

Implementing Supported Employment For Veterans

RECOVERY AND REHABILITATION OF THE CLIENT WITH PSYCHOSIS: EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICES

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Types of Work Restoration

- Compensated Work Therapy (CWT)
 - Contracts with private and public sector
 - Less structured
 - Some work is in the community, leading to competitive employment
 - CWT/TR includes a housing component
- Incentive Therapy (IT)
 - Work on hospital grounds requiring little or no training
- Vocational Assistance
 - Vocational testing, assessment, guidance, counseling, or hands-on treatment provided by Vocational Rehabilitation (Voc Rehab) Therapy programs other than CWT/IT

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Background

- FY02 ~20,000 treated in CWT
- 9,000 evaluated by NEPEC
- Almost 87% w/ substance use disorder
- DSM Major Axis I diagnoses all mention occupational dysfunction as a criterion
- Development of performance measure for occupational dysfunction assessment and treatment
- New legislation and monies

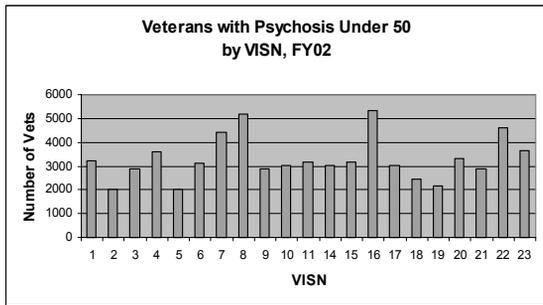
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National Psychosis Registry

- The SMITREC Psychosis Registry is an ongoing registry of all veterans diagnosed with psychosis (schizophrenia other than latent, schizoaffective disorder, bipolar disorders, and other non-organic psychoses) who have received VHA services from 1988 to the present.
- Data presented based on FY02 cohort.

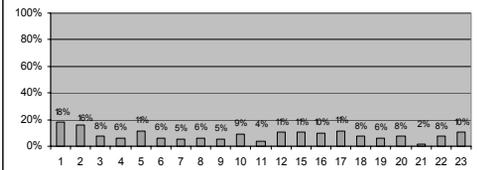
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National Psychosis Registry



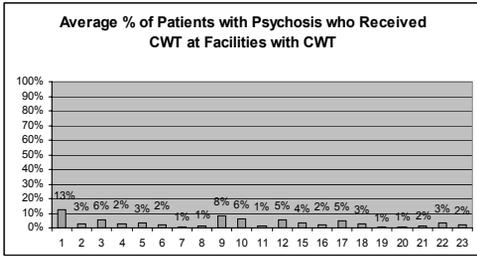
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Average % of Vets w/ Psychosis Receiving Any Type of Vocational Care, by VISN

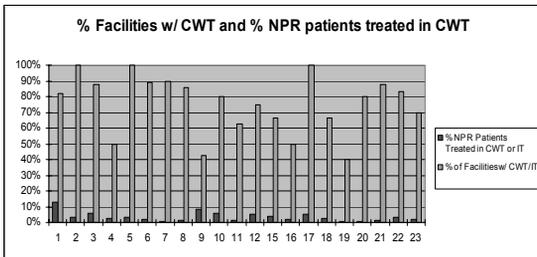


National average of 8.31% of patients with psychosis received any work restoration, from a low of 2% in VISN 21 to a high of 18% in VISN 1.

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Even when considering only those facilities that have CWT programs, a very low percent of NPR patients receive this treatment.



Underlines that the mere presence of CWT programs does not ensure the treatment of patients with psychosis.

Evidenced Based Practices (EBP) Philosophy

- Mental health services should reflect the goals of consumers to establish satisfying lives beyond illness, such as relationships, careers, and independence (“Recovery”)
- Consumers and families have the right to access services from the public mental health system that are known to be effective

Veterans Deserve:

- Access to services that are effective
- Access to services that support community re-entry or integration
- Access to services that address multiple complex needs
- Services that foster self-determination
- Services that recognize Veterans as individuals with many talents strengths and abilities that are often overlooked

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Challenging Thinking in Mental Health

- Mental Health once viewed employment as something a person with a mental illness did when they achieved recovery. Mental Health staff must be challenged to understand employment as a means to help veterans achieve recovery.

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Why Focus on Employment?

- Viewed by many as an essential part of recovery
- Most individuals want to work
- A typical role for adults in our society
- Cost-effective service that supports the recovery process
- We have a long history of understanding employment as therapeutic

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Positive Outcomes from Competitive Work

- Higher self-esteem
- Better control of psychiatric symptoms
- More satisfaction with finances and with leisure

(Bond et al., 2001)

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Guiding Principles of SE

- (1) Rehabilitation is considered an integral component of mental health treatment, rather than a separate service;
- (2) The goal of SE is competitive employment in integrated work settings, rather than prevocational, sheltered, or segregated work experiences;
- (3) People with severe mental illness can obtain and succeed in competitive jobs directly, without pre-employment training;
- (4) Vocational assessment is continuous and based in competitive work experiences, rather than in artificial or sheltered settings;

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Additional Principles

- (5) Follow-along supports continue for a time that fits the individual, rather than terminating at a set point after starting a job;
- (6) Job finding, disclosure, and job supports are based on clients' preferences and choices, rather than on providers' judgments;
- (7) Services are provided in the community, rather than in mental health treatment or rehabilitation settings; and
- (8) Multidisciplinary approach, rather than parallel interventions in separate agencies or systems, promotes the integration of vocational, clinical, and support services (Becker, Drake; 2003).

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Eligibility Is Based on Consumer Choice

- No one is excluded who wants to participate
- Individuals are not excluded because they are not “ready” or because of prior work history, hospitalization history, substance use, symptoms, or other characteristics

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Consumer Preferences are Important

- Individual preferences and choices regarding types of employment are honored and understood
- Preferences should not be “modified” by mental health, or vocational rehabilitation staff to make them more “appropriate”

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Supported Employment Is Integrated with Mental Health Treatment

- Employment Specialists coordinate plans with the treatment team, which includes case managers, therapists, and psychiatrists
- It is crucial for managers and supervisors to ensure the Employment Specialists are active partners in the treatment process

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Responding Rapidly to Interest in Employment

- Individuals who express an interest in employment meet with an employment specialist shortly thereafter to begin discussing employment
- Individuals are not required to take pre-vocational screening tests
- Individuals are not required to participate in “pre-work” activities

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Follow-Along Employment Supports Are Continuous

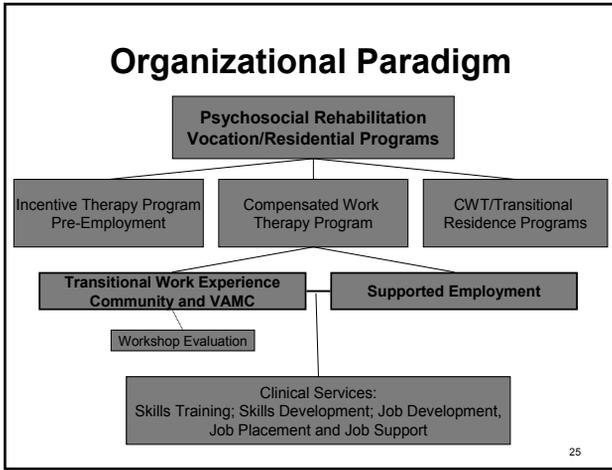
- Supported employment staff continue to stay in regular contact with consumer and (when appropriate) the employer without arbitrary time limits.
- Individuals receive on the job supports to help them with illness related employment issues that arise
- Follow-along supports come from the whole mental health treatment team

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Public Law 108-170 Section 104: Enhancement of Rehabilitative Services under 38 USC 1718

- In providing to a veteran rehabilitative services under this chapter, the Secretary may furnish the veteran with the following:
 - Work skills training and development services
 - Employment support services
 - Job development and placement services
- STRAF account may be used to fund operational expenses.

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- ### PSR Roll Out Proposal
- Directives
 - STRAF
 - Supported Employment
 - NEPEC SE Evaluation
 - Revised Handbook 1103.1
 - SE VISN Mentor Sites Training
 - SE Employment Specialist Training
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- ### Resources for Implementation
- 6 million dollars requested to fund one CWT program in each VISN as a Supported Employment Mentoring/Training Center
 - 10 million dollars requested to fund supported employment in the remaining CWT programs and to establish new programs at facilities without them
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