

# Employment for People with Psychiatric Disabilities: Good for Everyone

Len Statham, MS, WIP, CPRP  
Project Manager –  
Employment & Economic Self Sufficiency  
New York Association of  
Psychiatric Rehabilitation Services  
Albany, NY



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# New York Association of Psychiatric Rehabilitation Services (NYAPRS)

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- NYAPRS is a statewide coalition of people who use and/or provide community mental health recovery services and supports.
- Primary focus is on recovery, rehabilitation and rights.
- NYAPRS is informed by people in recovery
- Advocacy: System, Social, Policy, Legislative, \$
- Education: E-news, Webinars, Forums, Events
- Training and TA to peers, providers, agencies, MCOs, health homes in NY and nationally.

# What NYAPRS is Hearing

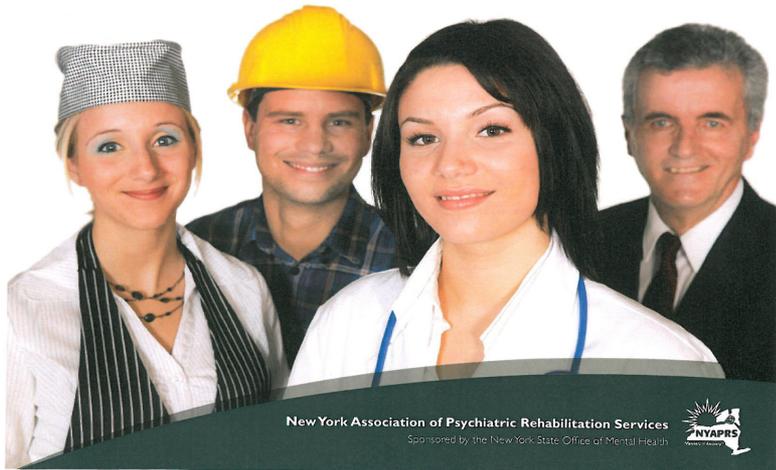
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- Employment NOW
- Economic Freedom
- Transformation from “patient” role to meaningful life role
- A clear path to employment that is not filled with a labyrinth of benefit traps
- Self-Employment opportunities

# We Can Work/Save Campaign



The **Employment Tool** For  
**People with Psychiatric Disabilities**  
in New York State



New York Association of Psychiatric Rehabilitation Services  
Sponsored by the New York State Office of Mental Health



- Successfully ran a state-wide grassroots movement that built hope and capacity among people with psychiatric disabilities in New York State to achieve meaningful employment and economic integration.
- Campaign led to important policy changes in New York – most importantly, the adoption of the Medicaid Buy-In program

# The Cost of Unemployment

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The conditions of poverty can **cause** certain mental health disorders and that alleviating poverty can have positive effects on children's and adult's mental health (Costello et al, 2003).

Poverty, acting through economic stressors such as unemployment and lack of affordable housing, is more likely to precede mental illness than the reverse (Hudson, 2005).

Adults with lower socioeconomic status are more likely to have serious mental illness than those with higher socioeconomic status (SAMHSA, 2002).

**The link between mental illness and poverty can't be denied. Employment is the “therapeutic intervention” that treats both.**

# The Cost of Unemployment

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**Benefits = Poverty**

**Benefits + Employment = Working  
Poor**

**Employment – Benefits = PRICELESS**

# Barriers to Employment:

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- The prevalence of “benefit myths”
- Medical advice that “working is too stressful”
- The belief that we can’t work
- Stigma on the job
- Family pressure not to work
- The prevailing belief that Employment = Illness; Benefits = Wellness

# Recommendations

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Encourage States' to boost enrollment into their State Medicaid Buy-In program via

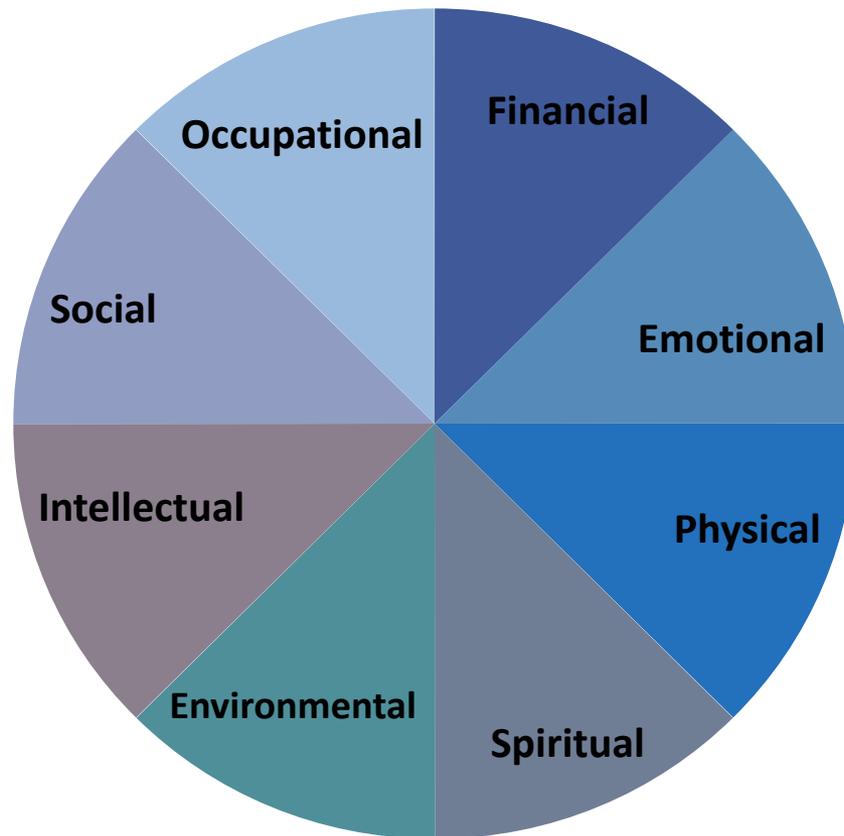
- Fund **consumer** campaigns that encourage and demonstrate the advantages of employment and removing barriers to the program.
- Fund training initiatives that educate and encourage providers and benefits advisors to refer to the program

Increase spending on Supported Employment programs to create jobs, decrease demand on benefits, and increase tax revenue to government

Train mental health providers in recovery, Supported Employment practices, and benefits advisement

# The Implications of Not Working

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# Good for Business

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## **Reason 1:** It benefits the bottom line

A recent [Best Practices guide](#) by the U.S. Business Leadership Network (USBLN) suggests that “[s]uccessful businesses recognize that incorporating disability in all D&I practices positively impacts their companies’ bottom line.” The guide features examples from companies such as 3M, PepsiCo, and Merck among others of the benefits and importance of hiring people with disabilities

# Good for Business

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**Reason 2:** People with disabilities represent a talented, untapped labor market.

Hiring people with disabilities doesn't just improve the talent pool at the office – it also improves the office culture.

A recent study by the Institute for Corporate Productivity (i4cp), which surveys and analyzes the practices of high-performing businesses, found that one of the reasons employers proactively hire people with disabilities is that it supports their corporate culture.

As the report states, this positive impact “is brought about in two ways: [it] adds highly motivated people to the workforce (which can lead to increased productivity) and it promotes an inclusive culture that appeals to the talent pool organizations want to attract.”

# “First Job Ever”

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- ▶ “No one ever talked to me about work.”
- ▶ “I experienced that work was helpful in managing my symptoms.”
- ▶ “Work gave me the confidence that I can do anything that I put my mind to.”
- ▶ “Has help me to be a better person knowing that I am needed somewhere.”

# Contact Information

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Len Statham

Project Manager: Employment & Economic Self Sufficiency

New York Association of Psychiatric Rehabilitation Services

Albany, NY 12210

585-490-3979

[lens@nyaprs.org](mailto:lens@nyaprs.org)