

Recovery Works

Improving Employment Opportunities for Adult Mental Health Consumers

Sponsored by the Maine Department of Health & Human Services, Office of Behavioral Health

Never Give Up on a Dream

Judy, a woman in her mid-30's, was working at a local coffee shop in what she described as a "very toxic" environment in October 2024 when her medication manager connected her with the CES/IPS ES. Though she was unsure if she was ready for a change, her Need for Change Scale indicated she wanted to work with the ES, and that opened the door to a powerful shift in her life.

Upon meeting with the ES and learning how the CES/IPS program can help, Judy was ready to pursue employment support services. She reported struggling with anxiety and depression and found it difficult to get motivated to change; she was also not sure how to pursue her dream of becoming a machinist. With surgery scheduled for January, she wasn't sure how or when to begin, but the idea of learning more about the field sparked something in her. She agreed to explore local opportunities and gather information in informational interviews and tours, excited to learn more in small, meaningful steps.

The ES started a job search and found a local machine company that was not only hiring but looking for those interested in learning the trade and was offering paid training. Judy reported she had done some machine type work in the past and offered a few photos that

she wanted to submit with her application. In the meantime, Judy's family were her biggest support, offering transportation and helping her get her own vehicle to help obtain her career goal.

She was soon interviewed and was hired to begin by the end of the year! Honest about her upcoming surgery, Judy was surprised by the company's response: they encouraged her to take the time she needed and even sent flowers to her in the hospital. Their compassion reinforced her belief that she was on the right path.

The ES followed up with Judy during her recovery; although she was feeling much better in the weeks after, her employer insisted that she follow her doctor's instructions to stay home and get stronger. Judy collected unemployment during this time and returned to her position at the company after full medical clearance. Judy reports being "happy to be back at it" and is appreciative of the kindness and support her employer extended her in such a short amount of time. She states she is feeling much stronger and better and reports having a new (to her) truck which gives her more freedom to get out and socialize with friends.