

RECOVERY TO WORK

Treatment Works...People Recover

Recovering People Work

Working People Pay Taxes

The above statement is a fact, and frankly it's an important concept; work is an important component of recovery. Experts in the behavioral health field increasingly acknowledge that work is a key factor in supporting recovery from an addiction and/or mental illness. Most people want to be a part of something, and work helps people become contributing members of society. In fact, in many cases the loss of a job can contribute to the heightening of symptoms in a person's mental illness, or can be a trigger to relapse or increased use in an alcoholic/addict.

Unfortunately, according to the National Alliance on Mental Illness, 60-80 percent of people who live with mental illness are unemployed and, for people living with the most severe mental illness, unemployment rates are as high as 90 percent.

Currently in Ohio, there are thousands of individuals with mental health issues and/or drug and alcohol addiction in need of vocational rehabilitation services to help them move towards recovery and work readiness. This has resulted in a need for a multi-systemic approach to preparing these individuals for employment. The Ohio Rehabilitation Services Commission (RSC), the Ohio Department of Alcohol and Drug Addiction Services (ODADAS), the Ohio Department of Mental Health (ODMH), and the Ohio Association of County Behavioral Health Authorities (OACBHA) have conceived and implemented a project that has established a statewide program allowing Alcohol, Drug Addiction and Mental Health (ADAMH) Boards to contract with local agencies to provide vocational rehabilitation and treatment services to eligible consumers.

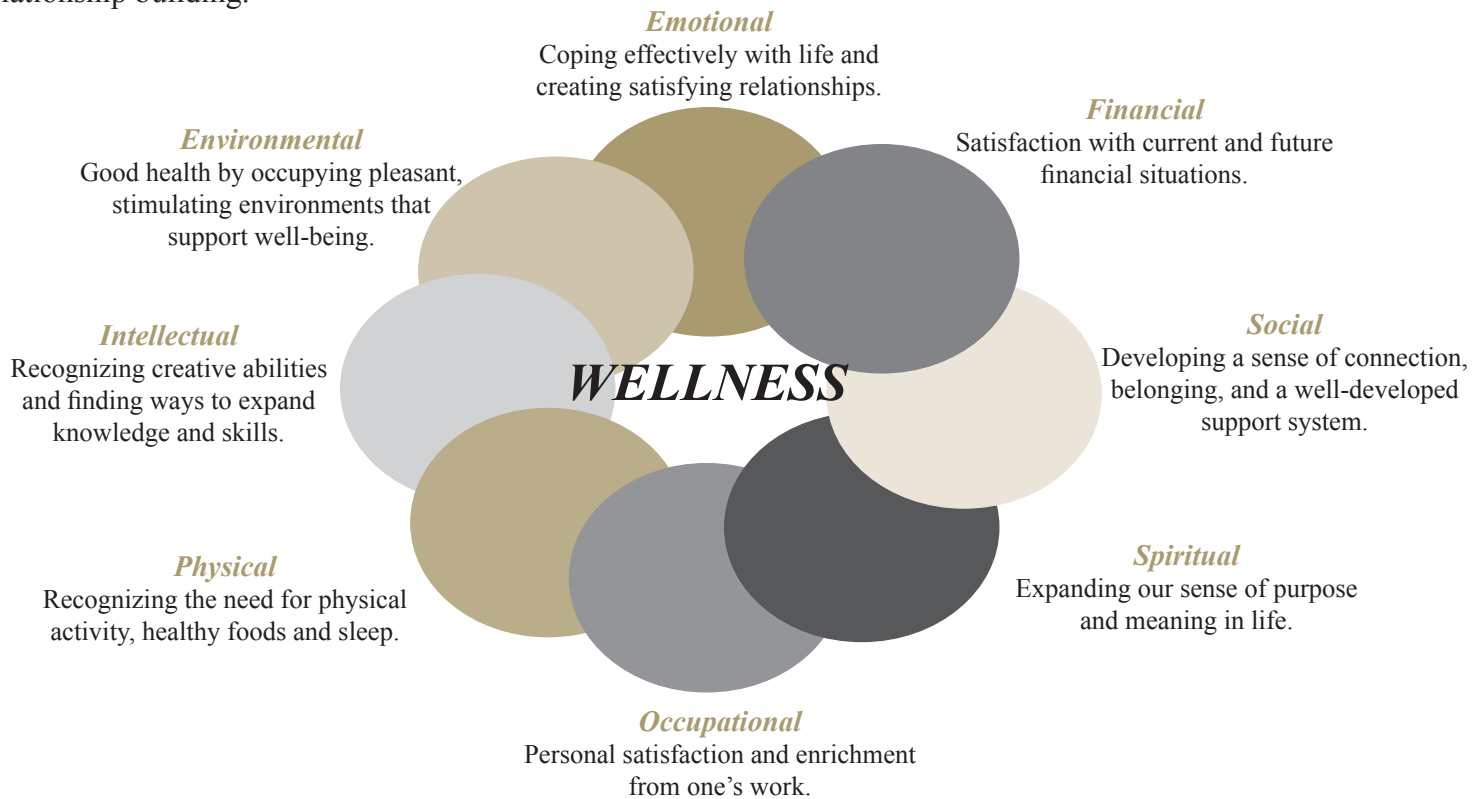
In essence Ohio has implemented a new paradigm of **Recovery to Work**, where work plays an integral role in a person's recovery. No longer is it about getting people clean and sober, or mentally healthy and then seeing if they have a place in Ohio's workforce. Now we start from the premise that **treatment works and people recover**. And as part of this recovery, individuals will be engaged in the workforce as contributing and vibrant members of their communities.

By the Numbers

- In State Fiscal Years 2010 and 2011, the Ohio Department of Mental Health's Supported Employment programs at 24 sites throughout Ohio assisted more than 1,100 Ohioans in achieving competitive employment.
- In Federal Fiscal Year 2010, RSC programs placed 5,707 Ohioans with disabilities in competitive employment. RSC consumers worked an average of 30.8 hours per week at an average hourly rate of \$12.75.
- Unfortunately, there are no comparable statewide statistics from the field of addiction recovery in Ohio. One of the reasons for this is that many individuals in recovery from an alcohol or drug addiction follow the principle of anonymity of Alcoholics Anonymous and do not share their recovery status.

SAMHSA's Eight Dimensions of Wellness

Recovery is more than just being clean and sober, and/or experiencing fewer symptoms of a mental illness. Recovery today is about overall wellness and well-being. The following are SAMHSA's Eight Dimensions of Wellness -- mental, emotional, physical, occupational, intellectual, and spiritual. Overall wellness can affect an individual's overall quality of life, and ultimately their ability to stay in recovery. As you look at these eight dimensions of wellness, you will notice at least three of them Financial, Occupational and Social are directly and positively impacted when a person is employed, and a fourth, Emotional, can be directly and positively impacted through a person's job in regards to relationship building.



I've worked in the fields of mental health and addictions for over 30 years and I believe the paradigm shift represented by the Recovery to Work program is one of the most exciting advancements in the approach to treatment in years. Starting treatment with the premise of getting back to work sets the expectation that treatment works and people recover and will return or enter the workforce as a productive member of their community.

~ Cheri L. Walter, CEO, Ohio Association of County Behavioral Health Authorities

Why Hire Someone in Recovery?

Treatment professionals should talk to employers about the fact that given the opportunity, people in recovery can do meaningful work, contribute positively to their communities and become productive, tax-paying members of society. In fact, many people in recovery are outstanding employees precisely because they have overcome significant challenges in achieving recovery, an accomplishment that contributes to a determination to succeed in other areas of their life, including employment.

The Ohio Department of Taxation estimates that for each employed Ohioan, the combined state and local annual average tax gain is approximately \$2,500

Sources:

National Alliance on Mental Illness
Ohio Department of Mental Health
U.S. Department of Labor

Ohio Rehabilitation Services Commission
Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration