Serious Mental Illness and Employment

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Four Points

• People with serious mental illness want to work

• Supported employment increases competitive employment by three-fold, to 60-70%.

• Employment enhances self-esteem, quality of life, management of illness, and decreasing involvement in the mental health system.

• Barriers: lack of health insurance and lack of supported employment.
“The most lucid and hopeful memoir of living with schizophrenia I have ever read.” — Oliver Sacks

THE CENTER CANNOT HOLD

ELYN R. SAKS
Competitive Employment Rates in 17 Randomized Controlled Trials of Individual Placement and Support
Non-Employment Outcomes

- Self-esteem
- Quality of life
- Symptom Control
- Decreased mental health service use
- No changes with sustained sheltered employment

(Bond et al., 2001)
Barriers to Employment

• Fears of losing insurance and benefits
  – Medicaid has been linked to SSI
  – ACA may change

• Lack of vocational services
  – 1% Medicaid beneficiaries get supported employment
  – Misalignment between CMS, VR, and evidence base