

HOUSING FIRST WITH SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT

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Emergency Services
Center

Downtown Emergency Services Center (DESC) Seattle, WA

DESC works to end the homelessness of vulnerable people, particularly those living with serious mental or addictive illnesses. Through partnerships and an integrated array of comprehensive services, treatment and housing, **we give people the opportunity to reach their highest potential.** At DESC, uncommon efforts produce uncommon results that eliminate homelessness, one person at a time

www.desc.org





Offering Housing First...

- Locations Throughout Seattle
- 4,800 + clients/year receiving shelter
- 1000 + units of Supportive Housing
- 1000 + clients enrolled in the MH Services



Employment Services

Connections Program

- For homeless persons not in the MH system
- Hygiene Station -7 days a week
- Since 2006, helped people find more than 1,300 jobs and 824 find permanent housing
- Computers, 2 Employment Specialist, Housing Specialist, Case Managers,
- DVR
- Onsite GED and Adult Education Classes available to all clients of DESC

Is employment a core service to ending homelessness?

What is the best employment intervention for people with mental health conditions experiencing homelessness?

A Healthy Life

A Home

A Purpose

A Community

Work is part of recovery...

Traditional Vocational Services: Typical Features

- Stepwise training or sheltered work first
- Clients screened for job readiness
- Different agencies provide vocational and mental health services
- Services are time limited and reduced when job is found

Features of Supported Employment (EBP)

- Competitive & satisfying jobs in community
- Pays at least minimum wage
- Time unlimited support
- For consumers with a desire to work
- Aimed at people with the most severe disabilities
- Eligibility based on choice
- Consumer preferences are important
- SE is integrated with mental health treatment
- Rapid job search
- Integrated work settings

Housing First Principles

- Targeted to the most vulnerable.
- People are moved into housing directly from the street without preconditions of treatment acceptance or compliance.
- Provider is obligated to bring robust services into the housing.
- Continued housing is not dependent on participation in services.
- Harm reduction approach rather than mandating abstinence.
- Residents have leases and tenant protection under the law.
- Can be implemented in either project-based or scattered site model.



Cross-over core principles

Supported Employment

- Mainstream job in the community.
- Integrated work setting/ integrated teams.
- Ongoing supports from service agency.
- Most significant challenges.

Housing First

- Mainstream housing in the community.
- Integrated housing setting/ integrated teams.
- Ongoing supports from service agency.
- Most significant challenges.



Does it work?

SE research is compelling

- The IPS (Individual Placement and Support) model was the foundation for EBP-SE principles
- Superior employment outcomes are produced when fidelity to the core practices is maintained
- Higher employment outcomes
- 40-80% vs. 10-21% for traditional models
- There is no evidence that anything “adverse” happens to employed persons with psychiatric disabilities (increase in symptoms/hospitalizations) (Bond, 2001)

EBP SE Benefits

- Responds rapidly to an individual who desires to work.
- Streamlines the service delivery process.
- The entire treatment/service team shares responsibility for the employment outcome.
- Employment specialists are supported by the agency in all aspects of their work with consumers.
- Extensive research evidence demonstrating effectiveness, when applied with fidelity.

**How do you
do it?**



1. Employment services are integrated with treatment and supportive services

- ES regular attendance at team meetings and a regularly scheduled presence at the mental health program/agency is important
- State VR Counselor is part of the treatment team
- Collaboration with only a case manager, a psychologist or a housing program is not considered integration with a team.

Ideally integrate means...

- Same Team
- Same Organization
- Same Case Record

Why Integrate?

- Lower dropout rate for consumers
- Better communication
- Clinicians get involved
- Clinical information incorporated into employment plan



2. Participation is open to all who want to work

“We don’t seem to do well at predicting who can work and who cannot”



Reframing “Job Readiness”

- People will accept services that they want
- The role of professionals is to help people get those services that they say they want AND provide necessary supports

People are ready to work when they say they are ready to work

3. Preferences are Important

Job finding is based on preferences, strengths, and work experiences, not on a pool of jobs that are available



4. Rapid Job Search

- You track employer contacts
- First face-to-face contact with an employer about a competitive job is on average within 30 days after program entry.
- 6 face-to-face employer contacts per week
- Multiple in person visits to an employer to build a relationship
- Employment specialists spends 65% of time in community
- Jobs obtained are diverse

Outline of Job Development Process

- Prepare for employer engagement
- Get an appointment with a decision maker
- Establish rapport
- Navigate the employer interview
- Follow-up with employers
- Present your solutions
- Maintain & nurture employer relationships

5. Goal is a competitive job



- Competitive jobs
 - pay at least minimum wage;
 - are in the community; and
 - are open to anyone, not just people with mental illnesses or other disabilities.

Volunteer work and other pre-placement services such as trial work experiences are used sparingly and ONLY in response to individual preferences.

6. Time Unlimited Support

Services can include:

- on site coaching
- off site supports
- family supports/ interventions
- help reporting income
- transportation options
- supports to employer
- AM phone calls
- help with grooming/dress
- social skills training
- money management
- medication adjustment
- help tracking schedule
- And on and on!

Follow along supports should be highly individualized

7. Personalized benefits planning

- Starts at the beginning of vocational planning not only when people secure a job
- Informing people helps allay anxieties and fears about losing coverage
- Continues beyond initial employment, to assist consumers in coping with reporting requirements, raises, etc.



Supported Employment at DESC

- Operating for 3 years
- 1 program manager
- 3 employment specialists (2 in SE)
- Staff stationed with the treatment teams



Supported Employment

- Core service of the MH Program
- 2008 - 7.6% Employment Rate (agency wide)
- 2010 – 13.7% Employment Rate
- 2011 – 13.5% Employment Rate
- SE has enrolled 150+ people and provided consultations for at least another 100
- Assisted participants find and keep 40 + jobs
- Doubled the number of S.E job matches each year



2011 STATS AT DESC SE...

42 people entered SE program

19 jobs were developed


52% stayed in their jobs for more than 90 days

10 supported workers remain employed 12+ months


\$10.75 is the average wage

22 hours a week is the average hours worked

92% working less than 40 hours a week



Typical Job Titles	
Home Health Care Worker	Seafood Production Worker
Courtesy Clerk	Deli Clerk
High School Tutor	Mover
Janitor	Customer Service Representative
Peer Specialist	Medical Assistant
Kitchen Steward	Security Guard



Challenges Related to Supported Employment for Housing First Programs

- Rapid Job Search
- Criminal Backgrounds
- Integration with Housing Services as well as Treatment Teams
- Substance Use
- Knowledge of Work Incentives
- Working with DVR
- After hours and before work supports that Housing Staff provide



CULTURE CHANGE

- Change in personal perspective
- Redefine Success
- Vocationalizing Housing Environment
- Hiring People with Mental Illness/experience of Homelessness in all areas of the agency



Harm Reduction – “A Client –centered Approach to working with people where they are, rather than where they should be as dictated by treatment.” *Alan Marlatt*

Motivational Interviewing: A person-centered counseling method for addressing the common problem of ***ambivalence*** about change.



How we are Vocationalizing our Housing

- Including Housing Staff more deliberately in our integrated service
- Staffing clients when they are re-engaging in the community, not just when they are having problems
- Pilot program – Social Work Student at our newest supportive housing residence
- Transitioning to senior staff member – will cross train

Changing Perspectives



Benefits of Supported Employment for Our Agency

- Response to Clients
- Engagement of Clients
- Access to Benefits for Clients
- Changes Housing and Treatment Culture from focus on Disability to focus on Expectation and Possibilities
- Staff view of clients change
- Message to the community

A Tool to End Homelessness

How are we making it work?

- Utilizing fidelity to guide program design
- Measuring outcomes
- Continuously addressing issues impacting integration
 - Multi-player responsibility
 - Documentation
 - Reporting
- Utilization Training

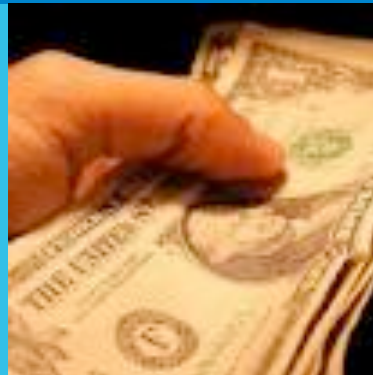
CREATING A WORK CULTURE:

- Culture Shift- Embracing the Recovery Model
- Entire clinical team discusses employment
- Employment Board
- Group Outings to Job Fairs
- Discussion in Community Meeting
- Start at intake in CM Program and continue when incarcerated or hospitalized

Vocationalizing



How do you pay for it?



Funding Sources for EBSE

- State Department of Mental Health
- State Vocational Rehabilitation Agency
- Philanthropy
- HUD SHP
- Community Development Block Grant
- Medicaid
- Local revenue
- US Department of Labor
- SSA Ticket to Work

Why implement evidence-based supported employment?

- Gives people hope, self-esteem and better quality of life = Recovery focused Service
- It helps more people with Serious Mental Illness.....
and many go to work
- More income, less reliance on housing subsidies
- Complements HF



Resources

Dartmouth IPS Supported Employment Center

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

Financing <http://www.hudhre.info/documents/FinanEmployPrgmsPresentation.pdf>

Nine HUD Employment Lectures

<http://hudhre.info/index.cfm?do=viewEmpAudioLectures>

Work as a Priority www.nrchmi.samhsa.gov/pdfs/WorkPriority.pdf

CHETA-Chronic Homeless Employment and Technical Assistance Center www.csh.org/cheta

Toolkit linking PSH tenants to employment

<http://www.csh.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=Page.viewPage&pageId=4283&parentID=10>

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development



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Resource Detail

HUD Employment Lecture 9: Employment Services for Homeless Ex-Offenders

Abstract

Many people who are chronically homeless cycle between jails, shelters, and the street, and many people have difficulty finding or maintaining housing after their release from prison. Helping people who are homeless obtain and retain employment requires an integrated services approach. Job goals and employment-related activities must be balanced with other needs such as housing and mental health and substance abuse treatment. This lecture will discuss some strategies for assisting ex-offenders. These strategies are based on research and interviews with employment specialists.

Related Resources

[HUD Employment Lecture 1: Integrating Vocational Assessment in Client Service Planning](#)

[HUD Employment Lecture 2: Outreach and Employment](#)

[HUD Employment Audio Lecture Series](#)

[HUD Employment Lecture 3: Using an Integrated Services Approach to Engage](#)

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