

Why Encourage Mental Health Consumers to Work?

Studies have demonstrated many positive personal and economic effects of working for mental health consumers...

- ❖ Most people with mental illness want to be employed; recent investigations indicate that the majority of consumers surveyed ranked employment as an important personal goal.^{1,2}
- ❖ Studies have shown that successful employment for consumers can significantly reduce the use of costly mental health services.^{3,4}
- ❖ Research among people with mental illness indicates that improvement in employment status results in higher levels of self-esteem, morale, self-efficacy, and overall life satisfaction.^{5,6}
- ❖ Helping people with mental illness work increases their contribution to our country's tax base. In a study examining the cost-effectiveness of programs designed to assist people with mental illness become employed, the California Department of Rehabilitation (CDR)⁴ demonstrated that on average, for every mental health consumer in that State who became employed, \$239 was paid each month in federal, state, local, and sales taxes.
- ❖ Since people with mental illness are one of the largest groups who rely on SSI/SSDI benefit support, helping consumers to work reduced the number of people on the SSI/SSDI rolls and saves taxpayer money. In the CDR study noted above, an average of \$200 per month was saved in General Assistance (Public Aid), AFDC (now TANF), and SSI payments. In addition, an average of \$187 was saved in public mental health services costs.⁴

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