



Managing diversity – supporting people with mental health problems in Social Firms

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Why employment?

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- For most people work is good for mental health and well being including people with severe and enduring illness
- Unemployment is very bad for mental health
- Most people with mental health problems want paid employment (but not necessarily full time)
- Good work in competitive employment is the most effective treatment and its positive effects increase with time

Why employment? (2)

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“As a researcher I’m convinced that this is one of the only effective treatments and clearly the most effective treatment that we have for serious mental illness.

It’s totally clear to me that there’s nothing about medications or psychotherapies or rehabilitation programs or case management programs or any of the other things that we study that helps people to recover in the same way that supported employment does”.

Professor Bob Drake (London 2008)

Good work – healthy work

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Questions to ask:

- ❑ Security of employment?
- ❑ Is the work is characterised by monotony and repetition?
- ❑ Do employees have autonomy, control and task discretion?
- ❑ Is there an appropriate balance between the efforts that workers make and the rewards that they receive?
- ❑ Do employees possess the skills they need to cope with periods of intense pressure?
- ❑ Is the workplace is seen to be fair?
- ❑ How strong are workplace relationships?

(after Marmot 2008)

What is competitive employment?

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- ❑ The job is paid at the going rate
- ❑ The job is open to a disabled or non-disabled people (not reserved for a disabled person)
- ❑ The workforce and management is fully integrated between disabled and non disabled
- ❑ The goods or services are sold on the open market.

Why competitive employment?

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“Gary Bond has shown very clearly that it’s not supported employment *per se* but being in a job that helps people to improve their self esteem and their lot in life in many ways ... These gains accrue over time the longer that people stay in competitive employment and it’s very clear that the same gains do not accrue for people who stay in sheltered employment for similar amounts of time, even if they earn similar amounts of money...the clients somehow perceive a difference, they know that a real job is a real job and a sheltered job is not. ”

Professor Bob Drake (London 2008)

Social Firms – are they competitive employment?

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- Factors to consider
 - Pay
 - Terms and conditions
 - Relationship to market
 - Relationship to other businesses
 - Permeability to labour market
 - Ratio of disabled workers
 - The “psychiatric imprint”

The effective social firm

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- Offers good, healthy work in a competitive employment environment

Employment for people with severe mental health problems - what works?

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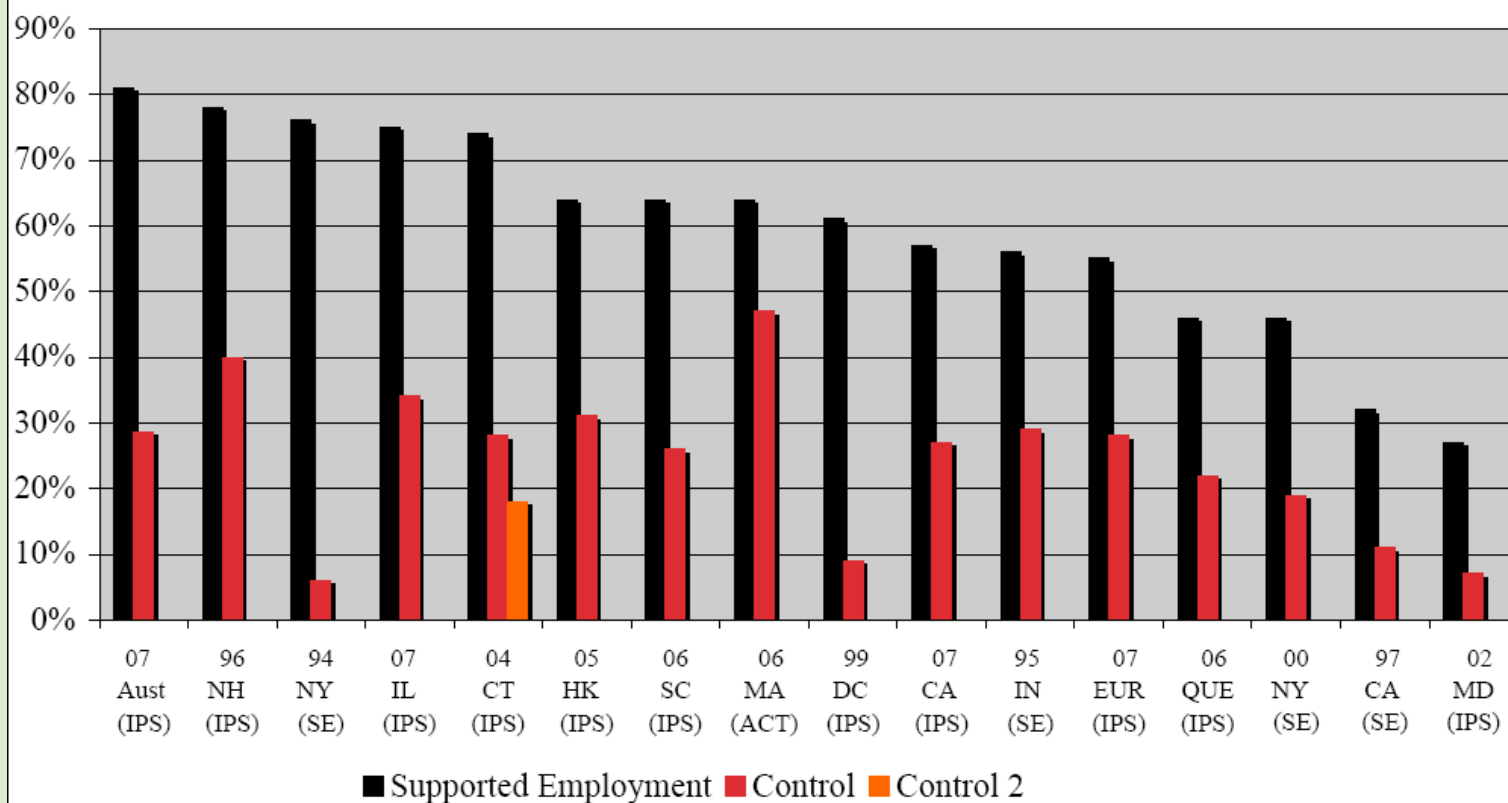
- ❑ Agency approach plays a significant part in work outcomes
- ❑ No exclusions – anyone who wants to work should be offered the chance
- ❑ Strong evidence in favour of supported employment - especially Individual Placement and Support (IPS)
- ❑ Effective in different countries
- ❑ Effective for all age groups

What do we mean by strong evidence?

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Figure 1. Competitive Employment Rates in 16 Randomized Controlled Trials of Supported Employment



What works?

Programme features that achieve success

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- ❑ Goal of competitive employment in integrated settings
- ❑ Client control of timing and pace
- ❑ Individual benefits advice
- ❑ Rapid job search and minimal prevocational training
- ❑ Integration of clinical treatment & vocational rehabilitation – team approach
- ❑ Job matching based on user preferences
- ❑ Initial assessment/adjustment – time unlimited in-work support

(Becker IPS Fidelity scale 2008)

What kind of in-work support?

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- ❑ Environmental design and adjustment
- ❑ Individual support and adjustment
- ❑ Social support
- ❑ Employee development

The working environment

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Remember:

- ❑ Some employees may have physical health problems
- ❑ Some employees may have communication difficulties – use universal design
- ❑ Some employees may find it difficult to concentrate – have some quiet working spaces

Individual support and adjustment

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- Each person to be asked how they manage best and the individual adjustments formally agreed
- Regular “supervision” sessions with manager reviewing all aspects of work and providing positive feedback
- Individual health management plan (WRAP) regularly reviewed with trusted mental health worker (Copeland 2002)

Social Support (1)



- ❑ Foster a sense of community;
- ❑ Get people moving;
- ❑ Nurture sensitivity to the environment
- ❑ Promote learning and development;
- ❑ Encourage generosity at work.

(“Five a day plan” NEF for the Foresight Review 2008)

Social support (2)



Some ideas:

- ❑ Buddying/mentoring for new employees
- ❑ Regular team meetings to discuss work, solve problems, make improvements
- ❑ Treat breaks as times when people socialise – play games, go for walks, share food, celebrate birthdays
- ❑ Have occasional away days with low-key team building activities – treasure hunt, visit another social firm
- ❑ Reward kindness and support for others

Employee development

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- ❑ Regular (at least annual) appraisal to include review of job description, goals for next period and training plan.
(where appropriate use Work Behaviour Inventory? Bryson 1997)
- ❑ Recognise achievement
- ❑ Encourage and support moving on (construct “passport” for future employers explaining adjustments etc.)

Further reading



- “Doing what works” Sainsbury Centre for Mental Health (2009)
http://www.scmh.org.uk/news/2009_doing_what_works.aspx
- Reviewing the theory and practice of occupational therapy in mental health rehabilitation(2009) Waghorn et al. British Journal of Occupational Therapy July 2009 72(7)
- Good work: job quality in a changing economy (2008) Coats & Lehki The Work Foundation
http://www.theworkfoundation.com/Assets/Docs/good_work_final3.pdf
- The Emotional Resilience Toolkit (2009) BITC
http://www.bitc.org.uk/resources/publications/emotional_resilience.html

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Thank you

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