

A practical guide for engaging people in employment efforts

Interested in Working?

2013

Of course you can't get a job by just snapping your fingers. It can often be a long and challenging process, but getting a job can also be the most rewarding thing you ever do. Interested? Here's how:

Step 1: Let's talk about it

What kind of job are you interested in? What work experience do you have? Skills? Challenges? Do you want a more formal assessment of your skills and interests?

What do you think working would be like for you?

Need some more exposure to work? You can meet a Village member who's working now. You can visit some jobs. You can do a little "we pay" work for the team or you can do a one week assessment at one of the Village work training sites to see what working is like and how you feel when you're working.

Getting real: To get a job you need 1) to have a clear idea about what working would be like for you that you're moving towards, 2) to be willing to take a few concrete steps in that direction, and 3) to know why working is important enough to you that you'll persist when things get tough.

Step 2: Let's take some action

Do you have an Id and a social security card?

Let's put together a resume.

Let's see what the job market looks like – we can check out Craig's list, the Career Transition Center

Want to know more about specific jobs and the market? WE can consult with a job developer or maybe find someone who works in the area you're interested in

If you find something interesting, let's try putting in an application.

Are you prepared for an interview? Need clothes? Need some practice with a mock interview? How will you get there?

Getting real: did you get a job that easily? Great, but if not, don't despair. Most people need more support and need to work on their challenges. What challenges did you run into?

Step 3: Making plans to deal with your challenges

Your team can help you deal with your challenges. Let's meet together in a "mapping meeting" to talk about it and see what we can work out. Here are some common challenges and plans to deal with them:

You don't have much experience working and what you'll face on a real job. You've never developed good work habits. Maybe spending some time training in one of our three work experience sites would help.

You don't have the skills you need to get the jobs you want. Maybe Voc Rehab has a training program, or the LB Adult School, or LBCC has a certificate program. There are special programs to train peer workers in mental health. Maybe we can find some job with on the job training available.

You can't get documentation. Maybe you need immigration assistance or help through non-governmental networks.

You're afraid your social security will be messed up or lost. Let's go through the Social Security work book or go to Social Security to talk with them or Mental Health Advocacy Services.

You're afraid of leaving a mental health environment. Maybe an assignment where the employer knows about us and mental health. Maybe an internship or volunteering to get used to being in the community. Maybe learning some coping skills for stigma and fear.

Your symptoms or side effects or emotions or substance abuse or physical problems are interfering with work. Maybe you need to focus more on your treatment. Maybe some peer support can give you some self help coping ideas.

You're having trouble finding a job. Maybe working with one of our job developers intensively would help.

You fail the background check. Maybe you can clear some warrants or get help getting you record expunged or maybe you need specialty job development for people with criminal records.

You can't afford transportation or work clothes or equipment. Maybe you can work on a savings plan or fundraising ideas or maybe the team can help with a grant or loan

These are just some common examples. You'll bring up your particular situation with your team in mapping meeting.

Reality check: Some of these obstacles take serious time and effort and commitment to overcome. Is working important enough to you to stick to it?

Step 4: holding onto a job

You got a job. Maybe not your dream job, but it's a job. That isn't the end of the process. You have to keep the job.

Are you prepared to go to work? Do you know where it is and can get there? Do you need an alarm clock to get up? Do you look good? Do you have what you need?

Can you deal with coworkers and supervisors? Maybe plan ahead. Do some role plays. Get some ideas for coping.

Can you persist in a job? Maybe joining a job club and getting peer support from other members who are trying to work would help. Where else can you get emotional and practical support? Can you find a mentor?

Can you handle your paycheck? Do you need help reporting to Social security so you don't get an overpayment penalty? Do you need help so you don't get drunk or high on your first check and lose your job?

How will you organize your life around your work hours? How will you see your doctors or other workers? How will you have fun after hours? How will you get errands done?

Is working impacting your mental illness or emotions or substance abuse? Better or worse or both? Do your treatment or coping strategies need to change?

Reality check: Imagining benefits and challenges and actually facing them at work are two different things. What surprised you? What needs changing about you plans and supports?