

3. Overcoming Barriers to Employment:

Purpose of the Brochure:

Brochure 3 was designed to review some specific types of barriers that people with psychiatric disabilities may experience, and to offer strategies and resources for overcoming them. The reader is encouraged to use this information to consider what their own barriers might be and to anticipate what strategies help them overcome these barriers.

Group Objectives:

- learn to identify one's own barriers to employment
- learn to identify strategies for managing disability / overcoming barriers related to employment
- identify local resources (programs, agencies) for helping people with psychiatric disabilities to work

Suggested Activities:

- Review the barriers listed in the brochure on pages 2-3. Invite participants to share experiences they have with those specific barriers, and if anything ever helped them deal with that barrier. Look at the strategies identified in the brochure for each barrier. See if anyone in the group has ever used that strategy successfully.
- Have a participant describe a problem they have had at a job that is related to one of the barriers listed. Ask how they handled it, and what the results were. Were they satisfied with the outcome? Invite the group to generate other possible ways of understanding the problem and other possible strategies for handling the situation.
- Provide information about local Vocational Rehabilitation programs. Invite participants to share any experiences they have had with local V.R. programs. Using the descriptions of different program models on pages 7-8 identify what types of programs are available locally and discuss the advantages and disadvantages of each.

Suggested Discussion Questions:

- What barriers to getting or keeping a job have you experienced related to your psychiatric disability? What kinds of difficulties resulted? What strategies helped?
- What strategies have you already learned to use to cope with your disability (e.g. in non-employment situations? How might these strategies be useful in an employment situation?
- Have you ever participated in a Vocational Rehabilitation program? What was it like? Did it have any of the "key program features" listed on page 9?
- What program features do you think would be most helpful to you in getting or keeping a job?