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Introduction

This special issue provides an update concerning the implementation and research of vocational rehabilitation programs for persons with psychiatric disabilities. The last special issue devoted to vocational rehabilitation services for the psychiatrically disabled was published nearly 4 years ago. At that time, Karen Danley, Ph.D., the guest editor, wrote about her "cautious optimism" of the field's acceptance of the emerging psychiatric rehabilitation technologies. Her sense, at the time, was that "the mental health community was prepared to relinquish ineffective rituals and replace them with technologies that achieve vocational outcomes desired by consumers and their families." Dr. Danley's cautious optimism has proven well founded. Although the current issue provides evidence of an advancement of supported employment (SE) and other psychiatric rehabilitation technologies, the advances have been incremental and not as significant or as far reaching as one would have hoped.

In order to get a sense as to how far the field has come since the last issue, we thought it of interest to compare the articles in the current issue with those published in the earlier issue. In the current issue, Drake, Becker, Xie and Anthony present a critique of a 'brokered' model of vocational rehabilitation for persons with psychiatric disabilities. The critique is based on client-level process data collected as part of a controlled clinical study comparing a brokered approach and an integrated approach to vocational rehabilitation. Their findings give empirical support to the list of problems offered by Lynda J. Katz, Ph.D. (published in the earlier issue) describing the inherent difficulties in the interagency collaboration in the rehabilitation of persons with psychiatric disabilities. Drake et al., suggest that integrated programs, in which vocational and mental health staff are administratively part of the same program, might be the preferred approach to delivering vocational services to the psychiatric population. Mowbray, McCrohan and Bybee (in this issue) describe an integrated approach used in Michigan to remedy the problems of the brokered mental health vocational rehabilitation system.

In the earlier issue, Rogers, Anthony, Toole and Brown studied the employment outcomes of 275 clients enrolled in three psychosocial programs who identified themselves as having a vocational goal. Comparisons made between those who obtained any type of employment during the follow-up period and those who did not enter into employment revealed that the employed group spent significantly more hours and days per month in the psychosocial rehabilitation program and tended to spend more hours involved in the vocational services within the PSR center. In the current issue, studies conducted by Cook and Razzano, and Macias, Kinney and Rodican, provide additional support for the value of client participation in PSR programs. Cook and Razzano examine the vocational histories of 602 clients enrolled in transitional employment at two PSR centers and find that involvement in multiple TE placements and program tenure contribute most to the prediction of employment outcome. Macias, Kinney and Rodican find a significant relationship between level of client participation in the work-ordered day activities at Fountain House and success at a TE. The two current

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studies represent a continuing interest in the evaluation of PSR services and their affect on vocational outcomes.

In the earlier issue, Bond reviewed employment outcomes for persons with psychiatric disabilities enrolled in a range of innovative psychiatric vocational rehabilitation programs. Bond's review suggested that SE's emergence would likely enhance the movement of clients into competitive employment. However, he challenged the field to conduct controlled research. MacDonald-Wilson, Revell, Nguyen and Peterson (in the earlier issue) examined a sample of 212 clients enrolled in the Virginia supported employment project. The authors found that compared to persons with mental retardation, persons with psychiatric disabilities fared well within the traditional SE model. In the current issue, additional support is offered for the use of SE programs for persons with psychiatric disabilities. Gervey, Parrish and Bond review 12 exemplary SE programs modelled on the job coach, individual placement model. The authors find that SE programs have been successfully implemented in a wide range of provider agencies and that success rates are well above those reported by traditional vocational programs. Shafer and Huang (this issue) report on an exemplary SE program developed in Arizona. Project Employ is one of the few SE programs within the mental health field designed exclusively on Dr. Paul Wehman's job coach, individualized placement model. Although they are not controlled studies, the outcomes reported by the 12 SE exemplary programs and Project Employ suggest that the SE model can be successfully generalized to the psychiatric population.

In the previous issue, J.F. Campbell described the consumer movement and its implications for vocational rehabilitation services. The absence of a single article devoted exclusively to the consumer movement and/or to a description of a consumer-run vocational program is unfortunate. Reviewing the articles in the current issue as a whole, however, reveals the influence that the consumer movement has had in program development and program evaluation. Nearly every article makes it clear that consumer choice and/or consumer empowerment are important elements of the programs under study.

Unger's article concerning transition-aged youth with serious emotional disorders and Bond, Dietzen, Vogler, Katuin, McGrew and Miller's article concerning the cost-effectiveness of 3 psychosocial programs are welcome additions to this special issue. Expanding vocational services to youth is an important next step for the field of psychiatric rehabilitation as are efforts to evaluate the cost and benefits of psychosocial programs.

The limitations of a comparison between articles in two special issues of a single journal are obvious. The dozen or so articles reviewed do not necessarily represent the work conducted within the field. In addition, 4 years is not a very long period of time to evaluate changes in any given field of study. Nonetheless, the trends noted in our review ring true. First, it is clear that PSR programs are mounting a deliberate effort to focus attention on the vocational outcomes of their members. Second, it is clear that the mental health field is engaged in a process of implementing and evaluating supported employment technologies. Third, the field is slowly, yet steadily, moving toward evaluation research including controlled clinical trials. Fourth, the field is beginning to experiment with components of vocational rehabilitation models in order to ascertain which components are most effective. Finally, the field is beginning to awaken to the importance of cost-benefit evaluations which will likely be critical to the fields's long-term survival.

By the time that this issue is released, a national study sponsored by the United States Center for Mental Health Services Community Support Program, a division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health Program (SAMHSA) will have begun or nearly so. A coordinating center and five demonstration sites will conduct controlled clinical trials comparing a number of competing models. We look forward to the next special issue of psychiatric vocational rehabilitation with perhaps the same degree of optimism and caution that the former editor had in anticipation of this one.

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