

FACT SHEET

Transformation Priority: Peer Employment

January 2014

Background

One of the transformation priorities in Beaver County focuses on peer employment and education options. One of the services addressing this topic is the implementation of the evidence based practice (EBP) of Supported Employment (SE). An anticipated outcome of this effort is providing peers with the skills and supports to obtain and maintain employment.

The November 2005 OMHSAS publication, "A Call for Change: Toward a Recovery-Oriented Mental Health Service System for Adults" became the impetus for a January 2008 initiative at BCRC that would transform and enhance the employment services available to individuals with mental health diagnoses. An advisory council, which was established in March 2008, includes representatives from various community agencies and staff members from BCRC/WIN Services and continues to meet on a quarterly basis. The Mental Health Transformation (MHT) Program, as it is known, utilizes the SAMHSA framework for supported employment. Supported Employment is an "...approach to vocational rehabilitation for people with serious mental illnesses that emphasizes helping them obtain competitive work in the community and providing the supports necessary to ensure their success in the workplace."

The employment strategy transforms employment options by hiring peer specialists as mobile employment support coordinators.¹ This increases vocational options for consumers and promotes recovery through supported employment and ongoing mobile peer support. Since employment services began being offered to consumers in 2009, the program has received two formal reviews which assessed fidelity to the model, with the outcome yielding a high level of consistency and an overall determination that services are meeting the fidelity measures.²

This fact sheet summarizes data collected between October 2010 and September 2013, contains consumer descriptive information and outcomes achieved.

Descriptive Information

- 120 individuals enrolled over the three years
- 60.6% were male and 39.4% were female
- Primarily Caucasian
- Majority of participants were between 24 and 54 years old

¹ Some of the direct service assistance has been provided by Certified Peer Specialists, who received training and Pennsylvania certification through Recovery Innovations. It is important to note that retention of CPS staff has been a challenge. Other staff at BCRC/WIN provides SE services on an ongoing basis.

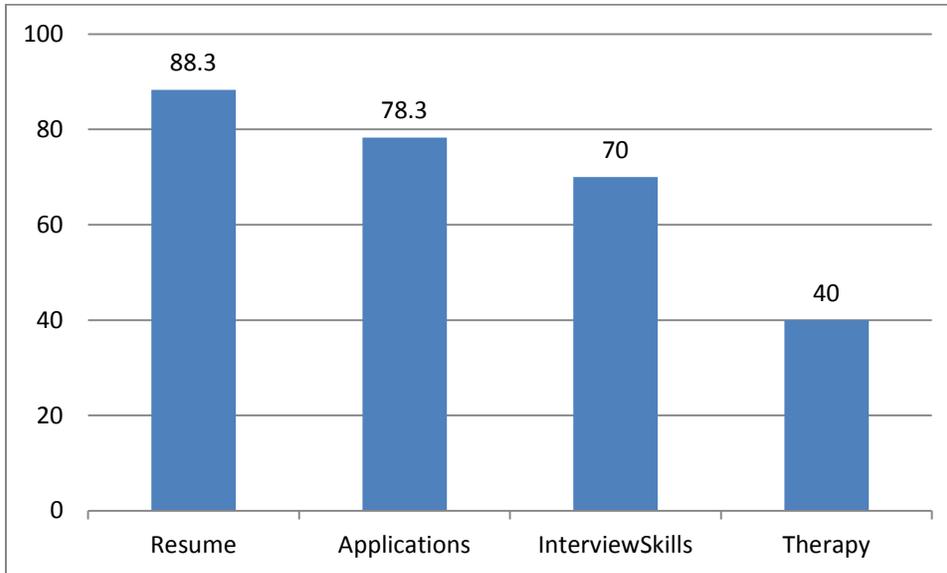
² Available at <http://store.samhsa.gov/product/Supported-Employment-Evidence-Based-Practices-EBP-KIT/SMA08-4365>

- Primary diagnoses of consumers include depression, bipolar disorder, and schizophrenia

Participant Outcomes: Key Findings

A large proportion of participants received help with resumes, job applications, and interview skills (see Figure 1).

Figure1: Primary Services Received (N=120)



- Over half (60.8%) of those receiving services have obtained and/or maintained employment, are volunteering, are enrolled in school or a training program, or participate in additional educational opportunities.
- Of the consumers that obtained employment, approximately two thirds were successful in maintaining employment.

"The employment specialist is very helpful. She allows sessions to be driven by me and we go at my pace."
-SE Consumer

Staff stressed the importance of client choice- Clients decide when they are ready to search for jobs and where they apply.

"Employment specialists think outside the box and provide new insights into my challenges."
-SE Consumer