

The Connections Place “TCP”

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Staff Members

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The Connections Place

- A center in Manhattan that offers a job preparedness program specifically designed for people who have borderline personality disorder (BPD), run under the auspices of NEA-BPD
- The program focuses on individual values, and connecting people, places, and things related to work

Program Format

- Four-month curriculum: repeats three times per year (Portals & Vocational Modules)
- Individualized goal setting and vocational planning with a job coach
- Internships provided at the TCP office
- Community volunteer jobs



Daily Schedule

TCP is open on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Typical daily schedule is:

- | | |
|--------------------|---|
| 9:00 am - 9:30 am | Office opens and clients arrive |
| 9:30 am - 11:00 am | Group meeting covering program curriculum |
| 11:00 am - 1:00 pm | 30 minute "one-on-one" meetings with vocational coach to discuss individualized vocational plan and assess personal and vocational goals for the week
(time is also for independent computer work) |
| 1:00 pm - 2:00 pm | Graduate group meeting for clients who are appropriate for our internship opportunities
(time to stay in office to continue independent work) |

Goals

1. Develop and maintain a commitment to participate in TCP program (i.e. attending consistently, arriving on time, or calling if not able to attend)
2. Identify emotional barriers that interfere with getting a job, and practice strategies to overcome individual emotional barriers
3. Identify meaningful activity/jobs through vocational assessment (Strong Interest Inventory)
Prepare to apply for jobs (i.e. write resumes and cover letters, do mock interviews)
Obtain part-time job (volunteer /paid or education)

Portals Module

- Portal Module (Part I and II) – incorporates DBT-like concepts to overcome emotional barriers to obtaining and keeping a job
- Such practical skills include time management, goal setting, and problem solving, etc.

Portals Module - Part I

- Orientation to Portals Module
- Identifying Barriers to Vocational and Educational Goals
- Increasing Motivation to Change
- Setting Goals
- Managing One's Time
- Discussing Expectations (i.e. Benign Interpretations)
- Analyzing Attitudes
- Reducing Vulnerability to Negative Thoughts and Feelings

Portals Module - Part II

- Identifying Work-Interfering Behaviors, Thoughts, and Feelings
- Learning to Tolerate Distress Effectively
- Identifying Barriers to Productive Problem Solving
- Managing Stressful Thinking
- Decreasing Procrastination
- Examining Current Work Behaviors
- Developing Optimism

Vocational Module

- Vocational Module (Part I and II) – incorporates the choose-get-keep approach to employment developed by William Anthony
- This approach highlights the importance of individual values in finding meaningful work

Vocational Module Part I

- Orientation to Vocational Module
- Evaluating Readiness to Work
- Identifying Personal Values
- Determining Work Environmental Preferences
- Rating Areas of Interests and/or Jobs
- Identifying Meaningful Jobs
- Brainstorming about Other Possible Jobs
- Determining Preliminary Vocational Goals

Vocational Module Part II

- Writing Resumes and Cover Letters
- Preparing for an Interview
- Putting a Positive Spin on Potential Liabilities When Interviewing
- Dealing with Feelings During an Interview
- Mastering the Interview and Follow-up
- Looking for Jobs: Jobs Search Websites and Networking
- Discussing Work-Related Issues (i.e. SSI, SSDI)

TCP Interns

Currently the program has clients who are also interns providing skills in:

- Marketing
- Public Relations and Outreach
- Computer Support and Website Design

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“Some Symptoms That Might Interfere With Employment”

Anger

Transient Paranoia

Fear of Abandonment



Feelings of Emptiness

Unstable Sense of Self

Client Quotes

- “TCP gives me an opportunity to feel good about myself.”
- “The Connections Place offers me a supportive place to go.”
- “I expected TCP to be one thing (vocational) but it’s so much more.”
- “TCP is a means for me to step outside of myself and into something productive.”

TCP Facts

- 86 Applicants
- 65 Clients Enrolled (During 28 Months)
- Age Range: 19-55

- 16 guest speakers
- 14 “in-the-field” mock interview

- Current Status: 14 Clients

Some Thoughts

- Why focus on job preparedness?
- 53.9% of BPD individuals are unemployed (BPD DSM-V Survey in progress)
- TCP as bridging the gap between therapy and work (transitional)
- Dealing with the drop-out rate. Trying to maintain consistent and willing behavior
- Evaluating TCP - how to measure progress?
- Future plans for research and funding