



# CREATING A CULTURE OF EMPLOYMENT BECAUSE EVERYONE CAN WORK

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## Supported Employment Team

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## Employment Services

[http://dmh.mo.gov/  
about/  
employmentservices.html](http://dmh.mo.gov/about/employmentservices.html)

## What Can Agency Leaders Do to Promote a Culture of Employment?

Management experts tell us that successful organizations set goals and measure their success in achieving those goals. Agencies that track their performance typically are more focused, take corrective action when there are barriers, and celebrate their successes. Set goals to decrease the unemployment rate in your agency.

Get a baseline by simply counting the number of consumers in your agency at each stage of the employment process (competitively employed, looking for work, unemployed, and not looking for work.) Simply measuring the rate of unemployment and sharing the data with all staff on a regular basis will raise awareness of the need to encourage employment. Click here for Need to Change Self Rating Scale <http://on.mo.gov/2k0ehOH>

Staff need to hear from leadership that employment plays a critical role in promoting recovery and your agency is in the recovery business. At staff meetings, CEOs should articulate how employment fits with the agency's overall mission.

Look for ways to remove barriers, expedite cross training, and increase collaboration among treatment teams to promote employment, recovery, and rehabilitation at your agency.

Learn the principles of IPS Supported Employment. [www.ipsworks.org](http://www.ipsworks.org) Partner with your local Vocational Rehabilitation office. Their mission is to put individuals with disabilities to work. <http://on.mo.gov/2kjr6kZ>

## People with Serious Mental Illness Can Work

While many people harbor preconceptions that people with serious mental illness cannot handle the stress of work, studies have consistently found that these assumptions are baseless. People with serious mental illness are capable of working if they are connected with appropriate jobs and receive appropriate supports.

It is not the inability to work, but rather attitudinal barriers, service gaps, and service system barriers that make it difficult for individuals with serious mental illness to maintain employment. In a national survey, (Michael McQuilken et al., The Work Project Survey: Consumer Perspectives on Work, 18 Journal of Voc. Rehab. 59, 60 (2003) ) people with serious mental illness reported the primary barriers to employment to be stigma and discrimination (45 percent),

## FREE TAX PREPARATION

The Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program offers free tax help to people who make \$54,00 or less, persons with disabilities and limited English speaking taxpayers who need assistance in preparing their own tax returns.

Tax filing assistance is available January thru April.

To locate the nearest tax aide site, call 888.227.7669.

## SUCCESS STORY

Do you have a success story to share?

<http://dmh.mo.gov/opla/sharingsuccessstories.html>

fear of losing benefits (40 percent), inadequate treatment (28 percent), and lack of vocational services (23 percent).

Not only can people with serious mental illness work, but employment plays a critical role in promoting recovery. Work promotes social acceptance, integration into the community, and gives individuals a sense of purpose, self-esteem, and self-worth. Work also reduces poverty and dependence, enabling people to become independent and self-sustaining, have more choices and opportunities, and live independently. It also improves clinical outcomes, including reducing symptoms of a person's mental illness, and reduces the need for other services.

To learn more, check out the following link: <http://bit.ly/1xCFzvn>



## EMPLOYER SPOTLIGHT

Sleeve a Message is a Brentwood, MO, based company that manufactures sleeves for coffee and other hot beverage cups. David Dresner is the CEO, owner, and the brains behind Sleeve a Message. At the age of 10, David came up with the idea to place customized messaging on coffee sleeves. During his academic experience, David learned what it would take to make this concept a reality. His business has grown from shipping six thousand sleeves the first year to shipping six million sleeves in 2016. Sleeve a Message employs factory workers, graphics workers and office workers.

David is enthusiastic about hiring individuals with mental illness. He is understanding about the needs for flexible scheduling and other accommodations. He has a great working relationship with Renee Morrow, the Employment Specialist at Independence Center. To date, he has hired three members of the Independence Center Clubhouse. He expressed that the most important thing to him is the supports and communication that

Renee provides to him as an employer and also to the individual she has helped to obtain employment in various areas of his business.

As an Employment Specialist, Renee devoted time to learn about the business and each of the job duties and responsibilities. She is available by phone or text to answer questions and provide supports. In addition, she is a frequent presence in the factory and the offices and she knows each of the workers by name. Renee says that she enjoys providing supports because it helps people keep their jobs and advance into jobs with more responsibilities and better pay. She wishes she could work with more employers like David.

## STAFF PROFILE- MEET THE NEW IPS STATE TRAINERS

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I have always been interested in mental health and working with individuals with disabilities. I worked as a Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor and Supervisor in St. Louis since 1985. In May, 2016 I began work as a Missouri State IPS trainer. IPS is a supported employment model that has been shown to help individuals who are severely disabled get and keep jobs. I have seen the many ways that employment helps people to recover and to have a more meaningful life. I am enthusiastic about sharing this evidence-based practice with colleagues around the State.

“The meaning of life? Work and love.”- Sigmund Freud

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I worked at a community mental health center from 2010-2016. I began as an Employment Specialist and was then promoted to Manager of the Employment Services program, a program that was highly regarded throughout the State of Missouri. It was during this time that I found my passion-helping people find and maintain competitive employment. It's an honor to further serve people across the State of Missouri in my new role as IPS State Trainer.

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