Highlighting Success: Labette Center for Mental Health

Labette Center for Mental Health is located in Parsons, Kansas serving a one county catchment area that traditionally has limited employment options. As the graph below indicates, prior to the implementation of the evidence-based practice project in supported employment, 24% of the consumers in supported employment services were employed during a quarter. After the implementation of the project, which began in January 2004, employment for consumers in the SE program increased dramatically to 77%. A significant element of implementation includes providing effective job development practices. Trinette Craddock, employment specialist at LCMH, has been highly successful in developing effective relationships with employers. These relationships, along with implementing evidence-based practice have resulted in more clients working!

Please read on to learn more about effective elements of job development that Trinette practiced.

Percentage Employed During Quarter
Effective Job Development in Supported Employment

One of the elements that the Supported Employment EBP projects have found as essential in success is Job Development.

**Definition:** Job Development is engaging employers in meaningful relationships, finding out what is important to the employer, and then matching those needs to consumer’s talents, interests and skills. In job development, the employment specialist becomes a resource for the employer, knows the employer and their needs, and provides support to the employer and to the consumer.

We have found that it is difficult to have programs pursue effective and aggressive job development. Typically, job development is something that is not done on a regular basis and rarely is done effectively. The following are some strategies that have worked in the EBP sites for pursuing effective job development.

- **Job Development Contact Goals & Tracking:** The supervisor and/or employment specialists set goals for the number of job development contacts to be made per week. These contacts are tracked and monitored on a weekly basis. The ideal goal is five employer contacts per week.

- **Employer Contact Log:** Employment specialists or employment services team keeps an employer contact log that details who the employer is, contact information, when visits have been made and who made them. Typically, once a relationship has been established, that employment specialist is the central contact person for that particular employer.

- **Target employers based on the employment interests of consumers currently on your caseload.** It is more effective to visit employers that you think match the needs and desires of consumers currently wanting to work rather than going to employers that you do not have someone in mind for working at that business.

- **Job Develop in pairs to build skills and confidence:** Many employment specialists who are new feel more comfortable in the beginning, contacting employers in pairs. This takes the pressure off and you can play off your partner. This is often an effective strategy when you are having difficulty getting into a company – the power in numbers.

- **Focus on engaging the employer and getting information rather than giving information during the first couple of contacts:** It is important to ask questions and listen more than talk during the engagement phase with employers. Finding out what is important to them, what their business needs are, and how they experience their hiring process is critical to engagement. Once you know the employer and their needs and experiences, then you can better target what information you give them to what they need.

- **The Supervisor doing skill building with employment specialists:** It is imperative that the supervisor of employment services have or obtain the skills
and ability to do effective job development. We have found that it can be helpful if supervisors have some marketing or sales background as well as experience in human services. In programs where there are several employment specialists, the effectiveness of obtaining jobs for consumers increases as a competent supervisor who has good skills in job development spends time with their staff learning how to build effective relationships with employers. Building skills entails going out with workers to model the skills, observe the employment specialist trying out the skills, and providing performance feedback.

If you have additional questions about job development or the EBP supported employment project, please contact the supported employment trainers/consultants: Linda Carlson or Galen Smith, or call 785-864-4720.

Other News:

New Strengths Model Case Management Sites Added: Labette and South Central (starting November 2005); Franklin and Horizons (tentatively starting summer 2006); and COMCARE (tentatively starting Fall 2006).

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