



## Employment: Rediscovering the Earliest Form of Recovery

**“Of all the modes by which maniacs may be induced to restrain themselves, regular employment is perhaps the most efficacious; and those kind of employments are to be preferred, both on a moral and physical account, which are accompanied by considerable bodily action, most agreeable to the patient, and most opposite to the illusions of his disease.”**

The above was written in April 1815 by Thomas Eddy, the first Director of New York State’s prison system, in a report to the Board of Governors of the New York Hospital on asylums in New York State.

Before the development of psychiatric therapy, before the establishment of social services and supports, before the discovery of modern medications – our earliest mental health providers understood the value of an honest day’s work on a troubled mind.

New York’s State Hospitals at the time were self-sustaining institutions – inpatients were given jobs as a part of their therapy. As you can see from the images above, they grew the crops, made the meals, tended to the animals, washed the laundry, made shoes, worked in the machine shops, and maintained the buildings.

Giving inpatients steady employment was proving to be successful, confirmed Commissioners William Pryor Letchworth and Sarah M. Carpenter in their report 67 years later: “The practice stimulated industrious habits and good behavior.”

New York State, like the rest of the nation, stopped employing inpatients in the early 20th century, as the structure of our institutions and methods of treatment changed. As we begin 2016, we look back at the strides New York State has taken in recent years to again make employment an important part of an individual’s recovery strategy.

New York State’s 2013 Olmstead Plan made employment a priority for community integration. Governor Andrew Cuomo’s Medicaid Redesign Team convened a workgroup in 2014 to focus on employment as one of the social determinants of health for individuals with mental and physical disabilities, offering 12 initiatives to expand overall employment opportunities, including New York’s Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Business Act, and the Governor’s Program to Hire Individuals and Veterans with Disabilities.

In this edition of OMH News, we’ll tell you about some of OMH’s employment-related initiatives – such as Employment First, the New York State Promoting the Readiness of Minors in Supplemental Security Income program, and the New York Employment Services System.

If you have any of your own employment success stories you would like to share, please contact us. We’d love to hear from you at [omhnews@omh.ny.gov](mailto:omhnews@omh.ny.gov).

# New York Puts Employment **FIRST!**

The employment rate for New York State residents with disabilities, ages 18 to 64, is less than half that for people without disabilities, while their poverty rate is more than double. New York State's Employment First Commission is working to close this gap.

Created through Executive Order by Governor Cuomo in September 2014, the goal of Employment First is to make competitive, integrated employment the first option when considering supports and services for people with disabilities. Part of a national movement to support the employment of people with disabilities, Employment First is seeking to register 100 businesses as having formal policies to hire people with disabilities. OMH is one of the state agencies that is represented on the commission.

Low employment rates among people with disabilities can have negative effects on community economies – tax revenue is less and aggregate productivity is lost. The Governor set a goal for Employment First to increase the employment rate of New York State residents who receive services from the state by 5% and decrease the poverty rate by the same amount for those individuals.

One of the ways OMH is participating in the program is by expanding the U.S. Social Security Ticket to Work program and simplifying the process for providers and recipients to participate in this program. Ticket to Work is now the largest and most successful program of its kind in the United States. It provides access for people

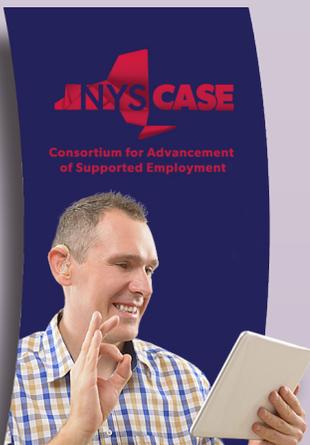
with disabilities to the mainstream employment supports available to all New Yorkers, coordinating them so that people with disabilities have the opportunity to work, pay taxes, and achieve economic self-sufficiency.

OMH is also increasing training for mental health providers, recipients, and families on a variety of Social Security work incentives and is partnering with the New York State Department of Labor to provide service recipients better access to job supports and training programs. The Office for People With Developmental Disabilities and Department of Labor is also taking part in this initiative. OMH



## Getting Started: Education, Training, and Assistance

Some individuals who are recovering from mental illness might need to sharpen their career skills, while others might want to learn about starting their own businesses. OMH and its partners have developed several programs to help these individuals make the transition back to the working world. Here are a few examples:



### Support through NYS CASE

Organizations that provide supported employment can get free training and technical assistance from the New York State Consortium for Advancement of Supported Employment (NYS CASE). Employers must have with a current contract with the State Education Department, Office of Adult Career and Continuing Educational Services. NYS CASE offers programs that can be customized to advance the professional development of supported employment providers. Coursework focuses on supported employment, vocational rehabilitation, workforce development, special education, social insurance policy, and evidence-based practices leading to successful integrated employment outcomes for individuals with the most severe disabilities.

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## NYESS: One-Stop Access

An effective way of helping individuals with disabilities find employment is to coordinate and exchange data among all state agencies that provide such support. This is the intent of the New York Employment Services System (NYESS), which has already been recognized as the largest Social Security Administration Ticket

to Work network in the nation. The system is a key step toward ending the fragmentation of the employment services system in New York State, and provides a single point of access to all of the state's employment-related services and supports, regardless of ability or disability. This system is also proving beneficial to businesses and employers. It incorporates the New York State Department of Labor's One-Stop Operating System, which connects job seekers with employment opportunities in the New York State Job Bank, as well as employment-related information from OMH.



## Entrepreneurship Bootcamp for Veterans

In 2007, OMH and Syracuse University established the Entrepreneurship Bootcamp for Veterans with Disabilities (EBV) in 2007. This program makes use of the university's resources to help returning military personnel learn small-business management skills. It's estimated that up to 30% of the 2.5 million post-9/11 veterans have some form of service-related disability that may inhibit them from working in a traditional setting. The bootcamp program gives veterans the knowledge and experience they need to start their own businesses. The program starts with a 30-day, instructor-led, online course that focuses on basic entrepreneur skills and the

language of business. Then there is a nine-day residency at a university affiliated with the program, during which students meet with entrepreneurs and educators from throughout the nation. This is followed by 12 months of support through the EBV Technical Assistance Program, a network of mentors and resources. The program has been so successful that it's been expanded to universities throughout the nation. Program officials estimate that more than 1,200 veterans have graduated from the program since 2007, more than 70% have started their own business.

## ACCES-VR

Anyone with a disability should have an opportunity to work in a job in their community. The New York State Education Department's Adult Career and Continuing Education Services-Vocational Rehabilitation (ACCES-VR) program helps make this happen by offering vocational rehabilitation services and guiding individuals through the service programs they need to reach their goals. Vocational rehabilitation counselors provide individuals with disabilities with training, education, rehabilitation, and career development to find jobs and live on their own. Each ACCES-VR participant works with a program vocational rehabilitation counselor to develop an Individualized Plan for Employment, which includes the steps and services needed to reach their goals. ACCES-VR does not charge for any vocational rehabilitation services, funding for other services under the program is based on financial need.



## Social Co-Ops

Although considered a new form of business model, a social cooperative works on a very old standard: The co-op is owned by its employees, volunteers, and customers. Stakeholders participate in its governing, deciding among themselves how to structure the organization and divide its profits. A social co-op differs from a traditional business in that it is committed to meeting social goals, such as providing employment for people with disabilities. Currently more common in Europe, social co-ops there have earned a reputation for delivering services more efficiently and being more adaptable and responsible than many government programs. For example, according to a report, *Social Co-operatives: A Democratic Co-Production Agenda for Care Services in the UK*, there are 14,500 social co-ops in Italy employing 360,000 people and 34,000 volunteers. The typical co-op has fewer than 30 members, and provides services to individuals who are older, individuals with disabilities, or individuals with mental illness. Some also provide sheltered employment for people with disabilities.

## Individual Placement and Support Program

Individual Placement and Support (IPS) Supported Employment programs help people with diagnosed mental illness locate jobs that match their strengths and interests. Developed by researchers at Dartmouth College, IPS is being implemented increasingly in New York State and successfully across the United States and in other nations as well. Because of the high rates of employment attained by consumers participating in high-fidelity IPS programs across the nation, IPS has become the standard for supported employment.

- IPS is based on eight principles: Competitive employment is the goal
- Eligibility is based on consumer choice – zero exclusion
- Consumer preferences are important
- Supported employment is integrated with treatment
- Personalized benefits counseling is provided
- Employment specialists systematically develop relationships with employers based upon their client's work preferences
- Rapid job search – starts soon after a consumer expresses interest in working
- Follow-along supports



It's important to recognize that anyone diagnosed with a mental illness who wants to work can participate in the program.

Employment specialists work to help people find jobs quickly. Job searches are uniquely tailored to help people find jobs that match their strengths and interests. Individual preferences such as job location or work hours are given special consideration. The goal is a paid job at regular wages in the general workforce.

Once an individual finds a job, IPS programs provide ongoing support to help the person succeed. IPS teams are a partnership between employment specialists, mental health care providers and the person diagnosed with mental illness. Based on the person's choice, family or friends may be included in the team. Employment specialists help individuals identify goals and, together with the team, work toward achieving them.

Employment specialists work as part of the mental health team to help people set employment goals and achieve success as part of overall treatment objectives. Trained benefits counselors help individuals understand how work affects access to insurance and government benefits.

The Center for Practice Innovations (CPI) at Columbia Psychiatry, New York State Psychiatric Institute is currently working with OMH state-facility clinics as well as PROS programs across the state to implement IPS. In 2015, more than 35 state facility clinics and 60 PROS programs received training and implementation support from CPI.

Implementations sites are organized into learning collaboratives, where they learn from each others' efforts as well as from IPS implementation experts. Training activities and resources include online modules, webinars and interactive online meetings, regional face-to-face training, and site-specific consultation visits. Data provided by the implementation sites – fidelity self-assessments and performance indicators – helps to individualize the training and support provided. OMH Central Office staff – from the State Operations Unit and Rehabilitation Services Unit, collaborate with CPI staff to support the implementation and assist in sustaining the model.

For further information, please visit: [http://www.practiceinnovations.org/CPIInitiatives/SupportedEmployment\(IPS\)/tabid/188/Default.aspx](http://www.practiceinnovations.org/CPIInitiatives/SupportedEmployment(IPS)/tabid/188/Default.aspx).<sup>omh</sup>

# Cultural Modeling: Leading By Example

OMH is taking the lead in encouraging employment of people with disabilities through its “cultural modeling” initiative.

“The basic concept behind cultural modeling is to practice what we preach,” said John Allen, Special Assistant to the Commissioner at OMH. “Our agency is making a concerted effort to create a fair environment to improve the hiring of qualified individuals with disabilities. We’re working to identify barriers that exist and remove them, and then match applicants to opportunities with the agency and the community-based organizations it funds.”



John Allen

One such strategy is to ensure individuals receive timely notification about state employment opportunities. Under Sections 55-b and 55-c of New York State Civil Service Law, the Civil Service Commission can designate up to 1,200 positions that would have been filled through competitive examination to be filled instead through the appointment of qualified people with disabilities.

OMH is working toward making it possible for 55-b and 55-c applicants be included on canvas lists for these positions. This will give them more opportunities for career advancement and will, in turn, free up entry-level positions for others. It will also help managers, because they will be able to “reach” these individuals and give them a formal job offer.

The state’s Employment First Commission has recommended the reinstatement of a statewide 55-b and 55-c coordinator to oversee the adoption and implementation of this change.

Such openings for 55-b and 55-c candidates will be included in the New York State Department of Labor’s Skills Matching and Referral Technology (SMART) program. SMART compares resumes with openings in New York’s Job Bank and from Job Scout, a service that recommends leads from other Internet-based job postings. Using these resources can also open the door for employment in county and municipal governments, and in community-based organizations. This can be important in rural communities, where some of the largest employers are in these settings and can serve as a model for local businesses.

New York is working to refine its strategy and is consulting with national experts to help develop a policy. “Although some state agencies are already working to hire individuals that receive their support,” Allen said, “we can improve the process by working together to integrate our efforts.” All state contractors will be asked to culturally model the hiring of qualified individuals with disabilities, as well. <sup>OMH</sup>

# NYS PROMISE: Work-Based Learning

The NYS PROMISE program is designed to improve the economic prospects of students and their families.

Short for “Promoting the Readiness of Minors in Supplemental Security Income,” NYS PROMISE is helping youth age 14 to 16 who have disabilities and receive Supplemental Social Security Income (SSI) to develop the skills they’ll need for their future careers, while learning the responsibility of earning an income and creating a budget.



Andrew Karhan

“Program participants will work with case managers to assess their goals, and to identify a place to work with a local business, usually for five hours each week,” said Andrew Karhan, Project Director for NYS PROMISE. “Then they’re trained in the skills they’ll need to handle the job. They also receive coaching at their workplace. The goal is to help participants and their families make better-informed decisions about their financial future, and help them take action to be economically self-sufficient.”

The \$32.5 million research initiative is under way in New York City, Western New York, and the Capital Region. Enrollment ends April 30, 2016. Starting in 2016, the New York State PROMISE initiative will publish results and reports describing its research findings and feedback.

NYS PROMISE is a collaborative initiative that includes the following statewide partners: Office of Mental Health, Cornell University Yang-Tan Institute, State Education Department, Department of Labor, Office of Children and Family Services, Department of Health, Employment Services System, Office for People With Developmental Disabilities and the Developmental Disabilities Planning Council. For information on enrollment, visit the NYS PROMISE website at: <http://news.nyspromise.org>. <sup>OMH</sup>

# OMH and Cornell ILR: A Working Partnership

OMH's long-time partner in developing employment-related recovery strategies has been the Cornell University's Institute of Labor Relations, now known as the "ILR School." The Institute worked with OMH in the 1980s to set up some of the earliest supportive-employment programs for those under OMH care and is still conducting innovative research today.

"Employment is a pivotal part of recovery," said Thomas Golden, Associate Director of Cornell's K. Lisa Yang and Hock E. Tan Institute on Employment and Disability. "Employment gives one a meaningful role in the community." The Yang-Tan Institute works to advance knowledge, policies, and practice to strengthen equal opportunities for all people with disabilities. It conducts research on issues related to disability and employment and works with employers to encourage inclusive workplaces.

## Studying Influence of Employment on Health

One such research project with OMH examined the role of employment in reducing medical expenditures. Conducted among individuals who were working and enrolled in the Medicaid Buy-in Program for Working People with Disabilities, the study reported a 43% decrease in Medicaid expenditures as a result of employment. This confirmed an earlier study by Mathematica Policy Research, which indicated that social enterprises that provide employment can help people to be self-sufficient and stable, and less dependent on government benefits.



Thomas Golden

The study cautioned, however, that many New Yorkers with disabilities still reported limited knowledge of, and access to, tools and services to find work and plan for themselves financially. Although family members help access services, they, too have limited knowledge and often seek to protect their family member from challenges. It was recommended that employment programs move toward conducting assessments based on criteria that identifies a person's abilities, rather than the traditional method of reducing perceived deficits.

## Improving Education and Career Outcomes for Youth

Recently, the ILR School's Employment and Disability Institute has been working with OMH to implement a \$32.5 million federal award to improve education and career outcomes for low-income children with disabilities, ages 14 through 16, who receive Supplemental Security Income. The initiative is now known as the New York State "Promoting the Readiness of Minors in Supplemental Security Income," program or NYS PROMISE, and is expected to enroll 2,000 youths by April 2016. Read more about NYS PROMISE on page 5 of this issue.

The project focuses on a vulnerable population of youth who experience low education and economic levels, high school dropout and incarceration rates. Their situation is often made more complicated by their families' limited resources and their families often face challenges in supporting their children's transition from school to earning living. Golden, who is also the lead investigator of this project, said the five-year grant is designed to help students graduate from high school, complete postsecondary education and job training, obtain employment and reduce reliance on Supplemental Security Income.

"Work is therapeutic to one's well-being and self-esteem" Golden added. "It's a critical factor of the human experience we all need to have."



Bell tower at Cornell University

# Peer Employment: A Vital Connection to Recovery

An opportunity to earn a living has made all the difference for Garrett Smith.

Discharged this past November after three years at Rochester Psychiatric Center (RPC), Smith is working full-time today at the Affinity Place respite program for the East House Corporation in Rochester. He credits his volunteer and part-time work while at RPC with playing a major role in his recovery.

“Working gave me motivation,” Smith said. “It gave me responsibilities and people to help. It’s given me a purpose in life outside of myself.”

## Encouraging Recovery

Peer support programs help to encourage recovery for individuals with mental illness. These individuals are able to personally connect with peers, given the experience they share. Studies have shown that these programs are just as valuable to the peer advocate. Besides helping advocates re-establish themselves financially, advocates report these programs help them develop more confidence and feel more hopeful about their future employment opportunities.

Smith once aspired to become a filmmaker, and interned for an arts organization in Oakland, California. He took jobs on the side while he pursued his dream. Mental illness entered his life in December 2009, while he was living in New Orleans. Smith said it took hold quickly, and he “bounced around” with sporadic employment during the next few months before coming to the psychiatric unit at Erie County Medical Center in Buffalo for care in March 2010.

## “You Learn To Compromise”

After being placed in the Erie County Holding Center from 2010 to 2012, Smith was moved in February 2012 to RPC, where he started his recovery by taking part in an inpatient structured-workshop program. Through the program, Smith said he learned the value of social interaction. “You learn to deal with the people you meet in your professional life,” he said “Even if you have a personality conflict with someone, you learn to compromise. It’s all a part of employment. It makes you a better person – without realizing you’re working on yourself.”

**“Working gave me motivation,” Smith said. “It gave me responsibilities and people to help. It’s given me a purpose in life outside of myself.”**

Smith stayed with the program the entire three years he was at RPC, eventually being promoted to workshop coordinator. He also started working per-diem as an advocate, running a group and studying for certification. While still an inpatient, he volunteered at Rochester Rehabilitation. He was hired full-time at East House in May 2015, six months before his discharge.

## Bring Something to the Table

“If it hadn’t been for RPC, I never would have had these opportunities,” Smith said, adding that these employment opportunities helped him stay active and avoid any idle thinking that could have led to depression. “Recovery is something you have to engage in yourself,” Smith added. “Programs will work with you, but you have to be willing to bring something to the table. This is where employment comes in. They’ll give you the tools, but it’s up to you to build the platform.”<sup>OMH</sup>



Smith and his son, Luca.