

Abstract: Supported Employment for People with Serious Mental Illness: An Experiential Learning Project and Qualitative Survey

Objective: This mixed methods scholarly project employs experiential learning and a qualitative survey to explore systems that can support employment (SE) for people with serious mental illness (SMI) and understand the role that psychiatric clinicians can play in those systems.

Background: Numerous models of SE such as Individual Placement and Support (IPS) and the clubhouse model have shown strong efficacy at reducing unemployment rates for people with SMI, and yet unemployment rates remain up to 80%.

Experiential Learning: I conducted an internship at La Fageda, a dairy product producing social enterprise in Spain that provides employment and therapeutic services for people with SMI and intellectual disability.

Methods: We conducted a 26 question qualitative survey of Colorado psychiatric clinicians' experiences with SE, training in SE, beliefs about SE, and perceived role in SE.

Results: N=64 providers completed the survey. There was moderate alignment with the principles of IPS among respondents. There was largest variance in responses to questions on direct experience with SE.

Conclusions: Psychiatric clinicians in Colorado are lacking training in SE and guidance on best practices for incorporating it into their practice.