

**SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT (SE)
FIDELITY REPORT**

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Method

On Nov. 3 - 5, 2014, Georgia Harris and Karen Voyer-Caravona (Fidelity Reviewers) completed a review of the Lifewell Behavioral Wellness Supported Employment (SE) program. This review is intended to provide specific feedback in the development of your agency's SE services, in an effort to improve the overall quality of behavioral health services in Maricopa County. Supported Employment refers specifically to the evidence-based practice of helping SMI members find and keep competitive jobs in the community based on their individual preferences, not those set aside for people with disabilities. Services are reviewed starting with the time an SMI participating member indicates an interest in obtaining competitive employment, and the review process continues through the provision of follow along supports for people who obtain competitive employment. In order to effectively review Supported Employment services in Maricopa County, the review process includes evaluating the working collaboration between each Supported Employment provider and referring clinics with whom they work to provide services. For the purposes of this review at Lifewell Behavioral Wellness, the clinic Partners In Recovery – Metro Center was included.

Lifewell Behavioral Wellness is a nonprofit behavioral healthcare agency providing a variety of services, including counseling, supportive housing and vocational rehabilitation to low income individuals diagnosed with general mental illness issues, serious mental illness and substance abuse. Lifewell serves over 3500 new referrals annually across all programs; between 75 - 120 members new referrals are served annually under the SE program. While Lifewell counselors are co-located at Provider Network Organization (PNO) clinics throughout Maricopa County and Apache Junction, vocational rehabilitation/employment services are only offered at four Lifewell clubhouses or "hubs". Two hubs are located in Phoenix (including Lifewell's main office at 40 East Mitchell Drive) and two in Mesa. All hubs are accessible by public transportation. According to the Lifewell website, the purpose of the hubs, which follow the psychiatric rehabilitation clubhouse model, is to assist individuals "to develop skills and appropriate behaviors to achieve and sustain vocation and social independence." The vocational rehabilitation program includes supported education, vocational skills,

basic and independent living skills, self-advocacy, and supported employment. The supported education program includes: GED, Peer Support Training and Culinary Awareness and Nutrition (CAN) programs, the latter two providing certification that can be used to meet job goals. As of this review, most referrals to the supported employment program are internal, self-referrals from individuals receiving other types of Lifewell services. A smaller number of individuals are referred from the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA), followed by the PNO clinics. Currently, the PNO clinics appear to have little awareness of Lifewell's SE program, and most of their referrals are for the already co-located individual and substance abuse counseling, supportive housing services, and day-treatment. Members participating in other Lifewell services often learn about the SE program during their initial Lifewell intake and express interest in work later in the course of the participation, as they develop skills, confidence and interact with other members already engaged in SE services. Lifewell leadership reports that they have recently been approved by the Regional Behavioral Health Authority (RBHA) to begin co-locating supported employment services at the People of Color Network- Capitol Center and Comunidad clinics. They expect referrals from clinics to increase significantly after these co-located staff are in place.

The individuals served through the agency are referred to as clients and members, but for the purpose of this report, and for consistency across fidelity reviews, the term "member" will be used.

During the site visit, reviewers participated in the following activities:

- Observation of an SE team meeting and supervisory meeting.
- Group interviews with administrators, the SE leadership, two employment specialists, and three members receiving services;
- Individual phone interviews with a former Lifewell employee and current employer of a member SE service recipient; and with a Lifewell Peer Support Specialist
- Group interviews with PNO clinic staff: two case managers and two rehabilitation specialists;
- Observation of a clinical treatment team meeting; and
- A review of 10 member records at the clinic and agency.

The review was conducted using the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) SE Fidelity Scale. This scale assesses how close in implementation a team is to the Supported Employment (SE) model using specific observational criteria. It is a 15-item scale that assesses the degree of fidelity to the SE model along 3 dimensions: Staffing, Organization and Services. The SE Fidelity Scale has 15 program-specific items. Each item is rated on a 5-point scale, ranging from 1 (meaning *not implemented*) to 5 (meaning *fully implemented*).

The SE Fidelity Scale was completed following the visit. A copy of the completed scale with comments is attached as part of this report.

Summary & Key Recommendations

The agency demonstrated strengths in the following program areas:

- Employment Specialists are assigned manageable caseloads and perform most phases of vocational services.
- Supported Employment staff at all levels demonstrate a strong commitment to zero-exclusion; members are considered ready for employment at the time they express an interest in finding a job. Job searches are primarily focused on permanent, competitive employment in community-based settings. The SE program does not make use of work adjustment or trial work activities, reporting that they reject such referrals, finding them to have little value for members.
- Employment Specialists function as unit, receiving two hours of weekly group supervision that emphasizes member needs, sharing successes and job search challenges, as well as engagement strategies and sharing job leads. The Supported Employment Supervisor provides a strong clinical component to group supervision, tying members' mental health needs, functioning and situational factors to interventions (i.e. motivational interviewing, solution focused strategies, cognitive behavioral approaches) Employment Specialists can implement to facilitate successful job seeking and employment retention. Employment Specialists demonstrated familiarity with each other's caseloads, comfort in offering ideas and suggestions, and willingness to offer assistance.
- Employment Specialists provide on-going vocational based assessments. The program recently adopted the SAMHSA Vocational Profile, after previously using a shorter assessment tool. Employment Specialists embrace all job seeking activities as opportunities for members to refine their profile as they expand their knowledge and insights into their employment needs and preferences. With new knowledge, skills and experiences, members are free to revise their employment goals in whatever ways reflect personal choice.
- Employment Specialists engage members in rapid job searches; with first face-to-face contacts with potential employers occurs within three to six weeks of program entry.
- Employment Specialists view all jobs as transitions. Members can quit jobs that do not satisfy current needs and preferences; Employment Specialists will continue working with them to find the right employment.
- Employment Specialists provide follow along supports to assist members in finding and retaining employment. Follow along supports described in documentation and interviews included unscheduled phone support to assist members in preparing for job interviews, meeting members in the community to process emotional distress and identify solutions to problems at a job site, and enlisting the supervisor's help in meeting with a member on the weekend to rehearse for a job interview.

The following are some areas that will benefit from focused quality improvement:

- Currently, vocational services at Lifewell are minimally integrated with mental health treatment. PNO clinics do not seem to be aware that Lifewell offers supported employment services, which may have the effect of communication being one way between the agency and the clinics. As Lifewell begins co-locating SE staff at clinics, it will be incumbent upon the agency to build relationships with treatment teams while educating them in the role competitive work plays in recovery. This will also require SE staff to constructively challenge previously-held notions about work readiness. It is recommended that the PNOs

and the RBHA provide all treatment team staff with ongoing, in-depth education on the evidenced-based practice model of SE, while creating opportunities for SE staff input and integration in the clinical team setting.

- Job placements appear to lack diversity in terms of job types. Nearly 50% of job placements in the time period between February and October 2014 appeared to be those in Peer Support or related roles. Consider job development with non-profit or public agencies that can utilize the surplus of Peer Support Specialists (PSS) trained individuals. (I.e. Classroom Assistants, programming staff at a local recreation/senior center, other non-profit agencies, etc.) Expanding the scope of the job search for PSSs can increase integration into the community while creating opportunities to use this skill set with other groups in need.
- Identified Supported Employment services (i.e. member/employer engagement, job finding and development, and follow-along supports) should be performed more often in community settings. As per interviews and record reviews, only 10 – 15% of services are delivered outside of the office or hub settings. Travel time, a small staff and time spent providing group activities appear to play a role in limiting community based services.

SE FIDELITY SCALE

Item #	Item	Rating	Rating Rationale	Recommendations
Staffing				
1	Caseload:	1 – 5 5	Two Employment Specialists carry caseloads of 22 and 27 members each for an average caseload of 24.5 members.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to monitor caseloads to maintain levels at 25 members or below per ES. Monitoring caseloads will be especially important with the pending expansion of services into the clinics and addition of one new Employment Specialists.
2	Vocational Services staff:	1 – 5 4	Employment Specialists conduct group activities for approximately two hours weekly at the hubs for members enrolled in the vocational rehabilitation program. One activity, a monthly employer forum, invites local employers to speak on various topics related to finding and retaining employment. While some group activities may be pertinent to employment, attendees are not necessarily participating in supported employment job-seeking activities nor are those activities geared toward meeting individualized employment goals.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In good fidelity SE programs, Employment Specialists are solely focused on individualized vocational services involving member engagement, job development and placement, and job retention. The agency should consider reassigning the facilitation of group activities at the hubs to other staff such as independent living or peer support staff.
3	Vocational generalists:	1 – 5 4	Employment Specialists carry out most but not all phases of vocational services. Employment Specialists provide member engagement, on-going assessment, job development and placement, job coaching and follow-along supports. The Supported Employment Supervisor conducts intakes, which include initial assessment using the vocational profile, for all new SE referrals.	While the overall SE services are undoubtedly enhanced by a Supportive Employment Supervisor who has direct contact with members and is familiar with their needs and preferences, it is recommended that the program's leadership consider assigning intakes to the Employment Specialists. In good fidelity Supported Employment programs, the Employment Specialists handle all phases of employment from intake to extended supports.

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Organization				
1	Integration of rehabilitation with mental health treatment:	1 – 5 1	Currently, vocational services at Lifewell are minimally integrated with mental health treatment. Lifewell does not have SE staff co-located at the clinics. Most Lifewell referrals are generated internally from members already participating in other services such as housing, individual and substance abuse counseling or psychiatric rehabilitation/day treatment. PNO clinics do not seem to be aware that Lifewell offers supported employment services, or if they were, lacked an understanding of the scope of those services. At the clinic, staff stated that due to the elimination of rehabilitation specialist positions from supportive teams in the last year, case managers are left to find employment (and other types of) resources on their own. Case managers stated that with their large caseloads, they are often unable to focus on employment as a priority. Member ISPs reviewed at clinics either did not include work goals, or did not show evidence of referrals for supported employment services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As Lifewell begins co-locating SE staff at clinics, it will be incumbent upon the agency to build relationships with and educate treatment teams as to the role competitive work plays in recovery, as well as to constructively challenge previously held notions about work readiness. • It is recommended that the PNOs and the RBHA provide all treatment team staff with ongoing and in-depth education on the evidenced based practice model of SE. • It is recommended that the agency and clinics collaborate to create structures supporting full integration of Employment Specialists into treatment teams to the greatest extent possible, so that they have a voice in decision making for members. Employment Specialists should be regularly included in treatment team meetings to ensure conversations occur about the option of supported employment and its role in recovery.
2	Vocational Unit:	1 – 5 5	The Supported Employment Supervisor provides two hours of weekly group supervision to the Employment Specialists, as well as individual supervision. The Supervision meeting observed by the reviewers showed a strong educational component that served to fit job finding challenges and barriers into the context of clinical and situational issues. The Supervisor appeared to be familiar with details of the members discussed and offered ideas and directions as needed to support member motivation and engagement. Likewise, Employment Specialists demonstrated familiarity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue with current schedule and quality of supervision supporting a vocation unit that education and professional growth; sharing of information, resources and job leads; and opportunities to present challenging cases and celebrate successes.

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			with each other's caseloads, and offered suggestions and direct assistance with member needs. Per interviews, Employment Specialists provide one another with back up coverage when needed.	
3	Zero-exclusion criteria:	1 – 5 4	<p>The Supported Employment Supervisor and Employment Specialists are committed to the zero-exclusion philosophy. Members are considered ready to work when they express a desire to work. Substance abuse, felony convictions, symptoms and intellectual functioning are not cited as reasons to exclude people from job searches. Employment Specialists offer treatment services and seek the assistance of treatment teams if SMI or substance abuse issues present potential barriers to finding and keeping a job. Competitive employment is considered a facilitator of recovery and can motivate member ownership of their treatment plan.</p> <p>The score for this item reflects that, at the time of the review, 80% of referrals are generated internally from individuals already participating in other Lifewell services. The second largest referral source is RSA. Only a small percentage of Lifewell SE referrals originate from the clinics. Lifewell Intake Specialists "chase the paperwork" so that members have access to care. Lifewell has its own ISP so that out-of-date ISPs do not have to prevent members from receiving the services.</p> <p>The only eligibility requirements are a stated desire to work, insurance coverage under the Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System (AHCCCS/Medicaid) and a referral from their PNO clinic. As per Item O1, it is not clear that PNO clinic treatment teams are aware of Lifewell's SE</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Per item O1, as Lifewell begins co-locating SE staff at clinics, it will be incumbent upon the agency to build relationships with and educate treatment teams as to the role competitive work plays in recovery, as well as to constructively challenge previously held notions about work readiness. • It is recommended that the RBHA provide education and training at all levels on the principle of zero-exclusion and the concept that job readiness begins when the member first expresses an interest in work and is based on his or her needs and preferences rather than determined by treatment teams.

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			program. It also appeared that recent staffing changes at the clinic visited may be decreasing the emphasis placed on the role of employment in recovery.	
Services				
1	Ongoing, work – based vocational assessment:	1 – 5 5	<p>Lifewell’s SE program does not utilize work samples, intelligence tests, or work adjustment periods to assess work readiness prior to placement. Leadership noted that they decline referrals for work adjustment because “we don’t see the value in it”.</p> <p>Per record review and staff interview, Employment Specialists conduct ongoing vocational assessment based acquisition of interests, need, preferences, knowledge, skills and previous work experiences. Staff said members often learn a lot about themselves and their work preferences while working on their resume. The SE program has recently moved from a short vocational assessment form to the longer SAMHSA SE vocational profile.</p>	
2	Rapid search for competitive jobs:	1 – 5 4	Employment Specialists engage members in the job search immediately, sometimes at the first meeting. Members are encouraged to take ownership of their job search. Staff stated that looking for a job is a job in itself. Some members come to the first meeting with a prepared resume in hand and are ready to begin submitting applications. There was evidence in documentation that some members began submitting applications on their own soon after program entry. Recently, four members found	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is recommended that the agency develop a system for clearly tracking and documenting first contact with employers. First contact would be defined as face-to-face contact with the member and/or the Employment Specialist on behalf of a member. The first contact could occur in the context the member attending a job fair and speaking to a human resources manager about desired skills or educational background. An Employment Specialist

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			<p>jobs immediately following a job fair.</p> <p>Lifewell seeks to establish contact between members and potential employers within 30 days of program entry. The agency defines first employer contact to include phone calls, online application submission and follow up phone call and face-to-face contact with a potential employer. However, the evidence-based practice of SE considers only face-to-face contacts with potential employers. Per interviews and record review, face-to-face contact with members and potential employers begins within three to six weeks of the job program entry.</p>	<p>could establish first contact at a scheduled meeting with a hiring manager to discuss characteristics of their top staff members or hiring projections for the next quarter.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Supported Employment Supervisor and the Employment Specialist should consider how increasing community based services would further support this item. Community Based Services section of this report, Item S8, is relevant to rapid job search and employer contact.
3	Individualized job search:	1 – 5 4	<p>While Employment Specialists strive to implement individualized job searches based on member needs and preferences, they report that market forces sometimes influence job searches. For example, Employment Specialists state that the types of jobs applied for is driven 100% by member choice. They occasionally suggest that members accept seasonal and volunteer work as an opportunity to acclimate to work settings, increase skills for a new area of employment, and gain work experience to add to their resume. One Employment Specialist said, “I try not to pigeon hole people because needs and priorities change”, explaining she has encouraged members to apply for seasonal work to fill an income need while still looking around for “the dream job”. Employment Specialists also suggest that members apply for jobs that are a close fit to long-range job goals. For example, the ES may refer the member to an opening for a position answering the “warm”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the evidence -based practice of SE, individualized job searches are based on member choice and reflect needs and preferences. As is common with job seekers in general, members may choose to accept jobs that are readily available due to immediate needs or changing job trends. When this occurs, the Employment Specialists should assist members in identifying available options that reflect the members’ values, interests and experiences. • Employment Specialists should clearly document how deviations from needs and preferences originally identified in the members ISP and vocational profile reflect member choice. • Employment Specialists should assist job seekers without specific job preferences

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			<p>(support) line if no openings for peer support specialists exist.</p> <p>One ES said that she has encouraged a member to accept “any” job when those employment opportunities occurred in the members preferred geographic location.</p>	<p>(i.e.: roles, duties, work environments, etc.) in using new job experiences to enhance their vocational profile rather than simply accepting “any job”. Jobs accepted to satisfy immediate needs (geographic location, income or transportation limitations) may ultimately prove unfulfilling and dissatisfactory if the job type, company culture or work setting are not a good fit.</p>
4	Diversity of jobs developed:	1 – 5 3	<p>While job development logs showed a variety of work sites and positions, job placement logs suggested a lack of diversity in job types. Forty-three percent (six out of 14) of job placements in the time period reviewed were in Peer Support or related roles. While the pursuit of PSS positions may reflect a genuine desire on the part of members to engage in work that “gives back” or offers personal meaning, the high percentage may be an indication of members staying within their comfort zone, following an “attainable” career path suggested by others. Additionally, the high percentage of PSS placements raises potential concerns about true employment integration and the potential steering of individuals in recovery living with an SMI and/or co-occurring disorder.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In good fidelity SE programs no more than 10% of job options are within the same work setting or field. The SE supervisor should monitor ES job development logs to ensure there is a focus on diversity. • Consider job development with non-profit or public agencies that can utilize the surplus of PSS trained individuals (i.e. Classroom Assistants, programming staff at a local recreation/senior center, other non-profit agencies, etc.). Expanding the scope of the job search for those seeking peer support positions’ can increase integration into the community while creating opportunities to use this skill set with other groups in need.
5	Permanence of jobs developed:	1 – 5 4	<p>Employment Specialists appear committed to the overarching goal of permanent, competitive employment, with 100% of job placements being in competitive jobs. The agency states that they do not use transitional work programs. However, they acknowledge occasionally encouraging individuals to apply for seasonal and volunteer work in order</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The goal of evidence-based Supported Employment is to find members permanent, competitive jobs in the community, and Employment Specialists should focus their job development efforts on this.

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			<p>to fill in resume gaps and gain skills and experience. One item on a job placement log indicated that the position was temporary, however staff state the hiring process was competitive. Employment Specialists stated that for some members seasonal or temporary work fill an immediate income need, and will sometimes lead to an offer of permanent employment.</p> <p>In SAMHSA's evidence-based practice model of Supported Employment, Employment Specialists help members find competitive, permanent employment as opposed to trial work, temporary or volunteer positions, set aside for people with disabilities. However, seasonal jobs and jobs found thru temporary agencies that anyone can utilize, regardless of disability status, can be counted because they are competitive, pay at least minimum wage and are integrated into the community. If members want to consider temporary positions due to the need for immediate income, the member's preference is always foremost. However, ES should encourage members to continue to search for permanent jobs, using those work experiences to develop skills for future. (See item S1). Employment Specialists can appropriate assist.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Documenting linkages between short-term activities and competitive work goals helps demonstrate Employment Specialist accountability for respecting member choices, needs and preferences. Therefore, it is recommended that Employment Specialists tie seasonal/temporary employment or volunteer positions to the member's vocational profile and ISP in order to show a clear relationship between those types of activities and the successful attainment and retention of competitive employment and long-range career goals. The documentation should show how such short-term activities directly relate to the members employment plan.
6	Jobs as transitions:	1 – 5 4	<p>Employment Specialists at Lifewell helps members end jobs that are no longer meeting their needs and will help them find new jobs. Ending a job to seek a new, more satisfying position is considered an indication of growth and insight gained about naturally-evolving needs and preferences. When asked if there was ever a reason why she would decline to work with a member on a finding a new job, one Employment Specialist explained that if</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is recommended that Employment Specialists clearly document specific effort to engage members in conversations about how and why jobs ended, including lessons learned that can be updated in the member's vocational profile. In the event that members decline or put on hold offers of assistance with a new job

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			the rapport was not good, she might refer the member to another ES for assistance.	search, Employment Specialists should make efforts to identify reasons or concerns for the refusal, offer solutions and resources when appropriate and clearly document the process and outcomes of these discussions.
7	Follow-along supports:	1 – 5 4	Per interview, treatment team observation and member records, Employment Specialists provide follow along supports on a time unlimited basis. Supports include direct job coaching, meeting in the community to discuss work site problems, role play to rehearse new communication strategies and phone calls to problem solve and provide support. Employment Specialist report that slightly less than half of member utilize extended follow along support services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limiting ES activities to Supported Employment activities may increase the time available for follow along supports. See S3 <i>Vocational Generalists</i> for details. Follow along supports need not be limited to that provided by the Employment Specialist. Efforts should be made to enlist the help of the treatment team who can provide support and encouragement, assist with practicing interpersonal and problem solving skills, make adjustments to medications when appropriate, or provide identification of resources and referrals related to situational factors such as housing, transportation, child care and educational deficits. The Employment Specialist can further help identify and engage family and friends who are interested in and motivated to support the member's employment goals.
8	Community-based services:	1 – 5 2	Employment Specialists meet members at work sites, job fairs, coffee shops, public libraries and at their homes. However, they report difficulty providing community-based vocational services a majority of the time primarily due to time-consuming travel challenges. Employment Specialists estimate that between 10 – 15% of services are delivered in community-based locations. As per Item S2, time spent facilitating	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is recommended that the agency explore options for reassigning group activities currently lead by Employment Specialists to other hub staff such as Peer Support or Independent Living Specialists so that ES staff have more time available to spend in the community engaged in job development activities such as: on-site research about an industry or business;

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			<p>groups at the hubs may take away from time spent in natural community settings doing such activities as job shadowing, building relationships with potential employers or key industry informants, or helping members interview hiring managers about what they look for in a resume or job application.</p>	<p>meeting with potential employers about the ideal job candidate or the application/hiring process; and attending networking events with the business community to stay abreast of hiring trends and new job leads. Employment Specialists are also encouraged to meet with members in the community to help them become more comfortable in work-type settings.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> As the agency expands its SE mission by co-locating ES staff at the clinics, it will be important to consider each candidates comfort with providing services in the community rather than primarily in an office environment. It is recommended that the agency consider including a job shadowing component in the hiring process so that ES candidates have clear understanding of the expectations for community-based practice.
9	Assertive engagement and outreach:	1 – 5 4	<p>Evidence of assertive engagement and outreach was well documented in member records. Employment Specialists made phone calls to members, made community visits and outreached to treatment teams to encourage participation in the job search process.</p> <p>Employment Specialists take into account health issues, etc. for missed appointments, noting reasons for missed appointments in the member record, and offering support and assistance with job searches over the phone to meet the member’s needs.</p> <p>Employment Specialists appear to be persistent in engaging and motivating members but their</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is recommended that Employment Specialists make efforts to obtain permission from members (in the form of release of information forms) to outreach family members and other informal supports for assistance in contacting members and gaining information on factors that may be distracting the individual from the job search. Employment Specialists should look for opportunities to periodically obtain the member’s perspective on how the job search is progressing and identifying desired changes to the job search plan. Employment Specialists should avoid

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			<p>efforts are on a time-limited basis, usually two – three months after members stop participating in services. Employment Specialists report that members usually respond to 30-day Intent to Close letters.</p>	<p>placing arbitrary limits on continued outreach and assertive engagement efforts with members. Ideally, Employment Specialists would continue engagement efforts until members indicate that are no longer interested in services for up to a year.</p>

SE FIDELITY SCALE SCORE SHEET		
Staffing	Rating Range	Score
1. Caseload	1 - 5	5
2. Vocational services staff	1 - 5	4
3. Vocational generalists	1 - 5	4
Organizational	Rating Range	Score
1. Integration of rehabilitation with mental health treatment	1 - 5	1
2. Vocational unit	1 - 5	5
3. Zero-exclusion criteria	1 - 5	4
Services	Rating Range	Score
1. Ongoing work-based assessment	1 - 5	5
2. Rapid search for competitive jobs	1 - 5	4
3. Individual job search	1 - 5	4
4. Diversity of jobs developed	1 - 5	3
5. Permanence of jobs developed	1 - 5	4
6. Jobs as transitions	1 - 5	4
7. Follow-along supports	1 - 5	4
8. Community-based services	1 - 5	2
9. Assertive engagement and outreach	1 - 5	4
Total Score	57	

