

EMPLOYMENT

WHERE TO BEGIN

THINKING ABOUT WORK

CHOOSING WORK

GETTING WORK

KEEPING WORK

Here are some issues

The majority of individuals with serious mental illness express the *desire* to work, yet their employment rates are estimated to be 22%, with little more than half of that percentage working full-time.

Fewer than 2% of people with serious mental illness have access to evidenced-based employment services. This needs to change. And programs like Individual Placement and Support (IPS) can help people with mental illness find and *keep* meaningful jobs, supporting their mental health recovery.

THINKING ABOUT WORK

- POSSIBILITY OF WORK
 - WORLD OF WORK
 - NEED FOR WORK
 - SUPPORTS FOR WORK
- FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS
 - [What if people are telling me that I'm not ready to work?](#)
 - [What happens to my benefits if I work?](#)
 - [Can work improve my financial situation?](#)
 - [How can I try out work to see if work is right for me?](#)

What might I ask myself when considering the possibility of work?

- How do I figure out if work is possible for me?
- What role can work play in our lives?
- How is work supportive of recovery?
- Is work possible for people with mental illness?

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| Belief 1 | Do I think work is possible for me? |
| Belief 2 | Do I want work in my life? |
| Belief 3 | Do I think working will be worth it to me? |
| Belief 4 | Do I believe I can make work happen in my life? |

What might I ask myself when considering my need for work?

- What is “need” for work?
- What is the importance of “Need to Work?”
- What if people are telling me that I need to work, but I don’t think I’m ready?
- Why do I feel pressured to work?
- How do I know if I have a Need for Work?
- What if I decide that I do not need to work now?
- What if I decide that I DO need a change in my work situation?
- Am I satisfied with not working now?
- Do I feel internal pressure to work (I feel the need myself)?
- Why are others saying that I need to work? And what does that mean to me?
- Feeling unhappy about my current work life (working or not working).
- Feeling bored by my current work life.
- Threats of losing something I value if I don’t go to work
- People convincing or cajoling me to make a change
- Life circumstances that make it difficult to not work

What might I think about when exploring the world of work?

- How much information do I need about the world of work to feel ready to work?
 - How do I know if I have enough Information about the world of work?
 - Who can help me explore what I would like and not like in a workplace?
 - What if I don't know much about myself as a worker?
- [Volunteering](#)
 - Working full time OR Working part-time
 - Working short-term, flexible “[gigs](#)”
 - [Day work](#) OR [Transitional employment](#)
 - Explore your options for work. Go to a site such as [O*Net](#), which has a lot of information and ways to explore the things that might appeal to you as a worker.
 - Try out different jobs! The best way to find out about yourself as a worker, is to do it. We learn what we like about different work environments by working in a variety of places. We learn what we're good at, and not so good at, through our learning and working experiences. Life's a good teacher, so use experience with work to learn who you are as a worker.

What might I ask myself when thinking about supports for work?

- What does “supports for work” mean?
 - What kinds of people supports are there?
 - Do I have enough supports in place to move forward?
 - What if I don’t feel supported enough to work?
- Help you assess your strengths, interests and limitations.
 - Help you to determine what type of work or work setting would be a match for you.
 - Help decide if education or training is needed to reach the intended goal. ([Leonard](#))
 - Help determine what, if any, impact wages will have on their benefits and what to do about benefits.
 - Help you maintain wellness, stay healthy while working. ([Dixon, et al., 2001](#))
 - Match you to jobs in the community.
 - Help in overcoming specific barriers to employment either in the individual or in the community. ([Boston University](#))
 - Help in determining what resources are available and accessible to pursue your family member’s goal. ([Mental Health America](#))
 - **Emotional Support**
Emotional support is related to close personal relationships. Each person may define it differently, but you might think about it as helping to increase your feeling of hopefulness and optimism, especially in this instance about work. Examples of emotional support may include things like a friend listening to you, someone who is willing to “just be there,” or knowing that someone cares.
 - **Practical Support**
Practical supports for work can be a lot of things, but all of them help out in very concrete ways, such as as with bus fare, childcare, helping out with interview clothes, or practicing your elevator speech.

CHOOSING WORK

- IDENTIFYING MY PREFERENCES
 - RESEARCHING MY OPTIONS
 - CLARYFING MY STRENGTHSMAKING A DECISION
- Frequently Asked Questions
 - [What if my family and I disagree about my work goals?](#)
 - [What resources are out there for Veterans?](#)
 - [What if I'm interested in starting my own business?](#)
 -

GETTING WORK

- FINDING A JOB
 - RESUMES & COVER LETTERS
 - APPLICATIONS AND INTERVIEWS
 - GAPS IN EMPLOYMENT
- Frequently Asked Questions
 - [When should I ask about disability accommodations?](#)
 - [How do I negotiate a salary?](#)
 - [What if I want to start my own business?](#)
 - [What resources are out there for self-employment?](#)
 - [Will my criminal record keep me from getting a job?](#)
 - [Resources on criminal records](#)
 - [What if I have an employment gap because of my criminal record?](#)

What might I think about when clarifying my strengths?

- [What are strengths?](#)
- [Who can help me figure out what I'm good at?](#)
- [How do I figure out what strengths could help me in a job?](#)
- [What if I don't have any strengths?](#)
- [Vocational Rehabilitation](#), which can provide a vocational evaluation if you qualify for their services. , and which tasks you struggle with.
- [Peer Specialists](#) can support you as you explore your strengths, whether by reviewing past experiences, or by trying out new ones.

What might I think about when making a decision about work?

- How do I figure out what options fit my preferences, values, interests, and strengths?
- What if I need more education to get the job I want?
- Who can help me make decisions about my career path?
- Frequently Asked Questions
- When should I ask about disability accommodations?
- How do I negotiate a salary?
- What if I want to start my own business?
- What resources are out there for self-employment?
- Will my criminal record keep me from getting a job?
- What if I have an employment gap because of my criminal record?

KEEPING WORK

- WELLNESS FOR WORK
 - SKILLS
 - SUPPORTS
 - ACCOMMODATIONS
- Frequently Asked Questions
 - [How do I know if it's time to leave my job?](#)
 - [If I want to leave my job instead of keeping it, how do I leave my job in a way that's helpful?](#)

WELLNESS FOR WORK

- How do I keep my wellness while working?
- What makes a workplace conducive to wellness?
- SAMHSA has described 8 dimensions of wellness, including Occupational Wellness, is defined by SAMHSA as “personal satisfaction and enrichment from one’s work.”
- Wellness Recovery Action Plan (WRAP) for Work,

Skills

- How do I know what's required of me at work?
- How can I figure out if I'm good at the skills that my workplace requires of me?
- How do I make the most of my strengths?
- What do I do if I'm not good at everything?
- Gather new information or knowledge
- Learn new skills
- Get support to use the skills you have
- Explicitly required skills,
Implicitly required skills,
Personally-important skills

SUPPORTS

- What does Supports for work mean
- How do I know what supports I will need in the work place
- How can I strengthen my supports
- Take stock of the supports you have. How do they help you? Do your supports work together (i.e., the people)? Do they feel like enough support for you to feel satisfied and successful at work?
- Where do you think there are “holes” in your support system?
- What people, places, things, and activities do you think might support you in ways you don’t have now?
- Work together

FAMILY SUPPORT

How can I help my family member think about work?

- THINK ABOUT WORK
 - FIND A PATH TO EMPLOYMENT
 - ACHIEVE EMPLOYMENT GOALS
 - KEEP A JOB
- Frequently Asked Questions
 - [How can I motivate my family member to consider work?](#)
 - [Are there potential risks to employment?](#)
 - [What will happen to my family member's benefits if s/he starts to work?](#)
 - [What happens to benefits if my family member is self employed or has his/her own business?](#)
 - [Veterans Benefits](#)

The Value of Work

- What is recovery?
- What is vocational recovery?
- Can work add value to my family member's life?
- Does work promote recovery?
- How will I know when my family member is ready for work?
- Does recovery promote successful employment?
- Would work give my family member a chance to socialize?
- How does work affect my family member's quality of life?
- What impact will work have on the family?

Hope for Success

- Why hope for success?
- What is the evidence that people with psychiatric disabilities can recover and work successfully?
- Does recovery make employment possible? Does employment makes recovery possible?
- Are there potential risks?
- Will working cause my family member to relapse?
- What if my family member is anxious about failing at the job?
- What sacrifices might be necessary?
- Is there potential for mixed messages about work from care providers, clinicians, and others?
- Is it worth the “hassle”?

Starting the Conversation

- How might I start talking to my family member about work?
- How can we offer “nag-free” and ongoing support for work goals?
- How would our family member begin the process of identifying resources for making a vocational choice?
- How might we think about our family culture in relation to work?

Supports for Work

- How can we consider what supports are needed and available?
- Why would my family member need supports for work when s/he isn't employed?
- What supports might we need to know about in the early stages of the employment journey?
- Who can help us find the right services to provide employment-related supports?

WHERE TO GO IN SAN ANTONIO

SAN ANTONIO CLUB HOUSE

TEXAS WORKFORCE
COMMISSION

Vocational Rehabilitation