual's work goal and life dream for work (What would you say is your dream job? What kind of work have you always wanted to do?)

- individual's short term work goal (What job would you like to have now?)

WORK BACKGROUND

- education (What school did you attend last? What was the highest grade you completed?)

- work history

- most recent job (What job did you do most recently [job title]? What were the job duties? About when did you start and end the job? How many hours a week did you work?)

- reason for leaving job (Why did the job end?)

- positive experiences (What did you like best about the job?)

- problems on job (What did you not like about the job?)

- next most recent job (What job did you do before the most recent job? What were the job duties? About when did you start and end the job? How many hours a week did you work?)

- reason for leaving job (Why did the job end?)

- positive experiences (What did you like best about the job?)

- problems on job (What did you not like about the job?)

*** USE BACK OF SHEET FOR ADDITIONAL JOBS ***

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CURRENT ADJUSTMENT

- diagnosis
- prodromal symptoms (What are the first signs that you may be experiencing a symptom flare-up? At times when you are not feeling well or having a bad day, how would I be able to tell?)
- symptomatology and coping strategies (How can you tell that you are not feeling well and what do you do to make you feel better?)
- medication management (What medication do you take and when do you take it?)
- physical health (How would you rate your physical health? Poor () Fair () Good () Excellent () Do you have any physical limitations that might influence your work needs? What are they?)
- endurance (What are the most number of days you could work per week? What are the most hours you can work in a day?)
- grooming (Do you have a place to bathe or shower? Do you have the clothes you will need for work?)
- interpersonal skills (How well do you get along with people?)
- support network (Who do you spend time with? How often do you see or talk to them?)

WORK SKILLS

- job-seeking skills (How have you looked for work in the past?)
- specific vocational skills (What skills have you learned either on the job or in school?)
- aptitude (what kind of work are you particularly good at?)
- interests - vocational and nonvocational (What have you always been good at? What kinds of things do you like to do?)
- motivation (Why do you want to work? What about work appeals to you? What about work do you not like? Are there things that you worry about regarding going back to work?)
- work habits relating to attendance, dependability, stress tolerance (How was your attendance in previous jobs? What kinds of situations and tasks cause you to feel stress?)

OTHER WORK-RELATED FACTORS

- transportation (How would you get to work?)
- family and friend relationships and type of support (Do you have family and/or close friends that you relate to? Do these people support you? If so, how do they support you? What do they think

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about work? What are their expectations for you?)

- current living situation - type and with whom (Where do you live and with whom do you live?)
- substance use (Have you ever used street drugs or alcohol? Have other people in your life been concerned about your substance use?)
- criminal record (Have you ever been arrested?)
- disclosure of severe behavior disorder (Will you be willing to tell possible employers about your illness?)
- expectations regarding personal, financial, and social benefits of working (What do you think work will do for you personally, financially, and socially?)
- money management skills (Do you manage your own money?)
- income and benefits - social security, medical insurance, housing assistance (Where does your money come from? What medical benefits do you get? Do you know how these sources of income will be changed by working?)
- daily activities and routines (Describe what a typical day is for you from the time you wake up until the time you go to bed?)
- regular contacts (Who do you spend time with?)

NETWORKING CONTACTS FOR JOB SEARCH

- family
- friends
- previous employers
- previous teachers

Completed by: _____ Date: _____

SAMPLE INDIVIDUAL EMPLOYMENT PLAN

Overall Vocational Goal: To work in a part-time competitive job (about 20 hours a week) in the computer field using my typing skills and interest in computers.

Date: 1/4/05

Objective 1: Seek a job that will use my clerical skills and will have opportunities for computer work.

Intervention: Meet with J. Conway at least weekly to identify job leads. Update resumé. Attend job interviews as scheduled.

People Responsible: Jill Conway, employment specialist

Target Date: 4/4/05

Date Objective Achieved: 3/1/05 Employed at Miller and Associates for data entry. 10 hrs./wk. at \$8.50/hr.

Objective 2: Monitor medication side effects to be sure that they don't interfere with my ability to do the job.

Intervention: Attend medication group (led by T. Williams) and work group (led by J. Conway) at least 2x/mo. each to discuss how medication affects my ability to work. Meet with case manager and psychiatrist at least 1x/mo and discuss changes in medication schedule that may be needed for the job.

People Responsible: Helen Howard, psychiatrist; Tom Williams, case manager; Jill Conway, employment specialist

Target Date: 7/4/05

Date Objective Achieved: /

CONDUCTING JOB SEARCHES: INDIVIDUAL CHECKLIST

IDENTIFY JOB LEADS

- Contact family and friends
- Contact previous employers
- Contact previous teachers
- Visit community resource organizations
- Department of Employment Security (also called Department of Employment and Training)
- Libraries, universities
- Use the Yellow pages telephone book
- Attend job fairs
- Locate openings on career-related web sites on the Internet
- Read newspaper want ads and other sections of papers that advertise job openings
- Contact employers for informational interviews
- Use connections to talk to someone employed in the same field

CONTACT WITH POTENTIAL EMPLOYERS

- Ask to speak to the person who is responsible for hiring
- Introduce yourself, state your interest in obtaining employment, and explain the reason why you have contacted this specific employment setting
- Ask about steps for obtaining more information and advancing in the hiring process, e.g., fill out job application, set up a job interview
- If there are no openings, inquire about other people and businesses to contact
- Thank 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
- Preparing for Job Interviews
- Review common employer questions

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- 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 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 ID card)
- Fill out a mock job application to have information ready
- Pick out clothes to wear to the interview
- Know the location of the interview
- Plan transportation to the interview and 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 brief thank you letter after the interview
- Call employer to inquire about whether hiring decision has been made
- If the position was filled, ask about other people and employers to contact

INDIVIDUAL CHECKLIST

PLANNING FOR SUCCESS: STARTING THE JOB

FIRST DAY WORRIES

- What is my plan for managing the natural worries that come in the days before starting a new job?
- Do I want extra support to get through my first day successfully?

FRIENDS AND FAMILY

- Have I explained my work plans to my friends and family?
- Do they support my plans?

WORK DAY SCHEDULE

- What time do I need to go sleep the night before work?
- What time do I need to get up to be ready for work?
- How will I wake up during workdays?
- What is my plan for taking medications on workdays?
- What is my plan for food/drink during work breaks or lunch?

TRANSPORTATION

- How will I get to and return from work?
- Who should I call if transportation problems occur?

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?

ARRIVING AT WORK

- Where do I go when I arrive at work on the first day?
- Who do I report to?

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- How will I introduce myself to others on the job?
- What do I do for breaks and lunch for the first day?
- If I smoke, what are the work site regulations regarding smoking?
- Who do I go to if I have questions at work?

**INDIVIDUAL CHECKLIST
PLANNING FOR SUCCESS: DOING A JOB OVER TIME**

WAGES AND BENEFITS (INCOME, INSURANCE, HOUSING)

- Do I understand what will happen to my benefits?
- What is my plan regarding reporting income changes to agencies such as Social Security, Medicaid, and others?
- Have I shared this plan with everyone who needs to know?
- How will I be paid?

DISCLOSURE OF SEVERE BEHAVIOR DISORDER

- Is it a good idea to tell my boss about my severe behavior disorder?
- If so, how will I do it?
- Will my employment specialist help with this?

ACCOMMODATIONS AND SUPPORT

- Are there parts of my job that I may need to have modified for me?
- How do I ask for this?
- How do I get in touch with my employment specialist?

WORK TASKS

- What are the tasks 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?

**MOVING BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES TOWARD RECOVERY:
A GUIDE FOR EMPLOYMENT SPECIALISTS**

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?

FAMILY AND FRIENDS SUPPORT

- Who can I call after work?
- What do my family and friends think about my working?

MONEY MANAGEMENT

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

**INDIVIDUAL CHECKLIST
PLANNING FOR SUCCESS: AVOIDING A CRISIS**

KNOWING YOURSELF

- What are the warning signs that indicate 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?
- If you use alcohol or drugs, how do they affect your ability to do your job?
- Who can you contact if you feel you are experiencing a crisis and need immediate assistance?

YOUR WORK ENVIRONMENT

- What has happened at work that has been stressful?
- What did you do to manage the situation?
- Is there anything you would do differently in the future?
- Are there small problems at work now that could turn into big problems?
- Is there something that your employment specialist can do to help you?

**MOVING BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES TOWARD RECOVERY:
A GUIDE FOR EMPLOYMENT SPECIALISTS**

YOUR PERSONAL ENVIRONMENT

- What things in your personal life cause, or might cause, increased 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 be of help?

**INDIVIDUAL CHECKLIST
PLANNING FOR SUCCESS: LEAVING THE JOB**

LEAVING

- What are your reasons for thinking about leaving this job?
- What are the pros and cons about leaving this job?
- Have you discussed your reasons for leaving with your employer?
- Have you discussed your reasons for leaving with your employment specialist?
- Is there anything that can be changed so that you will stay at this job?
- If possible, would some time off change the situation for you?
- 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?

WORKING AGAIN

- Do you want to use this employer as a reference in the future?
- 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?
- Are your family/friends aware of your future work plans?

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?
- Does she have a plan for managing any worries that come up the night before?
- What will she do if she cannot sleep the night before?
- Would she benefit from you meeting her for breakfast on the morning before work starts?
- Would a phone call before work be helpful?
- Are her family or friends informed about her starting work?
- Would it be useful to check with her family if they have questions about her first day?
- Does she know how to contact you on the first day if she needs to?
- Is there another team member available to her on the first day if you are not?
- Does she know whom she can ask questions of at work?
- Is there anyone she can call after her first day of work?

FAMILY AND FRIENDS

- Are his friends and family aware of his job plans?
- Have you discussed the value of positive support with his support system?
- Do his family and friends know how to contact you if necessary?
- Have you discussed releases of information with the individual to speak with family and friends?
- Are his family and friends aware of your role and the ways you may be of assistance as the employment specialist?
- What is his or her plan for childcare during working hours?

WORKDAY SCHEDULE

- What is her schedule for going to bed before workdays?
- How will she awaken on time for work?

**MOVING BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES TOWARD RECOVERY:
A GUIDE FOR EMPLOYMENT SPECIALISTS**

- What are the tasks she needs to do before going to work?
- Has she allowed enough time to get these things done?
- Has she practiced this plan to see how well it works?
- 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?
- What is her plan for taking medications on workdays?
- Has the psychiatrist or nurse reviewed this plan?
- How will she take medications at work if she needs to?
- What is her plan for food or drinks for breaks or lunchtime?

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

- Is she aware of the public transportation routes?
- Does she know where to get on and off the public transportation?
- Does she have a copy of the schedule and stops?
- Has she practiced using this transportation?
- Does she need you to accompany her?
- What is her plan for transportation fares?
- Does she need a transportation pass?
- 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?

PRIVATE TRANSPORTATION

- Who will be providing private transportation?
- Does he know where he will be picked up?
- Does he know what time he will be picked up?

**MOVING BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES TOWARD RECOVERY:
A GUIDE FOR EMPLOYMENT SPECIALISTS**

- Will he be driving? If so, has he driven the route?
- Does he know where to park if driving?
- What will he do if his ride is not there on time?
- Does he know whom to call if he has transportation problems?
- Does he know where he will be picked up after work?
- Does he know what time he will be picked up after work?
- What will he do if his ride home from work is not there?

GETTING READY FOR WORK

- What are her grooming habits?
- Has she allowed enough time for hygiene and grooming?
- What will she wear the first day at work?
- Is this clothing appropriate for the job?
- What is her plan for having clean clothes for workdays?

ARRIVING AT WORK

- Is he aware what time he should arrive at work?
- Where will he enter the work site?
- Whom does he report to on the first day?
- Does he need you to meet him at work when he starts?
- Is there anyone at work who will be showing him around?
- How will he introduce himself to his coworkers?
- Would it be helpful for you to role-play with him regarding introductions?
- What is he expecting for the first day?
- Does he understand what his work duties will be?
- What is his understanding of breaks at work?

**MOVING BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES TOWARD RECOVERY:
A GUIDE FOR EMPLOYMENT SPECIALISTS**

- How long do they last and when can he take them?
- When and how will he eat lunch at work?
- What is the workplace policy on smoking?
- Can he manage his smoking to fit with their policy?
- Whom will he ask if he has questions upon arriving?

**EMPLOYMENT SPECIALIST CHECKLIST
PLANNING FOR SUCCESS:**

DOING A JOB OVER TIME, WAGES AND BENEFIT (INCOME, INSURANCE, HOUSING)

- Have you reviewed all the benefits (income, insurance, and housing) she is currently receiving?
- Has she participated in developing a benefits plan?
- Does she understand how her work income will effect her benefits?
- Have all the work incentive plans been explored?
- Who will report her earnings to the appropriate programs or agencies?
- Has she signed a release of information for these if needed?
- Have her family and friends been informed of the benefits counseling and plan?
- Have the rest of the treatment team been informed of this plan?
- Do her family and friends know how to contact you with benefits questions?
- Would it be helpful for you to call her family regarding the benefits plan?
- Does she understand when she will be paid?
- What is her plan for when she receives her first check?
- Does she have a bank account or place to cash her check?
- Does she need you to help her when she receives her first check?

DISCLOSURE OF SEVERE BEHAVIOR DISORDER

- Have you reviewed the idea of disclosure of a severe behavior disorder with him?

**MOVING BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES TOWARD RECOVERY:
A GUIDE FOR EMPLOYMENT SPECIALISTS**

- Is he aware of the pros and cons of disclosing a severe behavior disorder?
- Have you discussed the best ways and reasons for disclosure?
- If he wants to disclose his severe behavior disorder, how will you help?
- What is the plan for when and how to disclose?
- Are you and he aware of the ADA and how it relates to disclosure and accommodation?
- Is he aware of the pros and cons of telling coworkers about his severe behavior disorder?
- Has he signed a release of information for you to discuss his severe behavior disorder with his employer if he needs you to?
- Are his family and friends aware of the disclosure plan?

ACCOMMODATIONS AND SUPPORT

- Are there parts of the job that need modification in order for her to be successful?
- Have you and she discussed how to ask for these modifications or accommodations?
- What is the plan for requesting modifications or accommodations?
- Does she need you to be present when she does this?
- Would it be helpful to role-play this in advance?
- Is she aware of the supports available to her by you and the rest of the team?
- What is the plan for meeting with her and her employer?
- Does she understand she can ask for your assistance in such a meeting?
- What is her understanding of how to contact you during workdays?
- Does the employer know how to contact you?
- Is the employer aware of the ways you can be supportive to him and the individual?

WORK TASKS

- What is his understanding of his duties at work?
- Is this consistent with your understanding of the job?

**MOVING BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES TOWARD RECOVERY:
A GUIDE FOR EMPLOYMENT SPECIALISTS**

- Are there any job duties he is unsure about?
- How will he go about asking for help with these?
- Does he need your assistance in asking for help?
- 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 assistance in discussing how he is doing at work?
- If he has a strong response to criticism, have you discussed this with his employer?
- Would it be helpful to role-play how to discuss his job performance with his boss?

SOCIAL SKILLS

- What is the quality of her social skills?
- How comfortably and effectively is she communicating with her boss?
- How can you be helpful in this area?
- Is she content with her relationships with her coworkers?
- Does she participate in conversations at breaks or lunch?
- Are there people at her work site that intimidate or worry her?
- Has she spoken with anyone about this?
- Would it be helpful to discuss any coworker concerns with her boss?
- How can you be of support to her regarding working relationships?
- Are there specific skills teaching available through her treatment team?
- How will she deal with friends who visit her at work? Is there a workplace policy?

FAMILY SUPPORT

- How involved is his family in supporting his work efforts?
- Does he feel he is receiving positive support from his family?
- Has he shared his work experiences with his family?

**MOVING BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES TOWARD RECOVERY:
A GUIDE FOR EMPLOYMENT SPECIALISTS**

- Are there any family members he calls to share good things about work?
- How can you be of assistance in helping him to explain the value of this to his family?
- Are they aware of how you can be of assistance to them and the individual?

MONEY MANAGEMENT

- What is the quality of his money management skills?
- How well has he done with meeting his needs with money in the past?
- What is his plan for managing his paychecks? Does he have a budget?
- Does he need assistance in adjusting or developing a budget for his wages?
- If she abuses substances, how will having new money effect this issue?
- Does the client have a plan to address the urges that can come with money?

**EMPLOYMENT SPECIALIST CHECKLIST
PLANNING FOR SUCCESS: AVOIDING A CRISIS**

THE PERSON

- What types of severe behavior disorder does he experience?
- What does the treatment team notice about warning signs of increased symptoms?
- How might this show up at work?
- What does the treatment plan describe as his history of alcohol or substance use?
- What work-related problems might occur with alcohol or substance use?
- Does he sometimes stop or change his medications without the knowledge of the treatment team?
- How will the treatment team keep you informed of any medication changes?
- When he experiences increased symptoms, does he tell people or isolate?
- Is there anyone on the treatment team with whom he works best when in crisis?
- What has been helpful in managing crises recently according to his treatment team?

**MOVING BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES TOWARD RECOVERY:
A GUIDE FOR EMPLOYMENT SPECIALISTS**

- What other crisis causes, strategies, or ideas does the treatment team have regarding the individual?
- How does he usually react to increased stress?
- How does he usually react to changes in his routine?

THE WORK ENVIRONMENT

- Are there situations at work that have become bothersome to her that may grow into a crisis?
- Are there coworker relationships that are bothering her?
- How can you be of assistance in helping her address either of these?
- Is it useful for her employer to notify you in advance of any upcoming work changes?
- Has she, or will she, experience changes in
 - Routine
 - Coworkers
 - Boss
 - Job duties; schedule
 - Job location
- 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?
- Who is the back-up person if you are not available for a work crisis?
- Has she signed a release of information for you to communicate with her employer in case of a work crisis?
- What is the plan for working with the treatment team in evaluating and helping to manage a crisis?
- What types of emergency services are available in case of a work crisis?

THE PERSONAL ENVIRONMENT

**MOVING BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES TOWARD RECOVERY:
A GUIDE FOR EMPLOYMENT SPECIALISTS**

- Has she, or will she, experience stress or changes in
 - Using alcohol or drugs
 - Interpersonal conflicts
 - Medications
 - Her living situation
 - Seasons or difficult times of the year
 - Family members, friends or pets
 - Members of her treatment team
- How does she handle increased personal stress?
- Does she use her support network or her treatment team?
- Does she know she can contact you if it will impact her work performance?
- Does she know how to contact emergency services in her area?
- What is the plan for working with the treatment team regarding personal stress or changes?
- Do you have a signed release of information to communicate with her family?
- Does her family know how and when they can contact you?

EMPLOYMENT SPECIALIST CHECKLIST

PLANNING FOR SUCCESS: LEAVING THE JOB, EMPLOYMENT SPECIALIST CHECKLIST

LEAVING

- What are his reasons for wanting to leave his job?
- How long has he been thinking about leaving?
- Has he attempted to discuss these reasons with his employer?
- How can you be of assistance if he wants to discuss his reasons with his employer?
- Are there modifications or changes at work that would change his mind about leaving?
- If possible, would a break from work help with his reasons for leaving?
- Have you discussed the pros and cons of leaving his job?
- Is he making an informed decision about leaving or staying?
- Is he aware that leaving is his decision to make, not yours?
- What length of notice does the employer expect before he leaves?
- Does he understand the benefits of giving an appropriate notice?
- Will he want to use this employer as a reference in the future?
- If he leaves, does his current position fit the desires of another individual?
- Does he have another job to go to, as it is often easier to find a job if you are already employed?
- Have his family and friends been informed of his decision to leave?
- Has the treatment team been informed of his decision to leave?
- What is the plan for notifying benefits programs or agencies?
- How can you be helpful to him so that he may leave his job successfully?

WORKING AGAIN

- Does he know how to get a reference from his employer?
- What has he learned about working from the job he is leaving?

**MOVING BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES TOWARD RECOVERY:
A GUIDE FOR EMPLOYMENT SPECIALISTS**

- What, if anything, would he do differently in his next job?
- What is his plan for working again in the future?
- Is this a realistic plan?
- Have you done a reassessment of his job skills and preferences based on the job he is leaving?
- What are the pros and cons of his future work plan?
- Have his family and friends been informed of the new work plan?
- Has the treatment team been informed of the new work plan?
- How can you be of assistance in developing and sharing his new work plan?

For more information please contact:
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