



Low-Threshold Work Activities in Practice

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1. The First Step

Ideally, low-threshold work activities represent the initial step toward full societal integration. Depending on the individual, this may take the form of rehabilitative work, work trials, education, employment, independent living, or a well-functioning life within a Housing First unit.

The most critical factor in the relationship between a resident and a staff member is trust; everything begins with its establishment. Without a foundation of mutual trust, interaction remains limited, and the potential to support the resident's progress in life is significantly diminished.

Once there is mutual understanding in terms of both strengths and challenges, it becomes possible to provide more effective support.

The perspective that every resident holds intrinsic value and dignity as they are cannot be overstated.

2. How do we operate?

We do things together, which helps us learn how to function as a group and tolerate different people and ways of doing things.

We take care of things like keeping the neighborhood clean and staying in touch with local stakeholders. Residents in the neighborhood are greeted, and sometimes we help them—for example, with moving or refurbishing outdoor furniture. Our activities make us valuable members of the community and help reduce the stigma directed at residents of the housing unit. Gaining social acceptance through our own actions strengthens residents' self-worth and fosters pride in both their place of residence and their fellow participants.

Organizing events open to everyone at the housing unit is an important occasion, as it helps break down prejudices toward the unit and its residents and demonstrates the openness of our activities. The dynamic is reversed when the residents become hosts in their own home environment. These events have without exception gone wonderfully, and it has been amazing to witness how residents have shown their best in these situations.

3. Implications for the Resident

Enhanced self-esteem

Greater recognition of personal capabilities – everyone excels in something

A growing sense of being heard and acknowledged, which reduces experiences of invisibility

Development of new, constructive behavioral patterns, and gradual abandonment of harmful ones

A sense of pride in oneself

4. Which Factor Should Be Kept Separate from Practical Work Activities?

Financial matters related to residents, such as income support, rent payments, and similar obligations, should be kept separate from low-threshold work activities for two primary reasons:

1. Clarity and Focus on Core Objectives

By maintaining a clear distinction between work activities and financial responsibilities, the purpose and goals of the work activities remain focused. This separation allows practitioners to concentrate on their core mission without the complexities introduced by financial issues.

2. Preservation of Trust and Neutrality

Involvement in financial disputes or disappointments can lead to personal conflicts, potentially affecting the resident-worker relationship. By directing residents to appropriate financial authorities and maintaining neutrality, workers avoid becoming parties to such disputes, thereby preserving trust and their role as impartial facilitators.