

# Work Well Toolkit

## *A Resource for Employers*



### **Work Well Initiative**

San Diego's Work Well initiative is focused on reducing the stigma that surrounds mental illness and promotes mental health awareness in the workplace. Work Well brings together a strong network of experts in employment and behavioral health as an important resource for San Diego job seekers and employers. The Work Well initiative is guided by a five year [Strategic Plan](#).



### **How Work Well Can Help My Company**

Employment specialists work closely with people looking for support in successfully finding a job. An employment specialist's expertise is to identify potential employees who have a strong interest in various working environments and matching them with those employers. Working with an employment specialist will help to quickly identify potential employees who are a good fit for your business. To connect with an employment specialist, contact Alex Heyer at (619) 228-2902 or [alexheyer@workforce.org](mailto:alexheyer@workforce.org).



### **Benefits of hiring someone with lived experience**

Employers hire people with a "lived experience" of mental illness for a number of reasons. The primary reason is the same reason that they hire anyone else—to get the services of a good and reliable employee. Additionally, employers may hire an individual with a mental illness because they appreciate the consultation and support that an employment specialist and their team of mental health support staff offers, and/or because they believe it is the right thing to do.



### **Incentives in Hiring**

Some of the greatest barriers that job seekers face are myths and fears about people with lived experience of mental illness. Oftentimes, employers can access tax incentives and job subsidies to help recruit, hire and retain employees through the San Diego Workforce Partnership.



### **Flexibility in Hiring and Staffing**

There are a range of options and opportunities for hiring someone with lived experience, including providing internships/work experience placements for individuals with disabilities, as a means of increasing the comfort level of staff and the potential applicant.

## Myths and Facts about Lived Experience

One in five California adults report needing help at some time in their life with a mental health or emotional problem. While most people have experienced a mental health or emotional problem, or know someone who has, there are numerous myths about mental illness, particularly in the workplace:

Myths	Facts
 Hiring employees with disabilities increases worker's compensation insurance rates.	 Insurance rates are based solely on the relative hazards of the operation and the organization's accident experience, not on whether workers have disabilities.
 Employees with disabilities have a higher absentee rate than employees without disabilities.	 Studies by firms such as DuPont show that employees with disabilities are not absent any more than employees without disabilities.
 Considerable expense is necessary to accommodate workers with disabilities.	 Most workers with disabilities require no special accommodations and the cost for those who do is minimal or much lower than many employers believe. Studies have shown that 58% of accommodations cost absolutely nothing, and most accommodations cost no more than \$500. In addition, a range of hiring incentives are available to employers.

## Resources for Employers

The following additional resources are available for further information on hiring and retaining employees in the workplace:

- Accommodations and the Law 
- Fair Hiring Practices
- Hiring Incentives and Job Subsidies for Employers
- Accessing Employment Programs/America's Job Center of California
- Employer's Checklist
- Employer Success Stories

## Community Resources

The following groups provide expert information and support to employers and job seekers, and are key resources in linking with people looking for work:

- [Work Well Committee](#)
- [San Diego Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities and the Disability Training Committee](#)
- [Job Accommodations Network](#)
- [San Diego Society Human Resource Management](#)
- [Department of Rehabilitation](#)

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For more information on the Work Well Initiative, contact Alex Heyer at (619) 228-2902 or [alexheyer@workforce.org](mailto:alexheyer@workforce.org).