

CONNECTIONS INC

Employee & Family Solutions | Employee Assistance Programs

Vol. 21 #5

A Message from Matt

Break the Stigma

As leaders, you can help foster a culture that destigmatizes mental health concerns and supports your employees.

1. Be vulnerable and authentic. Sharing personal experiences or just acknowledging you're having a bad day shows your humanity and encourages others to be more open.



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2. Model mentally healthy behavior. Demonstrate healthy work/life boundaries. It's okay to unplug at times and take care of yourself.

3. Be curious about your employees, but don't assume anything. Check in with your employees and ask open ended questions without prying.

Source: [The Pandemic Has Expanded the Role of HR \(shrm.org\)](http://ThePandemicHasExpandedtheRoleofHR.shrm.org)

"...under everyone's hard shell is someone who wants to be appreciated and loved"

- Andy Rooney



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EMPLOYMENT SUCCESS AND MENTAL ILLNESS

In this, the second of two Connections front page stories about employment for persons who suffer mental illness, we explore **Individualized Placement & Support** or **IPS!** The key concept here is that, "Work is the best treatment we have for serious mental illness."

Two-thirds of people with serious mental illness want to work, only 15% are employed. Being productive is a basic human need. Working can be a way out of poverty and avoiding the disability system. Competitive employment has a positive impact on self-esteem, life satisfaction, and reducing symptoms (Luciano, Bond, & Drake, 2014). Today, only 2% of people who could benefit have access to effective employment services.

Employing motivated individuals with a mental illness diagnosis may be a significant part of the solution in the **"WE ARE HIRING" environment!** Individual Placement and Support – **IPS - supported employment helps people living with behavioral health conditions work at regular jobs of their choosing.** IPS uses an evidence-based practice of supported employment. Mainstream education and technical training are included as ways to advance career paths. IPS is based on 8 principles:

1. Competitive employment; jobs anyone can apply for.
2. Systematic job development; Employment Specialists (ES) visit employers assessing business needs, hiring preferences and consider compatibility with job seeker preferences.
3. Rapid job search; the first face to face contact with the employer occurs within 30 days.
4. Integrated services; ES attach to and facilitate discussion with 1 or 2 mental health treatment teams for a hired employee. Motivated employees provide appropriate medical releases.
5. ES facilitate access to and personalize Medicaid, Social Security and other entitlement assistance.
6. Zero exclusion; no one is excluded based on diagnosis, symptoms, readiness, past substance use, psychiatric history or legal system involvement.
7. Time-Unlimited Support; Job supports are individualized, continue as long as each worker wants and needs support, ES has monthly face to face contact with employee.
8. Worker preferences and choices drive the involvement of the Employment Specialist.

How to access these services? Your local community mental health and counseling or Vocational Rehabilitation provider may be a good place to start. The international IPS Employment Center can be reached at <https://ipsworks.org/index.php/what-is-ips/>.

Connections Inc. Employee Assistance Program's mission is to provide holistic assistance products and services that support optimum productivity, team work and healthy community in the workplace.

Connections Inc. Employee Assistance Program mission statement since 1988

NOTEWORTHY:

ON LINE CHEMICAL DEPENDENCY RECOVERY SUPPORT: “I’m grateful to be able to log into a group and find the support, accountability and understanding that I need.” Says one enrollee in the Hazelden/Betty Ford Foundation ‘Virtual Addiction and Mental Health Treatment, Family Services, Recovery Support and Community Solutions.’ Today’s rapid increase in virtual service and support creates a demand for distance help with addiction issues. Always a leader in the field, this group has unique **RecoveryGo** online solutions in which they claim to bring world-class outpatient addiction and mental health care, recovery support resources, family services and community solutions directly to an individual. Although not a program for every need these resources add to the variety of success stories in the chemical dependency treatment world.



<https://www.hazeldenbettyford.org/locations/online-care-support-services>

HR TEAMS AND SUPERVISORS CAN IDENTIFY STAFF MEMBERS EXPERIENCING MENTAL HEALTH CHALLENGES... by paying attention to each person’s base lines. What is the person’s typical behavior? Learning this becomes more difficult with remote workers but there are signs that should cause concern:



- “Have you noticed that a person’s appearance has shifted?”
- “Are they choosing not to have their camera on during videoconference meetings when they usually did?”
- Is there evidence that they’re drinking too much or [have] picked up smoking again?
- Maybe they’ve told you about the 12 Amazon deliveries that show up at their house each day.”

<https://www.shrm.org/resourcesandtools/hr-topics/employee-relations/pages/5-common-mental-health-challenges-in-the-workplace.aspx>

Maynard’s Corner

A Connections Inc. PROACTIVE EAP is there 24/7 encouraging anyone to call with any concern. Addressing a problem early saves much more than a plan lying in wait.

Disability plans offering free Employee Assistance attempt to return the claimant employee to

work sooner, thus lowering the cost of their claim. Disability plans are not there at the beginning of a problem, only there when it impacts their income.

So please call with any question or concern 24/7, Connections Inc. Employee Assistance Program is here to help. That’s what we do!



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NEXT ISSUE: Obesity Rates are Soaring – What Can Be Done?

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