

The background features abstract, overlapping geometric shapes in various shades of green, ranging from light lime to dark forest green. The shapes are primarily triangles and polygons, creating a dynamic, layered effect. The overall composition is clean and modern, with the text centered in the white space.

Employer Engagement, Consumer Choice, and Job Development: Paths to a Good Fit

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Goals for today:

- ▶ Understand the reciprocal value to employers and job seekers of consumer preference in job selection;
- ▶ The “Demand Side” of Job Development: The “Three Cups of Tea” approach;
- ▶ Explore Job Development Tools in the Workforce System;
- ▶ Consider how to engage colleagues in the mental health and substance use disorder system (who are not Employment Specialists) in supporting people to get and keep jobs.

BUT FIRST....A Few Reminders:

- ▶ Employment is a Social Determinant of Health (SDOH);
- ▶ A majority of people in the public mental health system say they want to work (Bond);
- ▶ Nationwide, only about 20% of people in the public mental health system ARE employed at all.
- ▶ Employment as a goal for persons served has rarely been seen as part of the mental health system (but there is some light on the horizon!);
- ▶ There is evidence that employment can reduce medical costs.

Social Determinants of Health

- ▶ Social status
- ▶ Stress
- ▶ Nutrition
- ▶ **Employment**
- ▶ Income
- ▶ Safe place to live
- ▶ Social support networks

Social determinants of health, 2nd ed., Edited by Michael Marmot and Richard Wilkinson. Oxford University Press, Oxford 2006.

Modifiable risk factors (SAMHSA/HRSA)

- ▶ Smoking, weight, inactivity
- ▶ Lack of access to care
- ▶ Social isolation/vulnerability/violence
- ▶ Medication/polypharmacy
- ▶ **Unemployment/poverty**
- ▶ Separate silos of care

How might work affect the Modifiable Risk factors?

- ▶ Smoking/weight/inactivity: can't smoke at work; need to move around to get to job
- ▶ Social inclusion/vulnerability/violence: More access to community, chances to make friends
- ▶ Unemployment/poverty: Working is a way to get \$\$!!
- ▶ Careful benefits planning is critical.

SSA Employment Demonstration study (The Mental Health Treatment Study, "MHTS," conducted from 2006-2010)

The experimental condition provided Evidence Based Supported Employment and systematic medication management services over a 24-month period. The experimental group, which received purposeful employment assistance (Supported Employment) showed:

- significantly higher rates of employment- 61% compared with 40%;
- significant improvement in mental health status;
- significant improvement in quality of life;
- significantly higher number of months employed as well as significantly higher earnings;

([socialsecurity.gov/disabilityresearch/documents/MHTS_Final_Report_508.pdf](https://www.socialsecurity.gov/disabilityresearch/documents/MHTS_Final_Report_508.pdf)).

Studies have found that consumer choice leads to longer tenure in jobs.

- ▶ Mueser, et al (2001)
- ▶ Becker, et al (1996)
- ▶ Kukla and Bond (2012)
- ▶ Becker, et al (1998)

Eliciting Consumer Preferences

- ▶ Depending upon the persons' age and stage of employment maturity, they may need help to identify the elements of a job they prefer.
- ▶ In addition to exploring particular job categories (office, sales, computers, medical, etc), focus on broad characteristics of any job. "Process" might be more important to job satisfaction than "content."
- ▶ This approach is also useful when the person's specified job title is not available in the local area or the person does not have the needed skills to do it (yet).

Structured Conversation Topics about Job Preferences:

- ▶ Do you like to work with things, people, animals, or data?
- ▶ Do you like things to be predictable, routine, or varied?
- ▶ Do you like a quiet environment? To be indoors or out?
- ▶ Do you like to move around or stay in one spot?
- ▶ How do you learn? (show me, tell me, pictures, etc)?
- ▶ Do you like to have a lot of supervision or do you like to work on your own?

Use the Career Profile

- ▶ See handout
- ▶ This form collects a wealth of information; you will use it to learn about the person served. It is a process, however, and rarely will it all be completed in one sitting.
- ▶ **REMEMBER:** Some people have had unpleasant experiences around work, either getting fired, not getting hired, being told they can't work, etc. So sensitivity is important.

The “Demand Side” of Job Development

- ▶ Movement away from pitching employers to hire based on altruistic reasons;
- ▶ Some charitable appeals (“Hire the Handicapped”) led to unrealistic/erroneous attitudes about people with disabilities in the workforce;
- ▶ “Supply side” focus on getting employees “ready” for jobs may be over-emphasized rather than focusing on employers needs.

Employers Motivating Factors:

- ▶ Increase business
- ▶ Increase earnings
- ▶ Increase efficiency
- ▶ Reduce turnover

Research indicates that “company hiring decisions are less influenced by the presence or absence of disability than by potential contributions by a job candidate to the company...more pressing concerns to employers are often simply matching a person to a specific company need, irrespective of a disability or a need for accommodation.” (Luecking, 2008)

Approaching employers: Three cups of tea

- ▶ Key feature, based on what we have learned, is to think of the employer as your client (as well as the person served).
- ▶ Just as you do with people you are helping, the first step is to learn about the employer:
 - ▶ 1. Research before you visit.
 - ▶ 2. Cold call to say hello and ask for more time later to learn about the enterprise: What business needs do they have (NOT ASKING ABOUT OPENINGS).
 - ▶ 3. Visit to learn about the company THEN introduce the idea of a person who you believe matches the needs the employer has identified.

What to ask the employer?

- ▶ Remember the slide we covered about the “process” aspects of work desired by the client?
- ▶ Same list! Stripped down to fit the company, such as:

Is this work fast paced or routine?

Does your business have a variety of positions or do people do mostly the same thing (such as front of the house, back of the house).

Is attention to detail important in all your positions?

Do you want independent workers or do they work under close supervision or in teams?

The Art of the Match

- ▶ Part of the “demand side” of job development can include identifying job carving or creation to meet an employer’s needs.
- ▶ Determine your strategy if the person served does not want to disclose.
- ▶ Remember to stay in touch with employers even if you don’t have a match at the moment.
- ▶ Demonstrate your familiarity with the business climate and needs of your community.

The workforce system: A tool to help!

- ▶ NEWorks. Become familiar with the Department of Labor Workforce Centers (American Job Centers AKA One-Stops). They have information about state and local employment needs - business is their client as well as job seekers. FREE help for job seekers and possible classes/certificate programs to up skill levels.
- ▶ <https://networks.nebraska.gov/vosnet/Default.aspx>

Engaging your colleagues

- ▶ Attachment “ten things”
- ▶ “Selling” employment to your leadership as SDOH.
- ▶ Assess opportunities within your organization.
- ▶ Learn about what is “billable” and seek ways to legitimately fund portions of IPS services.