

## Ways to help with employment

- Reflect on your own past job finding experience.
- Talk about work with people.
- Identify strengths, skills, and talents.
- Explore past accomplishments to inspire hope.
- Help identify barriers to employment and possible next steps.
- Integrate employment supports and other supports = combine forces!

## Fostering “hidden” potential

- Be curious about how employment may fit into other goals.
- Reframe job changes as helpful learning in ‘normal’ career development.
- Believe that there is a job out there for everyone.
- Recognize that informed risk-taking is part of recovery.

## Ways to think about benefits with no complex rules or math

- People can work and maintain benefits if they choose to do so.
- Incentive programs exist that make it less risky to try a job.
- It is NOT “all or nothing”.
- Accurate and timely income reporting can help prevent overpayments.
- Relationships with benefits providers and professionals help people make choices based on **FACTS**

## Ways to foster recovery with employment

- Don't wait to talk about it.
- Think of employment as a form of treatment.
- Recognize the difficulties in working that are normal for anyone.
- Share (even the small) successes.
- Don't lose sight of long-term goals.

# Did you know... SSI?

SSI checks are reduced by ***less*** than what is earned.

Many workers can earn over \$1,400/ month before checks completely stop.

Reporting earnings each month reduces the risk of overpayment.

# Did you know... SSDI?

An SSDI work incentive allows workers to earn any amount of money for the first nine months worked.

There is usually no impact on SSDI benefits if earnings are below \$1,000/ month\*

\*For 2011: reviewed annually

Benefits may be reinstated after termination for at least 5 years if income decreases due to disability.

# Did you know... Medicaid?

Medicaid Buy-In for Workers with Disabilities (MBIWD) eliminates spend-down. Workers keep Medicaid at much higher income levels.

People who become eligible for MBIWD can have resources of up to \$10,580.

Those with Medicaid and SSI are often protected from spend-down (even without MBIWD.)

### **Possible Stresses of Employment:**

Having to wake up on time  
Filling out forms -- for my job or to get a job  
Managing benefits and work , reporting income  
Being accountable to employer  
Might encounter disappointment  
Fear that 'people will know' about illness (stigma)  
Transportation issues  
Interacting with co-workers, supervisors, public, others  
Childcare  
Setting up and keeping MH appointments  
Explaining to others what you 'do'

### **Some Positives of Employment**

Positive Stress  
More money  
Schedule/routine  
Decreased symptoms of mental illness  
Opportunities to interact non-mental health consumers  
Learning new skills  
Increased access to resources  
Increased self esteem  
Increased independence  
May lead to working on other issues  
Decreased isolation  
May lead to new housing and schooling options

### **Possible Stresses of Unemployment:**

Not enough money for basic needs = anxiety  
Completing paperwork for benefits  
Managing benefits (reporting of no income)  
Little or no sense of purpose  
May encounter disappointment  
Fear that people will know about unemployment (stigma)  
Blurred sense of identity (Who am I?)  
Transportation issues  
Social isolation  
Childcare for social activities, appointments  
Stuck in conversation when asked "What do you do?"

### **Some Positives of Unemployment:**

Freedom to structure day as desired  
No risk of losing a job  
Feeling of no risk of losing benefits  
More time with friends (if they are also unemployed)  
Less need for childcare  
More time for MH appointments