

Tips:

It is important for the facilitator to help find a balance between the position that work is a difficult or overwhelmingly negative experience and the position that work will be wonderful and solve all of a person's problems. Both of these positions are commonly held beliefs. It is important to discuss work in terms that are realistic and honest and at the same time encouraging.

Participants will probably bring up their specific concerns. Some people in your group may have tried to work and lost or left a job. Some may have been told that they couldn't or shouldn't try. Some might be quite discouraged and hopeless. Participants may be afraid that if they try, they will fail. These are normal fears to have, and they should be acknowledged and not dismissed.

For the person who tried and "failed", you might point out that most people (regardless of disability) go through several different jobs before they find something that's right for them. Losing or leaving a job is not a "failure" but an opportunity to learn something about themselves that will help them do it differently the next time. Also, through this brochure series and participation in the group, they have the opportunity to gain information and support that they probably didn't have the last time around.

For those who are afraid or have been told that work stress will make their psychiatric problems worse, point out that for some people working results in fewer psychiatric symptoms and fewer crises. It is different for each person. It helps to have a good sense of what you can and cannot do so that you can look for a job that matches your abilities. However, sometimes you just don't know until you try something. It's ok to try something and then stop if it isn't working out.

For those who are generally discouraged, encourage them to stay in the group. Maybe they'll learn something from the brochures or another participant that makes them feel more hopeful about working.

For some socially isolated consumers, it may be necessary for the facilitator to volunteer to help connect participants with peers or other support resources.

Outcomes:

By the time you have finished covering Brochure 2, participants should:

- a) be aware of several possible advantages of working.
- b) be aware that working is possible for many people with psychiatric disabilities (whether or not they believe that it is possible for them personally).
- c) have identified at least one person that they feel comfortable talking to about working.
- d) have identified a "first step" that they can do to begin the process of considering work.