



LakeCity

Employment
Services

A s s o c i a t i o n

Best Practice in Employment If Living with a Mental Illness

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LakeCity Employment Services, Dartmouth



History of LakeCity

- 1972 Dartmouth Activity Centre
- 1982 LakeCity Woodworkers
- 1988 Community Employment Program

Programs: **Woodworking Shop**
 Community Employment
 TREES Program
 reBOOT

- **Currently working with over 350 clients, averaging 11 new referrals per month and 10 paid jobs per month**



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Psychosocial Rehabilitation

Psychosocial Rehabilitation is a process through which individuals with psychiatric disabilities develop skills and supports they need to live, learn, socialize and work in the environment of their choice.



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Supported Employment

- **A significant part of Psychosocial Rehabilitation is Supported Employment: it is an evidence-based practice for individuals living with persistent and severe mental illness**
- **The elements of Supported Employment:**
 - **Finding paid employment is the goal**
 - **Client chooses the types of work interested in**
 - **Rapid job search and attachment**
 - **Integration with the mental health treatment plan**
 - **Disability benefits counselling**
 - **Time-unlimited support from Employment Counsellors**



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Recovery

- **Role Recovery is helping individuals with psychiatric disabilities develop the skills they need to be successful.**
- **Individuals with mental illness can recover and can lead a satisfying and productive life.**
- **Recovery can occur even though symptoms remain or reoccur.**
- **Recovery from mental illness does not mean the illness is gone.**
- **Recovery is not a linear process. It involves growth and setbacks, periods of rapid change and little change.**
- **Being employed is a key part of the recovery process.**



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Obstacles

- Gaps in work history
- Limited employment experience
- Lack of confidence
- Fear and anxiety
- Workplace discrimination/inflexibility
- Social stigma



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Navigation of Community Services - you can work and keep your benefits

- **If you are involved in a supported employment program, Community Services will allow you to keep the first \$300 plus 30% of your monthly net earnings.**
- **Income statements cover the period from 15th of a month to 14th of next month, have to be returned by 17th of the month**
- **Income is based on the pay stubs you receive in this period.**
- **Budget for the end of the month – employment earnings may reduce your regular social assistance cheque**
- **Earning more than your monthly budget will end your eligibility for social assistance**



Community Services Medication Benefits

- **Transitional Pharmacare available for one year if eligibility for benefits ends**
- **Extended Pharmacare may be available indefinitely if medication costs are high**
- **Nova Scotia Pharmacare Plan is available to all low income Nova Scotians**



Navigation of CPP-D - you can work and keep your benefits

- **Earn \$5000.00 before you need to contact CPP-D**
- **If “gainfully employed” - more than \$10,800 per year – may be ineligible for CPP- D but can fast track back during the next 5 years**
- **No medical coverage**
- **Notify CPP-D of changes in hours/wages**



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Adjustment Factors: Medications and changes to work hours

- **Medication schedule may need to be adjusted – wake up time and/or bed time may change**
- **Need to keep mental health team informed of changes – physical work may change meds absorption in the body**
- **May need med dosage reduced to enhance alertness**



Accommodations

- **Negotiate with the employer either before job begins or after being hired**
- **Need to set realistic goals and emphasize abilities**
- **Accommodations could include flexible hours of work, work in area with few distractions or alter job description/duties**



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Rescheduling Activities

- **Medical appointments outside of work hours**
- **Social activities to fit around work hours**
- **Adjusting sleep patterns – avoid staying up too late when working the next day**



Culture of work

- **Maintaining appropriate boundaries and initiating small talk – not discussing one’s illness**
- **Accepting direction and constructive criticism**
- **Obtaining appropriate work clothing**
- **Going to work despite inclement weather**



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On going follow-up

- **Having regular communication with the employer if LakeCity developed the job for the worker**
- **Trouble-shooting to generate ideas to overcome problems with our client while employed is open-ended**



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Supporting, Individuals Living with Mental Illness, in Employment

Thank You