EVIDENCE-BASED SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT FIDELITY REVIEW MANUAL

Deborah R. Becker
Sarah Swanson
Gary R. Bond
Matthew R. Merrens
Dartmouth Psychiatric Research Center

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For each fidelity item, this section includes a description of the item, examples of how to score various situations, and sample questions for gathering information about the item.

Preface

The Evidence-Based Supported Employment Fidelity Review Manual provides information to help people understand how to successfully conduct a supported employment fidelity review using the Supported Employment Fidelity Scale, which was revised in January 2008. Following numerous revisions and piloting based on research findings and recommendations from national supported employment trainers, the Supported Employment Fidelity Scale expanded from 15 items to 25 items that define the critical components of supported employment. In this version, we also made revisions in the original 15 fidelity items, including clarification of the item and changes in the behavioral anchors.

This manual is part of the Evidence-Based Supported Employment Fidelity Kit. The kit also includes the Supported Employment Fidelity Scale, the DVD entitled, "Successful Supported Employment Fidelity Reviews," tracking sheets to be used while viewing the DVD to collect information observed about some of the items on the scale, two sample fidelity reports, and two sample supported employment fidelity action plans. The Supported Employment Fidelity Kit is available by contacting the Dartmouth Psychiatric Research Center at 603-448-0263 or http://dms.dartmouth.edu/prc

We appreciate all of the comments and recommendations that we have received from numerous people who have been associated with evidence-based supported employment across the country. In particular we want to thank the following people for their participation in this project:

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We believe that the revised scale is an improved fidelity measure that will improve the ratings and provide accurate information that will lead to program improvement. The ultimate goal is to improve the working lives of people with serious mental illness.

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Sarah Swanson
Gary R. Bond
Matthew R. Merrens

ONE

Introduction to Supported Employment Fidelity

1   Fidelity refers to the degree which a particular program follows the standards for an evidence-based practice. A fidelity scale is a tool to measure the level of implementation of an evidence-based practice (EBP). The Supported Employment Fidelity Scale defines the critical ingredients of supported employment (SE) in order to differentiate between programs that follow supported employment and those that do not. As demonstrated through research, high-fidelity programs are expected to have greater effectiveness than low-fidelity programs. You can think of the Supported Employment Fidelity Scale as like a roadmap or a compass, giving direction that will lead to good employment outcomes.

One use of the Supported Employment Fidelity Scale is for monitoring programs over the course of development. After completing a supported employment fidelity visit, the fidelity reviewers provide feedback to the agency by sending a completed Supported Employment Fidelity Scale form and a written report that includes observations, assessments, and recommendations that are useful for program improvement.

Supported Employment Overview

Evidence-based supported employment is a well-defined approach to help people with mental illness find and keep competitive employment. "Competitive employment" means work in the community that anyone can apply for and pays at least minimum wage. The wage should not be less than the normal wage (and level of benefits) paid for the same work performed by individuals who do not have a mental illness. Supported employment is a successful approach that has been used in various settings by culturally diverse clients, employment specialists, and practitioners.

Supported employment programs are staffed by employment specialists who have frequent meetings with the treatment team (i.e., mental health practitioners, such as case managers, therapists, psychiatrists) to integrate supported employment with mental health treatment. State Vocational Rehabilitation counselors also work closely with employment specialists to ensure that people who receive services from both systems have coordinated services.

Supported employment programs help anyone who expresses the desire to work. All clients interested in working have access to supported employment services regardless of job readiness factors, substance abuse, symptoms, history of violent behavior, cognition impairments, treatment non-adherence, and personal presentation.

Benefits counseling, also called work incentives planning, is part of the employment decision-making process. Employment specialists ensure that people are offered comprehensive and personalized benefits planning, which includes information about how work may affect their benefits and about work incentives in order to make informed decisions about job starts and changes.

Employment specialists help people look for jobs soon after entering the program, instead of requiring extensive pre-employment assessment and training, or intermediate work experiences (for example, prevocational work units, transitional employment, agency-run businesses or sheltered workshops).

Support from the employment specialist, and members of the mental health treatment team, continues as long as clients want assistance. Job supports often occur outside of the work place and can include help from other practitioners, family members, co-workers, and supervisors.

Jobs are seen as transitions. People commonly try several jobs before finding a job they want to keep. Each job is viewed as a positive learning experience. If a job is a bad fit for any reason, an employment specialist offers to help the person find a new job based

upon lessons learned. Evidence-based supported employment follows the philosophy that all choices and decisions about work and support are individualized, based on the person's preferences, strengths, and experiences. In supported employment, everyone is encouraged to carry out the job search and job performance as independently as possible, and employment specialists offer assistance as needed to support people in their working lives.

Assistance with career advancement planning is offered. For some people, career development might focus on a different job that the person anticipates will be more enjoyable. For others, career development could include specific vocational training or education through credit-bearing or certified educational programs.

Overview of the Supported Employment Fidelity Scale

The Supported Employment Fidelity Scale is divided into three sections, including staffing, organization, and services. Each item is rated on a 5-point response format, ranging from 1 = no implementation to 5 = full implementation, with intermediate numbers representing progressively greater degrees of implementation. The response alternatives are behaviorally anchored, identifying measurable elements of the practice. Programs that fully implement supported employment according to the scale criteria have shown to have higher competitive employment rates than those that do not.

Sources of Information

Fidelity reviewers using multiple sources of information make the most valid ratings. For example, reviewers might find information about community-based services by reviewing an employment specialist's calendar, asking clients where they meet with the employment specialist, and noting location codes on progress notes while conducting chart reviews. Sources of information include interviews with staff, clients, families, observations of mental health treatment team meetings and supported employment unit meetings, field observation of employment specialists while they are carrying out the practice (e.g., meeting an employer for job development), documentation reviews (e.g., job lists, outcome data…) and chart reviews.

What is Rated?

The scale ratings are based on current behavior and activities, not planned or intended behavior. For example, in order to get full credit for Organization #4 ("Vocational unit"), it is not enough that the agency is planning to organize the employment staff into a vocational unit, instead the agency is rated on how the employment specialists function at the time of the fidelity visit. So, if an agency had several employment specialists that did not meet weekly, share job leads and help each other with caseload backup, the program would receive a score of "2." If the SE supervisor reported that she had plans to begin gathering the employment specialists together for weekly meetings and that the meetings were scheduled to begin in a few weeks, the reviewers would include that information in the comment section of the report and might even comment that it was likely that the score would improve at the next review. However, the score for "Vocational unit" would remain a "2" because the action step was not yet in place.

Unit of Analysis

The scale is appropriate for organizations that are serving clients with severe mental illness and for assessing adherence to evidence-based supported employment at the agency/clinic level, rather than at the level of a specific clinician. However, separate ratings may be completed for a specialty team in addition to the agency/clinic level.

Scoring the Items

The fidelity review is conducted through a site visit, following a prearranged schedule. The fidelity review requires at least 1.5 days to complete. The time required for the assessment may vary depending upon the number of reviewers available. For instance, two reviewers who work side-by-side during the visit might require two days to complete the visit. Two reviewers who conduct some activities independently of each other may be able to complete all necessary activities in 1.5 days. Reviewers who have not been on at least a few supported employment fidelity reviews, however, should shadow a more experienced reviewer for the entire visit.

The data collection procedures include: 1) team meeting observations (both a mental health treatment team and the supported employment unit), 2) individual interviews that are semi-structured with the supported employment coordinator, the agency's clinical director and/or executive director, a couple of mental health workers/clinicians (i.e., case managers), a psychiatrist, 3) interview with a small group of clients who have received supported employment services, 4) shadowing employment specialists individually while they carry out supported employment services (e.g., contacting employers for community-based job searches), and 5) chart reviews. Further, reviewers may sometimes need to schedule short, individual interviews with employment specialists if they are not able to ask questions while shadowing the specialists (for instance, if there is a client present for the entire time).

Who Does the Ratings?

Individuals who have experience and training in interviewing and data collection procedures (including chart reviews) should conduct the supported employment fidelity reviews. In addition, reviewers need to have an understanding of the philosophy and critical ingredients of supported employment. We recommend that fidelity reviews be conducted by at least two raters in order to increase reliability of the findings. Both raters should have training and practice in conducting supported employment fidelity visits. Experienced reviewers should be paired with those with less experience. Finally, whenever possible it is recommended that review teams include clients trained in conducting fidelity visits and/or family members who can provide a unique perspective.

Basic skills and experience needed to become an SE fidelity reviewer include the following:
- *Knowledge of supported employment.* For example, at least a 2-day training in the evidence-based practice within the past year, experience working in an SE program or experience as an SE trainer.

- *Watch the DVD entitled "Successful Supported Employment Fidelity Reviews."* An SE reviewer watches the entire DVD and uses the tracking sheets in the supported employment fidelity kit to collect information on individual items for rating.
- *Experience observing an SE fidelity review.* An SE reviewer must observe at least one fidelity visit, consensus scoring, and review of the report with an agency by an experienced fidelity reviewer. At this point, a person would be qualified to conduct a review with another more experienced fidelity reviewer.

The scale can be administered internally by an agency or by an external review group. If it is administered internally, it is obviously important for the ratings to be made objectively, based on hard evidence. Circumstances will dictate decisions in this area, but we encourage agencies to choose a review process that fosters objectivity in ratings, e.g., by identifying a staff person who is not centrally involved in providing the service, such as a quality assurance person. With regard to external reviews, there is a distinct advantage in using raters who are familiar with the agency and supported employment services, but at the same time are independent. The goal in this process is the selection of objective and competent raters who receive training and have practice conducting supported employment fidelity reviews. Many evidence-based practice (EBP) trainers have reported that it is difficult for agencies to be objective when conducting their own fidelity reviews and consequently scores are often too high or too low. We recommend external reviewers whenever possible. It may be possible for agencies or counties to help each other out with reciprocal agreements to provide trained reviewers for fidelity.

Missing Data

The scale is designed to be filled out completely, with no missing data on any items. It is essential that reviewers obtain the required information for every item. It is important that reviewers record notes of responses given by the interviewees. If information cannot be obtained at the time of the site visit, it is important for the reviewers to collect it at a later date (either by telephone or on another site visit). If a particular item does not appear to apply for an agency, the item should still be rated. For example, if an agency does not have mental health treatment teams, the item

"Integration of rehabilitation with mental health treatment through frequent team member contact" should be rated as a "1" or "2", depending on whether the other components of this criterion are present, rather than ignored.

TWO

Preparing for the Fidelity Site Visit

2 Create a timeline for the supported employment fidelity review. Fidelity reviews require careful coordination and good communication, particularly if there are multiple reviewers. Therefore, it may be useful to list all the necessary activities leading up to, during, and following the visit. For instance, the timeline might include a note to make reminder calls to the agency to obtain a draft schedule confirming the site visit date, times, activities, people involved, and their positions.

Example Supported Employment Fidelity Review Timeline

Oct 10	Lead reviewer: Send outline of fidelity activities to agency and request a schedule for the visit. Include a request for needed documentation.
Nov 5	Lead reviewer: Contact the agency lead person a second time if the schedule has not been sent. Review the schedule to ensure that all necessary activities have been scheduled. Contact the agency if changes are required.
Nov 11	Lead reviewer: Call the contact person at the agency to ensure that the schedule is still in place and that the agency is ready for the visit.
Nov 13-14	Fidelity visit.
Nov 16	All fidelity reviewers meet (by phone, if necessary) to develop consensus for the final scoring. Reviewers complete their own initial ratings prior to this meeting.
Nov 27	First draft of report (written by lead reviewer) goes to all fidelity reviewers for feedback and edits.
Dec 2	Final report goes to agency.
Dec 10	Reviewers talk through the report with agency.

Agency Contact Person

Establish a contact person at the program. You should have one key person who arranges your visit and communicates beforehand the purpose and scope of your supported employment fidelity visit to program staff. This is usually the supported employment coordinator. Exercise common courtesy in scheduling well in advance, respecting the competing time demands on the employment specialists and other practitioners, etc. Ask the supported employment coordinator who should receive the written fidelity report. At minimum, the person who requested the fidelity review (e.g., the executive director) and the supported employment coordinator should receive the report directly from the fidelity review team. Agencies that have created a supported employment leadership team may want the team members to receive the report to monitor the implementation of supported employment services and to address suggestions provided in the fidelity report.

Shared Understanding with the Site Being Reviewed

It is essential that the supported employment fidelity review team communicates to each person interviewed or observed, the goals of the fidelity review. Reviewers should also inform program staff about who will see the report, whether the program site will receive this information, and exactly what information will be provided. The most successful supported employment fidelity reviews are those in which there is a shared goal among the reviewers and the service site to understand how the supported employment service is progressing according to evidence-based principles. If administrators or line staff at the agency site fear that they will lose funding or look bad if they don't score well, then the accuracy of the data may be compromised. The best arrangement is one in which all parties are interested in getting accurate information.

Prior to the supported employment fidelity review, contact the supported employment coordinator to request the documentation you will need and provide a written list of the interviews and activities you will need to conduct the visit. In addition, request the fidelity visit schedule in advance. The fidelity visit will be most efficient if the

supported employment coordinator gathers as much as possible of the following information in advance. For example, use of situational assessments and vocational evaluations is not in keeping with the SE approach, especially if those activities are conducted on a regular basis. By asking the SE supervisor to count the number of assessments and evaluations in advance of the review, fidelity reviewers can start the review with some objective data that will help them structure their questions.

List of Information to Request from Site

In advance of the review, reviewers should ask for the following:

- Roster of supported employment staff and assigned caseloads (if they make assignments).
- A list of places clients have worked over the past 6 months, including job titles, job start dates, job end dates if applicable, type of employment (i.e., competitive job, transitional (TE) job, sheltered job, set aside job for people with disabilities, volunteer job) *and* names of businesses/employers. For the baseline review request information about current jobs.
- The number of clients who have participated in situational assessments during the past 6 months. (*Situational assessments* refer to short-term work assignments that occur at an agency or in the community. The purpose of the assessment is to evaluate "work behaviors" such as attendance, ability to persist at tasks, social skills and so forth. These assessments may also evaluate the person's ability to perform a particular type of work.)
- The number of clients who have participated in vocational evaluation during the past 6 months. (*Vocational evaluation* refers to a battery of tests and work samples that measure academic levels, manual dexterity, short and long-term recall, range of motion, vocational interests, ability to sort items, etc.)
- Employment specialist and employment coordinator staff vacancies for the last 6 months.
- Available documentation indicating location of services provided by employment specialists, i.e., agency, community.
- Agency brochure.

- Brochures (or program descriptions) for each vocational service available to agency clients.
- Copies of job development logs for the past month for each employment specialist.
- Copy of supported employment fidelity action plan (if available).

List of Activities/Interviews to Schedule with Site

The schedule for the day should include the following activities:

- Meet with the supported employment coordinator (or others selected by the agency) for brief orientation to the agency (15 minutes).
- Observe supported employment group supervision meeting (1 hour).
- Observe a mental health treatment team meeting (1 hour).
- Interview a few members of the agency's executive leadership, including the executive director. For instance, the executive director, QA director and clinical director (30 minutes).
- Interview a psychiatrist or the medical director (15 minutes).
- Interview at least 3 case managers/therapists individually (30 minutes). It is important not to interview the same case managers/therapists at each fidelity visit.
- Shadow at least 2 employment specialists conducting job development services. (Reviewers may also wish to observe an additional activity, such as discussions between the employment specialist and client to collect information for the vocational profile, however it is important to observe at least two specialists conducting job development to determine whether the specialists have comparable skills in this area or whether there is diversity across the team.) (1 hour to 90 minutes each).
- Interview individual employment specialists to collect data not observed (30 minutes).
- Interview a small group of clients (i.e., 5-7 people) who have received supported employment services (30 minutes).
- Interview family members (30 minutes each).
- Read a sample of 10 charts for people who have received supported employment services.

- Interview a VR counselor and/or VR supervisor who is working with the SE program (30 minutes).
- Interview work incentive counselor (benefits counselor) (30 minutes).
- Interview the supported employment coordinator (30 minutes).

A sample letter that is sent to the agency contact person including requirements for documentation and fidelity visit activities is included in the appendix of this manual. This letter also provides recommendations for activities that fidelity reviewers should conduct together, for instance the interview with the SE supervisor.

Note: It is preferable from a time efficiency standpoint that the charts be drawn beforehand using a random selection procedure. If possible, ask to include 3 charts of clients who you are scheduled to interview. It is also helpful to review a couple of charts for people who are no longer receiving SE services. This can help provide an understanding of how the team approaches assertive outreach and/or continuous job supports.

There may be some agenda items that the agency cannot set up. For example, if the agency does not integrate services through a team approach, there will not be a mental health treatment team meeting to observe. This information obviously is used rating the item on integrated services (i.e., Organization #2. "Integration of rehabilitation with mental health treatment through frequent team member contact"). It's also possible that the agency may not be able to locate family members who wish to be interviewed or that the agency will not want to remove a psychiatrist from providing services. In some cases, it will be necessary to score the items with the information that is available.

It is helpful to schedule your visit on the day that the mental health treatment team meets as that is often a difficult meeting to reschedule. If the SE unit meeting does not naturally occur during your scheduled visit, ask the SE coordinator if it would be possible to reschedule the meeting so that it occurs during the review. Alternatively, if the

program is not far from you, ask the SE coordinator if you can visit the SE unit meeting that occurs just before or after the fidelity visit.

Request that the supported employment coordinator send you a draft schedule before the visit. Visits go smoothly if the schedule includes the specific activities listed above, the names and positions of people involved, and timeframes. If the schedule is not complete, contact the supported employment coordinator to request specific changes in the schedule. (The names of the clients to be interviewed and the sample charts should not be included on the schedule). Below is a sample schedule for a team of two experienced reviewers.

Sample Schedule of a Supported Employment Fidelity Review

DAY ONE

8:30   SE Coordinator and Clinical Director. Overview of the agency and SE program.

9:00   Mental health treatment team meeting observation.

10:00   Interview two case managers (reviewers split up for interviews).

10:30   Interview with agency executive director, QA director, clinical director (group interview).

11:00   Client group interview.

Noon: Lunch

1:00   Chart reviews.

3:00   Interview benefits counselor.

3:30   Shadow job development with employment specialists (reviewers split up for observations).

5:00   Break for the day.

DAY TWO

9:00   SE unit meeting observation.

10:00   SE coordinator interview.

10:45   Medical director interview.

11:00   Family interview (one reviewer).

          VR counselor (one reviewer).

11:30   Interview two employment specialists (reviewers split up for interviews).

Ask the supported employment coordinator whether the reviewers need to sign any agency documentation to ensure confidentiality regarding client information. Remove client names from all documents that you take from the agency (e.g., the job list).

THREE

Conducting the Fidelity Site Visit

3

Overview

The general strategy in conducting the supported employment fidelity review is to obtain data from as many sources as possible. When all these data sources converge, then one can be more confident in the validity of the ratings. However, experience suggests that the sources sometimes disagree. If the information from different sources is not in agreement, (for example, if an employment specialist indicates a higher rate of community-based services than is documented in the charts), then ask the supported employment coordinator to help you understand the discrepancy. As much as possible, ratings are made based on objective information from multiple sources, e.g., charts, practitioners, administrators, clients, family members.

The first step in the fidelity review is an interview with the supported employment coordinator. The fidelity reviewers should begin by reviewing the purpose for the visit and the schedule for the day. At the beginning of each interview or observation of an activity (e.g., team meeting, shadowing an employment specialist), briefly explain the purpose of the fidelity visit. Reviewers explain that client names will not be included in the report and information about specific practitioners will not be recorded by name. Watch the DVD, "Successful Supported Employment Fidelity Reviews," for examples of how reviewers describe the review process to agency staff who are interviewed or observed.

Individual meetings are recommended. The reviewer tries to obtain accurate information and not lead respondents to the desired answers that may not reflect the actual practice at the site. The format for interviewing is conversational rather than a

structured interview. Reviewers employ good interview skills and aim to get the interviewee doing most of the talking, answering questions and providing information that is useful to make the ratings. Information obtained during the site visit to make the ratings is not necessarily obtained in the order that the items are listed on the Supported Employment Fidelity Scale.

Sample questions for each fidelity item are included in this manual. Further, a list of sample questions, organized by stakeholder groups, is included in the supported employment fidelity kit. Consider taking the list with you and glancing over the list before ending each interview to ensure that you've covered important topic areas.

It is extremely helpful to shadow employment specialists as they conduct community-based services. If you are accompanying an employment specialist who is driving to meet an employer for job development, it is an opportune time to find out more about their daily activities. For example, to help understand if they provide community-based services, ask the employment specialist to describe what services he/she provided the day before, the amount of time for each activity, and the location of each activity.

Unexpected changes in the schedule may occur during the site visit. For example, someone may be ill and not be available for an interview. A clinical emergency may prevent the psychiatrist from meeting with you as scheduled. As visitors to the agency, reviewers need to be courteous and flexible when there are unexpected changes.

Discussion Guide for Interviewing Clients and Family Members
The paragraphs below suggest how reviewers can start their discussion with clients and family members.

"Thank you for taking the time to meet with me today. My name is (NAME) and I work for (REVIEWER'S AGENCY NAME). We're working with (NAME OF PROGRAM TO BE REVIEWED) to learn more about the way they provide services for clients who are interested in working. The information will be used to help provide better employment

services for people who want to go to work. We'll meet for about 15 to 30 minutes and talk about the services (YOU/YOUR FAMILY MEMBER) have received and what you've thought of them. Your participation in the interview is voluntary; you don't have to do this if you don't want to. Your decision to participate will not affect the services (YOU/YOUR FAMILY MEMBER) receive(s). Also, what we talk about today is confidential and anonymous. That means that no information that could identify you will be collected or included in the summary report of our visit to this agency. The only exception to this is if you report an incident of child abuse during our conversation, or indicate that you may be about to hurt yourself or someone else. In these cases, we'll discuss the situation and I may be required by law to report it.

The risk to participating is that you might feel uncomfortable with some of the questions. If there's a question you don't want to answer, you don't have to answer it, and we can stop at any time. The benefit to participating is that the information you provide can help us to improve employment services for people who receive services here.

Do you have any questions before we begin?"

Tailor Terminology Used at the Site
Be sure to ask about terminology used at the site. For example, if the site uses the term "client" for the person receiving supported employment services, use that term. Similarly, if practitioners are referred to as "clinicians," use that terminology. Every agency has specific job titles for particular staff roles. By adopting the local terminology, the reviewer will improve communication.

During the fidelity visit, ask permission of the people with whom you are meeting if it is okay for you to make some brief notes.

If discrepancies between sources occur, query the supported employment coordinator, other practitioners, or clients to get a better sense of the program's performance in a

particular area. The most common discrepancy is likely to occur when the interview with the program staff gives a more idealistic picture of the supported employment service than do chart reviews or client interviews. For example, Organization #6 ("Zero exclusion criteria"), the employment specialists may report that all clients have access to services, while some of the charts reviewed may document that people with worsening symptoms are discouraged from making plans to work.

Check for Missing Data

The scale is designed to be filled out completely. If information cannot be obtained at the time of the site visit, it will be important for you to be able to collect it at a later date. Before leaving, let the supported employment coordinator know that the Supported Employment Fidelity Scale form and a report will be mailed within 2-3 weeks. About one week after mailing the report, one of the supported employment reviewers will contact the supported employment coordinator (and others identified by the agency) to go over any questions the agency has about the report.

Thank all people whom you have interviewed or observed during the day!

FOUR

Consensus Scoring

4 If necessary, follow up on any missing data (e.g., phone calls to the supported employment coordinator). Assuming there is more than one reviewer, both should independently rate the Supported Employment Fidelity Scale within a day or two of the visit. The reviewers should then compare their ratings and resolve any disagreements and come up with a consensus rating within a few days following the visit. They should also discuss strengths to be noted and recommendations for improvement. When making ratings, be sure to rate an observation about program implementation under the one appropriate fidelity item. Tally the item scores and determine which level of implementation was achieved (see Score Sheet at the back of the Supported Employment Fidelity Scale). Watch the module on consensus scoring on the DVD, "Successful Supported Employment Fidelity Reviews," to observe how two reviewers reach consensus. For example, the reviewers initially have different ratings for "Zero exclusion criteria."

Reviewers may find that some items are difficult to score. Below are some tips for accurate scoring:

1. Re-read the anchors on the scale for each item. Do not rely on memory or assume that the anchors don't apply in certain situations. Never score a program without the complete fidelity scale at your side.

2. When having difficulty scoring a particular item, look up the item in this manual to see if a similar example has been provided. If not, read the rationale or description for each item to see if that can help you focus on critical elements of the item.

3. Remember that the difference between a "1" and 2" is not especially critical as these scores mean that the item has not been implemented. Reviewers should not spend a great deal of time deliberating between a "1" and "2" or between a "2" and "3."

4. The difference between a score of "3" and "4", and/or "4" and "5" is important. Reviewers should slow down in these instances and consider all of the sources of information available.

5. Use objective information whenever possible. For example, when rating "Diversity of job types", don't just scan the list of jobs. Do the math to determine the actual percentage of job types that are repeated on the list.

6. When objective information is not available, use more than one source of information. For example, you may visit a site that reports a local work incentive planner is available to meet with clients. If you are not able to observe written reports or even a list of people who have received benefits planning, then you could use information from clients, employment specialists, the work incentives counselor, and chart reviews.

7. Some anchors require more than one aspect to be present. For example, an SE unit might include 2 full-time employment specialists who report to one supervisor and who meet weekly to discuss client progress and share job leads. However, in order to receive a high score on this item, the employment specialists must also provide coverage for each other's caseloads. All of the elements of an anchor must be present. If not, reviewers must choose a lower score.

8. There are times when it is difficult to score an item because different sources provide conflicting information. For example, a supervisor may report that she provides field mentoring for all new employment specialists in order to teach job development. However, fidelity reviewers might also hear that one employment specialist who has been in her position for 3 months has not had any field mentoring while another employment specialist who has no one working has gone out with the supervisor only one time. It's likely that the employment specialists would remember going out with their supervisor to talk to employers. It's also

possible that the supervisor has plans to provide more field mentoring than she has actually been able to accomplish. If no documentation of field mentoring exists, reviewers should score "Role of employment supervisor" based upon the reports of the employment specialists.

9. For most of the items in the section on services, you may find that there is variation in how the individual employment specialists implement the skill area. In these situations, average the scores of each employment specialist to calculate an overall item score.

10. Make consistent ratings at follow-up fidelity reviews with the previous fidelity review when there have been no changes. For example, if an agency was rated "3" for "Zero exclusion criteria" and at the next SE fidelity review six months later the reviewers determined that no changes had been made, the item would receive the same score of "3". Reviewers do not lower the score because the agency had not made any changes.

FIVE

Writing the Report

5 The review team should determine which person will write the first draft of the fidelity report. Typically, the lead reviewer takes this role and sends the draft version to other fidelity reviewers for their comments and suggestions. A final version of the fidelity report should be sent to the agency within 2 to 3 weeks of the fidelity visit. Agencies find the feedback most helpful when it is received close to the time of the visit.

The fidelity report is the mechanism explaining (to the agency) their scores on the fidelity scale and providing some interpretation of the assessment, highlighting both strengths and weaknesses. The report should be informative, factual, and constructive. The recipients of this report will vary according to the purposes, but would typically include the key administrators involved in the fidelity review.

The purpose of the report is not just to provide scores, but also to help the agency feel good about aspects that they are doing well and also to help them improve. The report should help the agency understand how services are conducted and how they are congruent, or not, with the SE approach. To that end, reviewers should include factual information for each fidelity item. For example, quotes (without names), a list of actual caseload sizes, information from charts such as number of community visits found in a sample of charts, program outcomes, etc. Further, reviewers should describe how services with higher fidelity would look in comparison to current services.

Each item with a score below a "5" should include recommendations for ways that the agency could improve fidelity to that item. At times, it is also helpful to include recommendations for items that have been fully implemented, for instance, if an agency

indicates plans to change service delivery in the future. Specific and measurable recommendations are often easier for agencies to implement.

Finally, the reviewers should include a summary at the end of the report. It's often helpful to begin the summary by highlighting program strengths or positive changes since the last review. The reviewers can then describe one or two areas for improvement that they believe are critical next steps for the program.   Finally, the reviewers can list their contact information and offer to help the agency with next steps for implementation or sustainability.

Two examples of fidelity reports are included in this fidelity kit. Take time to read the reports to gain a better understanding of how to comment on various situations and how to write recommendations.

If supported employment fidelity is assessed over time, it is useful to create an Excel spreadsheet from which a graph of the individual item scores and the total fidelity scores over time can be created and incorporated into the fidelity report.

SIX

Following Up with the Site

6   Agencies often have questions about scores or recommendations in the fidelity report. Reviewers should always schedule a meeting or phone call with the site to occur a week or two after the report has been delivered. This should give individuals time to process the report and think about the areas that they would like to talk about. Some sites prefer to use the time to focus on areas that have low scores, while other sites like to talk briefly about each item on the scale. It's often helpful to schedule at least 60 minutes to talk about the report.

While talking through the report with the site, try to acknowledge efforts that have been made to improve fidelity and also offer specific suggestions for items. For example:

"We noticed that five people are working for the cleaning company that has a contract with the local mall. Although those are competitive jobs, they did not appear to be individualized. For example, one person that we interviewed said that he was happy to be working but would have preferred something other than cleaning. We also noticed that job goals tended to be generic. Some people were looking for several different types of jobs in the service industry simultaneously and it was unclear to us how the person's preferences matched the jobs. So, it seemed as if something is getting in the way of an individualized job search. Do you have any ideas about what that might be?"

"We observed that follow-along services have really improved. It seems as though the team is working together during the SE unit meetings to think of strategies that are strengths-based and individualized. They are also asking the mental

health team for ideas for the follow-along plan. That was an impressive change since the last fidelity review."

"It seems as though when clients are able to share their back-to-work stories, many more practitioners and clients become enthusiastic about work. That's the reason that "Agency focus on competitive employment" includes this item. In one agency I visited, clients wrote up their work stories and those were laminated and placed around waiting rooms at the agency. In another, clients were speakers at treatment groups such as social skills groups or CBT groups…"

"Your agency is not the only one to struggle with "Community-based outcomes" but because we know that it is closely related to good outcomes, it is an important one to keep working on. Have you had a chance to talk to employment specialists about the reasons that they are having difficulty getting out of the office? There are a few strategies that seem to have helped other agencies. One is for the SE supervisor to try to provide field mentoring. This sends a clear message that services can be provided in a variety of settings. Another is to make sure that employment specialists have cell phones so that they can be connected to the office even when they are out."

Reviewers can also help sites implement recommendations from the report. Minimally, reviewers should offer to review the first draft of the SE fidelity action plan (see examples included in this SE fidelity kit). Whenever possible, reviewers should also offer to attend the next steering committee meeting to help members think about strategies to implement recommendations. Every site has its own idiosyncrasies and may not wish to implement recommendations exactly as written. It's fine, even preferable, for sites to adjust the recommendations to their specific situations as long as the adjustments do not drift away from good fidelity to SE. Reviewers can be helpful by letting the committee know when their plans are moving them away from good fidelity.

SEVEN

Supported Employment Fidelity Items

7

This section includes sample questions that reviewers can ask to obtain some of the information needed to make ratings. Remember that information is gathered from a variety of sources besides interviews, such as mental health treatment team meetings, SE unit meeting, shadowing employment specialists conducting community-based services and record reviews.

Staffing

1. Caseload size: Employment specialists have individual employment caseloads. The maximum caseload for any full-time employment specialist is 20 or fewer clients. Small caseloads of 15-20 clients are manageable and allow the employment specialists time to provide effective employment services to people who are in different stages of the service (e.g., engagement, job development, ongoing job support).

Reviewers should attempt to discover whether each employment specialist has a discrete caseload. In some agencies, employment specialists don't have discrete caseloads. They meet with people as they show interest and when clients stop showing interest they don't meet with them. If the employment specialist doesn't have a discrete list and doesn't meet with specific clients regularly, a rating of "3" or less is indicated.

Reviewers should also inquire about the number of clients served by each employment specialist (full-time equivalent). Some programs differentiate between "active" and "inactive" clients. Active caseloads include anyone who is receiving supported employment services (i.e., receives at least monthly SE services and services are documented in a client record).   People who are working often receive follow-along services for about a year. Clients who have been successfully employed for over a year

could be discharged from the program to case management services. While the employment specialist may periodically have contact with these people, they would not be considered part of their caseload. People are not included as part of the active caseload when: 1) they are not available to receive SE services for an extended period of time, such as when in jail or hospital long term, 2) they have not met the employment specialist, even when the employment specialist is doing assertive outreach. People who are not considered active are not included in the employment outcomes for the supported employment unit.

Examples:

If caseload sizes are small (e.g., 10 people), indicate in the fidelity report that the employment specialists are underutilized and make a recommendation to increase caseloads. However, in this situation, the reviewers should score this item a "5."

It is almost always the case that caseload sizes vary a bit by employment specialist. For example, you might visit a program with caseload sizes of 25, 19 and 20. The average caseload would be 21, so the program would receive a rating of "4."

If an employment specialist spends a small amount of time (e.g., 2 hours) each week carrying out activities as a partner at the OneStop, and therefore not focusing on her caseload, this would still be considered high fidelity.

Sample questions for employment specialists:
- How many clients are you actively working with?
- Do you have a caseload list that I can see?
- Do you have some clients that are "inactive"? How do you define inactive? Are you responsible for writing treatment plans for inactive clients?

Sample questions for SE coordinator:

- Do you keep an updated caseload list for each employment specialist? If so, could you share that with me?
- Is there a waiting list?
- Why do you suppose caseload sizes are low? Have you talked to mental health practitioners about the reasons that they are not referring?

2. *Employment services staff: Employment specialists provide only employment services.*

When meeting with different people during the site visit, listen for whether the employment specialists have non-vocational duties. For example, you might hear from a mental health worker that the employment specialist is running a woman's group in the day program or carrying out case management tasks such as finding housing for a client who is about to lose his/her apartment. Time spent on non-vocational activities is time *not* used to help people find employment and stay employed.

There is often a fine line between what is an employment service and what is case management. In assertive community treatment (ACT) teams, employment specialists keep the team focused on employment but can contribute as the other team members, for example by dropping off medication when the employment specialist is meeting someone for job support. In general, however, the employment specialist has a protected position and does not spend more than 1 to 2 hours per week (4-5% of a full-time position) on case management activities.

Most employment specialists will report that they occasionally help with case management activities. It's important for reviewers to ask follow-up questions to try to get an accurate idea about how much of their time is spent doing these things. "When was the last time?" "Did you do any work to help out a case manager last week? What did you do? This week?…" Chart reviews can also be helpful if reviewers make a point of reading progress notes by employment specialists. Another very helpful strategy is to ask employment specialists to go through their date books and describe their activities

from the previous week. To watch a reviewer using this strategy, view the module called "Job Development Observation" on the SE Fidelity DVD.

Examples:

Employment specialists who are conducting any kind of employment service, including prevocational services are given a score of "5" as long as they are not conducting non-vocational services. For example, if an employment specialist was spending a day each week conducting paper and pencil vocational tests and spent the rest of the week on supported employment activities, the program would still receive a "5" for this item. However, the program would receive a lower score on "Ongoing work-based assessment."

An example of a program that would rate a "5" on this item might be one in which an employment specialist reports that she occasionally helps out with case management activities (less than 5% of her work week) but that she doesn't engage in time intensive activities such as helping people apply for benefits or look for apartments. For example, she might tell you that last week a client brought in some documentation that was needed for his housing program and she helped him to fax it to the housing agency. Chart reviews would also indicate that she spends almost all of her time focusing on employment activities.

Sample questions for employment specialists:

- Are you responsible for any duties at the agency other than supported employment? For instance, helping with groups, day treatment…?
- Are you ever asked to do case management activities? For example, helping someone get a food box, helping someone find housing, driving someone to doctor's appointments, dealing with mental health crisis, helping someone apply for Social Security benefits? When was the last time? How often does this occur?
- Do you have anyone on your caseload that doesn't have a case manager/primary worker? What happens when this person needs case management services?

- I'm interested in learning more about your job and understanding what a typical day is like for you. Can you show me in your datebook what you did last Tuesday? Wednesday?

Sample questions for case managers/therapists:
- Do the employment specialists ever help you out by doing things like getting someone to a doctor's appointment, helping someone with housing, taking someone to the grocery store… When was the last time? Do they help on a regular basis?

If chart reviews and interviews with the employment specialists and case managers left a reviewer feeling unsure about this item, she could try asking the SE coordinator some of the same questions that she asked of the employment specialists. The reviewer may also learn about employment specialists conducting other activities (e.g., conducting a women's group, helping to find an apartment) when meeting with clients and families.

3. *Vocational generalists: Each employment specialist carriers out all phases of employment service, including intake, engagement, assessment, job placement, job coaching, and follow-along supports before step down to less intensive employment support from another mental health practitioner.*
It is important to listen throughout the different interviews and team meetings about what the employment specialists are actually doing. Some vocational programs have a staffing pattern that assigns different staff members to carry out different parts of the employment service, making it necessary for clients to transition across staff members. For example, one team member might provide job development for all of the clients on the team, while other team members provide intake, vocational planning and follow-along services. Clients often drop out of SE services when they are expected to transition across multiple staff. People develop a working alliance when the relationship is not interrupted and information is learned about each client that pertains to individualized job choices, job searches, and job supports.

An exception to this approach is that one person may be chosen to provide work incentives planning (benefits counseling) to all supported employment clients. The reason for this is that work incentives planning requires a significant amount of specific and detailed information which must be updated over time, and so it helps the team to have access to one person who specializes in this service. The benefits counselor may be employed by the agency or may have an agreement to provide services to clients at the agency.

Examples:

If the SE coordinator (or another designated person) is responsible for meeting all clients newly referred to the SE program, before assigning the person to an employment specialist, then the rating for this item could not be higher than a "4" because a separate person is conducting engagement. The idea is that clients shouldn't have to meet with multiple people in order to become active in the SE program. SE intake is completed by the employment specialist.

If the program has one person who is the "lead job developer," then reviewers should listen carefully. Some programs explain that one person is the marketer for the program, but that everyone really conducts job development for their own clients. Try to ascertain whether each employment specialist is really conducting job development on a weekly basis (for instance, look at employer contact logs if those are available). If they are, and reviewers believe that the marketer is simply augmenting employment specialist's efforts, then the program might still rate a "5" for this item. However, also try to learn whether the marketer is providing client-specific job development, or if he is simply out in the community trying to drum up openings. It is probably difficult for the marketer to provide individualized job development for a large number of people whom he does not know well. Therefore, the score for "Individualized job search" could be affected by the marketing position.

If an employment specialist provides a range of SE services to some people but simply refers other people with serious mental illness to different vocational programs (e.g., other vocational programs within the center or the local area), then raters would assign a score of "2."

Sample questions for employment specialists:
- If a person is referred to you, are you the person from the employment program who would meet with the person for the very first time?
- For the people on your caseload, who conducts the vocational profile? The job search activities? On-the-job training, if that is needed? Follow-along supports?

Sample questions for the SE coordinator:
- Are there any specialized positions on the SE team? Is any one of the employment specialists responsible for a particular focus, such as job development, for example?

Sample questions for clients:
- Who was the first person you met from the SE program? Who helped you find a job? Who provided job supports? Did you ever work with another person from the SE program?

Organization

1. *Integration of rehabilitation with mental health treatment thru team assignment: Employment specialists are part of up to 2 mental health treatment teams from which at least 90% of the employment specialist's caseload is comprised.*

Employment specialists are expected to spend much of their time meeting with clients and employers. They are also expected to coordinate services with VR, mental health, AND to spend most of their time in the community. In order for employment specialists to keep track of all of these priorities, they cannot also be responsible for tracking down mental health practitioners on a variety of teams or in a variety of agencies. Instead, services should be set up so that employment specialists work with a limited number of referral sources with which they can develop relationships. For each employment

specialist, try to find out about all of the possible referral sources for his or her caseload.

Examples:

If a supported employment program is not part of a mental health center, and receives referrals from individual mental health practitioners from multiple agencies, then the program would score a "1" on this item.

If employment specialists receive referrals from a small number of VR counselors (e.g., 1-3 VR counselors) for people who are not connected to their mental health teams, but 90% of their caseloads are from their mental health teams, then the program would receive a "5" on this item.

Another example might be a supported employment program that is part of a mental health center that employs 25 mental health practitioners (case managers and therapists) but the practitioners are not organized into teams, then the agency would rate a "2" for this item. The reviewers could suggest that the agency organize practitioners into teams and assign an employment specialist to each team.

Some agencies are so small that it would not make sense to separate the mental health practitioners into teams. For example, if an agency had a total of 7 mental health practitioners, it is likely that the employment specialists would be able to coordinate easily with the practitioners. In that case, the reviewers could focus on finding out if the specialists also received referrals from sources outside of the agency.

Sample questions for employment specialists:
• Where do your referrals come from?
• Within the mental health agency, who makes referrals to your caseload?
• How many people on your caseload do not have a mental health worker from the agency?

Sample questions for the SE coordinator:

- Are the employment specialists assigned to be liaisons to mental health teams? If so, how many teams does each individual specialist work with?
- Does the SE unit receive referrals from other sources? How many?

Sample questions for the Clinical Director?

- Are the mental health practitioners organized into teams? If so, please describe the teams.

2. *Integration of rehabilitation with mental health treatment thru frequent team member contact: Employment specialists actively participate in weekly mental health treatment team meetings (not replaced by administrative meetings) that discuss individual clients and their employment goals with shared decision-making. Employment specialist's office is in close proximity to (or shared with) their mental health treatment team members. Documentation of mental health treatment and employment services is integrated in a single client chart. Employment specialists help the team think about employment for people who haven't yet been referred to supported employment services.*

The essence of this criterion is that there is frequent communication between all service providers for planning and coordination of services. The goal is to provide seamless services so that clients receive the same message from all providers.

Reviewers should always attempt to observe a mental health treatment team meeting during the review. In fact, it is often necessary to schedule the review so that reviewers will be present during a mental health team meeting. Also, ask questions to determine how often employment specialists attend the meeting and whether they participate in the entire meeting. Remember, part of their role on the team is to help mental health practitioners think about work for everyone on their caseload—not just to talk about shared clients. Try to find out if the specialists participate as full-fledged members. For example, observe whether the team uses shared decision-making or whether the mental health practitioners are looked to for the final decision. See if mental health

clinicians ever help out with job leads for SE clients and if employment specialists ever share job ideas for people who are not in SE but are looking for work on their own. (this would indicate a high level of integration).

While reviewing charts, look to see if vocational documentation is part of the regular clinical chart. For instance, check to see if the vocational profile is kept in the clinical chart. Including current employment documentation in the clinical file allows the treatment team members to have another venue for accessing information about SE services. Also, it reinforces the point that supported employment has the same status as other services. In some supported employment programs employment specialists keep separate files for vocational documentation (e.g., the vocational profile/assessment). This record keeping practice has a potential pitfall. Information is sometimes lost when there are staff changes and vocational documentation was not maintained in the client's agency record. Furthermore, many clients voice objection to having to recount employment-related information every time they are assigned a new employment specialist (because of staff turnover). We recommend that at a minimum, a copy of the vocational profile (updated or completed within the past year) is filed in the clinical record with the employment plan and employment progress notes, but more recent and up-to-date versions of the vocational profile may be kept in a separate record that the employment specialist keeps. Reviewers also should read progress notes by mental health practitioners (including medication prescribers) to ascertain whether people on the mental health team are talking to clients about their jobs or job search efforts.

Office location can affect how frequently team members have opportunities to communicate directly with each other. If offices are in separate buildings, the program would not get credit for this item. Even when employment staff and treatment members are located in the same building, they could be on different floors or wings of the building and end up having very little communication. The reviewer could make a recommendation for employment specialists to have their offices in the same building and near the offices of the treatment team members. Another recommendation might

be to reserve office space near the mental health team that they could be used on a part-time basis by the employment specialist.

While observing the SE unit meeting, listen for whether or not employment specialists are sharing problems with mental health practitioners. For example, if a client is having problems with anxiety on the job, has the specialist talked to the case manager about coping strategies that might help the person?

Examples:

If employment specialists participate actively in weekly mental health team meetings and speak to mental health practitioners on a daily basis, but vocational charts are separate from clinical charts, then the rating for this item would be a "4."

If employment specialists report that they take turns attending mental health treatment team meetings and cover for each other at the meetings, then the program could not receive a score higher than "4," and might receive a lower score based on the other items.

Sample questions for employment specialists:

- Do you go to any mental health treatment team meetings? How often?
- Do you generally stay for the whole meeting or just part of the meeting?
- Do you represent any of your fellow employment specialists when you go or do they attend meetings for themselves?
- What is the purpose in attending the meetings? Are the meetings helpful to you—why or why not?
- How do medication prescribers (psychiatrists, nurse practitioners) at this agency view clients' capacity for work? How do you communicate with them? Is that an effective way to collaborate with them?

Sample questions for mental health supervisors or clinicians:
- How have the employment specialists changed the mental health team meetings?
- What happens if an employment specialist and case manager disagree about whether or not a client should quit a job, stop looking for jobs, etc.
- Can you remember a time when you (or another case manager) brought in a job lead for a specialist or connected a specialist to one of your friends/family members who was also an employer?

3. *Collaboration between employment specialists and Vocational Rehabilitation counselors: The employment specialists and VR counselors have frequent contact for the purpose of discussing shared clients and identifying potential referrals.*
The evidence is mounting that clients who receive services from both VR and SE have better employment outcomes. However, services must be coordinated so that clients are not frustrated with conflicting messages and supports.

There are a variety of ways that service systems can accomplish this objective. Some agencies invite VR counselors to the SE unit meeting and others set aside a monthly meeting time to talk about shared clients. It's important to have regularly scheduled meetings so that the counselor and specialists have time to talk about barriers that individual clients are facing and discuss possible solutions. The VR counselors and employment specialists each have knowledge and experience that are important to helping clients move forward and both should be involved in planning. A meeting is defined as in-person contact between employment specialists and VR counselors with clients or without the client present.

Example:
An example of a program that would rate a "5" on this item is one in which the VR office has designated a liaison counselor who attends SE unit meetings once or twice each month. The liaison counselor would receive all, or most, of the referrals from the SE program.

Another example of a program that would rate a "5" would be one in which the employment specialists traveled to the VR office once each month to meet with the VR counselors as a group and discuss shared clients.

Sample questions for the SE team:

- How many different VR counselors do you work with? How often do you meet with each of these counselors? Where?
- How does VR help people on your caseload? (Try to find out if SE specialists understand the full range of benefits to be gained from working with VR.)
- How does everyone work together with the client to come up with the employment plan?

Sample questions for VR counselors:

- How often do you meet with the employment specialists? How do these meetings occur?
- Does the SE team understand the mission of VR, the policies under which you must practice?
- How does everyone work together with the client to come up with the employment plan?
- How could the SE team and VR improve their collaboration?

4. Vocational unit: At least 2 full-time employment specialists and a team leader comprise the employment unit. They have weekly client-based group supervision following the supported employment model in which strategies are identified and job leads are shared. They provide coverage for each other's caseload when needed. Employment specialists have discrete caseloads but provide back up and support for other employment specialists as needed. The supported employment coordinator meets weekly with all the employment specialists to review client employment goals and progress achieving goals. Sharing job leads through a team approach is key. View the "SE Unit Meeting" module on the SE Fidelity DVD and consider the reviewers impressions.

Note: The job titles of SE supervisor, SE team leader, SE coordinator, and SE program leader are used interchangeably and indicate the same person.

Examples:
In rural areas, or at new programs that are very small, there may be only one employment specialist. In that case, rate this item a "1." Explain that it is difficult for an employment specialist to work without a peer to help problem-solve, share job leads and responsibilities. Unless the agency serves fewer than 60 people with severe mental illness, encourage the agency to think about adding another specialist position.

When the agency/program serves fewer than 60 people and there is only 1 employment specialist and 1 employment supervisor, determine whether there is a mechanism for the employment specialist to connect by phone or in person with employment specialists from another program. For example, in one VA hospital, there is a residential program serving 50 people with serious mental illness and substance use disorder. They have 1 employment specialist and 1 team leader. If the employment specialist meets 2-3 times a month with another SE team at the VA, the program would score a "4."

If an agency in a rural area serves several counties and has an employment specialist in each county, encourage them to find a way to meet—either by phone or in person. In these cases, *mental health practitioners* may help cover for the employment specialist when he or she is off work or has problems with his schedule (for instance, job coaching at the same time he is scheduled to take someone to apply for a job). It is also important for the specialists to share a supervisor. In this situation, the score for Vocational Unit would not be higher than a "4."

If employment specialists meet weekly together but the focus of the meeting is to discuss administrative issues or to quickly run through their entire caseload in order to give their supervisor an update, then the program should not score above a "3."

Remember, the purpose of the meeting is to work as a team by helping each other to think of strategies, to share job leads and to celebrate successes.

Sample questions for employment specialists:
- To whom do you report (ask each specialist)?
- Do you help each other with the people on your caseload? Can you give me an example of a time that you helped another specialist or that someone helped you?
- How often do you meet with the other employment specialists? What do you do during these meetings? Are the meetings helpful?

Sample questions for SE supervisor:
- How do employment specialists work together? Learn together?
- How often do you schedule team meetings?
- What is a typical agenda for a team meeting?

5. *Role of employment supervisor: Supported employment unit is led by a supported employment team leader. Employment specialists' skills are developed and improved through outcome-based supervision. All five keys of the employment supervisor are present.*
- One full-time (FTE) supervisor is responsible for no more than 10 employment specialists. The supervisor does not have other supervisory responsibilities. (Program leaders supervising fewer than ten employment specialists may spend a percentage of time on other supervisory activities on a prorated basis. For example, an employment supervisor responsible for 4 employment specialists may be devoted to SE supervision half time).
- Supervisor conducts weekly supervision designed to review client situations and identify new strategies and ideas to help clients with their work lives.

- Supervisor communicates with mental health team leaders to ensure that services are integrated, to problem-solve programmatic issues, (such as referral issues or transfer to follow-along to mental health workers), and to be a champion for the value of work. Attends a meeting for each mental health treatment team on a quarterly basis.
- Supervisor accompanies employment specialists, who are new or having difficulty with job development, in the field monthly to improve skills by observing, modeling, and giving feedback on skills, e.g., meeting employers for job development.
- Supervisor reviews current client outcomes with employment specialists and sets goals to improve program performance at least quarterly.

It is possible that a person with good SE skills or good supervisory skills might not get a "5" on this item. When the score for this item is low, reviewers should mention that this item focuses on activities specific to the SE approach and is not meant to be an evaluation of the supervisor's abilities. Reviewers might also comment on some of the supervisor's strengths. Remember that at some agencies the report may be shared with boards, practitioners, advocacy groups, etc.

Examples:
If a supervisor were responsible for 12 employment specialists, the agency would not receive credit for the first component. Likewise, if the supervisor was responsible for an SE program with 10 employment specialists and was also responsible for supervising an ACT team, the agency would not receive credit for the first supervisory role. It is very difficult for supervisors to track the needs of two different programs while also training new staff, tracking outcomes, coordinating services with VR, implementing fidelity plans, etc. The supervisor plays a key role, and in order for the supervisor to be successful, the agency should ensure that she has the capacity to do her job well.

However, if there is only one employment specialist in an agency, it is unreasonable to demand that the supervisor will not have other responsibilities. In this case, reviewers would attempt to learn about all of the roles that the supervisor takes on in the agency

and would advocate for supervisors to have time to focus on SE implementation and employment specialist skill development.

If a supervisor meets weekly with individual employment specialists to review individuals on their caseloads, the program should receive credit for the second supervisor role, even if the SE supervisor does not facilitate vocational unit meetings. (However, the score for "Vocational unit" would be affected by the lack of meetings).

If the reviewers observe that the SE supervisor does not have a high level of knowledge regarding supported employment, SE skills, and SE implementation, the program would not receive credit for the second supervisor role.

Some programs report that the supervisor doesn't schedule weekly unit meetings or individual supervisory meetings, but that the employment specialists and supervisor have daily contact to discuss client progress. Sometimes, the supervisor even shares office space with the specialists. However, daily, impromptu discussions don't replace time set aside to talk about clients in a planned way, rather than reacting to problem situations. Therefore, the program would not receive credit for the second supervisory role.

An example of good implementation of the third supervisor role would be a situation in which the supervisor attends each mental health treatment team meeting on a quarterly basis and *also* attends a regular agency-wide meeting for all clinical supervisors. The second meeting might not always focus on supported employment, but information about changes in the clinical programs are important for the SE supervisor to know about. Those types of supervisor meetings may not always be present at agencies, but the SE supervisor should be able to give recent examples of collaboration with other supervisors regarding referrals, etc.

In order to receive credit for the fourth component, new employment specialists should all receive *in vivo* training on job development. Further, if reviewers observe that a particular employment specialist is struggling with job development, they should ask the supervisor if he has gone out into the field with that specialist recently. *Be sure to follow up* by asking employment specialists about the last time that their supervisor went into the field to help them learn job development.

An example of good fidelity to the last component would be a program that uses client outcomes to look for trends and to set goals for improved services. For example, a program might report that it tracks the number of referrals to the program, the number of people who obtain competitive jobs, the average number of days to find employment, the percent of people who find jobs related to their interests, the number of people who retain jobs for 30 days, 90 days, 6 months and one year. They might also track the number of people that they help with school. Such a program should also be able to talk about how they used the data to work on program improvement. For example, "We noticed that the number of days to find employment had been increasing over the past few quarters. We talked about that as a team and the specialists asked for more training in job development. I also began spending more time in supervision talking about job development strategies used for each client and I've been going into the field with one specialist who seems to be struggling. We hope to see the time decrease over the next couple of quarters."

Sample questions for employment specialists:
- Do you meet with your supervisor for 1:1 supervision (or for group supervision)? How often? What do you do during those meetings?
- How did you learn how to do job development? Did your supervisor ever go out with you to meet with employers? When was the last time?
- Do you receive information about how the SE program is doing—outcomes for the program? How do you receive that information? Does the program have goals to improve any of the outcomes? How will you all go about improving that outcome?

Does your supervisor ever set performance goals on an individual basis with you? Can you give me an example?

Questions for case managers:
- Does the SE coordinator ever come to your mental health team meeting? Is that helpful? When was the last time?

Questions for the SE coordinator:
- What are your responsibilities at the agency? What positions do you supervise? What committees do you sit on? Do you have any other jobs at the agency? Are you responsible for providing direct services?
- May I please see a recent report of the SE program outcomes? Can you tell me how you use these outcomes? Are you currently trying to improve any specific outcome? Can you tell me how you are working on that?
- How do new employment specialists learn about job development? (If SE team leader says that he goes into the field with them, ask what happens when they go out together). What do you do when a specialist begins to have poor outcomes for job placement?
- How do you provide supervision?
- How do you coordinate SE with mental health programs? What is your relationship with the other supervisors at the agency? How do you get feedback about the SE program from other programs at the agency? How do you hear about changes in clinical services at the agency?

6. *Zero exclusion criteria: All clients interested in working have access to supported employment services regardless of job readiness factors, substance abuse, symptoms, history of violent behavior, cognitive impairments, treatment non-adherence, and personal presentation. These apply during supported employment services too. Employment specialists offer to help with another job when one has ended, regardless of the reason that the job ended or number of jobs held. If VR has screening criteria,*

the mental health agency does not use them to exclude anybody. Clients are not screened out formally or informally.

Many agencies report that the SE program is open to any client who expresses an interest in work. However, clients are sometimes screened out informally. For example, a case manager might neglect to ask someone about his interest in work, or might suggest that someone work on sobriety before embarking on employment goals.   Further, there may be times when clients are encouraged to "take a break from work to focus on treatment." This would <u>not</u> be consistent with zero exclusion. Referrals are solicited by many referral sources within the mental health agency, i.e., case managers, therapists, psychiatrists. In supported employment there are no limits on the number of jobs with which the program will help someone.

When the SE program is not part of the mental health agency, it is still important to meet with mental health practitioners and a mental health supervisor to gain an understanding of how the practitioners approach work with clients. Reviewers may need to travel to the mental health agency to conduct these interviews.

Examples:

Some agencies have a few clinicians who make multiple referrals, while others make very few referrals. In that situation, it is doubtful that zero exclusion is being practiced across the agency. Reviewers would do their best to determine the percent of mental health practitioners that make referrals on a regular basis. If the employment specialists were open to working with anyone, but only half of the mental health practitioners made referrals on a regular basis, then reviewers might decide on a score of "3."

Some agencies depend heavily on VR funding and may not be able to provide job development services to clients who are not open with VR. In these situations, it is important to determine whether there are any individuals that VR is not able to serve, for instance, people with substance abuse problems or people who have recently been

closed from VR. Further, it would be important to find out whether or not VR had the resources to help with multiple job placements, as needed.

If the agency is large (for example, serves 1,200 people with severe mental illness each year) and the SE program only serves 40 people, then it is doubtful that all clients are being encouraged to think about their interest in employment. If they were, reviewers would surely hear about a long waiting list and a crisis regarding capacity to serve. Therefore the number of employment specialists is going to impact the rate that people can access supported employment services.

At some sites, prevocational programs and protected work experiences such as work crews or agency-run businesses may exist alongside of supported employment. When that occurs, reviewers may hear that mental health practitioners refer people to the sheltered programs if they have not worked recently, have poor social skills, etc. This is not consistent with zero exclusion. For example, if a person hasn't worked in the past or has multiple barriers to employment, would that person be referred to a workshop or an agency-run business or work crew to gain work experience? If that is the case, the agency should not score above a "3" since this prevocational program may provide a barrier for some people who do not want to engage in a program geared toward noncompetitive jobs. If the practitioners report that client choice determines the vocational program selected, reviewers should listen with a healthy degree of skepticism. Clients often feel encouragement from providers to move in one direction or another, even when "choice" is offered. Further, some clients have become so accustomed to institutionalized choices that they may require encouragement to opt for competitive jobs. Ask clients who have used the prevocational programs if they would have preferred to move directly into competitive jobs. Also, ask them how they decided which program to go with. An agency with co-occurring programs that require abstinence before starting employment services should not score above a "3."

Sample questions for employment specialists:

- Please describe a person who would be a good referral to SE? Someone who would not be a good referral to SE? How about people with substance abuse problems? People with a history of violence? A person who refuses to improve his hygiene?

- If someone were to walk off a job because he didn't like it, what would you do next?

- How about if someone lost a job because of stealing from the employer—would you help that person find another job? What next steps would you recommend?

- Can you serve people who are not open with VR? (If the answer is no, "Are there any referrals that VR is not able to serve?")

- Does it seem that some case managers or therapists refer people more frequently than others? Does your caseload list include the name of the person who referred each client to you?

Sample questions for case managers, therapists, and medication prescribers:

- How do you know when it is the right time to start talking to someone about work?

- When would you *not* recommend a competitive job to someone?

- Are there times when a person needs to develop prevocational skills before engaging with the SE program? Does the agency have programs that help with those issues? Are there programs in the area that help with prevocational needs? How often have you referred to those programs in the past 6 months?

- Do you ever worry that a job could worsen a person's substance abuse problem by providing more income? How do you approach this issue?

- What do you do if you are working with a person who has poor hygiene, but says that he wants a job?

- What is your strategy for working with someone who says he is interested in a job but does not take medicine on a regular basis?

- Do you ever suggest work for people who are in their fifties, sixties?

- If I were one of your clients, how would you go about starting a conversation about work with me?

- Have you ever worked with someone who was homeless but wanted to get a job?

- Has there ever been a time when you suggested that someone stop focusing on employment so that he or she could work on treatment issues? Please describe.
- How many people on your caseload are working? How many do you think could work?
- How many people on your caseload are in the SE program?

Sample questions for SE coordinator:
- How do clients get into your SE program? How long does it take?
- Can anyone make a referral to the program?
- How would a client know how to self-refer?
- Who would be a good referral to SE services?
- Have you received any inappropriate referrals over the past few months? If so, please describe.

Sample questions for supervisors of mental health practitioners:
- See questions for case managers, therapists, and medication prescribers.
- Do you know how many people are working on each caseload?
- How do you work with mental health practitioners who don't seem to have a lot of clients who are working?

Sample questions for clients:
- Do you remember when someone at this agency started talking to you about work? Was that the right time? Would you have been interested in hearing about work at an earlier time?
- How did you learn about the SE program?
- Did you go to any other kind of vocational program before meeting with (name of employment specialist)? How did you learn about that program? How did you decide to start with that program?
- Has anyone ever suggested that you should hold off on work?

Sample questions for agency administrators:
- Is the SE program able to serve most of the people who want to work at your agency?
- How many people with severe mental illness receive services from this agency?
- How many people are served by the SE program in a given year?

7. *Agency focus on competitive employment: Agency promotes competitive work through multiple strategies. Agency intake includes questions about interest in employment. Agency displays written postings (e.g. brochures, bulletin boards, posters) about employment and supported employment services. The focus should be with the agency programs that provide services to adults with severe mental illness. Agency supports ways for clients to share work stories with other clients and staff. Agency measures rate of competitive employment and shares this information with agency leadership and staff.*
- Agency intake includes questions about interest in employment.
- Agency includes questions about interest in employment on all annual (or semi-annual) assessment or treatment plan reviews.
- Agency displays written postings (e.g., brochures, bulletin boards, posters) about working and supported employment services, in lobby and other waiting areas.
- Agency supports ways for clients to share work stories with other clients and staff (e.g., agency-wide employment recognition events, in-service training, peer support groups, agency newsletter articles, invited speakers at client treatment groups, etc.) at least twice a year.
- Agency measures rates of competitive employment on at least a quarterly basis and shares outcomes with agency leadership and staff.

"Zero exclusion" ensures that all clients who are interested in work have access to supported employment. "Agency focus on competitive employment" is in place to ensure that all clients have the opportunity to think about the possibility of work. Some clients who have not worked for years need help thinking about how a job might fit into their lives. Furthermore, some people need to develop hope that they could be

successful in a job that they like. Through this fidelity item, agencies are encouraged to help clients think about work over time, rather than asking a "yes or no" question about work once a year.

Reviewers can obtain some information for this item by looking around the agency to see if there are posters, brochures, etc. regarding employment. Another way to gather information about this item is to read assessments (intake and annual) and treatment plans in client charts. Reviewers can also ask for a couple of quarters of data regarding agency employment outcomes but should also ask who sees the outcomes and how they are used. Finally, interviews with clients and staff (see questions below) are important for this item.

For large agencies with multiple SE teams, the rating is made for the office/program in which the SE team is connected.

When the SE program is not part of the mental health agency, reviewers should think about the components of this item in regards to the mental health agency rather than the SE program. Reviewers should visit the mental health agency to read mental health intakes (sometimes called mental health assessments or diagnostic assessments) and treatment plans. Reviewers should also walk around common areas of the building to look for displays about work and should ask staff, administrators and clients if there have been formal opportunities for clients to share their back-to-work stories.   Finally, reviewers should ask mental health administrators if they track the number of people with severe mental illness who are competitively employed.

Examples:
Regarding the first two components for this item, an agency would receive credit if questions on the intake and annual reviews (or treatment plans) asked not only if the client was employed, but also if the person was interested in work. For example, the following questions: "Are you currently employed?" "Are you satisfied with your job?"

"Are you interested in working?" "Are you interested in finding out how your benefits might be affected by a return to work?" "Are you interested in hearing about services that help people find and keep jobs that are related to their interests and preferences?"

To receive credit for the third component, it isn't necessary for agencies to have brochures, bulletin boards *and* posters in common areas of the building. The idea is that there should be something visual about employment so that clients and family members know that the agency is willing to help with jobs. These visual reminders also reinforce to practitioners that employment is part of the agency's mission.

For some people who can't decide whether work is a good idea, hearing from a peer can be especially helpful. Agencies are encouraged to work with clients who are willing to share their stories about going back to work. The format for story sharing may vary from agency to agency. However, it is important that practitioners, as well as unemployed clients, have opportunities to hear these stories. Many agencies report that stories are an effective way to build enthusiasm for work.

Before giving credit for the last component, reviewers should ensure that agencies are measuring rates of competitive employment versus any type of paid employment or volunteer employment. An example of good fidelity to this component would be an agency that distributed caseload lists to case managers each month, and asked each practitioner to circle the name of each person who had a competitive job (mental health practitioners may also need reminders about the definition of competitive work). The agency would then count up the number of working people *and share that information with the employees of the agency*. For example, the agency might send out a memo with the information and ask the QA director to visit team meetings to briefly discuss the outcome.

Sample questions for case managers, therapists, counselors:

- How do you define "competitive employment"?
- How many clients with severe mental illness served by this agency have competitive jobs?
- Are you aware of times when the agency helped working clients share their back to work stories (newsletters, speaking at events or treatment groups…)?
- When you are working on the annual assessment (or treatment plan) what do you do if someone says he wants to work? If he says he isn't sure if he wants to work?

Sample questions for agency administrators:

- Since the last fidelity review, have there been opportunities for clients to share their back-to-work stories with other clients and staff? Please describe.
- How does the agency collect information about employment outcomes? Do you also collect information about other types of employment (e.g., sheltered jobs, jobs set aside for people with disabilities)? Is this separated out of the competitive employment figure?
- How many people with severe mental illness have competitive jobs? Does the agency have goals to increase this number?

8. *Executive team support for SE: Agency executive team members (e.g., CEO/Executive Director, Chief Operating Officer, QA Director, Chief Financial Officer, Clinical Director, Medical Director, Human Resource Director) assist with support employment implementation and sustainability. All five key components of executive team support are present.*

- Executive Director and Clinical Director demonstrate knowledge regarding the principles of evidence-based supported employment.
- Agency QA process includes an explicit review of the SE program, or components of the program, at least every 6 months through the use of the Supported Employment Fidelity Scale or until achieving high fidelity, and at least yearly thereafter. Agency QA process uses the results of the fidelity assessment to improve SE implementation and sustainability.

- At least one member of the executive team actively participates at SE leadership team meetings (steering committee meetings) that occur at least every six months for high fidelity programs and at least quarterly for programs that have not yet achieved high fidelity. "Steering committee" is defined as a diverse group of stakeholders charged with reviewing fidelity, program implementation, and the service delivery system. The committee develops written action plans aimed at developing or sustaining high fidelity services.
- The agency CEO/Executive Director communicates how SE services support the mission of the agency and articulates clear and specific goals for SE and/or competitive employment to all agency staff during the first six months and at least annually (i.e., SE kickoff, all-agency meetings, agency newsletters, etc.) This item is not delegated to another administrator.
- SE program leader shares information about EBP barriers and facilitators with the executive team (including the CEO) at least twice each year. The executive team helps the program leader identify and implement solutions to barriers.

Note: Job titles may vary by organization and by system. For example, in the Veterans Administration job titles of the executive team include hospital director, associate director, chief of staff, and department head (i.e., Chief of Mental Health, Behavioral Health Service Line Chief, etc.).

The purpose of this item is to ensure that SE implementation and sustainability does not rest entirely on the shoulders of the SE team. Further, the National Evidence-based Practices Project demonstrated that CEO buy-in was critical for successful implementation of an evidence-based practice.

It is unnecessary for reviewers to meet with each member of the executive leadership. However, reviewers should plan to have a short interview (possibly a group interview) with several administrators, for example, the CEO, QA director and clinical director. This sample group can report on activities completed by the entire executive team.

In some very large agencies there may be more than one SE team. In those cases, SE fidelity may be conducted on individual teams on a rotating basis throughout the year. It is only necessary to interview the executive team every 6 months. That score can be used for each SE team that has a SE fidelity review within the 6-month period.

When the SE program is not part of the mental health agency, some components of this item refer to both the SE program and the mental health agency, while others refer only to the SE program.

- *Executive Director and Clinical Director demonstrate knowledge regarding the principles of evidence-based supported employment.* Executive directors for both agencies should demonstrate basic understanding of SE in order for reviewers to give credit for this item.
- *Agency QA process…* Reviewers should observe the QA process for the agency that houses the SE program.
- *Executive leadership in SE leadership meetings…* At least one administrator from each agency should participate in the leadership meetings in order for reviewers to give credit for this item.
- *Executive Director communicates how SE services support the mission of the agency…* Both directors must have vocalized their support for competitive employment/SE in order for reviewers to give credit for this item.
- *SE program leader shares information about EBP barriers and facilitators with the executive team…* Reviewers should apply this component to the agency that houses the SE program.

Examples:
Executive team members are not expected to be able to list the 7 SE principles or to describe the program in great detail. However, reviewers would expect these administrators to understand what is meant by an evidence-based practice. Further, if asked to describe the program, administrators should be able to talk about a few of the

general ideas behind SE. For example, "it's open to anyone," "it's about jobs in the community" and "they look for jobs right away."

To receive credit for the second indicator, the agency would participate in regular fidelity reviews (e.g., every six months during start up of implementation, and annually after achieving good fidelity). Further, the QA process would monitor fidelity. For instance, the QA process could track the total SE fidelity score or could track items that have a score lower than "4."

Fidelity reviews are intended to be part of a quality improvement process. Therefore, receiving reports and tracking scores is not enough. Agencies are also asked to develop committees to review fidelity reports and develop action plans for higher fidelity. Ideally, the committee would include a diverse group of stakeholders (e.g., clients, family members, local colleges, employers…) but minimally, the group should include people from the mental health agency and VR who understand the SE approach and are in a position to make programmatic changes. Agencies are not required to develop action steps for each fidelity item that isn't a "5", but to develop a plan that they feel is manageable and will help them move forward. Reviewers can ask to see a copy of the most recent fidelity plan. Examples of fidelity action plans can be found in the SE fidelity kit.

As mentioned above the CEO/Executive Director is critical to SE implementation. If administrators and practitioners don't believe that SE is important to the director, then they may not put in the hard work needed to implement or sustain the practice. An example of good fidelity to this item could be that the agency director spoke about the SE program and the importance of work to all agency employees during the past calendar year. Another example would be that each person interviewed during the fidelity review reported that they believed SE was a priority to the CEO. However, if only the agency administrators know that the CEO believes in SE but practitioners are unsure, then the agency would not receive credit for this item.

Many agencies will report that although the SE supervisor does not have direct access to the executive team, he or she reports to someone who can relay information about SE to executive leaders. This would not be sufficient for the agency to receive credit for this component. Instead, the SE supervisor who knows the program best, should have direct access at least a couple of times each year so that she can talk to the people who may be in a very good position to help her with problems. An example of good fidelity to this component would be for the executive team to invite the SE supervisor to attend part of a meeting twice a year to report on the program's successes and challenges. Further, the SE supervisor and administrators should be able to give examples of ways that the team has helped the program. For example, an executive director might indicate that she gave the green light for mental health team meetings to occur weekly instead of monthly. Or the medical director might report that he has been talking to the psychiatrists about the importance of work because the SE supervisor reported that psychiatrists weren't consistently supportive of work. View the module "Executive Director Interview" on the SE fidelity DVD. The fidelity reviewers obtain specific information about how the executive team supports SE.

Sample questions for executive team members:
- Please describe the supported employment program. (Reviewers: try to wait patiently during silence—people will often add bits of information as they have time to think).
- What changes have you made in order to have better fidelity to SE? What changes are you hoping to make in the future?
- Is there a fidelity action plan—a written plan to improve fidelity?
- (To the executive director): Have there been opportunities for you to talk to agency staff about supported employment? For instance, all agency meetings or other events? How do you share your values regarding the evidence-based practice? (Reviewers: if others answer for the executive director regarding the work that they have done, address your question to the executive director again).
- (To the executive director): Do you ever talk directly with the supported employment supervisor?

- Is fidelity part of the QA process? For example, does the QA process monitor fidelity scores over time? Does the QA process monitor client outcomes for SE? Would it be possible to see a recent QA report (or to see the section of the report related to supported employment)?
- Of the people with severe mental illness who are served by this agency, how many are employed? How often do you measure this? How is the information gathered? Is competitive employment separated from other types of employment? Do you have goals to increase competitive employment?
- Do you have a steering committee or leadership meeting for supported employment? Who participates in the meetings? What has been the focus of the meetings over the past 6 months? How often does the group meet?
- How does the SE supervisor share information about the program with this executive team? Have there been issues with which the executive team was able to help out?
- How is the relationship between VR and your agency? Has the executive team been able to help build a stronger relationship?

Sample questions for the SE coordinator
- Do you have access to the executive leadership at this agency (for example, the executive director, QA director, medical director) for help with the SE program? How have they helped you? Do you think they have a good feel for the challenges faced by the program, as well as the program's successes?
- Do you have a steering committee or leadership meeting for SE? Who participates in the meetings? What has been the focus of the meetings? Are they helpful? How often does the group meet?
- Is there a fidelity action plan? Would it be possible for us to see a copy?
- How many people with severe mental illness are employed at this agency?
- Does the CEO think that employment is a critical component of services at this agency? What gave you that impression?

Sample questions for employment specialists, case managers, therapists, medication prescribers

- Does the CEO think that employment is a critical component of services at this agency? What gave you that impression?
- What is the difference between "competitive employment" and other types of paid employment?

Services

1. *Work incentives planning: All clients are offered assistance in obtaining comprehensive, individualized work incentives planning before starting a new job and assistance accessing work incentives planning thereafter when making decisions about changes in work hours and pay. Work incentives planning includes SSA benefits, medical benefits, medication subsidies, housing subsidies, food stamps, spouse and dependent children benefits, past job retirement benefits, and any other source of income. Clients are provided information and assistance about reporting earnings to SSA, housing programs, VA programs, etc., depending on the person's benefits.*

Work incentives planning (also known as benefits counseling) is an important component of client choice. SE clients should all have access to comprehensive, accurate information about how their benefits will be affected by a return to work.

Further, when programs neglect to help clients access good information, that increases the chance that some clients will wind up with overpayments or may unintentionally lose benefits. When that happens, clients and mental health practitioners at the agency can become wary of employment and the SE program.

Examples:

If a SE program reported that there was a program in the county that provided good benefits planning and that they referred clients to that program on a regular basis but that only a few clients actually followed through with appointments, the fidelity score would not be above a "2" for this item. Reviewers could encourage employment specialists to go further to help clients access work incentives planning. For instance,

the SE program could ask someone from the program to spend an afternoon at the mental health agency one or two times each month. The employment specialists could sometimes go with clients to the benefits appointment. It isn't necessary for every client to meet with a benefits planner in order to receive a high score for this item, but when clients express interest in learning about work incentives, employment specialists should follow up to make sure that they are able to access the benefits planning service.

Individualized planning refers to providing clients some bottom line information. For example, "If you made $500 a month, you would lose your food stamps ($25) but your SSDI would not be affected... and your total monthly income would be XXX. If you made $1,000 a month..." If work incentives planning simply consists of explaining the rules to the person, the program would not score above a "2" on this item.

In some agencies, a particular employment specialist is responsible for providing benefits planning. In these situations, reviewers should try to ascertain how this person received training and whether there are plans for the specialist to receive ongoing training. Further, reviewers would be interested in knowing if the specialist is able to provide information when clients receive income from a variety of sources or when a client has a spouse or dependent who also receives benefits. Reviewers must try to assess whether the benefits information is accurate and comprehensive. Interviewing a VR counselor is often helpful as VR counselors are typically very familiar with benefits planning and can provide feedback about the quality of the service provided to their clients. If, for example, reviewers decided that the benefits planning was adequate for people who were simply interested in SSI or SSDI benefits, but not for people receiving VA benefits or multiple sources of benefits, the score could not be above a "3."

Another example might be a site that referred clients to an agency that provided individualized, comprehensive planning and also made sure that interested clients were able to follow up with referrals by actually attending the appointment. If the agency only referred clients prior to going back to work and did not help clients obtain further information as their income changed, then the score for this item could not be above a "4."

Likewise, if a center helped clients access comprehensive, individualized planning but did not help any clients with monthly reporting, the score could not be above a "4." Certainly the program would not be expected to help every client with income reporting as some people can do this on their own. However, the program might provide side-by-side assistance to some people and reminders to others.

If reviewers observe that clients must wait for a long time (for example, a month) to meet with a benefits planner, reviewers should comment that this is a concern. Some clients may become discouraged and lose interest in employment if they don't receive needed information in a reasonable time frame. However, the score would not be lowered unless the wait was so long that clients were actually finding jobs prior to meeting with the benefits planner.

Sample questions for employment specialists:
- What kind of benefits counseling is available for people in this program? Who provides the benefits planning?
- How do you keep track of which clients actually receive benefits planning and which clients don't? What do you do if someone doesn't follow through with a benefits appointment?
- How many of the people on your caseload have actually participated in benefits planning?
- Do you know if clients receive examples of what would happen to their total income if they worked part or full-time?
- Do you ever help clients report their earnings?

- Have you ever helped someone receive benefits planning a second or third time because of a change in income?

Sample questions for the work incentives planner:

- Are you able to provide information regarding benefits other than Social Security? For instance, if someone was receiving VA benefits, could you help them? If a client had a spouse or dependent who also received benefits, would you be able to give good information about how the client's earnings would affect other people in the family? How about housing programs?
- How did you receive training in work incentives? Have you been able to participate in training during the past year? Please describe.
- Do you provide people with any written information? Would it be possible to see a copy of the written information?
- Are you able to provide clients with information about how their bottom line would be affected by part or full-time work? Can you provide individualized information like this or are you instructed to provide information only about work incentive rules?

Sample questions for clients:

- Did anyone ask you if you would be interested in learning about how your benefits would be affected by a return to work? What happened next?
- Did the person who gave information about benefits and work talk to you about all the sources of income that you have? For example, Social Security, food stamps, or housing assistance? Did they ask you for the amount of money that you receive for each?
- Did the person who gave you information provide any examples? For instance, did they tell you what would happen if you worked part time or full time?
- Did the information help you—was it understandable?
- When you walked out of the appointment, did you have anything in writing to help you remember the details? Was the paper specific to you and the benefits that you receive or was it a list of rules that apply to everyone who gets benefits?

- Did anyone tell you how to report your earnings after you went back to work? Did they tell you how to do that for each source of income? Did anyone help you, at least in the beginning?

Sample questions for case managers, counselors
- When a person is transitioned off of the SE caseload and continues to work, what do you do if that person's income changes? Would you be able to refer the person to benefits counseling? Have you ever done so?

Sample questions for VR counselors:
- How do SE clients obtain benefits counseling? Have you observed that there is enough of this service available to help all of the clients that need this service? Is it your perception that clients are receiving helpful information that is specific to their own individual situation?

2. *Disclosure: Employment specialists provide clients with accurate information and assist with evaluating their choices to make an informed decision regarding what is revealed to the employer about having a disability.*
- Employment specialists do not require all clients to disclose their psychiatric disability at the work site in order to receive services.
- Employment specialists discuss with clients the possible costs and benefits (pros and cons) of disclosure at the work site in advance of clients disclosing at the work site. Employment specialists describe how disclosure is related to requesting accommodations and the employment specialist's role communicating with the employer.
- Employment specialists discuss specific information to be disclosed (e.g., disclose receiving mental health treatment, or presence of a disability, or difficulty with anxiety, or unemployed for a period of time, etc.) and offers examples of what could be said to employers.

- Employment specialists discuss disclosure on more than one occasion (e.g., if clients have not found employment after two months or if clients report difficulties on the job).

Client preferences are important in supported employment and the issue of disclosure is a key element of client choice.   This item encourages employment specialists to go beyond asking a simple "yes" or "no" question about disclosure. Instead, specialists are encouraged to help each person think about the possible benefits or costs of disclosure and to also help each person choose the specific information that they would like the specialist to share (if anything). Given the chance, some people will change their minds about disclosure over time. Therefore, it is recommended that specialists bring up the issue of disclosure again if clients are having difficulties with employment goals or if a job has ended and a client wishes to begin a new job search.

At some agencies, employment specialists will report that it is up to clients to choose whether or not they wish to disclose. However, they may go on to report that almost none of the clients in the program are comfortable with disclosure. Faced with this scenario, reviewers should attempt to find out from the specialists how they present disclosure. It is possible that the specialists are uncomfortable with disclosure and that they are consciously, or even unwittingly, encouraging clients not to choose disclosure. Reviewers can ask specialists to role-play a disclosure conversation with them, "If I were your client, how would you explain disclosure to me? And what if I said...?" It is also important to ask clients if they remember being given a choice about disclosure. Sometimes clients report that they would like employment specialists to advocate on their behalf to employers but didn't realize that it was an option.

Clients should also have choice about *what* is being disclosed. As a part of the decision-making process, the employment specialist should report that he talks to clients about the information to be shared and that he provides examples of things that he might say to the employer in order to get feedback from the client about his presentation.

Note: Reviewers usually encounter SE programs with employment specialists who carryout services somewhat differently. Gather as much information as possible and rate each employment specialist, then calculate the average and use the closest scale point.

Examples:

Employment specialists may report that they are not willing to help with job development unless clients are willing to disclose. Or they might say that choice is possible, but that they strongly encourage clients to go with disclosure. In these cases, the agency would not receive credit for this component.

If employment specialists report that disclosure is a choice, but when role-playing with reviewers, they simply ask whether or not the client is comfortable with disclosure, the program would not receive credit for the second component.   In order to receive credit, the specialists would help clients think about the possible costs or benefits in an impartial manner. An example of good fidelity might be that the specialist helps clients jot down a list of pros and cons regarding disclosure. Or the specialist might simply ask the client to talk about the pros and cons from her perspective.

In order to receive credit for the last component, employment specialists should be able to give examples of situations in which they brought up disclosure on more than one occasion. For example, "I was working with a person who lost her job but didn't see it coming. So when we started getting ready for another job search, we talked about disclosure again and how it might help her to get extra feedback from a boss. But I also told her that if she didn't want to use disclosure, I could still help her with another job."

Sample questions for employment specialists:
- If you were going to help me with a job search, how would you explain the issue of disclosure? What if I said that I wasn't sure whether or not I should disclose? What if I said that I didn't want to share information about my mental illness?

- Do you ever bring up disclosure on more than one occasion? If so, what would trigger another discussion about disclosure? Can you give me an example of when that has happened?
- I'm guessing that some people on your caseload are ok with disclosure and some aren't.   Do you have a feel for how many are ok with disclosure?

Sample questions for clients:
- Does your employment specialist talk to employers on your behalf—to advocate for them to hire you? How did that come about—do you remember talking to your employment specialist about that?
- Does your employment specialist have contact with your employer now? How did you decide that you did (or didn't) want your specialist to talk to your employer?

Sample questions for SE coordinator:
- How do you train new employment specialists to talk about disclosure? What are some important guidelines for employment specialists to think about when they are discussing disclosure with clients?

3. *Ongoing work-based assessment: Initial vocational assessment occurs over 2-3 sessions and is updated with information from work experiences in competitive jobs. A vocational profile form that includes information about preferences, experiences, skills, current adjustment, strengths, personal contacts, etc., is updated with each new job experience. Aims at problem solving using environmental assessments and consideration of reasonable accommodation. Sources of information include the client, treatment team, clinical records, and with the client's permission, from family members and previous employers.*
The essence of this item is that clients are not asked to engage in vocational evaluation activities (e.g., paper and pencil vocational tests, interest tests, work samples), situational assessments (such as short-term work experiences used as assessments), prevocational groups, volunteer jobs, short-term sheltered work experiences, or other types of assessment. Instead, the employment specialist typically spends a few weeks

getting to know the client by talking with the client, the case manager, psychiatrist, and with permission, family members and previous employers. Information gathered is not to determine employability, but to determine type of job and supports required to help the person work. What type of work environments will promote recovery and positive work experiences? Are there job accommodations that may also support the person working (e.g., part-time hours)? This information is gathered into a document sometimes referred to as a "vocational profile." The vocational profile is updated with each new job experience so that when practitioners leave the agency, lessons learned from the person's work experiences are not lost. Reviewers should make sure to read a number of vocational profiles while looking at charts, in addition to asking questions about the assessment process.

Note: Reviewers usually encounter SE programs with employment specialists who carryout services somewhat differently. Gather as much information as possible and rate each employment specialist, then calculate the average and use the closest scale point.

Examples:

It is possible that a reviewer could visit a program that did not routinely use vocational tests or situational assessments, but the reviewer might run into one or two cases in which a person engaged in a vocational assessment because he heard that VR offered this service and he believed that it would be helpful to him. The program could still receive a "5" for this item. On the other hand, if it was more routine for the program to have clients engaged in vocational testing because the program thought the testing results were needed, and then reviewers might decide to give the program a "2."

Some programs use situational assessments by arranging short-term "job tryouts" with community employers. In these assessments, clients are typically paid for their work. If these assessments are used on a routine basis, then the program would not rate above a "2" for this item. However, in some agencies, the employment specialist uses situational assessments as a placement tool. For example, upon hearing of an job

opening that would be a good fit for a person, the employment specialist might say to an employer, "I know of a person that I believe would be a good fit for your company. He hasn't worked much in the last few years, but he is dependable and very conscientious. Just to prove it to you, we'll pay his salary for the first two weeks. If after that time you agree that he is the kind of person you've been looking for, you would hire him like any other employee." If the site used this strategy for some clients whom they were having difficulty helping with job development, the program could still rate a "5" on this item since the assessment was really used as a job placement tool, rather than an assessment. If the program used this job development strategy for a large number of their clients, reviewers might decide that the specialists would benefit from improving their job development skills and would make comments under "Job development— quality of employer contacts."

If the program does not use a comprehensive vocational profile form similar to the form in *A Working Life* (Becker and Drake, Oxford University Press, 2003), or the SAMHSA supported employment toolkit, then the program would not rate above a "3" for this item. Further, if the program only included information from the client, and did not use information from the mental health team, the program could not rate above a "3."

Finally, programs may neglect to update the profile with lessons learned from each job experience while in the SE program. Employment specialists should be encouraged to update the profile with information each time a person starts a job and ends a job. Without these updates, the program would not rate above a "4" for this item.

Sample questions for employment specialists:
- Tell me about the vocational profile/assessment that you use? How long does it usually take to fill it out? What happens after you fill it out—do you ever use it? Do you ever add information to it?
- Where do you usually meet with clients when you are working on the profile?
- Does the client provide the information for the profile or do you get information from other sources as well? What sources?

- Do you ever have clients who would benefit from a vocational evaluation or situational assessment? What happens in these cases?
- In the past six months, how many people on your caseload have used a vocational evaluation or situational assessment?
- If you are working with someone who hasn't worked in a long time, do you ever suggest a volunteer job so that you can get a feel for the person's work behaviors and work skills?

Sample questions for SE coordinator:
- Do you track the number of clients who have participated in a traditional vocational evaluation or situational assessment? Can you share that information with us?
- Do you track the number of people who volunteer? Why would someone volunteer?
- How do your employment specialists gather information to determine ideas for job types and leads for employers?

Sample questions for VR counselors:
- Do you ever suggest a vocational evaluation or situational assessment for someone? Under what circumstances would you be likely to do that? How often?

Sample questions for clients:
- When you first met with the employment specialist, what did the two of you talk about? And what happened after that first meeting?
- Were you asked to do any vocational testing or participate in a job tryout?

4. *Rapid job search for competitive jobs: Initial employment assessment and first face-to-face employer contact by the client or the employment specialist about a competitive job occurs within 30 days (one month) after program entry.*
The purpose of this fidelity item is to ensure that clients are assisted in contacting employers directly about jobs, rather than steered toward lengthy vocational counseling, prevocational groups or work adjustment programs. It also ensures that the job search is active. In other words, if employment specialists are meeting with clients

week after week to hand them a list of job leads, but neither the specialist nor the client begins contacting employers, it is unlikely that the client will find work.

Reviewers can talk to clients and employment specialists to find out whether employer contact occurs rapidly, but they should also read charts and count the number of days from first client appointment with employment specialist to first employer contact. Though there may be some variability from chart to chart, reviewers should observe that in most cases, contact occurs within 30 days. In some situations, contact may not occur because the employment specialist may be conducting outreach and trying to engage a person. This should not be counted against the program.

Supported education is an integral part of supported employment when the client's goal is to attend school in order to increase knowledge and skills for a competitive job. Some people, however, want to go to school specifically for the learning experience without intentions to use it for a competitive job and this is not part of SE. Oftentimes a case manager will assist the client with this schooling. Some people are interested in attending schools or training programs to obtain certificates that are related to specific jobs (e.g., nursing assistant, truck driver, food service). In these instances, the length of time to first contact for school or training is counted.

Note: Reviewers usually encounter SE programs with employment specialists who carryout services somewhat differently. Gather as much information as possible and rate each employment specialist, then calculate the average and use the closest scale point.

Examples:
In the majority of cases, employer contact will be focused on applying for jobs. However, in a few cases contact may revolve around a person trying to learn more about the types of jobs that are available in the community by visiting workplaces and observing people at work. This is consistent with a score of "5."

In some cases, the client will make the employer contact rather than the specialist. This is consistent with a score of "5" as some clients don't want to use disclosure and even those who do may also want to make some contacts on their own. However, if the client has said that he is ok with disclosure and there is no evidence that the specialist is ever making contacts with employers, then reviewers may wish to include this information when scoring "Individualized job search."

When people make contact within 30 days with training and educational programs that will lead to a specific competitive job this is consistent with a score of "5."

Sample questions for clients:
- After you first met with the employment specialist, about how long was it before you started contacting employers about a job?
- If it was more than a month: "What slowed things down? Was that the right pace for you?"

Sample questions for employment specialists:
- What happens after you first meet a client?
- About how long does it take to start the job search? Are there ever any exceptions to that? Why would those exceptions occur?

5. *Individualized job search: Employment specialists make employer contacts aimed at making a good job match based on clients' preferences (relating to what each person enjoys and their personal goals) and needs (including experience, ability, symptomatology, health etc.) rather than the job market (i.e., those jobs that are readily available). An individualized job search plan is developed and updated with information from the vocational assessment/profile form and new job/educational experiences.*

Employment specialists should help clients look for jobs that are consistent with the person's stated interests. However, they also take other factors into consideration when helping the person think about a job goal. For example, they should be talking to each

person about their previous job experiences—the things that worked and the things that didn't. They should also be helping the person think of a job that will maximize their strengths and minimize any issues such as symptoms, cognitive impairment or substance abuse.

Further, job preference may not just be related to type of job. Some people have stronger preferences related to location, pay or work environment. Employment specialists should be listening to what is most important to each person.

Finally, an individualized job search plan should be present and up to date. If each employment plan reads, "Client will look for a part-time job" then the plans are not at all individualized. Encourage employment specialists to make each plan specific to the person's job preferences and job search preferences so that even if the names were removed from a stack of job search plans, the specialists could still identify which plan belonged to which person.

Examples:
If there was no evidence of job search plans, the program would not receive a score above "3."

If reviewers ask the specialists about individual clients, and time and time again the specialists report that the job search was based on a particular job title because "that's what the client wanted to do," then reviewers should ask questions related to how the job will fit with the person's disability. If specialists aren't helping clients think about a good job match based upon each person's strengths, lessons learned from previous jobs and also symptoms, substance abuse, etc., then the program isn't really providing individualized job searches. That program should not rate above a "3."

Finally, if reviewers observe that people have goals such as "customer service, kitchen work or janitorial", they should ask why the person is looking for such a diverse range of jobs. Even when clients say that they will "take anything", employment specialists can

do a better job of helping people think of jobs that they will find satisfying and that will be a good match. A key role of the employment specialists is to help people link their strengths and preferences to specific types of jobs and work settings.

Sample questions for clients:
- How did you decide to apply for (the job you just applied for OR the job you are working at)?
- What types of jobs are you and your employment specialist looking for? Why do you think that type of job will be a good match for you?
- How did your employment specialist help you get a job?

Sample questions for employment specialists:
- How did you decide which employers to contact for (name of client)? How did you decide which type of jobs?
- Please tell me about a person on your caseload who really needed a very specific type of job. How did you help that person find the right job?
- Do you ever suggest jobs to clients? How do you decide what type of jobs to suggest?
- Do you ever get information from the case manager or psychiatrist to help you and your clients think of a good job match? Can you give me an example?

6. *Job development—Frequent employer contact. Each employment specialist makes at least 6 face-to-face employer contacts per week on behalf of clients looking for work. (Rate for each employment specialist, then calculate average and use the closest scale point.) An employer contact is counted even when an employment specialist meets the same employer more than one time in a week, and when the client is present or not present. Client-specific and generic contacts are included. Employment specialists use a weekly tracking form to document employer contacts.*

Note: In supported employment, clients are encouraged to search for jobs as much as possible. In fact, many people with severe mental illness are better than anyone else at engaging, learning about the needs of, and marketing themselves to employers, and in

particular at explaining their recovery experience when that is pertinent (e.g., ex-felons with serious mental illness describing what they have done to recover and to rehabilitate themselves). Job development is always viewed in terms of doing with or in support of an individual. Even when clients are not in need of or interested in the employment specialist making direct contacts to employers on their behalf, employment specialists must be knowledgeable about requirements of different jobs and the range and needs of employers in their communities. Employment specialists share job leads with all clients regardless of advocating directly with employers for a specific individual.

In order to rate this item, reviewers should ask to see a month's worth of tracking forms. Two examples of employer (job development) contact logs are in the appendix of this manual. Reviewers should also be sure to look at forms for *each* employment specialist—not just a sample—since specialists may vary greatly in regards to employer contacts. Before rating the item, ask employment specialists what type of contacts are counted on the sheet, and whether or not they record contacts made by clients without the specialist. Finally, if there isn't a supervisor's signature on the form, ask supervisors how often they review the forms and how they use the forms in supervision. The focus of employer contact for this item is job development. For this item, do not include employer contacts made after the person starts working and is receiving follow-along support.

Examples:
If there are two employment specialists in a program and one made 21 contacts over the past four weeks, and the other made 18, the reviewers would score the item based upon an average of 5 contacts per week. 18+21= 39. 39/8 weeks= 4.8. (The total number of contacts was divided by 8 weeks, because the reviewers were looking at two employment specialists over a four-week period.)

If the specialists are tracking contacts weekly, but the supervisor does not review the logs at least monthly, the program would not rate above a "2" even if the employment specialists are making 6 contacts per week.

If the specialists report that they include phone calls and contacts made by clients (without the specialist) then the reviewers should look to see if the logs include this information. If it isn't clear which contacts were by phone (or were made independently by the client) then reviewers should not score this item above a "2."

If reviewers observe that employment specialists make an average of 6 contacts per week and that the majority of the contacts are client specific, then the program would receive a rating of "5." If however, the majority of contacts are generic (not pertaining to a specific client), then the reviewers should lower the score to "2" and make recommendations that the specialists focus on client-specific contacts.

Sample questions for employment specialists:
- Do you include phone contacts on your job development (employer contact) logs?
- If a client makes an employer contact without you, would that go on the log?
- Does your supervisor ever review your logs with you?

Sample questions for SE supervisors:
- Do you review the employer contact logs? How often?
- What is your approach if someone is consistently having difficulty making contacts?

7. *Job development—Quality of employer contact: Employment specialists build relationships with employers through multiple visits in person that are planned to learn the needs of the employer, convey what the SE program offers to the employer, describe client strengths that are a good match for the employer. (Rate for each employment specialist, then calculate average and use the closest scale point.)*
All fidelity reviews should include an observation of employment specialists conducting employer contacts for job development. If there is more than one reviewer, then each can go out with a separate employment specialist to observe. Even if the program schedules time for reviewers to observe job development activities, it is possible that on the day of the review, the employment specialist(s) will want to focus on another

activity instead (for instance, completing a vocational profile). Explain that this is a very important part of the review and help the employment specialist think of a person who needs a job and employers s/he might contact for that person. Then ask the employment specialist if the two of you can head out and conduct a couple of cold calls. If the time of day is not conducive to the type of employment (for example, if it is lunch time and the employment specialist knows a person who wants restaurant work) help the specialist think of a second person who is looking for work. Be persistent. Further, ask questions (see below) to get a feel for how other specialists on the team approach job development.

Examples:

If the employment specialists almost never make face-to-face employer contacts (for instance, 2 per month), then the program would receive a score of "1" on this item— because it doesn't matter how good they are if they never do it.

If employer contacts revolve around asking about job openings and leaving a business card with an employer, reviewers should ask what the next step would be. If the specialists don't have plans to personally follow up with the employer, then the score for this item would probably be a "2."

The following would be an example of good fidelity "5": The specialist reports that she likes to visit an employer once to introduce herself and make an appointment to come back. Or, the specialist might set up a meeting by phone. She then takes the reviewer out to meet an employer whom she is getting to know and asks questions to learn more about the employer's needs. For example, "What type of person is successful in this job? How often do you hire these positions?" She might then go on to describe a person she believes to be a good match, or may plan to return again to talk about a person whom she would like the employer to meet. If the employer doesn't have any openings, she would stop by from time to time to check in with the employer and to remind him that she is still available to help him find qualified applicants.

Sample questions for employment specialists:

- How do you go about approaching an employer for the first time? What do you say? What do you try to accomplish during that first contact? What would happen next?

- Tell me about an employer whom you contacted recently? What was your approach? What happened? Do you have plans to follow up?

Sample question for clients:

- How does the employment specialist help with finding jobs?

8. *Diversity of job types: Employment specialists assist clients in obtaining different types of jobs.*

Ask to see a list of jobs obtained in the past 6 months. For the baseline fidelity review, ask for a list of all jobs. Very similar jobs may have a variety of titles, such as housekeeper, janitor, and maid. Group these jobs together under "cleaning." If a job title occurs more than once on the list, determine the percentage for that job.

Note: Reviewers usually encounter SE programs with employment specialists who carryout services somewhat differently. Gather as much information as possible and rate each employment specialist, then calculate the average and use the closest scale point.

Example:

A program has a job list of 40 jobs over the past 6 months. Five of the jobs are janitorial or cleaning (13%), two jobs were stocking but all of the other jobs were diverse. The score would be a "5."

9. *Diversity of employers: Employment specialists assist clients in obtaining jobs with different employers.*

If the job list used for "Diversity of job types" does not include business names, ask the program for a list of businesses that have employed clients in the past 6 months. For the

baseline fidelity review, ask for a list of all jobs. Determine the frequency with which clients are hired at the same business.

Example:

In some towns, a large company such as a big factory or hospital may be one of the main employers. If a few clients are working there, that would be consistent with high fidelity. If however, several clients were working at a medium size company, such as a Target store, it is possible that the employment specialists are just trying to maximize a good relationship with an employer rather than making individualized job placements.

10. *Competitive jobs: Employment specialists provide competitive job options that have permanent status rather than temporary or time-limited status, e.g., TE (transitional employment positions). Competitive jobs pay at least minimum wage, are jobs that anyone can apply for and are not set aside for people with disabilities. (Seasonal jobs and jobs from temporary agencies that other community members use are counted as competitive jobs.)*

Look at the list of jobs obtained in the past six months, or all current jobs for a baseline fidelity review. Try to determine whether these are regular jobs in the community that anyone can apply for, rather than jobs that are created for people with disabilities. If people are working for employers, such as Goodwill, that hire anyone in the community but also tend to hire a good percentage of people from employment programs, reviewers should try to determine whether the program depends heavily on these employers or whether these jobs are the exception.

Self-employment is considered to be competitive. To distinguish self-employment from casual labor, which is not considered competitive employment here, reviewers ask about the wage (e.g., piece rate, at or above minimum wage) and if the work is performed regularly.

Examples:

If some people are working for temporary agencies, reviewers should ask how each person came to be working at a temporary job. Some people may choose seasonal work because they want a particular kind of job such as landscaping. Others may be working "temp to perm," jobs that transition from temporary to permanent in status. Both of these examples are consistent with a high fidelity score. However, if a more than a few people have temp jobs, reviewers should ask careful questions to ensure that the temp jobs really are based upon client preferences.

If clients in the program are volunteering, reviewers should try to find out how the volunteer job came about. If employment specialists suggest volunteer work as a way to gain work experience, the program would probably not rate a "5" on this item. However, if just a few people were volunteering and it appeared that the clients asked for volunteer work without prompting from the specialist as a step they feel they need to take toward working in a competitive job, it would be possible for the program to rate a "5." Reviewers could encourage specialists to offer help with competitive jobs from time to time and should also encourage the program to track the number of people who volunteer to ensure that volunteer jobs are not overused. People solely interested in volunteer jobs should not be referred to supported employment services.

Some jobs occur in the community and pay above minimum wage but are not considered competitive because they are set-aside for people with disabilities. An example is a cleaning crew that hires people with disabilities. An example of a job that would not be considered competitive would be a person who was "self-employed" selling books on eBay, but who only had been able to sell a couple of books each month.

Sample questions for employment specialists:
- I noticed that a few people are working at temp agencies. Can you tell me about the person at "Ready Labor"? How did he choose that job? How about the person working at …"?

- I noticed that someone is cleaning at a company called "Abilities." Is that a job that anyone can apply for?
- I saw that Sue had a volunteer job. How did that come about?

Sample questions for clients:

- How did you happen to choose a volunteer job? Would you have preferred to work at a paying job? Did anyone offer you help with a paying job?
- How do you like your job at the temp agency? Is that the type of work that you were hoping for?
- For those of you who have a job now, is it a time-limited position or can you keep it as long as your employer is satisfied with your work?

11. *Individualized follow-along supports: Clients receive different types of support for working a job that are based on the job, client preferences, work history, needs, etc. Supports are provided by a variety of people, including treatment team members (e.g., medication changes, social skills training, encouragement), family, friends, co-workers (i.e., natural supports), and employment specialist. Employment specialist also provides employer support (e.g., educational information, job accommodations) at client's request. Employment specialist offers help with career development, i.e., assistance with education, a more desirable job, or more preferred job duties.* While reviewing charts, keep track of the type of job supports that are offered. Further, when interviewing clients, employment specialists, case managers, and VR counselors try to get a feel for the range of supports that the program offers. The idea is that the supports should be related to the person's work history, preferences, strengths, symptoms, supports… rather than the same types of supports being offered to most people. Examples of supports could include on-the-job coaching, off-the-job meetings to talk about work and employer supports. However, SE programs can provide other supports as well, for instance, helping someone report benefits or meet with a benefits planner to discuss a change in income, providing wake-up calls, helping someone ask for a job promotion, facilitating family meetings to talk about a job, observe someone at work to develop strategies for efficiency, provide rides to work in

order to help someone with anxiety, help with travel training to the job site, coordination of services with VR, help with orientation materials, etc. Mental health supports might include medication adjustments, budgeting, social skills training, encouragement regarding the job, help with grooming or dress for a job, etc.

Examples:

Ask employment specialists if they talk to mental health practitioners to plan job supports. For example, when someone gets offered a job, does the mental health treatment team celebrate success and also try to anticipate supports that the client will need? Mental health practitioners might talk to clients about their jobs to offer support or might even increase their contacts to provide extra support if the job start is stressful. If the treatment team considers job supports to be entirely on the shoulders of the SE team, the agency would not score above a "3" for this item.

If specialists tell clients to "call if there is a problem" rather than scheduling meetings, the program should not rate above a "2." If the specialists use this approach for less than half of newly employed clients, then the program should not rate above a "3."

If reviewers run across situations in which a client had difficulties with a job but the specialist did not offer to change or intensify supports, the program would not rate above a "3" since the supports are not individualized to the needs of each person.

An example of individualized supports might be providing transportation to the job for the first week or two if a person had a very high level of anxiety prior to starting their shift. Another example is asking an employer to change a person's job duties to accommodate a cognitive impairment. If the employment specialists were able to provide a few examples such as these, the reviewers would have indicators of individualized supports.

Reviewers should be aware of indicators that supports are not individualized. For example, if 70% of clients are receiving on-the-job coaching or if almost everyone

receives visits at the workplace, then supports are not individualized. Employment specialists should be able to give examples of individualized supports such as, "He lost his last job on the first day, so even though his first day of this new job was on a Saturday I made plans with my supervisor to work that day."   Follow-along plans should also be specific to each person's strengths and needs.

If most clients are not choosing to participate in follow-along supports, the reviewers may ask how specialists go about making follow-along supports convenient to people. For example are they offering to meet the person in a convenient location or at a time chosen by the working person? Further, have they spoken to the person about the specific services that they can offer to help the person be successful in the job and build a career, or are they just offering to provide a check in service? In this situation, the program would not score above a "2."

Finally, unless it is a very new SE team, the specialists should be able to give some examples of helping clients leave a job to find a more desirable job, advance through more education or ask for a promotion or change in job duties.   Without any evidence of career advancement assistance, the program would not score above a "4."

Sample questions for clients:
- How does your employment specialist help you with your job? Is that the kind of help that you need?
- How does your case manager or therapist help you with your job?

Sample questions for employment specialists and SE coordinator:
- Has anyone on your caseload started a job within the past month? Can you tell me how often you have been meeting with this person? What other types of supports have you offered? Did you talk to the treatment team about the type of supports that would make sense or how they could help out?
- What percentage of people decide to make use of job supports?
- How do you decide what type of job supports to offer?

- Do case managers, therapists, or medication prescribers ever have suggestions of job supports that would be helpful? Can you give me an example?
- Do you ever go to the medication prescriber when someone is having problems with symptoms or side effects on the job?
- Tell me about someone on your caseload who is working. What type of job supports are you providing and how often? How did that person do in previous jobs?
- Is there anyone on your caseload who is going to school? How are you helping with that?
- Have you ever helped someone quit a job to find a better job? Can you give me an example?
- Have you ever been in a position to help someone ask for a promotion or transfer to more desirable position within his or her company?

12. *Time-unlimited follow-along supports: Employment specialists have face-to-face contact within 1 week before starting a job, within 3 days after starting a job, weekly for the first month, and at least monthly for a year or more, on average, after working steadily, and desired by clients.   Clients are transitioned to step down job supports from a mental health worker following steady employment. Employment specialists contact clients within 3 days of learning about the job loss.*
Reviewers should ask to talk about some clients who are working but no longer open with the SE program. The decision to transfer someone off the team should occur because the person likes the job and has demonstrated steady work performance. Further, the case manager should be prepared to talk about the job and refer the person back to the SE program if problems crop up.

In SE, services are always individualized so that there may be some variation about how often people meet with their employment specialists once they are employed. But, if employment specialists vary from the above guidelines for all of their clients, it is likely that people are not being offered supports to maintain their jobs. The reviewers should look at job tenure for people on each of the employment specialist's caseloads.

Also, when looking at charts, look for face-to-face supports offered just prior to the job start and after the job start. Count the weekly meetings (if any) during the first month of the job. If supports provided during the first month of a job vary from person to person, try to determine whether supports are provided to more than half of working clients, etc. in your sample.

Examples:

Talk to employment specialists and the SE supervisor to see if the program has a protocol regarding supports during the first month of the job. If there is no protocol, but charts and interviews indicate frequent, face-to-face meetings before the job start, just after the job start, and weekly for the first month, the program would still receive a score of "5."

If clients are almost always transferred off the SE team as they reach a one year anniversary at work, then reviewers should question the rationale that was used in individual cases. An example of good fidelity might be that the team transfers some people at the one-year mark, but continues to provide supports for others whose job performance has not been stable. The team might even have examples of one or two people who remain on the SE caseload even after a few years of employment because of intermittent problems or the need for employer supports.

Sample questions for employment specialists:

- Can you tell me about the last couple of people who obtained jobs? How long after they started the job did you have a face-to-face meeting? How did you support that person over the first month of work? Was anyone else providing supports?
- Can you tell me about the last few people who were transferred off the SE team? How long had they been working? Why was the decision made that it was the right time for a transfer? Was each person included in the decision?
- How do you know when it is the right time for someone to transfer off the SE team?

Sample question for clients:

- When did you start your job? How often do you meet with the employment specialist? Do you meet in person or by phone?

13. *Community-based services: Employment services such as engagement, job finding and follow-along supports are provided in natural community settings by all employment specialists. (Rate each employment specialist based upon their total weekly scheduled work hours, then calculate the average and use the closest scale point.)*

There are a variety of ways to determine where employment specialists spend their work hours. For example, reviewers can ask the agency if it tracks location for all services provided. At some agencies, it is possible to get a print out of the percent of community services provided to each client. Another strategy is to look at location codes on progress notes and count the number of contacts that occur in the community. Reviewers can also ask employment specialists to open their calendar to the previous week and explain the activities for each day and where the activities occurred (this may provide information for a variety of fidelity items). Some reviewers ask employment specialists to keep a simple daily log of how they spend their entire work time for one month prior to the fidelity review. The log includes what occurred, where it occurred, and for how long. An example of such a log can be found in the appendix of this manual. Finally, some reviewers report that they look at the agency's sign out logs for company cars. Mileage logs and staff sign in/sign out logs can also be sources of information.

To determine a score for this item, reviewers should remember that for a "5", specialists should spend 65% of their *total* scheduled work hours in the community, which is a different perspective than a percent of all services provided.

Examples:

Occasionally, agencies have attempted to move vocational unit meetings and individual supervision into the community in order to drive up the percentage of community time. This is not in keeping with the spirit of SE fidelity.

Travel time and meetings at VR offices should count towards time in the community. Meetings at the agency's satellite offices should not count as time in the community.

Sample questions for employment specialists:

- Thanks for bringing your appointment book. I was hoping to get a better understanding of what your job is like. For instance, could you show me what you did last week? What did you do on Monday? Where did you meet the person to work on the vocational profile? What did you do on Tuesday?
- Are there any clients who prefer to meet with you at the office? Is that common?

Sample question for SE coordinator:

- What strategies has the team used to increase time in the community?

Sample question for clients:

- Where do you usually meet with your employment specialist? Where do you prefer meeting your employment specialist?

14. *Assertive engagement and outreach by integrated treatment team: Service termination is not based on missed appointments or fixed time limits. Systematic documentation of outreach attempts. Engagement and outreach attempts made by integrated team members. Multiple home/community visits. Coordinated visits by employment specialist with integrated team member. Connect with family, when applicable. Once it is clear that the client no longer wants to work or continue with SE services, the team stops outreach.*

When clients begin missing appointments, it is incumbent on the employment specialist and mental health practitioners to try to find out the reason that the person has not

attended. For example, difficulty remembering appointments, lack of hope or confidence about work, family concerns about work, etc. The team should make every effort to talk to the person about their reasons for disconnecting and also try to help the person solve problems that may be getting in their way. If someone says that they have changed their mind and no longer want to work, then the employment specialist may close the case, though the mental health practitioner should be encouraged to bring up work from time to time.

At the end of the SE unit meeting, reviewers could ask the team to discuss a couple of people who have disengaged from the program. Ask employment specialists to describe the strategies they have used to provide outreach to those individuals.

If reviewers have any concerns about "Assertive engagement and outreach", they should ask to see a few charts for people who have dropped out of the SE program.   Reading progress notes during the last few months of service may provide helpful information.

Examples:
Some employment specialists report that in response to missed appointments, they usually make a few phone calls, send a letter, and then close the case. In this situation (assuming the specialists documented their calls and letters) the program would receive a "2."

If a program reported that it uses five of the six outreach strategies, but it has not yet connected with families because of confidentiality, then reviewers should think about how long the program has been operating and how many clients are served by the program. If the program has been around for awhile and does not have permission to speak with *any* families, then it is likely that employment specialists are not asking clients if they would like a family member to be involved in the employment plan. In this case, the program would receive a score of "4." If the program was very new, then it may be possible that employment specialists have not had permission to contact

family members for those people who have required outreach. Reviewers might decide to rate the item a "5" and expect to see some changes at the next review.

Sample questions for employment specialists:
- What do you do when someone starts missing appointments (or misses their first appointment)? Can you give me an example of someone who has not been consistent in keeping appointments with you?
- At what point would you go ahead and close the person's case?
- Do you document your efforts to reach people who miss appointments?
- Could you describe when you have contact with family members of clients?

MATT

Sample questions for SE supervisor:
- Does the program have a policy for missed appointments?
- When specialists close a case, do you review that case?

Sample questions for mental health practitioners:
- If a person misses appointments with the employment specialist, what do you do?
- How do you help people hook up with the employment specialist for the first time?

APPENDIX: SAMPLE FORMS AND LOGS

EMPLOYER (JOB DEVELOPMENT) CONTACT LOG—EXAMPLE 1

Employment Specialist: _____ Client: _____Week Starting:_____

- The purpose of employer contacts should be to introduce yourself, learn about the employer, advocate for the client, and/or talk about the supports you could offer. Other examples of employer contacts include sitting in on interviews and making follow-up contacts. Each contact with an employer counts; so if you talk to the same employer twice in one week, please fill in two lines.

- There are some job search activities that should not be recorded on this form. These include contacting employers only to ask about job openings, and helping clients send in resumés or completing on-line applications. Helping a client turn in an application does not count unless you also talk to the employer. Contacts made by the client without your presence should not be recorded on this sheet.

1. Employer: _____☐with client ☐ without client; ☐ interview.
    Plans to follow up and notes about workplace/employer:

    _____
    _____

2. Employer: _____ ☐ with client ☐ without client; ☐interview.
    Plans to follow up and notes about workplace/employer:

    _____
    _____

3. Employer: _____☐with client ☐ without client; ☐ interview.
    Plans to follow up and notes about workplace/employer:

    _____
    _____

4. Employer: _____ ☐with client ☐ without client; ☐ interview.
    Plans to follow up and notes about workplace/employer:

    _____
    _____

5. Employer: _____ ☐ with client ☐ without client; ☐ interview.
    Plans to follow up and notes about workplace/employer:

    _____
    _____

(continue on back, if needed)

SE Supervisor's Signature _____ Date: _____

EMPLOYER (JOB DEVELOPMENT) CONTACT LOG—EXAMPLE 2

Employment Specialist: _____

Week starting on: _____

- The purpose of employer contacts should be to introduce yourself, learn about the employer, advocate for the client, and/or talk about the supports you could offer. Other examples of employer contacts include sitting in on interviews and making follow-up contacts. Each contact with an employer counts; so if you talk to the same employer twice in one week, please fill in two lines.
- There are some job search activities that should not be recorded on this form. These include contacting employers only to ask about job openings, and helping clients send in résumés or completing on-line applications. Helping a client turn in an application does not count unless you also talk to the employer. Contacts made by the client without your presence should not be recorded on this sheet.

1. Client: _____ Employer: _____
    ☐ with client, ☐ without client, ☐ interview. Plans to follow up/notes:

_____
_____

2. Client: _____ Employer: _____
    ☐ with client, ☐ without client, ☐ interview. Plans to follow up/notes:

_____
_____

3. Client: _____ Employer: _____
    ☐ with client, ☐ without client, ☐ interview. Plans to follow up/notes:

_____
_____

4. Client: _____ Employer: _____

☐ with client, ☐ without client, ☐ interview. Plans to follow up/notes:

_____

_____

5. Client: _____ Employer: _____

☐ with client, ☐ without client, ☐ interview. Plans to follow up/notes

_____

_____

6. Client: _____ Employer: _____

☐ with client, ☐ without client, ☐ interview. Plans to follow up/notes:

_____

_____

7. Client: _____ Employer: _____

☐ with client, ☐ without client, ☐ interview. Plans to follow up/notes:

_____

_____

(continue on back, if needed)

Supervisor's signature: _____

Date: _____

Field Mentoring Checklist for Job Development

Date: _____ Employment Specialist: _____

1. <u>Supervisor plan for field mentoring:</u>

☐ Observe, ☐ Model, ☐ Help ES prepare for employer contact, ☐ Provide feedback

Other: _____

2. ES goal(s) for field mentoring: _____

_____

3. <u>Planned activities (ES and Supervisor to develop together):</u>

Number of businesses we will visit: _____

Specific focus for each visit:

1. Employer: _____

   Client in mind: _____

   ☐ Introduction of ES, ☐ Learn about the business, ☐ Advocate for client,

   ☐ Provide info about SE program, ☐ Continued contact to strengthen

   relationship with employer, ☐ Other: _____

2. Employer: _____

   Client in mind: _____

   ☐ Introduction of ES, ☐ Learn about the business, ☐ Advocate for client,

   ☐ Provide info about SE program, ☐ Continued contact to strengthen

   relationship with employer, ☐ Other: _____

3. Employer: _____

   Client in mind: _____

   ☐ Introduction of ES, ☐ Learn about the business, ☐ Advocate for client,

   ☐ Provide info about SE program, ☐ Continued contact to strengthen

   relationship with employer, ☐ Other: _____

4. Employer: _____

   Client in mind: _____

   ☐ Introduction of ES, ☐ Learn about the business, ☐ Advocate for client,

   ☐ Provide info about SE program, ☐ Continued contact to strengthen

   relationship with employer, ☐ Other: _____

4. **Feedback:**

☐   **Strengths Observed During Field Mentoring:**

☐   **Obstacles Encountered:**

☐   **Could Alternative Interventions/Approaches Have Been Used?**

We role played the following alternatives:

❒   **What did the supervisor learn from the ES?**

5. **Plan for Follow-up**

  ❒

  ❒

  ❒ **(Remember to complete employer contact log for these visits)**

  ❒ **Next date for field mentoring: _____**

Supported Employment Community Activity Time Log

Name: _____

Date	Activity	Where Activity Occurred		Time in Min.
		Agency	Comm.	

Activity Codes:

A	**Assessment:** This activity is obtaining information needed to begin filling out the vocational profile; identifying client's skills, interests, abilities, job preferences, employment history, work limitations, etc.
B	**Benefits Planning:** This activity includes any meeting with individuals who are providing information to clients regarding how their SSA benefits will be affected by working, going to work, or work changes, i.e. increase in pay. Individual providing counseling could be from SSA, or any other individual <u>specially</u> trained to provide benefits counseling.
CM	**Case Management:** Include all case management-related services, such as arranging for housing, handling a medication emergency, applying for SSA benefits, etc. If you were taking the person to a med appointment to discuss increased symptoms as a result of working, that would be a SE service listed under "other."
DT	**Driving Time:** Time spent driving to and from client appointments, meeting employers, time driving in job search, etc.
E	**Engagement:** Activity includes meeting new SE clients and getting to know them.
FASC	**Follow-Along Supports for a Working Client:** The activities include meeting with the client face-to-face with the purpose of maximizing job retention, identifying any problems the client is having and problem solving, arranging for transportation, assessing if the job is a good match, assisting the client to manage their symptoms at the workplace. The supports can be at the workplace or off-site.
FASE	**Follow-Along Supports for the Employer:** Activities include meeting with the employer of a working client with the purpose of identifying any potential issues or concerns the employer has about the client and attempting to create a solution, educating the employer about mental health issues, mediating employer issues between the employer and client, negotiating accommodations and work support needs for the client, etc.

JD	Job Development: face-to-face contact with employers either with the client present or alone where the intention is to build a relationship. that lead to a potential job placement. Activity includes introducing yourself, providing information about supported employment services, talking about a client who might be a good job candidate, or getting information about the business in order to make a good job match, etc.
JP	Job Preparation: Activities include assisting client with interview skills, résumé development, developing workplace social skills, etc.
JS	Job Search: Activities include visiting potential places of employment with the client, filling out applications, online job search, visiting the workforce center, etc. This activity does not include any face-to-face meeting with an employer
O - V	Other: Any other activity that is not described but is a service that is vocationally-related, i.e., assisting clients pursuing educational objectives
O - NV	Other-Non-vocational: Activities such as running a non-vocational group.
R	Record keeping: include time spent on completing documentation requirements
S	Supervision: Time spent in individual supervision
TM	Weekly treatment team meetings, monthly all case management team meetings and SE team meetings
VR	Vocational Rehabilitation: Activities include meeting with VR counselor, ES, and client to make application for services, IPE development, and preparation to meet with VR counselor, scheduled meetings to discuss clients. Note: this does not include taking clients to medical/dental services authorized by VR this is considered a case management activity.

G. Smith, KSU, 2008

SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT TIME ACTIVITY LOG-VERSION 2

Monday, _____ (date)

Time	Activity

SAMPLE LETTER REGARDING PREPARATION FOR THE FIDELITY VISIT

December 10

Fatima Pacis
SE Supervisor
X Center
Something Street
Town, City, Zip

Dear Fatima,

Thanks for your offer to help with preparation for the fidelity visit on January 15 and 16. Nick Germanotta and I are looking forward to visiting with you and your staff.

Prior to our visit, there is some information that we will need to receive (see list below). Please let us know if you do not have any of the documentation listed. It's possible that you may have this information in another form that would also be helpful to us.

- A list of places clients have worked over the past 6 months, including job titles, job start dates, job end dates if applicable, type of employment (i.e., competitive job, transitional (TE) job, sheltered job, volunteer job) <u>and</u> names of businesses. Please remove client names before sending.

- The number of clients who have participated in situational assessments during the past 6 months. <u>Situational assessments</u> refer to short-term work assignments that occur at an agency or in the community. The purpose of the assessment is to evaluate "work behaviors" such as attendance, ability to persist at task, social skills and so forth. These assessments may also evaluate the person's ability to perform a particular type of work.

- The number of clients who have participated in vocational evaluation during the past 6 months. <u>Vocational evaluation</u> refers to a battery of tests and work

samples that measure academic levels, manual dexterity, short and long-term recall, range of motion, vocational interests, ability to sort items, etc.

- Employment specialist and employment coordinator staff vacancies for the last 6 months.
- Agency brochure
- Brochures (or program descriptions) for each vocational service available to agency clients.
- Copies of job development logs for the past month for each employment specialist.
- A copy of fidelity action plan (if available).
- Available documentation indicating location of services provided by the employment specialist (i.e., agency, community)

Please remove client names before sending these documents. Thanks.

There are specific activities that we will need to complete during our fidelity visit. It would be helpful if you could arrange the activities and send us a schedule by Jan 2. The activities we'll need to complete are outlined in the table below.

Activity	Time	Reviewers
Orientation to the agency. (This is often provided by the SE supervisor and could include others from the agency.)	30 minutes	Both reviewers
Observation of supported employment unit meeting.	One hour	Both reviewers
Observation of mental health treatment team meeting	One hour	Both reviewers

Interview with a few members of executive leadership, for example, CEO, QA Director and Clinical Director.	30 minutes	Both reviewers
Meeting with a psychiatrist, medication prescriber or medical director	15 minutes	Both reviewers
Individual interviews with at least 3 case managers (different people than at last review).	30 minutes each	We'll split up for the case manager interviews.
Shadow 2 employment specialists as they conduct job development services (meeting with prospective employers)	90 minutes each	We'll split up to shadow the employment specialists.
Interview 2 employment specialists who were not shadowed while conducting job development.	30 minutes each	We'll split up for these interviews.
Interview a small group of clients (5-7 people) who have received supported employment services.	45 minutes	Both reviewers
Interview one or two families of people who have received SE services.	30 minutes	We'll split up for these interviews.
Read a sample of charts. Please pull 12-15 charts for people who have received SE services.	2.5 hours	We can do this together or independently.

Interview a VR counselor or supervisor working with the program.	30 minutes	We can do this together or one of us can do this alone.
Interview a benefits counselor.	30 minutes	We can do this together or one of us can do this alone.
Interview the SE supervisor	30 minutes	Both reviewers

Please pull the charts ahead of time so that we can work on reading records whenever one of us has time available during the visit. Also, it would help if you could include a few charts for the people we will be interviewing.

Fatima, thanks for your help with preparation for the fidelity visit. We realize that it is a lot of hard work, however, we hope the review will help your program with efforts to move forward on supported employment. Please feel free to call if you have any questions about this letter.

Sincerely,

Ann Shapiro
Department of Mental Health
(555) 024-4850
Ann.Shapiro@mh.state.us

GLOSSARY

ACT (Assertive Community Treatment)	The IUPUI ACT Center describes Assertive Community Treatment as being "characterized by a team approach with shared caseloads and frequent staff meetings, intensive community-based services, and a focus on assistance with daily living skills. ACT is an effective treatment for people with severe mental illness, particularly in reducing hospitalizations and maintaining stable housing." For more information, go to www.psych.iupui.edu/ACTCenter.
Advisory committee	Sometimes referred to as steering committees or SE leadership teams. Agencies are encouraged to gather together groups of stakeholders for SE to discuss implementation efforts and to develop goals for better implementation. Advisory committees may include the SE supervisor, clients, family members, VR representatives, agency administrators, area chamber of commerce representatives, local colleges and GED programs, etc.
Agency intake	Most mental health agencies have an intake or mental health assessment that is administered when a person begins receiving mental health services. At some agencies, the intake/assessment is updated on an annual basis.
Benefits planning	Refers to helping a person review all of his or her benefits (e.g. Social Security benefits, medical benefits, food stamps, housing subsidies, VA benefits, etc.) and determine the impact of earned income upon those benefits. Also called work incentives planning.

Community-based services	Services provided outside of the mental health or vocational offices. For example, client homes, workplaces, coffee shops, One Stops, libraries…
Co-occurring disorders	Sometimes referred to as "dual diagnosis." Coexisting severe mental illness and substance use disorder.
Competitive employment	Jobs that anyone can apply for rather than jobs created specifically for people with disabilities. These jobs pay at least minimum wage (or clients receive the same pay as everyone else).
Disclosure	Refers to disclosing information about one's disability in the workplace. Some people choose to share information about their disability in order to ask for accommodations (such as the support of an employment specialist) or because they are proud of having overcome barriers in order to return to work.
Enclave	Also referred to as "work crews." Typically refers to a group of people with disabilities who work under the supervision of a person who is employed by a vocational rehabilitation program or has connections to a vocational rehabilitation program. These are not considered to be competitive jobs even when the work is performed in community settings or when the wages are at/above minimum wage.
Evidence-based practices (EBPs)	Evidence-based practices refer to well-defined practices that have been demonstrated to be effective through multiple research studies. Research for supported employment has been conducted in urban and rural settings, as well as national and international programs. Programs with good fidelity to supported employment have better outcomes than programs with poor fidelity to supported employment. For more information, go to http://dms.dartmouth.edu/prc/

Fidelity	A fidelity scale is a tool to measure the level of implementation of an evidence-based practice (EBP). The Supported Employment Fidelity Scale defines the critical ingredients of supported employment (SE) in order to differentiate between programs that follow supported employment and those that do not.
Fidelity action plan	A written plan that outlines the steps a program will take to improve fidelity to the supported employment model. Includes specific steps to be taken, person(s) responsible, and target dates.
Field mentoring	Support and training to practitioners as they perform their work. For instance, a supervisor could meet with a practitioner and client who are working on the vocational profile to model or observe the practitioner's interviewing skills. SE supervisors are also encouraged to go into the community with employment specialists to demonstrate job development, observe specialists making employer contacts and provide feedback.
Job readiness groups	These groups may vary from one setting to another but typically focus on teaching people about the world of work; the importance of punctuality, proper grooming, managing symptoms in relationship to a job, etc. Groups that precede a job search are not part of supported employment.
Mental health practitioners	Refers to case managers, therapists, counselors, nurses, nurse practitioners, psychiatrists or others who provide mental health treatment.
Mental health treatment team	A group of mental health practitioners (see above). May also include other disciplines such as employment specialists, VR or housing.

Multidisciplinary team	See "mental health treatment team."
SE unit meeting	Employment specialists and the SE supervisor are encouraged to meet at least once each week to celebrate successes, problem-solve issues that are preventing clients from meeting their goals, and share job leads.
Sheltered employment	Also known as "sheltered workshops." These workplaces hire people with disabilities to complete contracts for other businesses. For example, people with disabilities may be paid a piece rate to assemble garden hose spigots for a company that makes garden hoses.
Situational assessments	Short-term work assignments that occur at an agency or in the community. The purpose of the assessment is to evaluate "work behaviors" such as attendance, ability to persist at task, social skills and so forth. These assessments may also evaluate the person's ability to perform a particular type of work.
Steering Committee	A diverse group of stakeholders charged with reviewing fidelity program implementation and the service delivery system. The committee develops written action plans aimed at developing or sustaining high fidelity services. Also called leadership committee.
Vocational evaluations	Usually refers to a battery of tests and work samples that measure academic levels, manual dexterity, short and long-term recall, range of motion, vocational interests, ability to sort items, etc.

Vocational Rehabilitation (VR)	Each state, as well as the District of Columbia and US Territories, supports a division of vocational rehabilitation that has offices throughout the state to provide vocational rehabilitation services for individuals with disabilities. The focus of VR is to help people find gainful employment related to each person's "strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capacities, interests, and informed choice."
Work incentives	Special rules that make it possible for people with disabilities receiving Social Security or Supplemental Security Income (SSI) to work and still receive monthly payments and Medicare or Medicaid. For more information go to www.socialsecurity.gov