

HORIZON HEALTH PULSE



New program helps consumers enter the workforce.

This past June, Horizon initiated a new program, called the Individualized Placement and Support (IPS) program, to serve consumers with severe and persistent mental illness. This program is based on the Drake and Becker model for supported employment, which embraces the values of person-centered practices. An offshoot of Horizon's vocational program, the IPS program is designed to place consumers in volunteer or paid positions at companies and organizations throughout Erie County.

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Two vocational specialists, Toby Beahan and Sarah Just, work directly with consumers on an individual basis. The goal of IPS is to encourage consumers to return to work and develop job-related skills. The primary role of the employment specialists is to assist consumers in identifying their work goals and values, identifying and overcoming barriers and fears of working, practice in completing job applications, providing resources for benefits advisement and providing support and encouragement as they begin their employment.



Eric Frick

Anna enjoys being a productive member of the workforce.

Since the program's inception, 96 consumers have shown interest in the IPS program. Currently, Horizon has placed 18 consumers in competitive employment and six consumers in volunteer positions. The shortest period of time a job was held was eight hours. The consumer who has held his job the longest worked for five months.

“Our program is consumer driven,” says Kathy Dietrich-Green, Horizon director of vocational services. “We let them determine the direction the program takes as it relates to them. Many are unsure of their skills or what they'd like to do, so it's our job to assist them in their career paths.”

Horizon has placed consumers in food service, janitorial, telemarketing, retail and general labor positions. The employers don't know the consumer was placed through Horizon, or that he or she has a mental illness. Once a consumer is placed, Horizon provides support and encouragement as often as needed.

“We're working with SSI to improve the consumers' ability to work and still collect Medicaid,” says Dietrich-Green. “That's often a barrier because the family doesn't want the consumer to lose his benefits or have to reapply. As it stands now, there's no waiting period if they do go back on Medicaid, so that's been helpful in getting more consumers to try the program.”

What do the consumers think?

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Coridon James Photography

From the desk of...

Hak Ko
Medical Director

It's 7:00 a.m. on a cold, damp and dark

December morning. The street lights are still on; the sun won't rise for another 40 minutes. Not that we'll see any of its light since, as usual, it will probably be another gray and cloudy day.

We wake up feeling tired and unmotivated, and the day ahead looks unusually long and unexciting. Gloomy, sad and irritable, we wish we could go back to sleep for eight more hours.

Many of us have experienced the “winter blues.” However, when the symptoms are more intense, longer lasting and cause serious disruption in our lives, we call it Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD).

Possible clues to the cause of SAD can be found in the brain's pacemaker action on the body's many physiological rhythms, relayed by hormones such as Melatonin. It could explain the disruption in the circadian rhythm in sleep, appetite, etc.

No matter what the exact cause, light exposure is one of the more effective treatments for SAD. Standard light treatment consisting of fluorescent light, equivalent to early morning sunlight, for one or two hours a day seems to bring significant improvement within days. Anti-depressants such as Prozac, Zoloft and Celexa appear to be quite effective, which is understandable since Melatonin is made from Serotonin.

Better yet, we could find refuge on a Caribbean Island for the winter months. ♥



Depression: an illness you can't just "snap out of."

Depression is a serious medical illness that requires treatment, just like diabetes, asthma or heart disease. According to the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH), more than 18 million Americans from all walks of life develop depression each year. And depression doesn't discriminate: both women and men can become depressed.

Depression can be caused by an imbalance of chemicals in the brain. These chemicals are natural substances that allow brain cells to communicate with one another. Depression can also be caused by stress, medication or other medical illnesses. Certain personality traits and family history can also contribute to depression. No matter what causes depression, it can be treated...and help is available at Horizon.

There are two principal treatments for depression: counseling (also called psychotherapy) and medication. For some, either treatment may be enough. For others, the most effective treatment is a combination of the two.

Counseling, or psychotherapy, is often described as "talk therapy," and comes in many forms. It is aimed at helping the person

develop new ways to cope with problems, and to identify and understand more about depression. Each type of psychotherapy may take place in individual, group or family sessions, and the process may take some time before it is effective.

"Some people who are depressed tend to 'catastrophize' situations," says Adrienne Roy, Horizon psychiatric nurse practitioner. "They only see the absolute worst possible outcome of a situation. In verbal therapy called Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, the 'catastrophizer' is taught to think differently, more positively."

Antidepressant medication works by affecting brain chemistry. These drugs may take several weeks to be effective, but they work well and are very safe.

Ninety-five percent of consumers being treated for depression take medication as part of their treatment.

"All mental illnesses have a biological basis," says Roy. "More medications have been developed that are more effective, and a large percentage of consumers show great improvement with antidepressants."

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Anna is a 45-year-old woman who moved to Buffalo with her family about a year ago. She is diagnosed with paranoid schizophrenia and has been attending continuing day treatment for approximately one year. She entered the IPS program soon after it began in June. Anna felt bad that she did not have a job and she was eager to do something that would help boost her self-esteem. Anna wanted to begin as a volunteer so she could gain experience since she had not worked in years.

Anna was placed at a local shelter for women and their children. In her position, she performed many diverse tasks, including dishwashing, window washing, helping in the kitchen and washing floors.

After working at this organization for approximately three months, Anna felt that she had gained the confidence to begin looking for part-time competitive employment, and expressed a great deal of excitement about working at a fast food restaurant. Anna was directly placed in a local fast food restaurant last October and continues to work there one day a week during the lunch rush. Anna's supervisor has promised her more hours, and says Anna can soon learn how to make some of the meals.

"Seeing Anna proudly don her uniform on her first day of work was a truly heartwarming experience," says Toby Beahan, IPS vocational specialist. "Anna has expressed her enjoyment at working at this restaurant, but she would like to begin looking for full-time employment sometime early in 2005."

"We will be working closely with Anna to help her to achieve this goal and support her in every step along the way. She is a prime example of the success that can be achieved through Horizon's IPS program."

Horizon's Individualized Placement and Support program is the only one of its kind in New York State. It was made possible by a grant from the Erie County Department of Mental Health.

For more information on Horizon's Individualized Placement and Support (IPS) Program, please call Kathy Dietrich-Green at 836-3247.

Hello
My name is
Paige Prentice
Director, Residential
Services, Horizon Village

Gordon James Photography



Paige Prentice says she likes working at Horizon Village because it gives her a chance to really get to know the consumers.

"The hallways of Horizon Village are like the streets in any community," says Paige. "The residents show their true personalities here, which gives our treatment team valuable insight into who they really are and how we may be able to help."

Paige has been at the Village for nine years, starting as a recreational therapist. Before coming to Horizon Health Services, she did a brief stint coordinating home care services and spent seven years at DeGraff Memorial Hospital as an exercise physiologist in the cardiac care unit. Paige received her Bachelor's degree from SUNY Brockport in Physiology,

but eventually went back to school to become certified in alcohol and drug rehabilitation counseling. Currently, Paige is working on obtaining her Master's degree in organizational management.

What Paige likes best about working for Horizon is the commitment to continually seek new ways to help the consumers. "We are constantly driven to look for what works best," says Paige. "We don't settle for status quo; the goal is always to put the consumers' best interests first. Management is dedicated to changing and improving programs to better assist the consumers because they care very much. It's a great environment in which to work."

Soon, Horizon Village will break ground for its new women-specific program, and Paige is very excited about that. "I think this will be an extraordinary advantage for women who come to the Village," she says. "Because the focus will be on who they are, the culture they come from and why they respond as they do. We will really be able to offer these women better treatment that meets their specific needs." And for Paige, that's what it's all about. ❤️

thePathtoRecovery

Here is the true story of a consumer who overcame many obstacles with the help of Horizon to turn his life around. Last names have been omitted for privacy.

If you met Chuck, you'd probably see him as a personable, friendly and articulate 33-year-old guy who loves music and writes poetry. You would, according to his mom, Linda, be largely unaware of his hidden disabilities. But Chuck has been diagnosed with ADHD and chronic low-grade depression. Chuck also has hearing loss in his right ear and has non-verbal learning disabilities, which means he has difficulty reading body language and distinguishing voice inflections. He earned a Bachelor's degree in English from a local college and has lived on his own since his early twenties.

"Chuck is very good at speaking and writing," says his mom. "He writes music and poetry, he's up on world affairs and he's an avid reader. But he doesn't always come across well, so he does poorly at job interviews. His disabilities cause him to get into difficulties at work; his performance doesn't always match his intellect. He was having trouble finding good jobs well-suited to his capabilities."

That is, until Linda and Chuck were told about Horizon. According to Linda, Horizon has helped Chuck tremendously, and is the reason he's now employed full-time at a job he loves and is good at.

"We tried several agencies," said Linda, "but they were placing him in inappropriate jobs that were low-paying, with no opportunity for advancement. One agency placed him as a prep cook at a busy restaurant. It was horrible: too noisy, too confusing, too stressful for someone with Chuck's problems. They failed to recognize that."

But that all changed when Linda heard about the vocational program at Horizon. Chuck was eager to try it and so, last summer, he enrolled in the program. And it's clearly helping him.

"Chuck keeps saying that, out of all the agencies and people he's worked with, Horizon has helped him the most," says Linda. "They are professional, encouraging,

enthusiastic and supportive."

"Chuck was discouraged and unhappy when he came to our program," says Rebecca Rechlin, former coordinator of vocational services. "He had the potential but not the tools to fulfill his goals and his dreams. We saw a 180-degree turnaround in Chuck's attitude and behavior as he became more self-assured and got into a job where he felt fulfilled and worthwhile."

Chuck was particularly excited when Horizon made a videotape of a mock job interview with him. He and his counselor sat down to watch the tape, and Chuck was able to see what he had done wrong and what he had done right. The counselor, said Chuck, "gently pointed out my weaknesses, but also pointed out my strengths, which helped me feel better about myself."

Chuck and Linda say they are impressed with how Horizon recognized that Chuck's various disabilities combined to cause problems, and that they worked to change that. He's undergone testing he's never had before, and he's learning a lot about himself as a result. Because Horizon's focus is on the positive, Chuck's self-esteem and self-confidence have been boosted.

The program is very demanding, which also appeals to Chuck. "He had to make a time commitment, go out and buy the newspaper, be actively engaged in finding work and do other tasks such as sending thank you notes after job interviews," says Linda. "But Horizon kept an eye out for him, helping him whenever he needed it."

Today, Chuck is employed as a habilitation specialist at a local human services agency, where he works with brain trauma patients – a job he never would have thought he could handle ten years ago. Chuck helps his clients function better in society, whether it's learning to set a table or how to conduct themselves in a movie theatre. He loves his job, and has really come to understand that a person can become disabled at any time.

Linda says she's thrilled to see how much Chuck has matured since joining the Horizon program, and that he has so much more self-confidence and self-esteem. She's pleased her son is happy, and that he looks forward to each new day at his rewarding job. ♥

New wing to enhance services at Horizon Village

Horizon will soon break ground on a 3,100-square-foot addition at Horizon Village, its inpatient facility in Sanborn, NY. The Women's Specific Wing is being funded by OASAS and will include a multi-purpose room for women-specific activities and other classes, a lounge/visitation area, conference room and offices. Enhanced programming in the new wing will include group and individual education and counseling regarding:

- ♥ Family planning;
- ♥ Nutrition for mothers, fetus and children;
- ♥ Safer sex and high-risk behaviors;
- ♥ Positive parent/child relationships;
- ♥ Stress management as it relates to parenting and child care;
- ♥ Positive child behavior management techniques.

"The addition of this new wing will help us better address the complex psychological, interpersonal, educational and addiction needs presented by women who are addicted to substances," says Horizon CEO Anne Constantino.

The new wing is scheduled to be completed in June 2005. ♥



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The bottom line is, if you experience any of the symptoms of depression for more than two weeks – restlessness, lack of energy or focus, crying bouts, anxiety, loss of appetite, lack of pleasure in everyday activities – consult your doctor immediately. Once a proper diagnosis is made, treatment can be started. The sooner you start treatment, the sooner you will feel better! ♥♥

An evening of sharing

By Vicky Wideman, BSW, CASAC-T and Ramona Lee, ADS

The team at the Bailey/LaSalle location, under the management of Vincent Sherman, decided to end 2004 with a celebration that would demonstrate our commitment to the community, as well as our commitment to the quality of care for consumers, recovery values and spirituality.

Our vision was to seize the opportunity to explain, as well as illustrate, to family and loved ones that:

- alcoholism is a disease that can be generational
- traumatic experiences can lead to substance and alcohol abuse
- selling of drugs can lead to substance and alcohol abuse
- family and loved ones can be enablers
- Horizon Health Services is effective in counseling in these areas

With the support of senior management, clinicians and the support staff, we came together to offer *An Evening of Sharing* to the consumers, their families, loved ones and friends. During this special event, the consumers shared their experiences here at Horizon and participated in skits written and directed by Vicky Wideman and entitled, *Family Matters*. Julie Gutowski, an addictions counselor at Horizon, also provided, for the children, a very memorable artistic activity that allowed them to show their creativity.

This special evening was an incredible experience for both the consumers and the Bailey/LaSalle team. The atmosphere was charged with many emotions. We could look around and see people laughing, crying, hugging, exchanging phone numbers, mending relationships and making new friends.

Remember the Bailey/LaSalle team motto:
We're taking you to a New Horizon. ♥

Horizon is the largest and most comprehensive outpatient provider of integrated mental health, chemical dependency and medical services in WNY.

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According to the NIMH website, in any given one-year period, 9.5% of the population – or about 18.8 million American adults – suffer from a depressive illness.

INSIDE:
Signs and symptoms of depression

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