

mental health | vocational rehabilitation

# VR | SE PARTNERSHIP

*Effective implementation strategies for Vocational Rehabilitation services & Supported Employment, the evidence-based practice*



*Service systems*

*Service organizations*

*Direct-service providers*

*Improve employment outcomes and economic independence among people with severe mental illness in your local community*

*(see Outcomes on page 3)*

*This best-practices guide was developed with collaboration among the following:*

- Ohio Department of Mental Health | ODMH
- Ohio Rehabilitation Services Commission | ORSC
- Ohio Supported Employment Coordinating Center of Excellence | Ohio SE CCOE



power up  
to full partnership

# INTRODUCTION

## STAGES OF COLLABORATION

*This booklet outlines implementation strategies for collaboration between local offices of state vocational rehabilitation (VR) services and mental health service organizations that provide Supported Employment, the evidence-based practice (SE-EBP), to consumers who have a severe mental illness (see page 3). Strategies for the VR and SE partnership are organized into three stages of collaboration.*



LEVEL

1

### BASIC

Describes local service systems in the beginning stages of a working relationship (page 4)



LEVEL

2

### INTERMEDIATE

Describes local service systems that have some experience with collaboration (page 6)



LEVEL

3

### COMPREHENSIVE

Describes local service systems that have reached an optimal level of integrated service delivery (page 10)

#### **MULTIPLE STAKEHOLDERS**

SE-EBP programs and local VR offices may wish to use this document to assess current levels of collaboration and to develop plans for improved partnership. Plans to achieve high levels of collaboration are most effective when they are developed by a range of stakeholders who review the written plan on a regular basis and revise it as experience dictates.

#### **WHY USE THESE IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES?**

Recent research indicates that when VR offices and SE-EBP programs work collaboratively,

consumers have better outcomes in terms of obtaining competitive employment. VR counselors will benefit from access to the people who are providing mental health services and making treatment decisions that directly impact the consumer's ability to enter and sustain competitive employment. SE-EBP employment specialists will be better able to coordinate the services that consumers receive from both the mental health (MH) provider agency and from the state VR agency. Finally, consumers will benefit from quick service delivery that directly addresses their needs.



# SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT

*the evidence-based practice*

*SE-EBP is a model for providing vocational services being used by MH provider agencies that helps people with severe mental illness find and keep competitive jobs in their communities. SE-EBP is assertive about helping people find the work they want as soon as they express the desire to work. Although the term “supported employment” is used loosely by many vocational programs, there are seven core principles that differentiate between the SE-EBP model and other programs:*

## 1 ZERO EXCLUSION POLICY

All consumers are eligible, regardless of symptoms, past work history, or other issues. (Research has shown that the presence or absence of these issues does not predict success in employment.)

## 2 CONSUMER PREFERENCES ARE IMPORTANT

SE programs work with consumers to find jobs that are related to the person’s interests, strengths, and values. Further, employment specialists honor consumer choice regarding disclosure, job location, work schedule, etc.

## 3 RAPID JOB SEARCH

The program does not use vocational testing, lengthy vocational counseling, or work adjustment. Employment specialists offer to help consumers begin the job search within a few weeks of meeting the consumer. (Research has shown that compliance or success in assessment settings, work adjustment programs and other such settings does not predict success in employment.)

## 4 A COMPETITIVE JOB IS THE GOAL

SE programs look for regular jobs in the community that pay at least minimum wage. These are jobs that anyone can apply for, regardless of disability.

## 5 EMPLOYMENT IS INTEGRATED WITH MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Case managers, therapists, housing staff, and psychiatrists work closely with SE programs to ensure that services are well coordinated. In seasoned agencies, a “culture of work” prevails. The state VR counselor is an important part of this integrated team and participates in decisions about the employment services needed by each consumer.

## 6 TIME-UNLIMITED SUPPORT

The SE program offers follow-along services long after the consumer stops working with VR. In some cases, the multidisciplinary team may be chosen to help SE provide follow-along supports.

## 7 PERSONALIZED BENEFITS PLANNING

All consumers are offered information about the impact of earned income upon their benefits.



## RESOURCES

See the back panel of this booklet for a list of resources.

## OUTCOMES

Multiple research studies have demonstrated that Supported Employment is much more effective than other vocational practices for people with severe mental illness. In 16 randomized controlled trials, only 24 percent of people in traditional programs found employment, while 60 percent of the Supported Employment participants were able to engage in competitive employment.

### SE INCREASES

- Employment in competitive jobs
- Number of hours worked
- Amount of income earned in competitive jobs

### SE DECREASES

- Unemployment
- Dependence upon public systems of care
- Symptoms of mental illness
- Hospitalizations
- Stigma in the community about mental illness

### COMPETITIVE EMPLOYMENT IMPROVES

- Self esteem
- Self-management of mental health symptoms
- Independent living
- Autonomy

# LEVEL 1

# BASIC

mental health | vocational rehabilitation collaboration

**DESCRIBES LOCAL  
SERVICE SYSTEMS  
IN THE  
BEGINNING  
STAGES OF A  
WORKING  
RELATIONSHIP**

## DIRECT-SERVICE PROVIDERS

### CASE COORDINATION

- Individual SE employment specialists and VR counselors discuss shared cases at least one time each month.
- Supervisors become involved when consumers are having difficulty reaching their employment goals, although there is no protocol for the supervisors of each program to talk together about cases.
- SE employment specialists send monthly reports for each consumer. Reports are on time and include information requested by the local VR office.

## ADMINISTRATORS

### LEADERSHIP MEETINGS

#### PURPOSE

- Systems support for improved outcomes and program fidelity.
- Examine the system for obstacles
- Develop methods to promote the program in communities
- Discuss program outcomes

#### PARTICIPANTS

- MH agency CEO and VR Area Manager may designate a representative.
- SE supervisor and local VR supervisor also attend.
- Mental health board representative is invited and may attend.

#### MEETING ACTIVITY

- Discussion of any issues related to coordination between the agencies
- Review of policy alignment for service delivery
- Discussion of consumer outcomes
- Development of plan to improve outcomes
- Review of plan to improve program fidelity
- Development of plans to promote the program in the community.

#### SCHEDULE

- Once each year

#### TOOLS

- Program outcome and process (fidelity elements) data

## 1A INTEGRATION OF SERVICE PROVIDERS

### MENTAL HEALTH

- MH center invites VR counselor(s) to participate in at least a portion of the multidisciplinary team meeting at least a few times each year.
- SE employment specialists have or work toward having at least 1/3 of core competencies (see page 14).
- At least 30 percent of SE consumers appropriate for referral use VR services.

### VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

- Local VR office designates 1 to 3 counselors to receive SE referrals.
- Designated counselors have or work toward having at least 1/3 of roles and responsibilities (see page 15).
- Designated counselor attends multidisciplinary team meeting at least a few times per year.
- Designated counselor(s) participate in at least one SE-EBP training within first year of working with the program.



## 1B INDIVIDUALIZED EMPLOYMENT PLANNING

### MENTAL HEALTH

- SE helps consumers access benefits planning.
- MH sends referrals that include:
  - A psychiatric evaluation that has been completed or updated within the past year. Report must be signed by a psychiatrist, psychologist, or other licensed professional.
  - MH writes “SE-EBP” across the top of the VR referral form to indicate that the consumer should have the option to choose the evidence-based practice.
- MH offers to go with consumers to VR appointments.
- MH refrains from referring that small portion of consumers who do not have employment goals that are consistent with VR practices. MH serves these consumers with other funds.

### VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

- VR counselor provides 1:1 intake appointment (rather than group orientation).
- VR informs MH of scheduled appointments.
- VR informs MH of need for information about other disabilities and assessment of their impact on employment.
- VR counselor shares promotional and consumer information materials about the evidence-based practice as part of consumer education to support informed choice of employment services.
- VR counselor develops a plan within 30 days for at least 40 percent of SE consumers.
- The job goal is driven by the consumer and includes input from the employment specialist and other mental health providers.

## 1C CONSUMER SERVICES

### MENTAL HEALTH

- SE program provides strong job development—at least 40 percent of people receiving SE services obtain jobs and the average length of time to obtain a job is 120 days or fewer.
- SE program provides education to all consumers about disclosure to employers and offers varying levels of disclosure. SE program reports that approximately 60 percent of consumers are comfortable with disclosure.
- During the first 2 months of employment, the ES will provide a **minimum** of:
  - One in-person contact w/consumer each week.
  - Two employer contacts per month (if consumer consents to disclosure).
- SE offers long-term follow-along services along to all working consumers. At least half of consumers receive follow-along from the SE program for the first year of employment. Follow-along is scheduled in advance and occurs on a regular basis.
- When working consumers experience job problems after being closed from VR, the SE team provides immediate assistance. If SE feels that VR services are required, the SE program quickly calls the VR supervisor and also sends a new referral. The referral should document reasons that the SE team is not able to intervene without VR services.

### VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

- Counselors attempt to practice “zero exclusion” by authorizing job placement services for approximately 50 percent of SE consumers referred to VR.
- Job placement authorizations are developed within 90 days of first appointment. (Exceptions may include situations where community-based evaluations are used as an incentive for employers to hire, or when consumers have other disabilities or short-term medical issues that require additional planning.)
- Counselors only support competitive jobs in integrated settings.
- Counselors only use traditional vocational evaluation, work adjustment or other pre-employment programs when selected by individual consumers.
- Counselors assist with career development goals based upon agency guidelines (i.e., education, skill development, job advancement, etc.).
- When consumers experience job problems after a case has been closed “26”, VR counselors quickly re-open the case for post employment services. ■

# LEVEL 2

# INTERMEDIATE

mental health | vocational rehabilitation collaboration

**DESCRIBES LOCAL SERVICE SYSTEMS THAT HAVE SOME EXPERIENCE WITH COLLABORATION**

## DIRECT-SERVICE PROVIDERS

### CASE COORDINATION

#### PARTICIPANTS

- SE employment specialists
- SE supervisor
- Designated VR counselor(s)
- VR supervisor

#### MEETING ACTIVITIES

- A review of all clients on shared-caseloads
- Quick updates (e.g., consumers who are progressing towards employment goals)
- Brainstorming and problem solving regarding consumers who are not meeting goals
- Sharing of job leads
- The group may also spend a few minutes talking about programmatic issues, such as the process for monthly written reports, billing procedures, etc.

#### SCHEDULE

- Once each quarter

#### TOOLS

- VR supervisor brings caseload list for the vendor.
- SE employment specialists send monthly reports for each consumer. Reports are timely and include information requested by the local VR office.

## ADMINISTRATORS

### LEADERSHIP MEETINGS

#### PURPOSE

- Systems support for improved outcomes and program fidelity
- Examine the system for obstacles
- Develop methods to promote the program in communities
- Discuss program outcomes

#### PARTICIPANTS

- MH agency CEO and VR Area Manager may designate a representative.
- SE supervisor and local VR supervisor also attend.
- Mental health board representative is invited.

#### MEETING ACTIVITIES

- Discussion of any issues related to coordination between the agencies
- Review of policy alignment for service delivery
- Discussion of consumer outcomes
- Development of plan to improve outcomes
- Review of plan to improve program fidelity
- Development of plans to promote the program in the community

#### SCHEDULE

- Twice each year

#### TOOLS

- Program outcomes data

## 2A INTEGRATION OF SERVICE PROVIDERS

### MENTAL HEALTH

- MH center invites designated VR counselor(s) to use office space on a regular basis.
- MH center invites VR counselor(s) to participate in at least a portion of the weekly multidisciplinary team meeting at least once every other month.
- SE employment specialists have or work to develop at least 2/3 core competencies (see page 14).
- 60 percent of SE consumers appropriate for referral use VR services.

### VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

- Local VR office designates 1 to 2 counselors to receive SE referrals. If the SE program is very large, the office may choose to designate a third counselor for SE referrals.
- Designated counselors have or work to develop at least 2/3 roles and responsibilities (see page 15).
- Designated counselor(s) meets with consumers at the mental health center approximately once a month.
- Designated counselor attends multidisciplinary team meeting at least once every other month.
- Designated counselor(s) participate in at least one SE training event each year.



## 2B INDIVIDUALIZED EMPLOYMENT PLANNING

### MENTAL HEALTH

- SE helps consumers access benefits planning and offers to attend the appointments with consumers.
- MH sends referrals that include:
  - A psychiatric evaluation that has been completed or updated within the past year. Eval must be signed by a psychiatrist, psychologist, or other licensed professional.
  - MH writes “SE-EBP” across the top of the VR referral form to indicate that the consumer should have the option to choose the evidence-based practice.
- MH offers to go with consumers to VR appointments. When MH is unable to attend appointments, they offer to help consumers find a family member or friend to help them get to the appointment.
- MH refrains from referring the small portion of consumers who do not have employment goals that are consistent with VR practices. MH serves these consumers with other funds. VR counselor provides 1:1 intake appointment (rather than group orientation).

### VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

- VR informs MH of scheduled appointments.
- VR informs MH of need for information about other disabilities and assessment of their impact on employment.
- VR counselor shares promotional and consumer materials about the evidence-based practice as part of consumer education to support informed choice of employment services
- VR counselor develops a plan within 30 days for at least 60 percent of SE consumers.
- The job goal is driven by the consumer and includes input from the employment specialist and other mental health providers.
- When consumers find employment before meeting with a counselor, in most cases, the VR office opens a case within 48 hours for intensive follow-along services.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8

## 2C CONSUMER SERVICES

### MENTAL HEALTH

- SE program provides strong job development—at least 50 percent of people receiving SE services obtain jobs and the average length of time to obtain a job is 110 days or fewer.
- SE program provides education to all consumers about disclosure to employers and offers varying levels of disclosure. SE program reports that about approximately 60 percent of consumers are comfortable with disclosure.
- MH agency provides continuous and intensive follow-along services. During the first 2 months of employment, the ES will provide a **minimum** of:
  - One in-person contact w/consumer each week.
  - Two employer contacts per month (if consumer consents to disclosure)
  - One family contact per month (if consumer consents to disclosure)
- **SE offers long-term follow-along services to all working consumers.** At least 2/3 of consumers receive follow-along from the SE program for the first year of employment. Follow-along services are scheduled in advance and occur on a regular basis. Most of the follow-along occurs in-person.
- When working consumers experience job problems after being closed from VR, the SE team provides immediate assistance. If the SE team determines that VR services are required, the SE program quickly calls the VR supervisor and also sends a new referral. The referral should document reasons that the SE team is not able to intervene without VR services.
- Agency offers a peer-support group for working consumers—may partner with a consumer-operated service to do so.

### VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

- Counselors attempt to practice “zero exclusion” by authorizing job placement services for most SE consumers referred to VR.
- Job placement authorizations are developed within 90 days of first appointment. (Exceptions may include situations where community-based evaluations are used as an incentive for employers to hire, or when consumers have other disabilities or short-term medical issues that require additional planning.)
- Counselors only support competitive jobs in integrated settings.
- Counselors only use traditional vocational evaluation, work adjustment, or other pre-employment programs when selected by individual consumers.
- Community-based evaluations are used, for the most part, as incentives for employers to hire rather than as assessment.
- Counselors assist with career development goals according to agency policy (i.e., education, skill development, job advancement, etc.).
- When consumers experience job problems after a case has been closed “26”, VR counselors re-open the case within one week. ■



## WILSON

—by Nicole Clevenger, BFA

Wilson is 61 years old and works as supervisor of cleaning and retail technicians at a large department store in a local shopping mall in Lorain County. His qualifications and training are outstanding. He is certified in heating, ventilating and air conditioning (HVAC) as well as carpentry, electricity, and plumbing.

The joy that is so obvious in Wilson today is in direct contrast to the painful sadness that he felt in the recent past. Several years ago, he was unemployed, depressed, and virtually drowning in alcoholism. As a result of his drinking, he lost everything: his job, his family, his self-respect.

With the help of a team of service providers at The Nord Center, a provider of mental health services in Lorain County, Wilson embarked on a journey toward sobriety. He started to take medication for his depression and began mental health therapy and substance abuse counseling. He also started to attend Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) meetings regularly and to work with an AA sponsor.

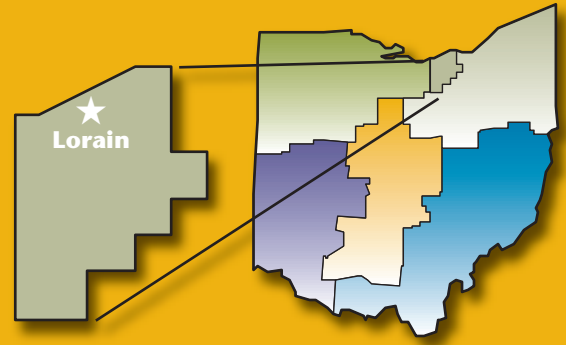
Almost a year into his recovery, he expressed the desire to find a job again, and he began to work with The Nord Center's Supported Employment services. With funding from the Ohio Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation (BVR), he also enrolled in a maintenance training program. With encouragement from his case manager, he applied for a job at a manufacturing company and eventually applied for the job at the department store. Despite occasional episodes of anxiety, he continues to go to work daily.

In his job as supervisor at the department store, Wilson is responsible for hiring employees for the maintenance crew. It is a role that brings him great joy.

"It feels good to hire people," he says. "It's amazing, really. I got help, and now I can help somebody else, too. I give people a chance."

---

*Nicole Clevenger, BFA, is peer consultant at the Ohio SE CCOE.*

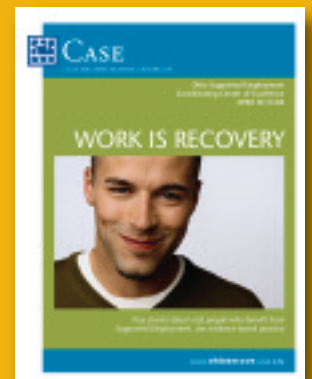


### LORAIN COUNTY

The Nord Center  
[www.nordcenter.org](http://www.nordcenter.org)

6140 S Broadway  
Lorain, OH 44053  
440-204-4100

*IN HIS JOB AS SUPERVISOR AT THE DEPARTMENT STORE, WILSON IS RESPONSIBLE FOR HIRING EMPLOYEES FOR THE MAINTENANCE CREW. IT IS A ROLE THAT BRINGS HIM GREAT JOY.*



Excerpted from the following collection of success stories:

Nicole Clevenger, BFA (2007). *Work Is Recovery: True stories about real people who benefit from Supported Employment, the evidence-based practice.* Cleveland: Ohio SE CCOE, Case Western Reserve University.

View sample pages and obtain an order form online:

[www.ohioseccoe.case.edu](http://www.ohioseccoe.case.edu)

# LEVEL 3

# COMPREHENSIVE

mental health | vocational rehabilitation collaboration

**DESCRIBES LOCAL SERVICE SYSTEMS THAT HAVE REACHED AN OPTIMAL LEVEL OF INTEGRATED SERVICE DELIVERY**

## DIRECT-SERVICE PROVIDERS

### CASE COORDINATION

#### PARTICIPANTS

- SE employment specialists
- SE supervisor
- Designated VR counselor(s)
- VR supervisor

#### MEETING ACTIVITY

- Meeting consists of a review of all clients on shared caseload
- Quick updates (e.g., consumers who are progressing towards employment goals)
- Brainstorming and problem solving regarding consumers who are not meeting goals
- Sharing of job leads
- The group may also spend a few minutes talking about programmatic issues such as the process for monthly written reports, billing procedures, etc.

#### SCHEDULE

- One time each month

#### TOOLS

- VR supervisor brings caseload list for the vendor.
- SE employment specialists send monthly reports for each consumer
- Reports are on time and include information requested by the local VR office.

## ADMINISTRATORS

### LEADERSHIP MEETINGS

#### PURPOSE

- Systems support for improved outcomes and program fidelity
- Examine the system for obstacles
- Develop methods to promote the program in communities
- Discuss program outcomes

#### PARTICIPANTS

- MH agency CEO
- SE supervisor
- VR area manager
- Local VR supervisor
- Consumers
- Family members
- At least one representative from the local mental health board

#### MEETING ACTIVITIES

- Discuss any issues related to coordination between the agencies
- Review of policy alignment for service delivery
- Discuss consumer outcomes
- Development of plan to improve outcomes
- Review of plan to improve program fidelity
- Development of plans to promote the program in the community

#### SCHEDULE

- Quarterly for the first couple of meetings, then twice each year

#### TOOLS

- Program outcome data

## 3A INTEGRATION OF SERVICE PROVIDERS

### MENTAL HEALTH

- Mental health center identifies office space for designated counselor(s). Office is static—VR counselor(s) have office key, copier code, etc.
- MH center invites VR counselor(s) to participate in at least a portion of the weekly multidisciplinary team meeting on a monthly basis or more.
- SE employment specialists have or work to develop core competencies (see page 14).
- 90 percent of SE consumers appropriate for referral use VR services.

### VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

- Local VR office designates 1 to 2 counselors to receive SE referrals. In communities where there is a very large SE program, the office may choose to designate a third counselor.
- Designated counselors have or work to develop roles and responsibilities (see page 15).
- Designated counselor(s) uses an office at the MH center at least once each week (preferably on the day that the multidisciplinary team meets). Case managers and SE team know when to expect the counselor(s).
- Designated counselor(s) participate in treatment team meetings at least once a month or more.
- Designated counselor(s) participate in at least one SE training event each year.



## 3B INDIVIDUALIZED EMPLOYMENT PLANNING

### MENTAL HEALTH

- SE helps consumers access benefits planning and offers to attend the appointments with consumers. SE offers to help consumers with monthly income reporting until consumer is able to do this independently. SE arranges for more benefits planning as consumer's income changes over time.
- MH sends referrals that include:
  - A psychiatric evaluation that has been completed or updated within the past year. Report must be signed by a psychiatrist, psychologist, or other licensed professional.
  - A completed copy of the “Initial Interview” form developed by the Ohio SE Supervisor’s group.
  - MH writes “SE-EBP” across the top of the VR referral form to indicate that the consumer should have the option to choose the evidence-based practice.
- MH offers to go with consumers to VR appointments. When MH is unable to attend appointments, they offer to help consumers find a family member or friend to help them get to the appointment.
- MH refrains from referring that small portion of consumers who do not have employment goals that are consistent with VR practices. MH serves these consumers with other funds.

### VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

- VR counselor provides 1:1 intake appointment (rather than group orientation).
- VR informs MH of scheduled appointments.
- VR informs MH of need for information about other disabilities and assessment of their impact on employment.
- VR counselor uses “Initial Interview” sent by MH and adds additional information to the form.
- VR counselor shares promotional and consumer information materials about the evidence-based practice as part of consumer education to support informed choice of employment services
- VR counselor develops a plan within 30 days for at least 80 percent of SE consumers.
- The job goal is driven by the consumer and includes input from the employment specialist and other mental health providers.
- When consumers find employment before meeting with a counselor, the VR office works with the SE program to open the case within 48 hours for intensive follow-along services for the period allowed by VR regulations.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 12

## 3C INDIVIDUALIZED EMPLOYMENT PLANNING

### MENTAL HEALTH

- SE program provides strong job development—at least 60 percent of people receiving SE services obtain jobs and the average length of time to obtain a job is 90 days or less.
- SE program provides education to all consumers about disclosure to employers and offers varying levels of disclosure. SE program reports that about 60 percent of consumers are comfortable with disclosure.
- MH agency provides continuous and intensive follow-along services. During the first 3 months of employment, the ES will provide a **minimum** of:
  - One in-person contact w/consumer each week.
  - Two employer contacts per month (if consumer consents to disclosure)
  - One family contact per month (if consumer consents to disclosure)
- SE provides continuous follow-along services to all consumers. In a few cases, consumers may choose to receive follow-along from case managers or therapists, but the vast majority of consumers will receive follow-along from the SE program for at least one year (often longer). Most of the follow-along is in-person, scheduled in advance, and in the community.
- When working consumers experience job problems after being closed from VR, the SE team provides immediate assistance. If SE feels that VR services are required, the SE program quickly calls the VR supervisor and also sends a new referral. The referral should document reasons that the SE team is not able to intervene without VR services.
- Agency offers a peer-support group for working consumers—may partner with a consumer-operated service to do so.

### VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

- Counselors attempt to practice “zero exclusion” by authorizing job-placement services for all SE consumers referred to VR.
- Job-placement authorizations are developed within 60 days of first appointment. (Exceptions may include situations where community-based evaluations are used as an incentive for employers to hire, or when consumers have other disabilities or short-term medical issues that require additional planning.)
- Counselors only support competitive jobs in integrated settings.
- Counselors only use traditional vocational evaluation, work adjustment, or other pre-employment programs when selected by individual consumers.
- Community-based evaluations generally are used as incentives for employers to hire, rather than as an evaluation or work-adjustment tool.
- Counselors assist with career development goals according to agency policy (i.e., education, skill development, job advancement, etc.).
- When consumers experience job problems after a case has been closed “26”, VR counselors re-open the case within one week. ■

## ELIZABETH

—by Nicole Clevenger, BFA

Elizabeth has a Master of Library and Information Sciences (MLIS) degree from Kent State University in Kent, Ohio. She describes this field as her “calling”. She has always been an investigative person who hungers for information about the world around her. She loves to collect, organize, and share facts. Elizabeth currently works from home as an abstractor for the American School Health Association, a job she has held for over two years.

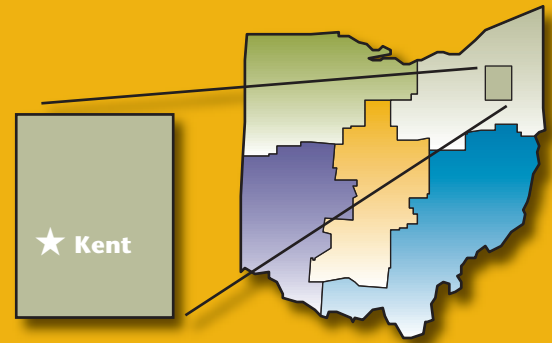
In 1997, Elizabeth was diagnosed with bipolar disorder, but she refused to let mental illness halt her plans for the future. In 2000, she enrolled in the master’s program at Kent State University even as she was struggling with symptoms, which gradually got worse. Elizabeth started her recovery by contacting the Students with Disabilities Office at Kent State and by working with an academic counselor. She also contacted Coleman Professional Services (CPS), a provider of mental health services in Portage County. The treatment team there helped her gain control of the rapid cycling of her symptoms and helped her manage her budget and find independent housing.

In 2004, Elizabeth graduated from Kent State, but she had some difficulty adjusting. She began to feel overwhelmed, and her symptoms began to intensify. Yet, she did not let this stop her from pursuing a career. She began to work closely with a supported-employment specialist at CPS, who helped her prepare for the interview process and encouraged her to apply for her present job.

“I felt it was important not to give up on my dream,” Elizabeth says. “I had to deal with my mental illness in tandem with my career goals. I don’t think it would have worked for me to say I am only going to deal with my mental illness and then get a job. That may never have happened.”

---

*Nicole Clevenger, BFA, is peer consultant at the Ohio SE CCOE*

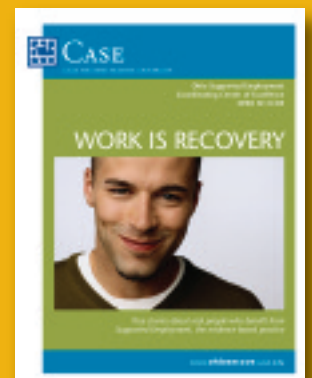


### PORTAGE COUNTY

Coleman Professional Services  
www.colemanprof.com

5982 Rhodes Road  
Kent, Ohio 44240  
330-673-1347

**“I FELT IT WAS IMPORTANT NOT TO GIVE UP ON MY DREAM. I HAD TO DEAL WITH MY MENTAL ILLNESS IN TANDEM WITH MY CAREER GOALS. I DON’T THINK IT WOULD HAVE WORKED FOR ME TO SAY I AM ONLY GOING TO DEAL WITH MY MENTAL ILLNESS AND THEN GET A JOB.”**



Excerpted from the following collection of success stories:

Nicole Clevenger, BFA (2007). *Work Is Recovery: True stories about real people who benefit from Supported Employment, the evidence-based practice.* Cleveland: Ohio SE CCOE, Case Western Reserve University.

View sample pages and obtain an order form online:

[www.ohioseccoe.case.edu](http://www.ohioseccoe.case.edu)

# TIPS



## to make partnerships work

### SE | EMPLOYMENT SPECIALISTS

#### COMPETENCIES FOR WORKING WITH VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

#### 1 KNOWLEDGE OF VR GOALS AND PROCESS

- Understanding that VR is not an entitlement; rather, consumers must be found eligible for services based upon documented disability and ability to benefit from services.
- Commitment to helping VR acquire documentation needed to determine eligibility in a timely manner.
- Knowledge of VR goals for competitive employment outcomes.
- Understanding of the need for on-time, comprehensive reporting.
- Understanding of the service authorization process, i.e., the process for requesting additional services, for billing only for appropriate services, etc.

#### 2 COMMITMENT TO INVOLVING THE VR COUNSELOR AS A MEMBER OF THE CONSUMER'S TREATMENT TEAM.

- Commitment to share information on a regular basis.
- Willingness to work together on problem-solving.
- Understanding that VR may have specialized knowledge about medical problems, local employers, and/or other issues that can be very helpful to SE programs.
- Inclusion of VR counselors in consumer meetings and multidisciplinary meetings.

#### 3 ASSERTIVE JOB DEVELOPMENT TECHNIQUES.

- Willingness to leave the office and conduct in-person job development.
- Understanding that a great deal of time must be devoted to job development.
- Willingness to gather information about each business site and to inquire about the employer's needs.
- Follow up on all employer contacts.
- Ongoing (annual) training to refine job-development techniques.

#### 4 EXCELLENT FOLLOW-ALONG SERVICES

- Support to consumer, family members, and employers (based upon consumer agreement to disclose).
- Follow-along services are planned and scheduled in advance.
- Most follow-along services are provided in-person and in the community.

# TIPS

to make partnerships work

## VR | VOC REHAB COUNSELORS

### COMPETENCIES FOR WORKING WITH MENTAL HEALTH, SE SERVICES

- 1 KNOW, UNDERSTAND, AND FOLLOW THE 7 PRINCIPLES OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT, THE EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICE (SEE PAGE 3), INCLUDING THE FOLLOWING:**
  - Practice zero exclusion: if necessary question and clarify agency policies/past practices about medication compliance, symptoms, and sobriety.
  - Support rapid job-search and placement: question and clarify policies that require extensive prevocational assessment and services that the consumer does not request and that are not required by individual consumer needs.
- 2 EFFECTIVELY WORK IN COLLABORATION WITH PROFESSIONALS FROM OTHER DISCIPLINES AND OTHER AGENCIES, INCLUDING THE FOLLOWING:**
  - Fully participate as a member of the treatment team, clarifying professional and ethical obligations of the team as a whole and its individual members
  - Share decision-making process with the treatment team and accept the team's decisions, even when disagreeing personally (so long as no ethical conflict is posed by the team's decision)
  - Be flexible and participate in "out-of-the-box" thinking;
  - Recognize agency policies that present additional barriers to employment for people with severe mental illness (SMI) and appropriately address them with supervisor and others (e.g., policy unit).
- 3 EXHIBIT STRONG INTEREST AND ABILITY IN WORKING WITH CONSUMERS WITH SEVERE MENTAL ILLNESS (SMI), INCLUDING THE FOLLOWING:**
  - Knowledge of principles and strategies for working with people who are dually diagnosed with substance abuse and mental illness.
  - Basic understanding of motivational interviewing (MI) principles and strategies.
- 4 WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH EACH CONSUMER, SHOWING STRONG COMMITMENT TO CONSUMER CHOICE AND EMPOWERMENT**
- 5 KNOW, DEVELOP, AND CONTINUOUSLY EVALUATE STRATEGIES FOR REDUCING STIGMA AND MANAGING DISCLOSURE**
- 6 EDUCATE EMPLOYERS AND COMMUNITY ABOUT INCLUSION AND REASONABLE ACCOMMODATIONS FOR PEOPLE WITH PSYCHIATRIC DISABILITIES**
- 7 COMMIT TO COOPERATING IN NECESSARY DATA COLLECTION**
- 8 COMMIT TO CONTINUING EDUCATION ABOUT SE-EBP, OTHER RELATED EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICES AND PSYCHIATRIC REHABILITATION**

# VR | SE PARTNERSHIP

Effective implementation strategies for Vocational Rehabilitation services & Supported Employment, the evidence-based practice

## ABOUT THE COLLABORATORS

### ODMH | OHIO DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH

www.mh.state.oh.us | 614.752.9703

ODMH provides oversight of the state's public mental health care system, which includes 50 county boards, over 500 certified community-based service organizations, and nine inpatient state-operated behavioral health care organizations (psychiatric hospitals), all of which provide services to over 300,000 Ohio residents. ODMH is part of the governor's cabinet. It supports and promotes access to quality care in communities in all of Ohio's 88 counties. ODMH's Office of Clinical Best Practices promotes recovery and resiliency through workforce development activities that focus on the accelerated adoption of evidence-based mental health services.



### ORSC | OHIO REHABILITATION SERVICES COMMISSION

www.rsc.ohio.gov | 614.438.1200

ORSC is Ohio's state agency that provides vocational rehabilitation (VR) services to help people with disabilities become employed and independent. It also offers a variety of services to Ohio businesses, resulting in quality jobs for individuals who have disabilities. RSC provides VR services to more than 44,000 people annually. ORSC provides oversight to three bureaus:

- The Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation (BVR) assists people who have physical, mental and emotional disabilities.
- The Bureau of Services for the Visually Impaired (BSVI) assists Ohioans who are blind or have a vision impairment.
- The Bureau of Disability Determination (BDD) determines medical eligibility for Ohio's Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) claims.

### OHIO SE CCOE | OHIO SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT COORDINATING CENTER OF EXCELLENCE

www.ohioseccoe.case.edu | 216.398.3933

The Ohio SE CCOE is a technical-assistance organization that helps service systems, organizations, and providers implement and sustain Supported Employment (SE), the evidence-based practice, maintain fidelity to the model, and develop collaborations within local communities that enhance the quality of life for consumers and their families. The Ohio SE CCOE is a program of the Center for Evidence-Based Practices at Case Western Reserve University, which is a partnership between the Mandel School of Applied Social Sciences at Case and the Department of Psychiatry at the Case School of Medicine.

**Written and edited by**  
Lon Herman, MA, Office of  
Clinical Best Practices, Ohio  
Department of Mental Health

Doug Bailey, MLRHR, CWDP,  
Ohio Department of Mental Health

Leslie H. Alloway, MEd, CRC,  
LPC, Ohio Rehabilitation Services  
Commission

\*Sarah Swanson, MRC, LSW, CRC,  
New Hampshire-Dartmouth  
Psychiatric Research Center  
(Ms. Swanson contributed to this  
document while employed at the Ohio  
SE CCOE.)

**Reviewers**  
Deborah R. Becker, MEd, CRC, and  
Robert E. Drake, M.D.

**Graphic design**  
Paul M. Kubek, MA, Ohio SE CCOE  
David Cravener  
Cravener | Holmes Creative

**Funded by**  
Ohio Department of Mental Health

**Published by**  
Ohio SE CCOE, Case Western  
Reserve University, Cleveland, Ohio

*Supported Employment (SE), the evidence-based practice, was originally designed by Deborah R. Becker, MEd, CRC, and Robert E. Drake, M.D., and their colleagues at the New Hampshire-Dartmouth Psychiatric Research Center of Dartmouth Medical School.*

v.2008-02-28



## SE SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT

the evidence-based practice



### Resources

This booklet was created with reference to the sources listed below, as well as to the practice experiences of the writers and editors. For more information about and hyperlinks to these and other recommended resources, visit the online resource library of the Ohio SE CCOE

[www.ohioseccoe.case.edu/library](http://www.ohioseccoe.case.edu/library)

- 1 **Paul M. Kubek, Patrick E. Boyle, Ginger Yanchar & Sarah Swanson (2007).** *Supported Employment: An overview of the evidence-based practice.* Cleveland: Ohio SE CCOE, Case Western Reserve University.
- 2 **Deborah R. Becker & Robert E. Drake. (2003).** *A Working Life for People with Severe Mental Illness.* New York: Oxford University Press.
- 3 **Gary R. Bond (2004).** *Supported Employment: Evidence for an Evidence-Based Practice.* *Psychiatric Rehabilitation Journal*, v27, n4, p345-359.
- 4 **Robert E. Drake, Guest Editor. (1998).** *Supported Employment: A Special Issue of Psychiatric Rehabilitation Journal.* *Psychiatric Rehabilitation Journal*, Summer, v22, n1.
- 5 **SE Resource Kit | SAMHSA**  
<http://mentalhealth.samhsa.gov/cmhs/communitysupport/toolkits/employment/>
- 6 **SE Fidelity Scale**  
[www.ohiosamiccoe.case.edu/library/media/sefidelityscale.pdf](http://www.ohiosamiccoe.case.edu/library/media/sefidelityscale.pdf)

This booklet may be obtained online as a free PDF by following the hyperlink below. Printed copies may also be obtained by following this hyperlink:  
[www.ohioseccoe.case.edu/library/resource.cfm?resourceid=149](http://www.ohioseccoe.case.edu/library/resource.cfm?resourceid=149)



OHIO DEPARTMENT  
OF MENTAL HEALTH



OHIO REHABILITATION  
SERVICES COMMISSION



CASE WESTERN RESERVE  
UNIVERSITY

OHIO SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT  
COORDINATING CENTER OF EXCELLENCE