

Modifying the Supported Employment Model with a Housing First Population

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About Pathways to Housing

- Dr. Sam Tsemberis developed the “Housing First” scattered site model over 20 years ago, in NYC.
- It was deemed an evidence based practice by SAMHSA in 2007.
- Pathways currently has offices in NYC, Philadelphia, Washington DC, and VT.
- Pathways NY currently serves over 750 individuals.



Pathways NY HF Population

- Only 8-10% involved in competitive employment.
- Only 25% express interest in employment.
- 80% have experienced significant traumas, with high Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) scores.
- Predominantly living in poverty with little social and financial capital, profound literacy issues.
- 50% with criminal justice involvement, many with serious felonies.
- 60-80% addictions issues.
- 40% African American or Caribbean, 40% Caucasian, 20% Hispanic; Average Age: 42



Why Focus on Employment?

What the Experts Say

“Nothing that I have studied has the same kind of impact that employment does: Medication, case management, and psychotherapies tend to produce a small impact on people’s overall adjustment. But the differences are often striking and dramatic with employment.”

- Dr. Robert Drake

Dartmouth Psychiatric Research Center

“Recovery...means growing beyond the catastrophe of mental illness and developing new meaning and purpose in one’s life. It means taking charge of one’s life even if one cannot take complete charge of one’s symptoms.”

- William Anthony PhD, Boston University



Our Observations

Overwhelmingly, we are not lifting people out of poverty, or putting them on a career path.

What is your experience?



Pathways' Employment Initiative

- Began May 2012 with funding from a PTH Board Member, Randy Nelson and is operated out of the PTH NY Recovery Center
- Staffing: 1 FT Program Coordinator, 2 PT Peer Specialists, and anticipate 1 FT AmeriCorps VISTA Job Developer
- Goals: Competitive Employment Placements, Job Training Opportunities, Continuing Education Opportunities, Employment Internships, Encourage Wellness and Recovery activities in participants.



Program Referrals

- The Employment Program is open to all PTH NY participants.
- Referrals come from PTH NY ACT Teams, PTH NY Apartment Program Teams, and PTH NY clients can just walk in if they're interested.
- The referral form is one page asking for basic info, with some employment history questions, if known.
- The idea is to be inclusive, not exclusive. No one is discouraged or dismissed.



Creating a Welcoming Environment

- It is the responsibility of all staff to make new and returning participants feel welcome.
- Strong Peer presence, and giving participants a voice.
- We offer coffee and snacks in the morning, and serve a healthy lunch prepared by an Employment Intern.
- We offer informational materials on community resources, training programs, job leads, etc.
- Clients can attend our classes/groups or meet one to one with Peer Specialists.
- Participants have created the rules for the Recovery Center, and we enforce them with the idea everyone should feel safe.



Core Supported Employment (SE) Principles

- Zero exclusion
- Attention to consumer preference
- Competitive employment is the goal
- Rapid job search
- Coordination of vocational rehabilitation and mental health services
- Unlimited follow along supports



SE Outcomes

High fidelity to the IPS/SE
Model should result in a 60%
or better placement rate
(Drake, Becker)



Why Don't We Get These Outcomes with Housing First Participants?

- Assumes participants are at least in the Preparation Stage regarding Employment.
- Assumes participants can attain a job within 6 months.
- Assumes participants have resolved trauma issues.
- Assumes participants have resolved self stigma issues.
- Assumes participants have some soft skills as well as hard skills.
- Assumes participants understand the “World of Work.”



SE Modifications: What We Have Done

Broadened the scope of what we provide:

- Increased time frames
- Peer involvement
- Assessments that are recovery and strengths based
- Offered an array of recovery and skills groups
- WRAP for Work
- Trauma informed activities
- Employment Readiness and Financial Wellness Groups
- Overcoming Self Stigma - Original Curriculum
- Familiarize participants with the community and businesses



SE Modifications (cont'd)

- Based on the work of Susan McGurk at Dartmouth we now include Cognitive Remediation to enhance: memory, concentration, ability to follow directions, and sequencing in tasks.
- We use Cog Pack (software) in individual and group settings. Very positively received, with almost immediate improvements observed.
- Added a Problem Solving Group that included: brain teasers, fun puzzles, and mazes.
- Introduced Memory Aids for Employment Interns



Ancillary Supports

- Identification and other documents
- Interview clothing, work clothes
- Hair and nails
- Tools
- Assistance with transportation costs
- Temporary usage of a cell phone
- Setting up email accounts
- Assistance in reporting earnings to SSA



Employment Services Provided

- Full Client Centered Assessment
- Develop an IEP
- Complete the Self Directed Job Search
- Assist with job leads
- Develop a resume, send out resumes
- Assist with applications
- Prepare, schedule, and accompany to interviews
- Conduct Employment Prep Groups
- Job retention activities
- Meetings with participant and Clinical Team
- Skills training



Exposure to Career Opportunities

- MEOC's Career Training Programs
- Culinary Arts Training
- Touro College, Harlem Commonwealth
- Workforce1 Career Center, On Site Recruitment Events, Community Job Fairs

Don't dismiss training programs for skilled or semi skilled positions, that do not require college.



Specialized Job Development

Grassroots, based on personal relationships that develop over time with local businesses. Customized approach. Take time to educate employers.

- Daycare
- Local Restaurants (Red Lobster, Dinosaur BBQ, Joe's Crab Shack)
- Messenger Services
- NYC Board of Elections
- Construction
- Some Chains: Walgreens, CVS etc.
- AM New York
- Columbia Presbyterian Hospital
- Fairway Market

Over 50 employers in our Job Bank



Placement Facts

We moved the needle from 8% to 17% the 1st year, regarding placements. These were all competitive, community placements.

Many clients were offered positions, but chose to turn placements down out of fear, unrealistic expectations, self stigma etc.



Job Retention, Job Tenure, & Income Enhancement

- We designed aggressive job retention plans as part of the participant's IEP.
 - Jobs Offered: 53
 - Jobs Accepted and Started: 36
 - Some of our Placements:
 - Services for the Underserved
 - Panera Bread
 - TJ MAXX
 - AM New York
 - Cohen Brothers Realty
 - Job Tenure:
 - Wide variance
 - Income enhancement:
 - Reported earnings of \$80 - \$500 a week
 - Other retention efforts:
 - Cash incentive
 - Wall of fame
 - Agency-wide e-newsletter



A few successes and their stories...

- Manny H. – AM NY, Newspaper promoter
- Harold H. – TJ MAXX, Maintenance
- Michael E. – RDS Delivery, Foot Messenger
- Qamar S. – Licensed Security Guard
- Anthony P. – SUS, Certified Peer Specialist
- Shobba J. – Panera Bread, Crew Member
- Rafael W. – Cohen Brothers Realty, Demolition



Going Forward

- Use of more Cognitive Remediation Groups.
- Increase in individualized job development.
- Increase of job acceptance and retention.
- Strengthen collaboration efforts with Clinical Teams and Supported Housing Teams in planning services.
- Expand involvement into Wellness services.
- Sustain supplementary funding for additional items (ie. Metro Cards).



For more information & resources

- Temple Collaborative on Community Inclusion for Individuals with Psychiatric Disabilities
 - <http://tucollaborative.org/>
- Dartmouth Psychiatric Research Center, IPS Supported Employment Center
 - <http://prc.dartmouth.edu/ips-center/>
- The Center for Psychiatric Rehabilitation at Boston University
 - <http://cpr.bu.edu/>



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Thank you!!