

# Supporting Employment for People with Serious Mental Illness: An Experiential Learning Project and Provider Perspectives Survey

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## What is Supported Employment for people with serious mental illness (SMI)

- In 2012, 77.8% of Coloradans with SMI were unemployed<sup>(1)</sup>
- 2/3<sup>rd</sup>s of people with SMI want to work<sup>(2)</sup>
- Employment improves psychiatric outcomes:
  - 0.65 Odds Ratio for re-hospitalization following discharge for unemployed people with schizophrenia<sup>(3)</sup>
  - “Unlike most mental health treatments, employment engenders self-reliance and leads to other valued outcomes, including self-confidence, the respect of others, personal income and community integration”<sup>(4)</sup>

## Support is needed - many models exist

### Individual Placement and Support (IPS)

- patients are matched 1:1 with an IPS specialist
- 8 core principles such as: zero-exclusion criteria, rapid job search, competitive jobs
- 25 RCTs showing efficacy

### Clubhouse model

- a building run by clients with SMI and staff, where clients meet for social activity, mutual support and work activity
- originated with Fountain House

### Prevocational rehabilitation

- follows the 'train then place' model
- clients train in generic work skills then enter the workforce without continuous connection to rehabilitation services

### Sheltered workshop

- an early form of SE, that was authorized to employ people with SMI at below minimum wage
- responsible for stigma around exploiting people with SMI for labor. Now mostly discontinued

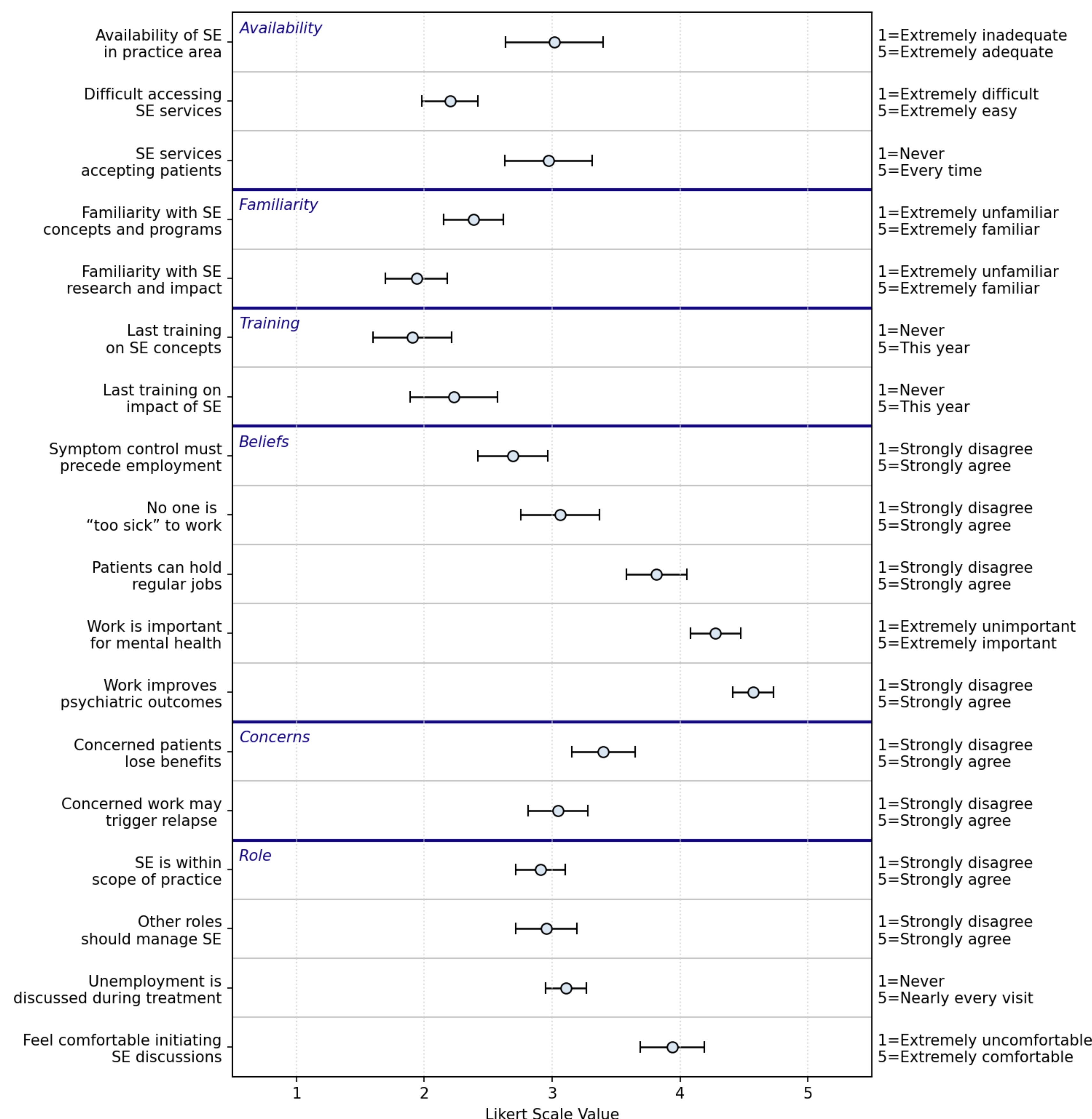
## Survey of Colorado psychiatrists' perspectives on Supported Employment (SE) for SMI

### Respondent Demographics

- N=64 completed surveys
- 14 ± 12 years in practice
- 40% work in academics, 26% in CMHCs, 30% urban
- 75% MD/DO, 25% NP/PA
- Respondents recruited using CDPHE database

### Survey Take-aways

- Training in SE is lacking
- Access to SE resources is strongest in CMHCs
- Psychiatrists see work as important for mental health
- Perceptions around principles of IPS are mixed



I spent 2 weeks at a yogurt company in Spain, learning about supporting employment for SMI



60% of La Fageda's 600 full time employees have SMI or intellectual disability

La Fageda is Catalonia, Spain's 2<sup>nd</sup> largest producer of yogurts

“The primary therapeutic element is the work itself”, along with the autonomy and dignity that comes from earning a wage

They additionally offer psychologists, group therapy, group living, and more services

### Photo Journal

La Fageda - located in a beautiful national park  
 La Fageda employee Joan show his artwork  
 Me touring the dairy processing factory.

Dairy cows which listen to classical music 24/7  
 Touring La Fageda's school for at risk youth  
 System for symbolically describing employees job

