Integrating Career Services into Clinical Services to Improve Wellness Outcomes for Individuals with Serious Mental Illness

Winning Innovations in Health Care
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LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Identify the key benefits of a career for one’s health and wellness
2. Identify specific tasks or processes to create a culture that embraces and promotes career pursuit at your agency/program
3. Brainstorm ideas about program structures and staff resources needed to provide career services at your agency/program
4. Strategize providing career services in the current fee for service environment
WHAT’S YOUR MODALITY?
All Modalities of Mental Health Services Aim to Address...

- Recovery
- Symptomology
- Housing instability
- Substance use
- Suicidality
- Poor general health / early mortality
- Hospitalization rates / length
- Community integration
- Social isolation
- Quality of life
Side Effects of Unemployment

Ample research on the impact of unemployment in the general population indicate the following...

• **Increases in:**
  – Anxiety and depression
  – Housing instability
  – Substance use
  – Suicide
  – Cardiovascular disease
  – Social Isolation

• **Decreases in:**
  – Self identity (sense of belonging)
  – Socialization
  – Coping skills
  – General health
  – Sleep
  – Financial stability
Impact of Mental Health Condition

Side Effects of Unemployment
Benefits of Employment

Research on people with mental health conditions shows that those who are employed experience…

- **Decreases in:**
  - Symptomatology
  - Number of hospitalizations
  - Length of hospitalizations
  - Substance use
  - Earlier mortality

- **Increases in:**
  - Self esteem
  - Community integration
  - General functioning
  - Housing stability
  - Quality of life

Akihito, Wilmar, Kimika, & Norito, 2014; Kukla et al., 2012; Burt, 2012; Bunnings, Kleibrink, & Webling, 2017; Netto, Yueng, Cocks, & McNamara, 2016
If employment has such profound benefits for people with mental health conditions, than employment rates must be high, right?

NAMI, 2014
REDEFINE TREATMENT TO 
INCORPORATE CAREER DEVELOPMENT SERVICES INTO ALL PROGRAM MODALITIES
Infuse Existing Services with Career Development

UNEMPLOYED
Example: Transformation of Career Services

• New Jersey based agency providing residential services to individuals with SMI

• Services ranged from 24/7 group homes to independent unit of Supportive Housing

• No career service component or trained staff when project started

• Provide opportunity for new experiences to explore career development goals

• Build a new narrative
Key Elements

- Create an organizational culture of embracing career services
- Develop program infrastructure for career services
- Develop staff knowledge and skills of career services
- On-going evaluation and support
Create an Organizational Culture of Valuing and Embracing Career Services

1. Mission statement and program descriptions were revised to include recovery goals such as employment and educational goals.

2. Board of Directors was consulted for top down support and resources.

3. Letter from the Executive Director to every employee explaining the paradigm shift to recovery oriented services initiated by the launch of providing career service agency wide. Staff volunteers were requested to serve on the steering committee.

4. Peer counselors and consumers were invited to serve on the steering committee.
Create an Organizational Culture continued…

1. At agency wide events, career-oriented achievement was promoted and honored. For example: consumers who were attending job training/school were invited to speak about their experience; awards were given to those who reach job tenure of a year or more; and those who achieved a promotion were celebrated.

2. The steering committee meet regularly for two years to continue to champion for career services.
Develop Program Infrastructure for Career Services

1. Job descriptions of all positions were updated with clear language on responsibilities of assisting consumers with career services.

2. Two Employment Specialist (ES) positions were created by strategically reallocating existing resources with additional funding. The intent was to develop in-house experts.

3. Staff were encouraged to apply for the ES positions and were carefully selected with the assistance of a consultant.
Develop Program Infrastructure for Career Services  (continued)

4. Programs developed clear procedures for consumers to request and be referred to career services.

5. Every residential site and office posted job openings, ADA posters, and work incentive materials.
Develop Staff Knowledge and Skills of Career Services

1. All full-time staff attended a full day in-person training.

2. All part-time staff watched the training video with a study guide and questions.

3. Two ES received bi-weekly didactic training for about six months followed by a written test.

4. In vivo training and case consultation was then provided for another six months to ensure ES could provide career services independently.

5. ES received incentive (bonus) after passing the test and finishing all training.
On-going Evaluations and Support

1. Clinical Director oversees evaluations.

2. All programs developed monthly reporting systems of employment outcomes.

3. If lack of progress was identified, Clinical Director and Program supervisor reached out to the consultant to problem solve.

4. Agency management team routinely discuss career services outcomes.

5. Once a year, all newly hired employee receive the all-day in person training on career services.
Outcomes

• 13% of consumers were employed at baseline
• Increased to 26% employment rate after 12 months
• Increased to 54% after 24 months
• Remained over 50% for the following year
Group Activity

Brainstorm strategies to employ at your agency or program to become more Career Service oriented.
Instill Hope for Career Development Goals

• Inquire about career development goals (early and often)
• Leverage strengths and celebrate accomplishments
• Link individuals to peers who have achieved career goals
• Reframe past experiences to highlight the positives
• Provide opportunity for new experiences to explore goals
• Build a new narrative
“When you ask someone about their passion, watch them light up.”
Resources to Explore Values, Preferences, & Career Interests

• O*Net: https://www.onetonline.org/
  – Interest Profiler: https://www.mynextmove.org/explore/ip
  – My Next Move: https://www.mynextmove.org/

• Self Directed Search (SDS) by John Holland

• Career Exploration Inventory (CEI)

• Career Clusters Interest Survey: https://cte.careertech.org/sites/default/files/StudentInterestSurvey-English.pdf

• Values Card Sort

• Career OneStop: https://www.careeronestop.org/
Strategies for Career Services in the Fee-for-Service Environment

How to link career service to the recovery goal?
Integrated Employment Institute: Career Development Services Checklist

• Implementing an Integrated Career Development Approach
  – Tool to promote discussion among colleagues, supervisors, & administrators
  – Offers insight into existing career development services, policies, & procedures within your program
  – Aims to facilitate change by identifying areas for improvement as well as barriers to making these changes
Resource for Integration of Career Development Services

• Rutgers University, Integrated Employment Institute
  – Provides free career development services training to mental health providers
  – Provides free technical assistance and consultation to mental health agencies on career development services

Contact us to find out how we can assist your organization:

IEI_info@shp.rutgers.edu
908-889-2470
References


References


