### **Wellness Planning for Career Exploration**

**NOTE TO THE FACILITATORS**

Many participants have expressed concern about dealing with symptoms at work. There are entire interventions focused on this very topic (e.g. VIMR), much of which may be more timely once participants move into the next phase of exploration (e.g. part-time work or school) and are looking for tools to help them maintain their progress.

We have provided a list of recommended resources that focus on this topic (see handout). For participants that are highly concerned about addressing this issue, we recommend using counseling session time to help them take steps to connect to these resources. What we offer in this lesson is a way to start the wellness planning conversation. We want to instill hope that it is possible to have a meaningful career even while managing symptoms. We also want to talk honestly about setbacks – big and small – and to empower students to feel more prepared for them.

If facilitators have the time and resources, they may also choose to have participants complete a WRAP (Wellness and Recovery Action Plan, Copeland) which can be found at <https://www.wrapandrecoverybooks.com/store/all-products.html>

**EXERCISE**

**Work-oriented wellness planning.**

* What are some of the things you do everyday to stay well?
* What do you sometimes need to do when you’re feeling unwell?
* Who do you trust to help you in times of crisis?

These are all questions to consider when formulating a career-oriented wellness plan.

While working so many benefits, it is a source of stress. There are fluctuations to respond to in the workplace as well as fluctuations in your own well-being.

Sometimes, if there are too many stressors and not enough supports, or even in spite of best efforts, increase in symptoms or relapse happens. You may have had an experience like this where you lost employment. The goal of a work-oriented wellness plan is to be thoughtful about how to keep yourself well so you have the best chance at riding the wave of stress that accompanies work-related events, including:

* Planed transitions – starting a new job or training program, changing your schedule, taking on more responsibility
* Unexpected changes – shift in coworkers, new bosses,

### **Wellness Planning**

**MY 3 – 6 MONTH WORK EXPLORATION GOAL(S)** (*Break down into achievable weekly steps w/ counselor. Example: Begin a 10 hour/week volunteer position by February 1, 2018.*)

**CRITICAL WELLNESS STRATEGIES** (*Examples: take meds every morning, get 8 hours of sleep/night, attend AA meetings 2x/week*)

**CHALLENGING SITUATIONS** (*Example: Feeling rejected when I don’t get a job offer*) & **WHAT TO DO**

*(Example: Call my Opening Doors counselor, explain how I’m feeling, reflect together on what I did well.)*

**WHO CAN HELP** (*people who have a copy of this plan and will help*) & **WHAT THEY WILL DO** *(example:*

*Ben, my sponsor, agrees to listen when I’m having a hard day and attend meeting with me)*

### **Additional Wellness Planning Resources**

**Whole Health Action Management** (SAMHSA, 2012)

Free participant guide and action plan <http://www.integration.samhsa.gov/health-wellness/wham>

**Wellness Recovery Action Plan** (Copeland) Online WRAP tools available at reasonable cost at [http://mentalhealthrecovery.com](http://mentalhealthrecovery.com/)

**Vocational Illness Management & Recovery** (Mueser et al.; BUCPR)

Evidence-based practice designed to help people with mental health conditions develop and manage their wellness at work. <https://cpr.bu.edu/store/curricula/vocational/vimr>