Mental Health Services Act

Innovation Project Evaluation Report 2017

Employment Stability Project

The Employment Stability Project (ESP) is a three-year project implemented in 2014 as part of Tri-City's Innovation Plan. Designed to promote interagency collaboration, this project was funded through the Mental Health Services Act and completed in June 2017. The following report reflects a summary of the learning objectives and program effectiveness.

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Innovation Coordinator

Table of Contents

Tri-City Mental Health Services' System of Care

Tri-City Mental Health Services (TCMHS) was created in 1960 as a result of the Joint Powers Authority adopted by the cities of Claremont, La Verne, and Pomona. It provides high-quality, culturally-competent, behavioral health care treatment, prevention, and education in the diverse cities of Pomona, Claremont, and La Verne by understanding the needs of consumers and families.

TCMHS uses the MHSA planning effort to create a unique and transformative approach to mental health service delivery. Guided by a vision of a system of care that is aimed at creating wellbeing in the three cities of Pomona, Claremont and La Verne, TCMHS plays a critical but not exclusive role in providing mental health supports and services. Rather, the system of care is made possible by the community's own capacity to care for its members without relying exclusively on expanded services provided by TCMHS. The role of TCMHS in this system of care is to provide services when necessary and to support the community's capacity to care for its members.

The Employment Stability Project was conceived as another component of this system of care in which we continue to build the capacity of both TCMHS and the three cities' communities to support mental health and recovery. The following reflections represent areas of learning that we believe can increase community capacity, improve services, and transform the system of care.

MHSA Innovation Project

INN-05 Employment Stability Project

Program Name: **Employment Stability Project**
Program Start Date: **September 15, 2014**
Program End Date: **June 30, 2017**

Summary of Purpose

Employment Stability Project Summary:
The Employment Stability Project (ESP) seeks to expand and strengthen the system of care by focusing on ways that employers and Tri-City Mental Health Center (TCMHS) can work together to: 1) promote employer awareness and understanding of mental health issues, with the goal of improving job stability for persons living with a mental illness; and 2) provide assistance in ways that allow TCMHS clients and others, including those at risk of serious mental illness, to access or maintain employment.

Purpose:
The purpose of this project is to find ways to work with employers to reduce stigma towards mental illness and increase employment opportunities for those who wish to include this on their path to wellness.

The project seeks to introduce a new mental health practice by developing truly collaborative relationships between employers, clients, and mental health providers. It also offers a variation to more traditional employment-support models, which tend to focus on preparing and supporting the consumer in his or her place of employment. In contrast, this project seeks to understand if mental health service providers can maintain and expand the employment opportunities for people with mental health needs by strengthening partnerships among employers, clients and mental health service providers. The project seeks to build new relationships that will bring employers into the system of care and help clients gain employment skills that will enhance resilience.

Through direct engagement with employers, TCMHS provided an opportunity for employers and local business owners to learn first-hand about the system of care and the trainings available to help increase their knowledge of mental illness and wellbeing as it relates to their employees. Through collaboration with Tri-City's Wellness Center and Housing department, the Effective Employee Curriculum was developed which focused on enabling participants to break down harmful barriers and beliefs in their own thinking and address self-stigma, a major barrier in attaining and maintaining employment. Employer feedback was solicited and critical when designing the employee curriculum to better meet the needs of both employers and employees.

Explanation of Purpose:

1

The Employment Stability Project moves beyond current supportive care models by engaging employers directly, to promote a healthier work environment and introduce them to services available at Tri-City. By encouraging a culture of openness surrounding mental health in the workplace, we hope to reduce stigma and increase job stability for employees managing a mental illness.

In traditional systems, once a person enters mental health treatment and accesses Social Security benefits, he or she is assumed to be out of the employment market; but for some clients, employment is a necessary component of recovery and mental health. A job provides a daily routine, the opportunity to learn new skills, social interaction, financial income and potential access to health care benefits. The current job market can be challenging and even more so for those managing a mental illness. Self-stigma, lack of experience and a lack of support systems prevent many consumers from entering the job market. Employers are typically disconnected from mental health support and other available services, and there is a pervasiveness of stigma and lack of information on mental health in the workplace. Through training and interactive activities, TCMHS endeavored to provide businesses and consumers with the tools to create a stigma-free and sustainable job environment.

Description of Changes

No significant changes were made to the original project plan as outlined. However, small adjustments were made over time including a response to language after learning that employers responded more favorably to the term "Mental Health in the Workplace" rather than "Employment Stability". This resulted in a change in terminology for employer conferences or when promoting employer trainings.

Description of Evaluation Methodology

Objectives of the Employment Stability Project included a focus on increasing communication, trust and collaboration among employers and consumers of mental health services. For employers, Tri-City relied on a combination of attendance sheets, surveys, and participation in trainings and workgroups to measure the progress of the ongoing employer cohorts. Consumers participating in the Effective Employee Curriculum were evaluated using attendance sheets, self-evaluation surveys and statistics based on the number of participants hired after completing the curriculum. Below is a brief explanation of these evaluation methods:

Attendance Sheets: For each employer or employee event, attendees were asked to sign-in to capture attendance and current contact information.

Surveys/Questionnaires: Surveys and feedback forms were given periodically to both employers and consumers to gauge progress of the group and collect input. Participants were given the option to remain anonymous when completing their surveys which allowed for constructive feedback to be provided without being named or acknowledged.

Follow up calls: To obtain statistics on curriculum participants who had gained employment, our staff relied on follow-up calls made at 30, 60 and 90 day intervals following completion of the Effective Employee Curriculum. Often times, participants were hard to reach or would not respond to our calls so it is possible that the number of curriculum participants who found employment may be under reported.

Group Discussions: Lastly, we relied on real time discussions and feedback during the meetings to measure the progress of our objectives. Questions such as, "What are some of the challenges from an employer perspective?" were discussed in an open format. From these discussions ideas about specific training topics were generated.

Program Metrics Collected

There were two main groups of focus in the Employment Stability Project: Employers and employees/curriculum participants. Attendance sheets and surveys were used at all trainings, conferences and luncheons for both groups. These sign-in sheets captured the contact and demographic information. Below is a breakdown of some of the statistical data collected throughout the project:

1) Demographics: Employer Cohorts
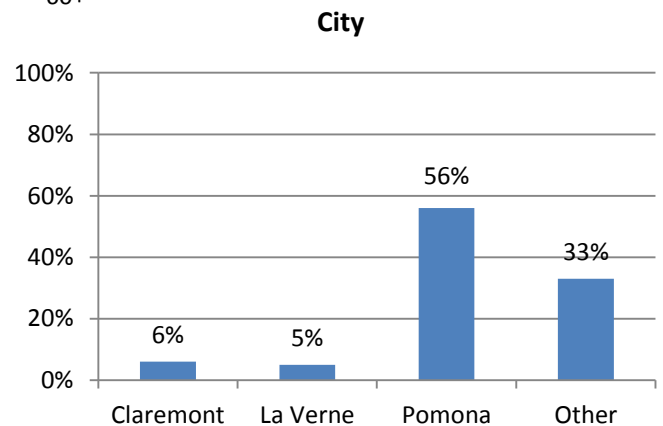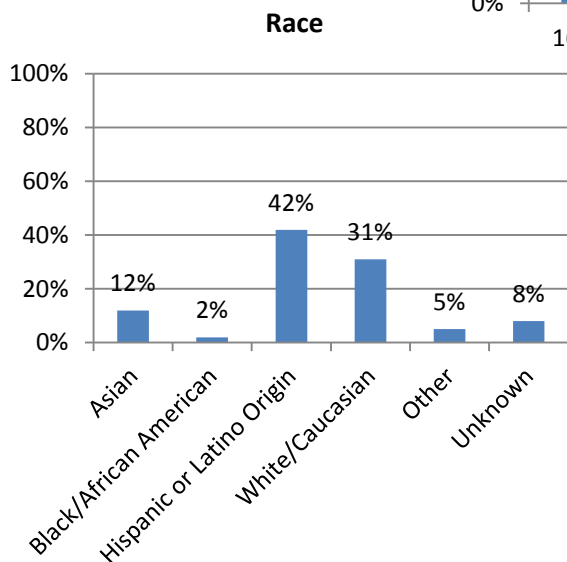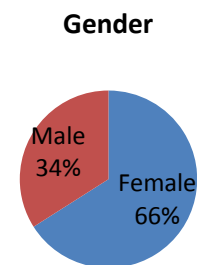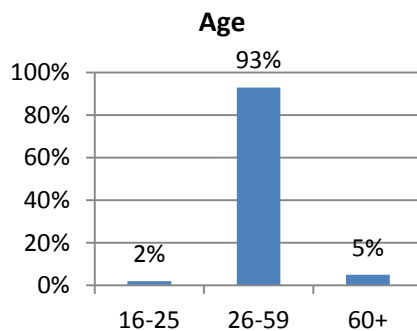
# Survey Results for Employer Cohort Trainings

For our Employer Cohorts, we created a modified version of Everyday Mental Health Training, hosted three training conferences and a series of lunch workgroups. Below are the survey results from the training and the conferences.

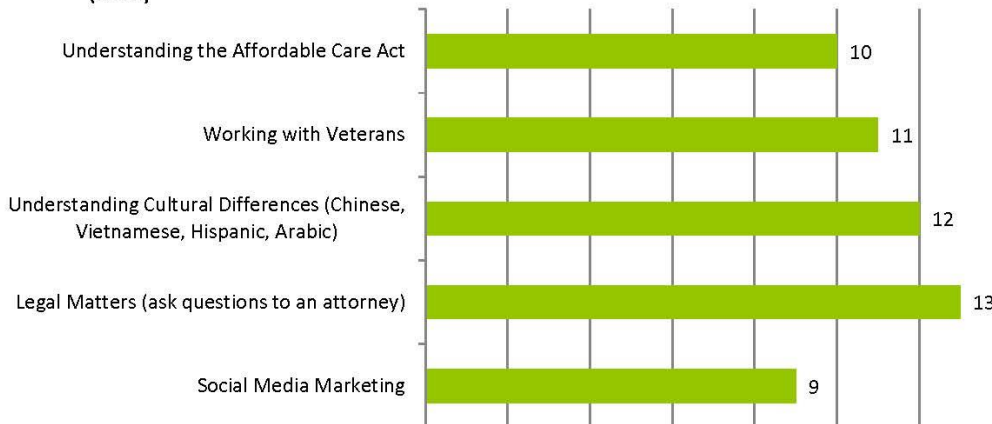| Total Employers Outreached:	Employer staff who attended at least one conference, training or workgroup:
104	93

(N=25)

1. How would you rate this conference?

1	2	3	4	5
Poor	Fair	Undecided	Good	Excellent

4.88
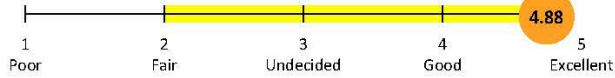
2. What could we do to make it better?

- I would suggest putting your more "inspiring" speakers last.
- Excellent, great content, time, pace, etc.
- Maybe give people a chance to introduce themselves and services (optional).
- None at this time.
- More presentations.
- Nothing everything was great!
- More on the value that Tri-City can bring to employers and their current workforce. i.e. Mental Health First Aid.

- More events just like this! Great format!
- You did great!
- N/A
- Maybe test presentations on PC prior.
- Learned more.
- It was wonderful. Extremely informative.
- N/A
- Everything was great!
- Understanding stigma in the workplace + instructions/importance on people first language in the workplace.

3. What topics would be of interest for future trainings/conferences? (Check all that apply)
(N=25)

Topic	Count
Understanding the Affordable Care Act	10
Working with Veterans	11
Understanding Cultural Differences (Chinese, Vietnamese, Hispanic, Arabic)	12
Legal Matters (ask questions to an attorney)	13
Social Media Marketing	9

Other suggestions?

- Youth/Seniors
- Mental Health Stigma/views in other cultures. Understanding the Affordable Care Act mental health component.

- EDD, Job placement agencies
- Working with people recently released from jail.
- Connecting services in the community.

4. **Would you be interested in learning more about free Mental Health First Aid Training at your worksite? (N=19)**

- No
- Yes

21%
79%
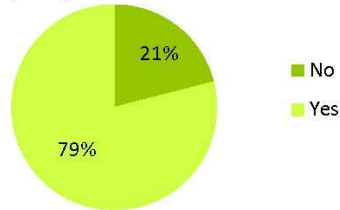
5. **Would you like to be added to our mailing list to hear about upcoming events and trainings? (N=25)**
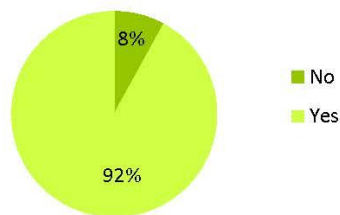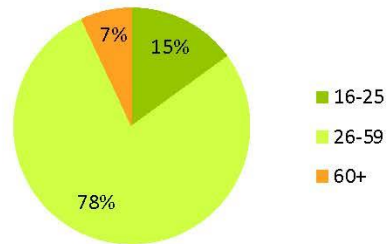

- No
- Yes

8%
92%

6. **Other comments or suggestions?**
   - Great food!
   - Excellent information.
   - Great conference.
   - Great speakers!!! Thank you!
   - All presentations in some way, shape or form, pertained to stigma, mental health and helping individuals understand employment. Excellent.
   - Very informative- I am glad I attended Mike Maunom-amazing inspiring.
   - Thank you.
   - Great workshop.
   - Very informative.
     Very informative and inspirational/motivational!!
   - This was very productive for me. Thank you.
   - Great event and excellent coordination!
   - This was very valuable. Thank you.
   - When Tri-City director spoke to attendees about hiring people with mental health challenges she mentioned they may "leave early, need time off", and if you fire them, an employer risks being sued. How about giving a more positive view that hiring these folks, you are giving a very committed worker with awareness + talents, who views their employment opportunity as much more than merely a job! Include the positive! ☺
   - Great day.
   - I enjoyed all the speakers.

Demographics

7. <u>Age</u>

15% — 16-25
78% — 26-59
7% — 60+

■ 16-25
■ 26-59
■ 60+

8. <u>Gender</u>

42% — Male
58% — Female

■ Male
■ Female

9. <u>Race/Ethnicity</u>

4%
8%
32%
4%
56%

■ American Indian/Alaska Native
■ Asian
■ Black/African American
■ Hispanic/Latino
■ Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander
■ White/Caucasian
■ Other

1. **How would you rate this conference?**

■ Excellent ■ Good ■ Neutral
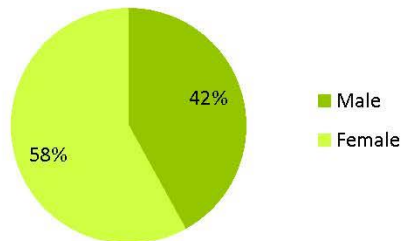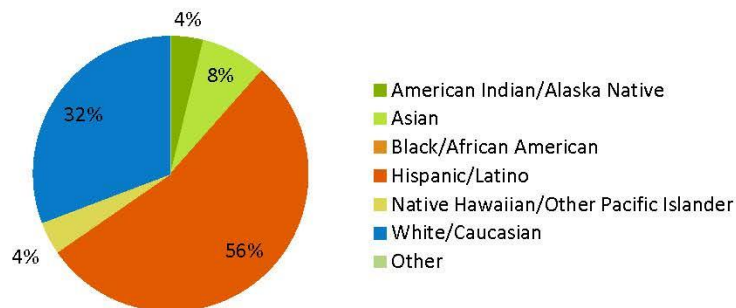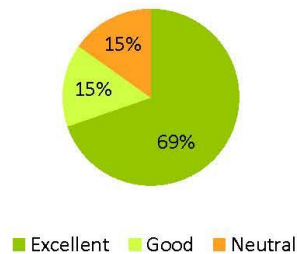
2. **In your opinion, what could Tri-City offer to businesses to help them understand and support employees living with mental health issues?**

- A toolkit or fact sheet for employers and one for job seekers. The hiring and onboarding process is often a point that cause folks with mental health issues undue stress.
- Do site visits with an employment specialist to major businesses and speak to a head in Human Resources. More awareness about supportive employment assistance to people with a mental diagnosis
- Mental Health First Aid training, openness, knowing the value of people, education.
- Outreach in schools, universities, social clubs
- Providing employers with mental health training to make the employer understand.
- Teach employers not to be afraid of the mentally ill who can be accommodated
- The training is a great idea
- Very informative, great speakers and topics this year. Next year learn about benefits employers have to hire employees with mhs.

3. **Other comments or suggestions on how to improve the conference?**

- Broader outreach/marketing to bring more employees and fewer services agencies. Mr. Rupal was excellent!
- Discussion on: integrate more about health issues in the workplace--needs to be relevant to business owners/employees.
- Introduction of organizations and businesses to learn about their services/titles. Networking more.

PAGE 1 |

- More interaction
- Thank you. It was very well developed and organized conference.
- Very interesting

4. **Would you like to be invited to a follow-up lunch where we discuss ways to promote awareness of mental health issues in the workplace?**
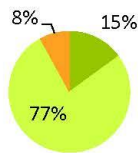
    85% said "Yes."

5. **Would you like to be invited to our next Employment Stability Conference?**

    77% said "Yes."

Demographics

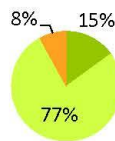**Age**

■ Missing ■ 26-59 ■ 60+

Gender

■ Male ■ Female ■ Missing

Race/Ethnicity
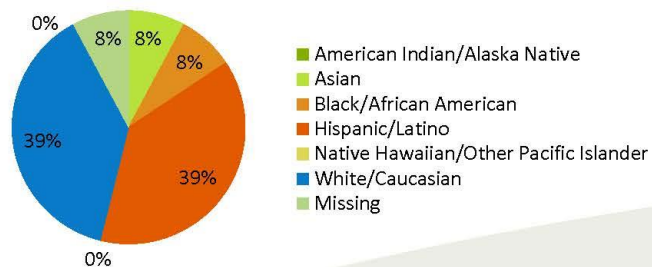
■ American Indian/Alaska Native
■ Asian
■ Black/African American
■ Hispanic/Latino
■ Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander
■ White/Caucasian
■ Missing

EMPLOYMENT STABILITY CONFERENCE RESULTS

21 Total Attendees

General Satisfaction

Legend: ■ 1-Poor ■ 2-Average ▤ 3-Good ▨ 4-Excellent

Question	N*	AVERAGE
1. How would you rate this conference?	20	3.85
2. How would you rate the presentation on Intensive Outreach and Engagement?	21	3.57
3. How would you rate the presentation on Social Security Benefits?	21	3.86
4. How would you rate the presentation on the Community Resiliency Model Training?	20	3.90

Question 1: 5% / 5% / 90%
Question 2: 10% / 24% / 67%
Question 3: 14% / 86%
Question 4: 10% / 90%

(Chart axis: 0% 25% 50% 75% 100%)

76%
Attendees found IOET could be a useful resource for their local businesses.

48%
Attendees were not aware that they could be employed and still receive Social Security Benefits.

81%
Attendees were interested in receiving training on the Community Resiliency Model.

95%
Attendees felt the information presented today will benefit them in their business or employment.

Demographics

Gender

Female 53%
Male 47%

Age

16-25: 5%
26-59: 86%
60+: 10%

Primary Language

Spanish 6%
English 94%

Race

Asian: 29%
Black: 19%
Hispanic: 29%
White: 10%
Other: 14%
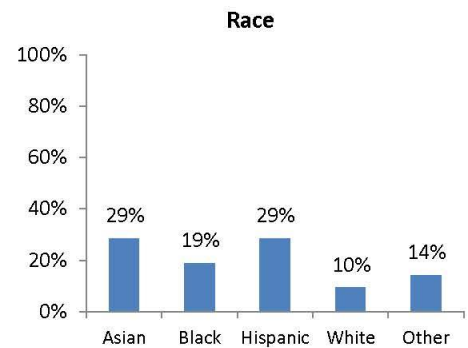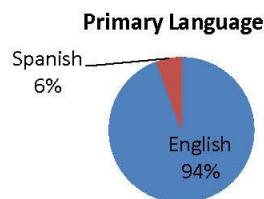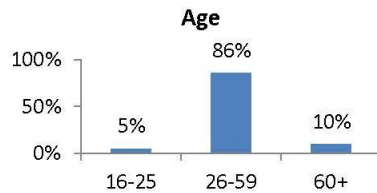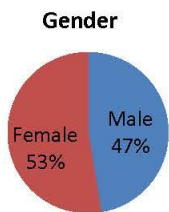
Based on "Do you think the Intensive Outreach and Engagement Team could be useful resource for local businesses?" <u>If yes, please describe:</u>

- Crime and homelessness affect small businesses and the outreach team can help educate businesses as their point of contact and resource for those businesses.
- Get to know nice people.
- The 1 hr. training mentioned would be great at work! Please send more info. Thx.
- Great for networking & partnership.
- Unsure.
- The training is priceless it will help empower both businesses & employees to be a productive team.

<u>Any other suggestions or comments:</u>

- Teresa Campbell's presentation was excellent, well presented, informative and very thorough on this topic SSDI/SSI.
- Great conference!! Very diverse set of speakers.
- It was very effective when Shawn Smith gave his phone number. Also, Teresa Campbell was excellent!
- Possibly have 2 breaks in between speakers.
- Please email us the monthly calendar.
- Topics on how to help/motivate individuals with MH disabilities look for employment.
- Interesting great speakers. Room looked very nice. Thanks for water, lunch!
- Awesome informative and pleasant everyone is very nice & polite.

Employer Training

Mental Health in the Workplace

October 25, 2016

20 Surveys Completed

Average

Statement		Average
The training met my expectations.	30% Agree / 70% Strongly Agree	4.70
The training objectives for each topic were identified and met.	25% Agree / 75% Strongly Agree	4.75
The topics covered were relevant to my setting.	5% Uncertain / 20% Agree / 75% Strongly Agree	4.70
I will be able to utilize the information/knowledge gained today in my practice moving forward.	25% Agree / 75% Strongly Agree	4.75
The content was organized and easy to follow.	10% Agree / 90% Strongly Agree	4.90
The trainer(s) was knowledgeable about the training topics.	10% Agree / 90% Strongly Agree	4.90

Legend: ■ Strongly Disagree ■ Disagree ■ Uncertain ■ Agree ■ Strongly Agree

How do you rate the training overall?

Good, 20%

Excellent, 80%

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2) Demographics: Curriculum Participants

110 Effective Employee Curriculum Participants

Age

- 16-25: 42%
- 26-59: 54%
- 60+: 3%

Gender

- Other 1%
- Male 45%
- Female 54%

Race

- Asian: 6%
- Black/African American: 19%
- Hispanic or Latino Origin: 45%
- White/Caucasian: 23%
- Unknown: 1%
- Other: 6%

City

- Claremont: 1%
- La Verne: 26%
- Pomona: 66%
- Other: 5%
- Unknown: 2%
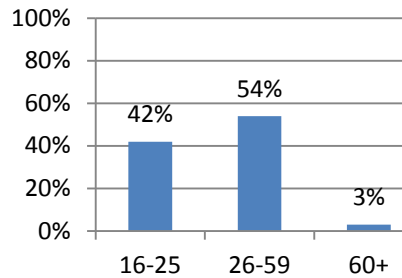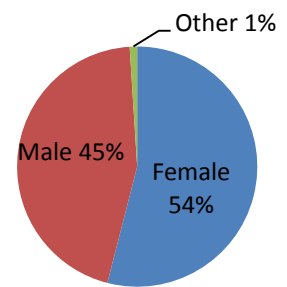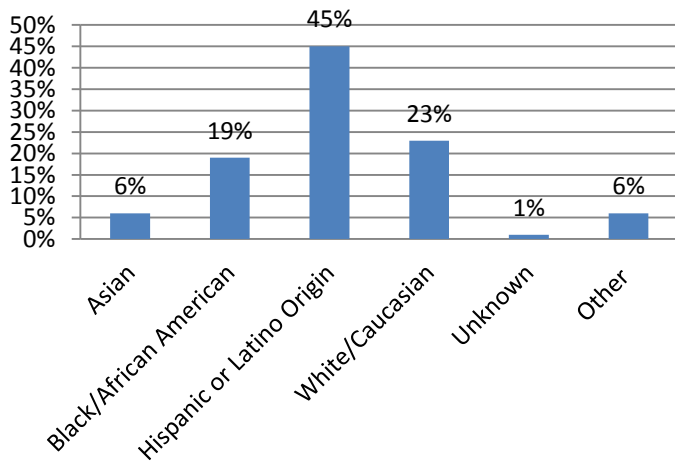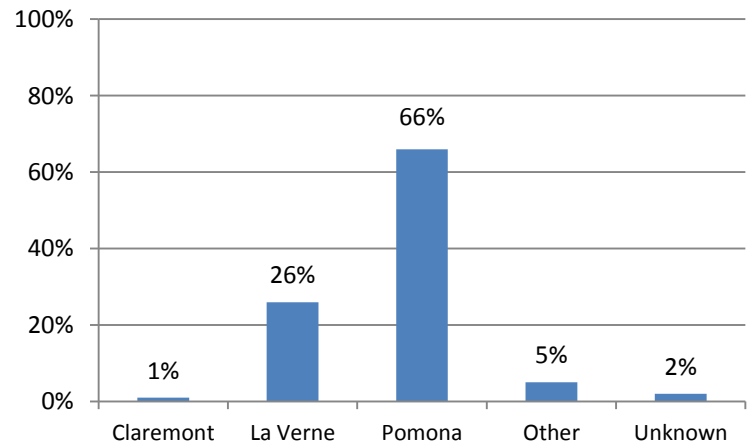
The Effective Employee Curriculum was developed to help prepare Tri-City clients and community members to enter the job market. Pre and post surveys were given to participants to measure improvements in areas such as creating a resume or searching for a job. Participants who attended at least six of the eight curriculum modules were awarded a Letter of Completion to recognize their achievement. Afterward, follow-up calls were made to curriculum participants to determine the number of individuals who successfully found employment. Below is a breakdown of the employment statistics, curriculum survey results and comments from curriculum participants:

Total Employee Curriculum Participants:	Participants who attended at least 6 of the 9 modules:	Participants who reported getting a job:
110	22	11

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Effective Employee Curriculum

Legend: ■ 1-Very Poor ■ 2-Poor ▨ 3-Fair ■ 4-Good ■ 5-Very Good

		N*	AVERAGE
1. Completing a job application.	7% 13% 60% 20%	15	2.93
2. Preparing a resume.	20% 40% 27% 13%	15	2.33
3. Searching for jobs.	13% 33% 40% 7% 7%	15	2.60
4. Communicating effectively with co-workers on the job.	7% 33% 20% 33% 7%	15	3.00
5. Communicating effectively with supervisors/managers on the job.	20% 40% 27% 13%	15	3.33
6. Being prepared for a job interview.	47% 47% 7%	15	2.60
7. Handling work responsibilities.	7% 47% 27% 20%	15	3.60
8. Being a team player.	53% 33% 13%	15	3.60
9. Managing time well when at work.	7% 60% 13% 20%	15	3.47
10. Understanding how to dress for a job.	7% 40% 33% 20%	15	3.67

0%   25%   50%   75%   100%

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TRI·CITY Mental Health Services

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Effective Employee Curriculum		

■1-Very Poor   **■2-Poor**   **□3-Fair**   **■4-Good**   **▸5-Very Good**   **N***   **AVERAGE**

Item	Chart	N*	Average
1. Completing a job application.	20% / 33% / 47%	15	4.27
2. Preparing a resume.	33% / 7% / 47% / 13%	15	3.40
3. Searching for jobs.	7% 7% / 21% / 36% / 29%	14	3.71
4. Communicating effectively with co-workers on the job.	40% / 20% / 40%	15	4.00
5. Communicating effectively with supervisors/managers on the job.	7% / 27% / 33% / 33%	15	3.93
6. Being prepared for a job interview.	20% / 20% / 40% / 20%	15	3.60
7. Handling work responsibilities.	20% / 53% / 27%	15	4.07
8. Being a team player.	27% / 27% / 47%	15	4.20
9. Managing time well when at work.	33% / 20% / 47%	15	4.13
10. Understanding how to dress for a job.	20% / 27% / 53%	15	4.33

0%   25%   50%   75%   100%

The length of this training was:

- ■ Too short — 7%
- ■ The right amount — 93%
- ■ Too long

| | 1-Strongly Disagree | 2-Disagree | 3-Neutral | 4-Agree | 5-Strongly Agree | N* | AVERAGE |

1. This training met my expectations.

	31%	69%

N*: 15 AVERAGE: 4.69
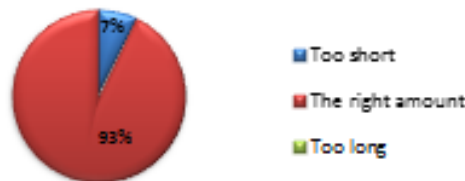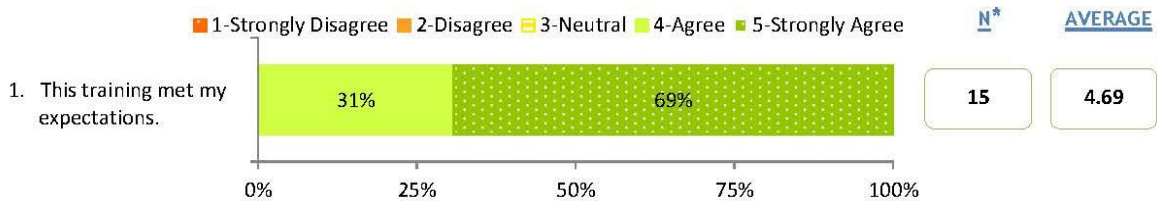
Pre-Test Question: What are your expectations for this training? In other words, what do you hope to get out of it?

- Get a great experience.
- My expectations are to help me get a job, and how to maintain it.
- I hope to improve my social skills, to better prepare me for success. I want to improve as much as I can.
- I hope to be better equipped to handle a job.
- Finding a job.
- Better socialization w/ people other participants. More job interviewing practice.

- I hope I get enough training for a job.
- I do hope to get out of improving social communicating skills, and learn how to address issues because it was very handy doing that for my old job.
- Learning important things for job interviewing.
- Be better prepared to obtain and retain a job.
- I hope to learn new information about how to act with my fellow employees and managers. I hope to learn new skills about how work in the work place.

Post-Test Question: What did you like the most about this training?

- Really the people were understanding/helping.
- It was straight to the point and good.
- That it was free and during the summer.
- The group setting.
- Computers.
- I learned a lot of things I needed for jobs.
- Learning coping skills.

- It helps me to better understand what to do.
- The valuable knowledge and detail Chris and mark displayed.
- Getting the information I need.
- The information I was getting about job training and doing application was great thanks.
- Very hands-on. Concise. Amazing quality information to function & be successful.

Post-Test Question: Do you have any suggestions on how this training could be improved?

- None at the time.
- Don't change a thing but if you need to.
- It was great thanks Chris.

- Practice the interview.
- Just the way it is going.
- Building skills.

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Question 1
Completing a job application:

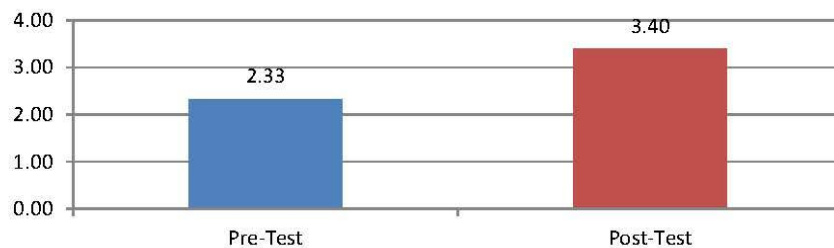At pre-test, group participants had a combined average of 2.93. The post-test average of 4.27 indicates a statistical significant increase at p<0.01.
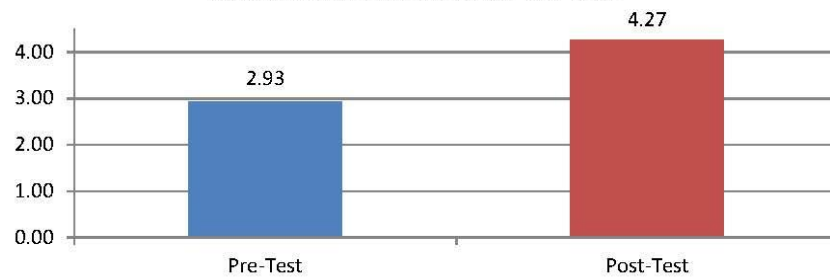
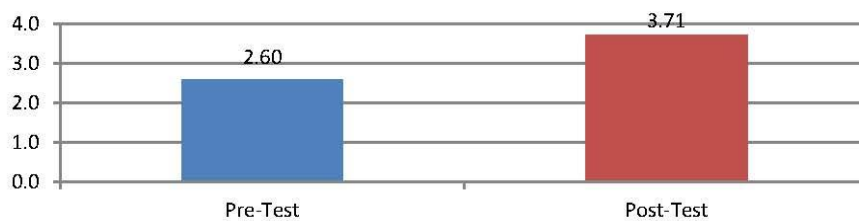

Question 2
Preparing a resume:

At pre-test, group participants had a combined average of 2.33. The post-test average of 3.40 indicates a statistical significant increase at p<0.01.

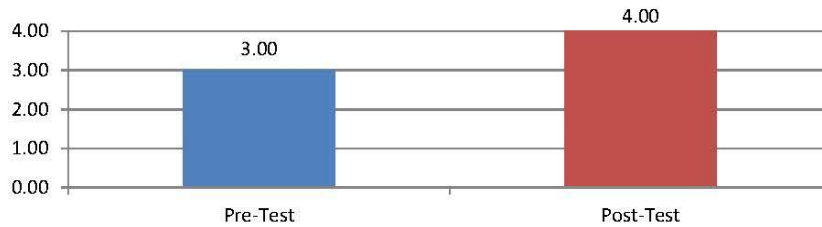**Question 3**
Searching for jobs:

At pre-test, group participants had a combined average of 2.60. The post-test average of 3.71 indicates a statistical significant increase at p<0.01.

Question 4
Communicating effectively with co-workers on the job:
At pre-test, group participants had a combined average of 3.00. The post-test average of 4.00 indicates a statistical significant increase at p<0.01.

Question 5
Communicating effectively with supervisors/managers on the job:
At pre-test, group participants had a combined average of 3.33. The post-test average of 3.93 indicates a reported increase.
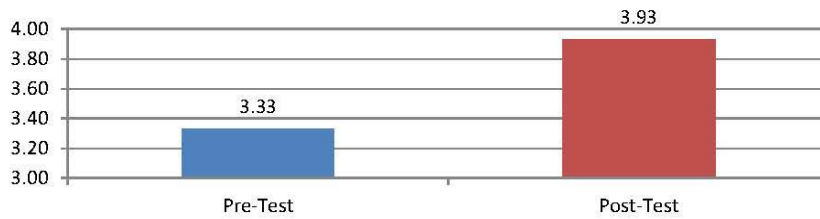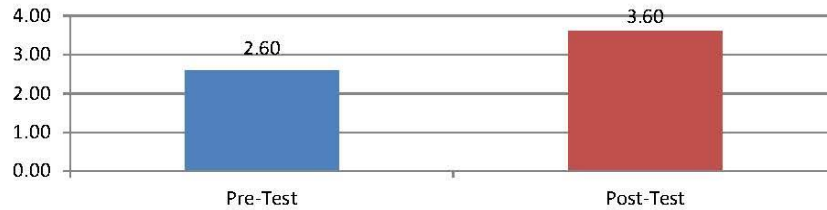

Question 6
Being prepared for a job interview:
At pre-test, group participants had a combined average of 2.60. The post-test average of 3.60 indicates a statistical significant increase at p<0.01.

Question 7
Handling work responsibilities:
At pre-test, group participants had a combined average of 3.60. The post-test average of 4.07 indicates a reported increase.

Question 8
Being a team player:
At pre-test, group participants had a combined average of 3.60. The post-test average of 4.20 indicates a statistical significant increase at $p < 0.05$.
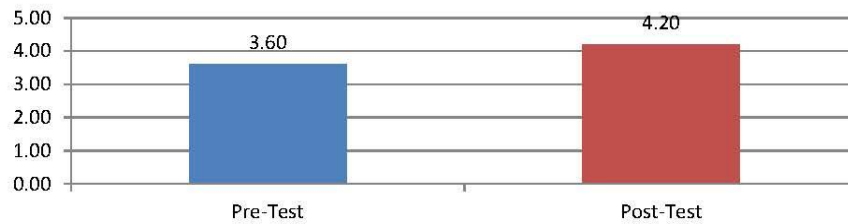
Question 9
Managing time well when at work:
At pre-test, group participants had a combined average of 3.47. The post-test average of 4.13 indicates a statistical significant increase at $p < 0.05$.

19

Question 10
Understanding how to dress for a job:
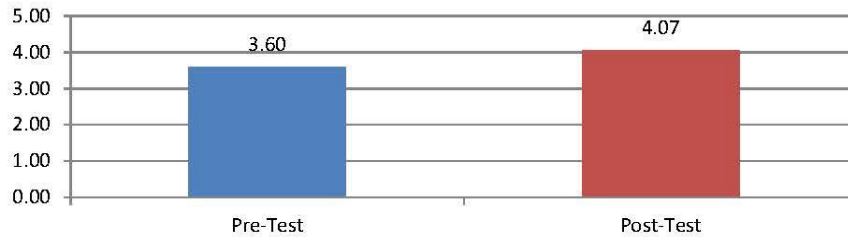At pre-test, group participants had a combined average of 3.67. The post-test average of 4.33 indicates a statistical significant increase at $p < 0.05$.
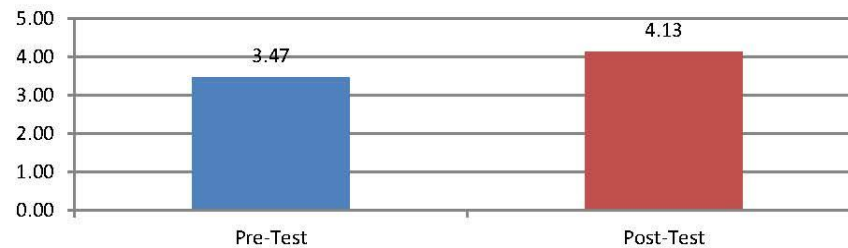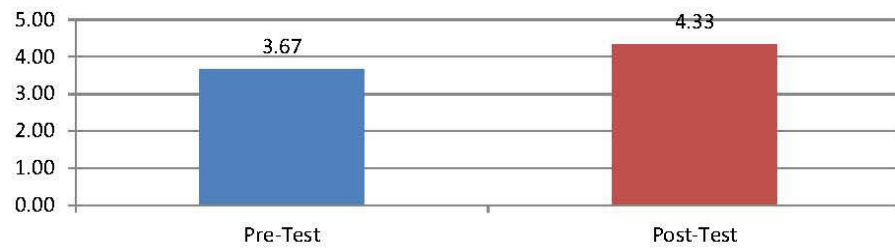
Learning Objectives

The following questions were addressed through the Employment Stability Project:

1. **What challenges make it difficult for employers to offer jobs to people who have mental health needs?**

    What We Sought to Learn: Identify the formal and informal barriers that prevent job seekers with mental illness from gaining employment.

    What We Learned: Businesses and human resource professionals were uncomfortable talking about this topic in detail due to privacy concerns and perceived risk. However, some high level barriers became evident.

    There is a great deal of stigma among employers when it comes to hiring persons living with a mental illness. For example, some hiring professionals may have a perception that certain individuals, such as veterans returning from war, may have Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and consciously avoid hiring from this demographic. Employers are also concerned about introducing a disruptive employee into a functional team and the potential legal retaliation by individuals with mental health issues.

    One formal barrier for employers designed to protect employees, are privacy laws which prevent an employer from asking about mental illness. If a potential employee chooses to disclose a mental illness, which does not interfere with their work, this may result in them being offered an accommodation at the time of hire. However, the goal of all job seekers is to first gain employment, and unless there is a confirmed advantage to disclosing a mental illness, it is widely accepted among interviewees to not disclose this during the interview for fear of being passed over for other applicants. As a result, employers are often unaware that an employee may have a mental health challenge at the time of hire. Even if an employer may have been willing to offer an accommodation, the topic is likely not to come up during the interview unless initiated by the interviewee.

2. **What challenges make it more likely that employers will terminate employment or not hire people with mental health needs rather than keeping them?**

    What We Sought to Learn: Understand the circumstances in the workplace that may cause a person managing a mental illness to face termination. What employer supports could be put in place to mitigate this?

    What We Learned: Most employers had a lack of understanding on how to identify the signs of mental illness in the workplace and how these symptoms may affect performance. As a result, the cause of an employee's declining performance is rarely considered and instead the focus is primarily on their output. As performance decreases, a manager may begin to apply pressure on the employee, which can increase the employee's stress and

likely exacerbate the symptoms of their mental illness. This can lead to a downward spiral, ultimately resulting in employee termination or the employee voluntarily leaving to remove them from this negative situation.

Understanding how to identify the signs of mental illness in the workplace is the first step to reducing this. The next step is learning how to approach an employee to ask about their mental health. The idea of asking an employee about their mental health was considered a delicate subject for many managers, even when hypothetically discussed. A manager, concerned with legal repercussions, may likely try to avoid this topic altogether out of fear of saying the wrong thing. To address these two issues, the Manager's Tip Sheet for Mental Health Awareness was developed and made available to employers. This tri-fold included examples of what depression may look like in the workplace so managers can learn to recognize the signs. It also included a section on using appropriate language when approaching an employee they may be concerned about. This document is included in the *Supporting Documents* section of this report.

During discussions with the employer cohort, Tri-City learned that larger organizations may have Employment Assistance Programs (EAP) to offer support for employees. Smaller businesses, however, often lack the resources for an EAP program or supervisors with the necessary skills to manage individuals with mental or emotional difficulties.

In addition to the lack of resources, smaller businesses also expressed concern about an individual employee who may be perceived as being treated differently. The risk with a small team is the employee may become a distraction or source of gossip, leading to conflict or problems for the employer. Employers may deem it necessary to terminate an individual rather than provide an accommodation, which may attract attention from other employees or create a scenario where other employees begin to ask for the same or similar accommodations.

To gain insight from the employee perspective, we created a group called the Employee Advisory Panel and sought out participants with lived experience who were either currently employed or had past employment experience. Having a group of peers in a non-judgmental environment allowed the participants to be candid about their experiences. Two participants shared negative stories about disclosing their mental illness to an employer. Both participants felt they were "forced out" after disclosing. It was the consensus of this peer group that until the perception of mental illness changes in Corporate America, it is best to hide one's illness from one's employer.

PARTICIPANT STORY OF DISCLOSING A MENTAL ILLNESS TO HER EMPLOYER

A participant, who had been employed with the same company for over 20 years, began to develop symptoms of anxiety. After struggling with these symptoms, she asked her supervisor if she could be allowed to work on weekends when the office was less frantic. She had a letter from her doctor who detailed her condition and, up until this point; she had a positive work history. Her request was denied, though it was not clear if any alternative accommodation

options were offered to her. Over the next year, she began to feel micromanaged by her supervisor and received criticism for her work. This increased her already high levels of anxiety, which in turn, affected her performance and caused increased micromanaging from her supervisor. In her words, "it started a downward spiral" and within a year of her disclosure, she voluntarily left her position. Her advice was to not disclose a mental illness to your employer. She said that while she misses being employed, her leaving was the best decision for her mental wellbeing.

From stories like these, we began to work on ways to increase awareness for employers to better understand what an accommodation is and examples of low cost or no cost accommodations. We also wanted to introduce the idea that an accommodation that allows you to retain a valued employee is more akin to an investment than a cost.

3. **What policies, agreements, or services might make it more likely that employers will offer jobs to people with mental health needs, and work to retain people with mental health needs in their jobs once hired?**

> **What We Sought to Learn:** Can we identify specific areas to make employers more comfortable with hiring workers with mental health needs or retain workers with these concerns? Can Tri-City be a facilitator for this?

> **What We Learned:** Tri-City Mental Health brought together employers and employees in a variety of trainings, luncheons and conferences to discuss what mental health in the workplace might look like and some of the challenges associated with it. Feedback provided from these ongoing workgroups helped generate topics for trainings and speakers for conferences.

> It was our goal to host conferences where employers could be introduced to topics of mental health and learn how they play a role in the workplace. In addition to having speakers present on a variety of topics, the conferences allowed Tri-City the opportunity to provide resource tables where supporting agencies, including the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), could host a table and introduce their programs to attendees. Through a combination of speakers, training materials, and cross promotion, we hoped to engage our employer base and introduce many of these topics.

> The conferences provided speakers presenting on topics of interest and the opportunity to network and be introduced to other service organizations, such as NAMI, the Department of Rehabilitation and Tri-City's Community Navigators. Increasing the awareness of the continuum of care that TCMHS offers, as well as other services such as the Job Accommodation Network (JAN), allowed employers to see that help was available and that there are advantages for using available resources.

> Through this project, it was determined that communication from leadership down to the employee level is the most effective method of disseminating information and

promoting culture change. An example of this might be reminding employees that their health care plan includes coverage for mental health services, if applicable. Just the act of reminding employees of this sends a positive message that these resources are not only available but management is supportive of their use, should they be needed. We emphasized the goal of creating a culture where the discussion of mental health could be as common as the discussion of physical health. When the topic of depression can be discussed among co-workers as easily as diabetes, it can be assumed gains in reducing stigma have taken place.

By partnering with Tri-City, employers are taking the first steps to adopting a change in mindset and ultimately a change in culture at their company. Although creating company policy is not within the purview of this project, by providing training and mental health awareness for participants, Tri-City can facilitate learning conversations necessary to plant the seeds of change for future policy development.

4. **What can Tri-City Mental Health offer employers to meet their business needs while supporting employees with mental health needs?**

> **What We Sought to Learn:** What services can Tri-City offer to assist businesses in supporting employees struggling with mental health concerns? How can we prepare our clients to succeed in the workplace?

> **What We Learned:** Stigma surrounding mental illness is a major barrier in the business environment and likely manifests in subtle behavior and office culture. Businesses have limited understanding of common mental illnesses and often think of them in terms of the most extreme cases when they hear the term "employee with a mental health challenge". After getting a better understanding of these barriers, our goal was to create dialogue that could build rapport, offer trainings and provide a safe and supportive space where taboo questions could be discussed.

> Survey data indicated employers were interested in receiving training on legal issues, training for their employees and Mental Health First Aid. Tri-City was able to respond to these requests over the life of the Employment Stability Project. Limited time was a concern expressed by many employers. Tri-City responded by providing streamlined trainings and conferences designed to accommodate attendees' schedules.

> Survey results also indicated an interest in learning about cultural differences such as how to work with and motivate younger age "millennial" workers. Employers were also interested in Tri-City's community-wide services and informal treatment services, such as those offered by the Intensive Outreach and Engagement team and the Community Navigators. We responded to these concerns by providing expert speakers addressing these topics during employer conferences.

> In addition, a series of lunch workgroups were hosted where our Employer Cohort was invited to have lunch and share input on a number of topics. It was from these

workgroups where we began to identify the training needs of our employers. One of the first things we learned was that when employers heard the term "mental illness", many thought it referred to more severe mental illnesses such as schizophrenia. Many were surprised to learn that anxiety and depression are also mental illnesses, and more common and likely to be seen in the workplace. Employers were also unaware of how to identify the signs of mental illness in the workplace and most expressed a great deal of concern when asked how they might approach an employee who may be showing these symptoms.

Based on the learnings from these workgroups, specific training materials were developed to help employers better understand these topics. Our first document was a tri-fold brochure titled "Manager's Tip Sheet for Mental Health Awareness", which gave managers quick tips on how mental illness such as depression may manifest in the workplace. Also included was a section on what to say and what not to say when approaching an employee they are concerned about.

Conferences were held annually throughout the project to give employers and community members the opportunity to hear speakers present on topics listed as important on feedback surveys. Presenters included an attorney on labor law with a background in mental health, who fielded legal questions from the audience, a representative from the Social Security Office who spoke on how employees receiving benefits can still be available for work, Mental Health First Aid trainings and Tri-City's Intensive Outreach and Engagement Team. Supporting agencies such as NAMI and the Department of Rehabilitation were invited to host tables along with Tri-City's Community Navigators to provide attendees with additional information and resources.

Through collaboration with our Prevention and Early Intervention (PEI) team, we developed a one-hour version of "Every Day Mental Health" which we called "Mental Health in the Workplace". The training was kept to one hour, based on feedback from employers, and focused on information about why mental health in the workplace is so important to business owners. For example, an employee suffering from anxiety or depression can lose up to two hours of productivity per workday, was a statistic many employers were unaware of, and became a motivator for many to learn more about this project.

The project also brought together consumers to gather information on their job seeking and employment experiences. Input from the employers was also relayed to employees, helping them to learn about important characteristics to look for in a successful employee.

To better assist our clients and consumers, an eight-week Effective Employee Curriculum was developed to help consumers improve their skills and confidence as effective workers. Curriculum modules were created based on input from our Employer Cohort, Employee Advisory Panel and employment specialists at the Wellness Center. Participants who completed at least six of the eight course modules received a Letter of

Completion to show evidence of their commitment to potential employers. This provided encouragement to our clients and aided in removing self-stigma.

Finally, we learned that Tri-City has services and trainings which the business community is largely unaware of. For example, Tri-City has a Wellness Center, which is open to clients as well as the local community. This is an important resource businesses can leverage to offer their employees access to support groups focusing on topics such as anxiety, depression or anger management. Through collaborating with employers and supporting agencies, the project was able to showcase the Wellness Center and their available resources.

5. **What are effective outreach strategies for building positive, productive relationships with employers?**

What We Sought to Learn: How could Tri-City Mental Health outreach to employers to create rapport while implementing the directives of the project?

What We Learned: Outreach to employers was initially conducted to businesses who had participated in job fairs at the Tri-City Wellness Center. This enabled the project to begin with a group who had already established a relationship with Tri-City and also provide the opportunity to increase participation by giving referrals to affiliates of those employers. Outreach was also attempted by door-to-door introductions to local businesses. This proved to be time-consuming and ineffective as businesses have little

free time and the stigma surrounding employee related mental illness presented a barrier to open discussion. Businesses saw little value in engaging in discussions and viewed the topic with trepidation. Reframing the discussion to how mental illness can lower employee productivity engaged their "business mindset" and helped us to begin an open dialogue. For example, we were able to educate them that an employee suffering from prolonged anxiety or depression will lose two hours of productivity per day. When presented with this data, employers began to see the benefits of committing their time to discussions and trainings. As one HR representative put it, *"appealing to productivity will yield more interest from businesses than appealing to their altruism".*

> *"Appealing to productivity will yield more interest from businesses than appealing to their altruism".*
>
> Employer Cohort Member

Later in the project, our team began to attend business meetings such as the Pomona Chamber of Commerce and Employment Task Force groups that focused on employment. These offered an opportunity to introduce Tri-City services as well as the initiatives of the project to the members.

Luncheon workgroups and trainings proved to be the best method for connecting employers and getting their input. Promoting a 60 – 90 minute workgroup with the offer

of food and a guarantee of getting them out on time proved to be a successful method of engaging with our employers.

During this project, Tri-City hosted three educational conferences and one employer based training called Everyday Mental Health in the Workplace. These events were well attended, with most attendees rating the conferences and trainers as good or excellent. The conferences brought employers together, enhanced their knowledge of mental health in the workplace, and provided the opportunity to learn about Tri-City resources. (See previous survey data and presentation in Supporting Documents section)

During the interim between workgroups and conferences, the Innovation team would send a monthly *Mental Health Tip* to all members of our Employer Cohort. These monthly email blasts maintained the connection with this important group and offered tips to help educate our cohort on mental health and upcoming events at Tri-City, such as Green Ribbon Week or Mental Health Awareness Month.

6. **What skills and information can Tri-City Mental Health help our clients exercise and understand about being an "Effective Employee" that serve to build better employer-employee relationships and keep them in appropriate work positions?**

   What We Sought to Learn: Could developing a training program based on input from employers and consumers help Tri-City participants build skills and present themselves as effective employees?

   What We Learned: The Effective Employee Curriculum was modeled after Tri-City's Landlord/Tennant curriculum and divided into eight stand-alone modules that were offered once a week. An optional ninth module was created for persons living with mental illness, and addressed topics such as disclosure and accommodation. Input from our Employer and Employee Cohorts helped to create content that would reflect real world instruction but also include information that addressed the unique challenges of our clients. Many of our consumers have no prior work experience, and a curriculum had to be designed that would not only touch on the unique challenges of mental health but also address the basic expectations an employer might have, such as proper work etiquette and getting along with others.

   One of the questions our team had to address in the beginning was "*is the Employee Curriculum just for Tri-City clients who are managing a mental illness or is it open to everyone?*" We decided to keep it open for everyone; however, this created a concern in that we could not assume our participants were managing a mental illness. Some of the curriculum material that is specifically for clients who are managing a mental illness (e.g. disclosure, accommodation or working while on SDI) may not be appropriate for everyone in the class. We did not want to assume any or all of our participants were managing a mental illness so we found ourselves in a situation similar to what our employers face when hiring someone who may or may not be managing a mental illness.

Communication and socialization are key skills for our clients so the curriculum was conducted in a group format where participation and sharing was encouraged. Using this method allowed the participants to share their experiences and gave the facilitator the option to weave in relevant topics from the lesson plan. Because of this format, some flexibility to the curriculum became necessary. For example, if a participant talked about being treated rudely at a restaurant and this engaged the group, the facilitator may use this opportunity to discuss the importance of customer service, even though this topic may not be part of the module currently being taught. Being open and flowing with the group conversation proved especially helpful in keeping the TAY population engaged and sometimes allowed for very insightful comments.

> *"Customer Service is a good way to develop social skills. Customer Service is social skills in action."*
>
> TAY Curriculum Participant

One of the challenges we faced was the difficulty in maintaining curriculum attendance, especially from TAY participants. Many of our TAY participants did not know how to drive a car, much less have access to one, so transportation became an issue. Although the Wellness Center, where the TAY workshops were held, is located on a major public transportation route and only steps from the nearest bus stop, many of our participants were not familiar or took advantage of this option. This became another opportunity for staff to educate them regarding the use of public transportation including community transit providers such as the Pomona Valley "Get About" which was promoted as a low cost option.

A second obstacle to attendance involved participants who were single parents and the lack of access to childcare. To address this concern, we sought out opportunities where we could bring the curriculum to them. We collaborated with Tri-City's Housing department to help organize a TAY curriculum training at an apartment complex which housed several of our TAY clients. By making this special consideration, participants did not have to commute or arrange for childcare. At the apartment complex we were fortunate enough to be provided a meeting room large enough to administer the curriculum and also accommodate the children of the participating parents. By allowing them to enroll in the course at any time during the curriculum, this also proved to be beneficial to increasing group attendance.

To address these barriers, we sought out opportunities where we could bring the curriculum out to them. We collaborated with Tri-City's Housing department to help organize a TAY curriculum training at an apartment complex that housed several of our TAY clients. By making this special consideration, participants did not have to commute or arrange for childcare. At the apartment complex we were fortunate enough to be provided a meeting room large enough to administer the curriculum and also accommodate the children of the participating parents. Allowing participants the ability to enroll in the course at any point during the curriculum was also beneficial to group participation. Participants could join the group at any point during the curriculum and add to the discussion based on the current topic.

The ability to provide the curriculum onsite and accommodate children allowed us to have increased attendance among the TAY population. In hindsight, having a volunteer present to entertain or occupy children while the class was going on would have been helpful. This would have been a valuable support for the facilitator and also a learning opportunity for a volunteer or intern who is interested in mental health or child development.

To gauge the effectiveness of the curriculum, we relied on pre and post-surveys. Whenever a new participant would join the curriculum, we would ask them to take a pre-survey and rate their ability to complete tasks such as filling out a job application or completing a resume. At the conclusion of the cohort, a post-survey would be administered to gauge their performance. Based on our survey results (included at the beginning of this report), we noted considerable improvements in our participant's ability to complete a job application and being prepared for an interview.

Success Stories

- One of the participants who completed the Effective Employee Curriculum went on to become a volunteer. After months of volunteer work, this person applied for and was hired as a full-time employee for Tri-City.

- A participant attending the TAY Effective Employee Curriculum was given a handout titled "Common job interview questions" during one of our classes. A week later this person received a call back for an interview and said many of the interview questions were identical to the ones on the handout provided by the training. The participant said the handout was a resource that helped with the interview and securing the job.

7. **How can mental health clinicians integrate discussion of current or potential employment in their ongoing clinical planning and care?**

   What We Sought to Learn: Can the topic of employment be introduced to clients as part of their therapy or be added to their treatment plan?

   What We Learned: Employment can be integrated into the client's treatment once the client is evaluated to be stable. This means that the client is taking medication as prescribed, crisis situations and hospital visits have been reduced, they have completed detox (if applicable), and appointments are attended regularly.

   Once stability is achieved and the client is engaged in their treatment, then conversations about employment can start with information gathering such as previous experience and what type of work do they think they would like to do. Clinicians can work with the client to identify small steps they can take to begin their path to employment. For example, the clinician might talk with the client about visiting the

computer lab at the Wellness Center to gain some computer skills or participate in volunteer work before applying for a paid job.

Employment can be an on-going topic for treatment sessions. The clinician may work with the client to problem-solve barriers that have been identified in previous therapy sessions. Common barriers may include transportation, self-stigma or coping skills needed to handle the stress of a job. During these conversations, clinicians can discuss the challenges of looking for work and help the client address fears of rejection or how to handle potential triggers from stress. By addressing these issues during treatment sessions, clients can become empowered by developing skills and identifying resources to help them meet their employment goals.

Throughout this process it is important to consider the client's level of functioning, diagnosis and the type of employment that is available. Clinicians can also work with clients to set realistic expectations of employment and how holding a job may impact them. All of these themes should be included when working with clients to obtain or maintain employment.

In addition to treatment, clinicians can also refer clients to the Wellness Center to talk with an employment specialist or participate in the Effective Employee Curriculum. It is important that clinical staff be made aware of the services available for clients. It should not be assumed that clinical staff will have knowledge of these services or other available MHSA programs. For this reason, we scheduled multiple short presentations for clinical staff to introduce them to this Innovation project and to ensure they were aware of the employment services offered for our clients.

In an attempt to put some of these concepts into practice, we collaborated with the clinical staff at Tri-City's Therapeutic Community Garden (TCG). A 10-week vocational curriculum was created which included hands-on gardening skills administered by clinical staff, followed by the Effective Employee Curriculum administered by the Innovation team. These weekly sessions were four hours long and required a true commitment from the clients. We were able to complete two TCG cohorts with a combined total of nine clients participating.

8. **Are there specific components of this approach that contribute to its success particularly when compared to traditional models of supportive employment?**

    What We Sought to Learn: Identify the actions and best practices unique to this project which yielded positive results and can be repeated after the project has ended.

    What We Learned: Engaging employers proved to be more difficult than anticipated. We learned that we must "speak their language" so we began framing the benefits of mental health in the workplace in terms of reducing employee conflict and increasing productivity as a way of introducing the value of participating in the workgroups.

Managers and decision makers are often restricted to how much time they can commit away from the office. We found if we leveraged the lunch hour window for our workgroups, this enabled more local business professionals to attend. We offered a one hour lunch/workgroup and we were committed to getting them out on time. This approach increased the overall attendance, and by offering lunch, it not only provided an incentive to attend but also gave the group an opportunity to eat together which helped to establish rapport.

When creating the curriculum, we sought out input from both employers and our participants. This helped to shape the curriculum to include real world suggestions from employers and participants, which then tailored the material to address challenges specific to our clients. By letting members know their suggestions were being used, helped increase their sense of value and ownership in the project. We also found that having a person with lived experience as the facilitator of the curriculum helped to engage the clients. Often times the facilitator would share examples of challenges he or she had faced which would encourage the clients to empathize and become more open and engaged in the group conversation.

Networking with other departments within Tri-City helped connect us to businesses which could potentially join our trainings or employer's cohort. Many departments in Tri-City have a list of businesses they purchase services from. Our payroll team uses a well-known bank and payroll processing company. The Operations department has several vendors for food catering, building maintenance and security. Each of these vendors represented a potential point of contact to engage their organization in Tri-City's system of care. Because Tri-City is already their customer, they were often more receptive to accepting an invitation to a workgroup as opposed to traditional outreach attempts.

Collaborating with other Tri-City MHSA departments allowed us to cross capitalize on community member involvement from other programs. Attending events hosted by other Tri-City departments, such as Housing or the Wellness Center, allowed us to connect directly to community members we may not have been able to reach otherwise.

Transportation and childcare were barriers that prevented many of our TAY clients from participating in workgroups and curriculums. To address this, we hosted our final two curriculums at an apartment complex that housed several Tri-City TAY aged clients. Having the curriculums on-site allowed residents who would not have been able to participate to attend on a regular basis. Having a TAY volunteer, who could help occupy the children while the parents participated in the group discussions, is one lesson learned and something we recommend for future facilitators working with this client group.

We also networked at job fairs, leveraged our connections with GAIN and EDD, attended employment conferences such as the California Placement Association and attended Chamber of Commerce meetings.

9. **Does improving collaboration among mental health service providers, employers and employees result in more successful outcomes than traditional supportive employment practices? In what ways is it more successful? Why is it more successful (or not?)**

> **What We Sought to Learn:** Can Tri-City engage candidly with businesses to understand the challenges they have regarding hiring and retention? Can Tri-City help businesses understand the unique challenges our clients face to employment? Can this exchange of information help create opportunities for both sides to benefit from?

> **What We Learned:** One of the key learnings from the Employee Stability Project was that both employers and employees were highly motivated to avoid any discussion of mental health in the workplace. Employers said that approaching an employee who may be showing signs of mental illness was considered one of the most difficult tasks for a manager. Employees who were interviewed recommended never disclosing a mental health challenge to one's employer for fear of losing their job or being ostracized by co-workers. It was an "elephant in the room" topic with both sides agreeing that it was best not to talk about it.

> The stigma of mental illness in the workplace is a major barrier preventing conversation and progress. To address this, Tri-City offered trainings to employers and employees showing how mental health affects employee productivity. Information on accommodation was provided to employers via luncheons and in monthly emails with links to the Job Accommodation Network (JAN) website. Employers were recommended to take on the initiative of creating a company culture where mental health could be candidly discussed with the same level of openness as physical health. Employees were shown examples of low-cost or no-cost accommodations that could be used to address common mental health challenges they may face in the workplace. In addition a section of the Effective Employee Curriculum was devoted to disclosing a mental illness to your employer, including a sample verbal script that clients could use to disclose their illness.

> It was our observation that reducing stigma in the business environment will take considerable time, even with aggressive training and outreach. Learning to identify the signs of a mental health challenge an employee experiences is the first step. Taking proactive measures to address an issue before it becomes a noticeable problem appears to be something many in our business cohort discussed with caution. Businesses are focused on limiting liability and the perceived risks of discussing a topic such as mental illness among one's employees is a topic that only progressive organizations or advocates within the organization appear willing to take.

An encouraging counterpoint to this was what appears to be a large potential for positive change coming from the millennial or TAY aged workforce. One of the things we learned when hosting the "Millennials in the Workforce" presentation was that millennial-aged employees are very socially conscious and motivated to make improvements in their community and the world in general. As these younger workers advance into positions of authority it is possible, perhaps likely, that they will be agents of change in promoting more tolerance and understanding on this subject.

We learned that having a person with lived experience interact with clients and employers can help facilitate learning. Clients participating in the Effective Employee Curriculum saw this person as a peer with similar experiences. Our employers got to hear a first-hand account of some of the challenges our peers face as employees. The peers with lived experience who

> *"My vision of this project would be to help employers not be so afraid of people with challenges"*
>
> Adult Curriculum
> Participant

have learned how to maintain employment are the true subject matter experts in this space so we sought to learn from them and also give them the opportunity to share their input.

Communication remains a critical component to reducing stigma and while we can see the beginnings of change, there appears to be a need for more open communication among employers and employees. As the topic of mental illness becomes more mainstream and the public perception changes, we feel stigma will lessen. Additionally, as millennial aged employees enter the work force, their passion for positive social change could act as catalyst to accelerate acceptance in the workforce in the coming years.

Any variation in outcomes based on demographics

While administering the Effective Employee Curriculum, we noticed the attendance for the TAY (ages 16-26) classes was lower than the attendance for the Adult curriculum. Over the span of 32 weeks, the adult classes averaged 3.7 attendees when hosted at our Wellness Center while the TAY classes averaged 2.4 attendees. We experimented with different days and times for the TAY classes and also tried different methods of promoting the curriculum, including offering pizza, but attendance remained low. Part of this was attributed to a lack of transportation but we also noticed a higher level of self-stigma with this age group. Many have never worked before and felt that their lack of experience and the added impact of managing a mental illness, such as social anxiety, disqualified them from the job market.

Our facilitators used motivational interviewing techniques to try resolve the ambivalence of those who attended but the main challenge was getting students to see the value of attending the classes in the first place. We eventually received more success when we partnered with Tri-City's Housing Department and offered the curriculum at a supported living complex with a high percentage of TAY

clients on-site. The curriculums hosted at this location received an average of 5.3 attendees which was more than twice what we received when hosting at our Wellness Center. We learned that many of the TAY clients, in addition to lacking transportation, are also single parents to small children. Hosting the curriculum on-site allowed these TAY clients to bring their children with them to the class and thereby give them the opportunity to participate in the curriculum. Having young children present during the curriculum was a distraction at times but the facilitator tried to use this as an opportunity to reflect on how young parents are good multi-taskers and this is a skill set employers look for in new hires.

How the project was culturally competent

Pomona and the surrounding area is a community of ethnic diversity and outreach was conducted to engage with consumers and businesses of all sizes. Our Employer Cohorts, curriculum participants and Employee Advisory Panel were comprised of a diverse group of individuals with various ages, experience and cultural backgrounds. Members included persons with decades of employment experience offering input along with TAY aged participants who had no work experience at all.

Millennials, ages 16 – 30, were identified as a segment of employees that managers were frustrated trying to motivate and manage. In response to this, speakers were brought in and training manuals created to help managers better understand and motivate millennials. To help our TAY aged participants, we also created a manual describing how millennials can better understand managers who are from the Baby Boomer or Generation X age group.

To better accommodate the different learning needs and encourage discussion, we offered our employee curriculum for two age groups. A curriculum class was offered to adults and a TAY-only curriculum was offered at a separate time. This allowed for TAY-aged participants, many of whom had never worked, to feel comfortable asking basic employment questions while being surrounded by persons with similar experiences. One of our TAY curriculum graduates went on to become a volunteer at Tri-City and now leads a support group the Wellness Center.

During the interview sections of the employee curriculum, cultural differences were discussed. For example, in some cultures eye contact is avoided as a sign of respect; however, lack of eye contact could be perceived negatively during an interview. This and other cultural differences that may be seen in the workplace were discussed to help participants become more aware.

The homeless population was identified as a target population in the hopes of offering the curriculum at a homeless shelter. The Tri-City Housing department has a partnership with the Pomona Homeless Shelter and goal was to begin forming a class there focused on employment possibilities. However, the response from many of the homeless was that they were focused on day to day survival and would not be interested in participating.

To address the needs of military veterans, a speaker was brought in to present to businesses on the availability of tax credits when hiring veterans and persons with disabilities. These incentives are

currently in place to encourage hiring vets but many businesses were unaware of how to take advantage of them.

Assessment of activities that contributed to successful outcomes

Creating an employer-only cohort helped to facilitate discussions and generate candid feedback. An effort was made to implement their suggestions whenever possible. For example our employer cohort cited difficulty managing younger, millennial-aged employees (18-30). In response to this, we created a training manual for managers to better understand and communicate with millennial-aged employees. This proved to be very a popular training manual and also gave our employers a sense of ownership in the project, knowing that their suggestions were being heard and action was being taken in response to them.

We realized that valuable input could also be gained from our consumers so we created a consumer-only cohort to gain insight from an employee perspective. In this supportive environment, many were willing to open up and share the challenges they faced in the workplace and in particular when dealing with topics of disclosure and accommodation. Based on this feedback, we added modules to our Employee Curriculum to cover topics on accommodation and disclosure, even adding a mock script that employees could use to broach the topic of disclosing a mental health challenge to their manager.

Collaborating with different departments at Tri-City proved to be beneficial for this project. Collaboration between the Innovation and the Prevention and Early Intervention (PEI) team resulted in a one-hour training called "Mental Health in the Workplace". This condensed training allowed our time-constrained employers to attend the training during their lunch break and get exposed to the importance of mental health in the workplace. Another collaboration example was connecting with Tri-City's Housing Department to offer the Effective Employee Curriculum at one of our residential locations that housed Tri-City clients. By securing a meeting space on-site, we were able to double the attendance rate of TAY participants to the employee curriculum.

Hosting events, such as trainings and conferences, helped to bring employers and community members together in a collaborative setting where they could network with each other in addition to participate in valuable trainings. Food was often provided and this proved to be an incentive to attend, but also gave attendees the opportunity to eat with each other and build rapport in the process.

Outreach and communication was an ongoing effort during the project and we found it important to keep in touch with our cohort and attendees. Email was used to remind participants about upcoming trainings and let them know about project developments. We also created a monthly email called "Mental Health Tip", which we would send to our employer cohort to help maintain contact. Each email offered a mental health tip relevant to the workplace which helped to remind them of the importance of mental health in the workplace and symptoms of an employee struggling with a mental health challenge.

How Stakeholders contributed to the Evaluation

The Employment Stability Project was presented through the community planning process, which included opportunities to participate in small workgroups as well as attend formal gatherings such as stakeholder meetings and the annual Public Hearing. A series of stakeholder workgroups were held during the project development where specifics were finalized with stakeholder input, including the approach to project measurement. As the project progressed, a series of employer and peer luncheons were formed to meet with participating members of the cohort, as well as the community, to assess the successes and challenges of the project. Information on the project was disseminated to the staff, community and other stakeholders via community meetings and employer conferences.

Future Project Application

The Effective Employee Curriculum, which was created as a component of this project, will be implemented at the Wellness Center. The Employment Specialist will administer the curriculum in addition to the traditional employment supports offered by the employment team.

Other training materials created for the project, such as the "Millennials in the Workplace" training and the "Manager's Tip Sheet for Mental Health Awareness", will be offered to the community at Tri-City events and Stakeholder meetings.

The "Mental Health in the Workplace" training, developed by the PEI team for this project, will continue to be offered to business and community members as a one hour introduction to Mental Health First Aid and as a way to introduce the importance of mental health to businesses.

There is an on-going need to bring awareness of Tri-City services to the business community. Effective collaboration is crucial to maintaining the relationships created and a focus on the mental health of the employee will remain a common objective for both Tri-City and participating businesses. This success can hopefully begin to build upon itself as employers begin to share their learnings and training opportunities with other business associates.

Whether the Project achieved its intended outcomes

Employers:

Tri-City is the mental health authority for the cities of Pomona, Claremont and La Verne. With the launching of the Employment Stability Project, an opportunity was presented to introduce the mental health system of care to employers in these communities and help them understand the importance of mental health in the workplace.

Our recruitment efforts focused on employers across different disciplines and geographic areas. A total of 104 employers and staff participated over the course of this three-year project with representation from both large and small companies. Even though employers were restricted on the time they could dedicate to participating, we had 93 employer staff attend at least one conference, training or workgroup.

Overall the level of involvement from our local employers was very positive. We anticipated a stronger participation from human resource and executive level staff, who could use their position and influence to implement culture changes at their workplace; however, we learned this level of individuals were unavailable to attend the trainings and events, but occasionally would send a representative in their place.

The relationships formed among the businesses and community groups are likely to be one of the most valuable achievements from this project. Because of the length of the project, some members were able to interact with each other over a period of months, some even years, and these relationships will hopefully have a lasting impact and inspire them to share what they have learned with other members of their business community.

The employer conferences offered a variety of professional speakers on topics such as mental health, stigma, generational differences, employment law and Social Security benefits. The conferences provided employers with valuable information and the opportunity to network with other business owners. By building relationships with employers through these educational opportunities, this project attempted to plant seeds of change that participants can take back to their workplace and initiate a culture change which includes Tri-City as a trusted resource and a strong partner for local businesses.

Effective Employee Curriculum:

The Effective Employee Curriculum was successfully created based on input from both employers and consumers. This curriculum will now become a part of the current employment support program offered at through our Wellness Center. Tri-City has also received inquiries from two local community groups who are interested in obtaining this curriculum for the benefit of the members of their organizations.

Once of the challenges we experienced with the delivery of this curriculum was attracting TAY (16-25) participants. We learned that a combination of transportation, child care and self-stigma creates barriers for this age group and should be addressed early on. However, even with lower than anticipated attendance, we received high feedback results from attendees as well as noticeable increases in employment skills as indicated by our Pre/Post surveys. Following the completion of the curriculum, outreach efforts were made to measure how many participants were successful in finding employment. The methods of outreach included telephone and/or email in increments of 30, 60 and 90 days. It was difficult to connect with these individuals and we were only able to document that 11 of our participants, or 10%, reported getting paid employment. However, due the challenge of connecting with participants we feel this number may be underreported.

Description of how the County disseminated the results

- Innovation staff overseeing the Employment Stability Project provided regular updates on progress made to Tri-City staff, board members, and stakeholders via community held meetings, staff meetings and conferences. Many of the businesses participating in the Employment Stability Project also share the information learned through this project with their organization and helped promote the services and events to other business partners.
- Collaborations and presentations on the Employment Stability Project were made with organizations outside of Tri-City including Goodwill Industries, the Department of Rehabilitation, the Education Development Department, the Pomona Chamber of Commerce and other employment related groups. These efforts attempted to bring educational opportunities and information to community members who may be unaware of the multi-program services provided through Tri-City.
- A series of annual conferences which targeted businesses were organized and used to explain the vision of the Employment Stability Project and educate attendees on the many training opportunities available to them.
- Presentations were made to Tri-City's Mental Health Commissioners on the progress of the Employee Curriculum. All newly hired employees at Tri-City are educated on the Employment Stability Project and how this project could benefit our clients as well as local businesses.

Any other data, reports or material the County considers relevant

Supporting documentation including surveys, feedback and presentations are included in the accompanying document. These include:

- Manager's Tip Sheet for Mental Health Awareness
- Manager training for understanding millennials
- Millennial training for understanding managers
- Effective Employee Curriculum
- PEI Every Day Mental Health in the Workplace presentation
- Speaker presentations from employer conferences:
    - Motivating Employees
    - Millennials in the Workplace
    - Tax Credits for Businesses
    - Mental Health First Aid
    - Employment Law
    - Community Resiliency Model
    - Intensive Outreach and Engagement
    - Social Security Benefits Explained