

# Employment Service Considerations for Adults with a Major Mental Illness Using TANF/MFIP Services

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# Today's Learning Objectives

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- **Identify immediate concerns**
- **Learn about common functional barriers linked to the symptoms of a mental illness.**
- **Increase awareness of potential accommodations for functional barriers in the employment process & within the workplace.**

# Getting to Know You

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**What Are *Your* Concerns in  
Providing Employment  
Services to Individuals With  
Major Mental Illnesses?**

# Some Facts About Mental Illness

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- 1 in 5 Americans (40 mill/20%) are diagnosed with a mental illness in any given year
- Of this group, ½ of them have an illness resulting in functional limitations
- \$57-\$60 Billion annual loss in the workplace (WHO)

# Continuum of Health vs. Illness



## The Health / Illness Continuum

- Severity
- Duration
- Frequency

# Major Life Activities Commonly Impacted by Major Mental Illness

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- **Cognition**
- **Pacing**
- **Persistence**
- **Conscientiousness**
- **Reliability**
- **Motivation**
- **Interpersonal Functioning**
- **Stress Tolerance**

# Common Functional Barriers in Employment

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- **Relationships**
- **Motivation: May appear disinterested in achievement, passive, or may avoid demands**
- **Increase in errors**
- **More frequent miscommunication**
- **Reduced stress tolerance**

# Frequently Used Reasonable Accommodations

## Human Assistance

**Workplace Policies**

**Attitudinal**

**Scheduling**

**Supervision**

# ~ Mood Disorders ~

## A) Major Depression

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### **Mood:**

**“The general, prolonged emotion through which all life experiences are filtered.”**

~DSM-4 TR

# Common Functional Barriers

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- Poor motivation, initiative, energy
- ↓ capacity to stay on task
- Prone to making many mistakes
- ↑ in irritability
- ↑ hypersensitivity to criticism

## 2. Reasonable Accommodations ~ Major Depression ~

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- Consider a physical
  - Simple, straightforward tasks & expectations
  - Predictability in expectations & general routine
  - Clear guidelines & protocols that are easily accessible,
  - Flexibility in pacing tasks,
  - Team work minimizes loneliness or isolation
- Also Consider:
- Human Assistance
  - Relaxation/Stress Reduction techniques
  - Learning problem-solving strategies.

# ~ Mood Disorders ~

## B.) Bipolar Disorder

*Mood Disturbance:*

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...Either down toward excessive sadness, or up toward excessive elation.

*Bipolar Disorder is marked by both.*

~DSM-4 TR

# Common Functional Barriers

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## *During a manic phase*

- Inflated self-concept
- Ineffective interpersonal functioning
- Excessive motivation
- Distractibility

- Distracting to others
- More impulsive
- Aggressiveness in the Workplace

## **BONUS:**

- All functional limitations from depression, too.

# 3. Reasonable Accommodations

## ~ Bipolar Disorder ~

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- **Structured environment with daily routines, clear guidelines & expectations.**
- **Clear & predictable time frames & deadlines.**
- **An outlet for creative or social energy.**
- **Clear limits regarding behavior & dress as needed.**
- **Flexible scheduling**
- **Regular feedback about job performance, future assignments, and work-based social interactions.**
- **Ongoing support away from the workplace.**

# ~ Anxiety Disorders ~

## Post Traumatic Stress Disorder

**An unpleasant and unjustified sense of apprehension often accompanied by physiological symptoms.**

~DSM-4 TR

# Common Functional Barriers

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- **Inconsistent work pattern**
- **Reduced stress tolerance for events associated with the traumatic event**
- **Low energy, poor endurance, high error rate**

## 4. Reasonable Accommodations

~ Post Traumatic Stress Disorder ~

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- Identify skills, abilities & workplace needs in advance
- ↑ control of personal space EX: working more independently
- Rearranging workspace
- Flexible scheduling to accommodate medication/symptom fluctuation
- Flexibility in pace of work to accommodate changes in memory & concentration
- Social support at work & away from work
- Human assistance in disclosing impact of PTSD and potential need for accommodation in the workplace

# ~ Personality Disorders ~

## Borderline Personality Disorder

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**Personality traits are enduring patterns of perceiving, relating to, and thinking about the world and oneself exhibited in a wide range of social and personal contexts.**

**~DSM 4 TR**

# Common Functional Barriers

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- **Tense, unstable relationships**
- **Changing career, placement, and training plans**
- **Difficulty managing stress**
- **Aggressive actions in the workplace**

## 5. Reasonable Accommodations

~ Borderline Personality Disorder ~

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- Strong support for vocational strengths rather than constant emphasis on maladaptive social behaviors.
- Firm but supportive supervision; direct straightforward approach focused on work & concrete behaviors.
- Clearly spelled out behavioral & work expectations.
- Flexible scheduling at times to accommodate mood swings or med changes.

## Reasonable Accommodations

~ Borderline Personality Disorder, cont'd ...

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- Clear interpersonal & job related boundaries.
- Social support in & outside of the workplace to ↓ attention-seeking behaviors.
- Clearly defined evaluation processes to ↓ arguments.
- Use of Dialectical Behavior Therapy & active service teams
- Concrete consequences for misbehavior to help control potential danger to self or others.

# Q & A



# Techniques & Practices to Consider In The Employment Process

## Ponder:

“How does a functional limitation create a barrier?”

“What potential accommodations may benefit the person?”

**Functional limitation:** Distractibility; Short term Memory Deficits → can't recall newly learned information.

Triggers: Unexpected loud noises, or too much visual stimuli at same time

**Barrier** When in noisy places, leaves without notification

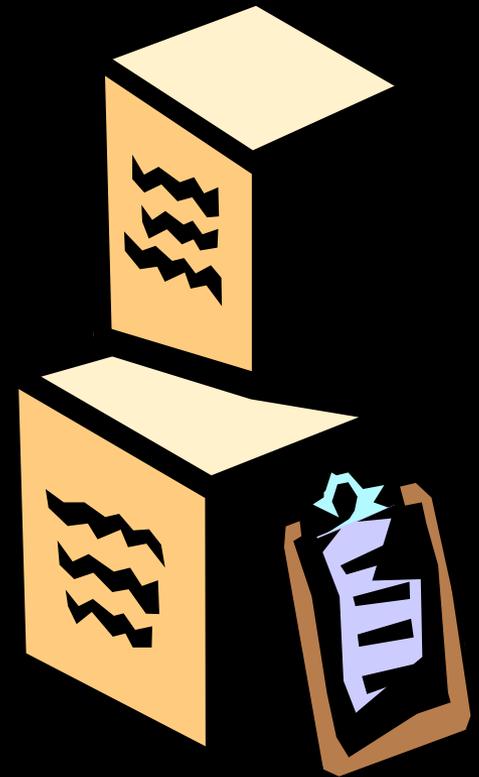
**Accommodation** communicate in quiet places with limited visual distractions or loud unexpected noises.

## Promising Techniques

- **Motivational Interviewing (MI)**
- **Cognitive Behavior Theory (CBT)**
- **Dialectic Behavior Therapy (DBT)**

# Meet Terry

- ❑ ~~37 yr old divorced woman with joint custody of a six year old girl.~~
- ❑ Two hospitalizations for symptoms of Bipolar Disorder Type I since 2004. She has big ideas, can't finish projects, & likes men- A lot!
- ❑ Has own apartment.
- ❑ Likes to create handcraft projects.
- ❑ Uses bus, will bike, & walk
- ❑ Lives in St. Cloud, MN.

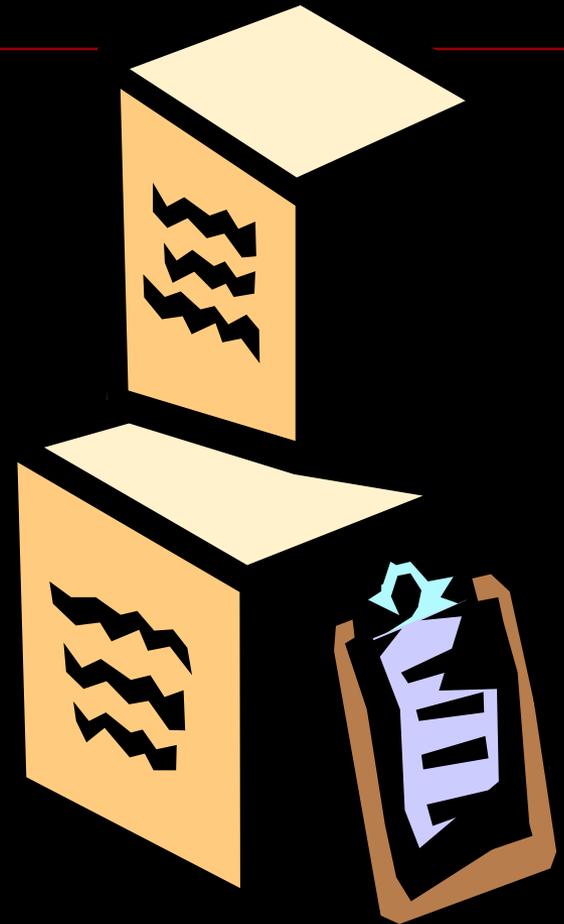


# Case Study

## Meet Terry

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- × Identify at least 1 Strength, Interest, and Preference
- × List the Functional Limitations
- × Identify 5 Job Development & Placement Strategies which could accommodate Terry in the job search.
- × Identify 1-2 Possible Strategies which might be beneficial in the early stages of employment .
- X What MH services would be of benefit to Terry after MFIP closes?



## ...Words of Wisdom

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- Build a relationship on the foundation of hope & optimism.
- **YOU** must believe that someone with a mental illness has valuable strengths, skills, interests, & abilities to offer.
- People Do Recover & Can Work!



# ...Other Tools

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- Internet Web Sites ([www.jan.wvu.edu](http://www.jan.wvu.edu))
- ADA Act ( [www.adabasics.org](http://www.adabasics.org) )
- DHS/AMHD free on-line courses & monthly training: ([www.dhs.state.mn.us/training](http://www.dhs.state.mn.us/training))
- YOUR Organization → Service Networks
- People who know the individual
- Advocacy organizations (NAMI, MHA, CSN) & the local Mental Health Advisory Council

# Web Sites

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- [www.mentalhealthmn.org](http://www.mentalhealthmn.org)
- [www.nami.org](http://www.nami.org)
- [www.save.org](http://www.save.org)
- [www.drugs.com](http://www.drugs.com)
- [www.ndmda.org](http://www.ndmda.org)
- [www.pharminfo.com](http://www.pharminfo.com)
- [www.pdr.net](http://www.pdr.net)
- [www.jan.wvu.edu](http://www.jan.wvu.edu)
- [www.samhsa.org](http://www.samhsa.org)
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